

A Blog about Japanese Unemployment Benefit

Today, I'm going to write a blog about claiming unemployment benefits and I hope this helps ALTs in Japan.

First off, no ALT wants to experience being unemployed in a foreign country. But, it may happen and cause uncertainties like in this COVID-19 example:

“If I break my contract, I will go home and face unemployment and no health insurance due to hiring freezes and health insurance is tied to employment.”

When I read this reply comment on a JET Reddit forum, I was bewildered because I'm already facing unemployment!! However, I didn't have the guts to tell this person, whom I do not know at all. I can understand the difficult circumstances, and we should try to have a different mindset that can be uplifting and helpful to one another. An example of this is how to prepare and navigate in accessing Japanese unemployment benefits. Because unemployment can happen to anyone at any time.

Here's what you should do once your work contract has ended:



Follow up with your employer and make sure they mail your rishokuhyo. A rishokuhyo (離職票) is a paper document that shows how long you have worked and how much you earned for the entire year at your workplace. It takes about ten days for it to be mailed to you. When you've received it, immediately go to [Hellowork](#) to register for unemployment. There's a 7 day waiting period. Then, you must revisit Hellowork for your first face-to-face appointment in receiving your [unemployment benefit](#). This first payment may seem low because they're only counting 21 days of work. The second appointment and after, it will be higher because they're counting 28 days. Also, the Hellowork where you registered is the only place where you can get the unemployment benefits and it cannot be at any other Hellowork.

Most foreigners will fit into receiving the minimum 90 days of unemployment. But, there are those who are older and can get them for longer. One problem is your work visa. There's a 3 month limit to find your next job. If under that limit, unemployment benefits may be claimed two times. Consult with the Hellowork staff. And, the immigration staff can inform you about visa regulations. Those with PR and perhaps a spouse visa do not have visa restrictions.

When going to each appointment, proof of a new job search is required. Minimum is two jobs and the information you put in must have the date written on when you have applied for your jobs. Follow by the company name, the phone number, and etc. They will also permit domestic and international job searches! You don't always have to use their Hellowork system which can be a bit restrictive for foreigners. Either one of two options is okay, the Hellowork system or outside sources like the GaijinPot website.

Another problem that might arise is for those who work for a dispatch. Dispatch work is just under a one-year contract and there are 2-3 months in which their salary is prorated. Having this kind of contract will not qualify them for unemployment benefits. But, not all is lost! It is still possible. You just have to accumulate the working days to reach that perfect 12 months. In other words, that means waiting until the second year. Though, do make sure your dispatch company enrolls their

foreign employees and you into the unemployment system just like the JETs/direct hires. **I had this kind of experience in 2011 and at the same time, I was in a lot of pressure to find my next job while having an instructor visa. Then, in 2012, I landed a direct hire job!**

One perk for those who are full-time JETs/direct hires is it seems that you will get unemployment from Hellowork and it will be a very similar amount to a dispatch salary!!! After the first payment that is.

Then, there's a slight complication for JETs. JETs and dispatch usually have their housing tied to their employer. But, direct hires have to take care of their own housing. Some JETs are fortunate enough to have free subsidized housing, but recently that benefit is fading away. When housing is tied with your employer, you must move out because they are no longer your guarantor and for JETs, the new successor will move in. But, dispatch has no one moving in and hence, must pay a moving out fee of ¥30,000. Though, with legal matters there may be a way to extend rental housing. If possible, sometimes it may be better to have housing not tied to your employer. That way, it'll be easier to avoid a VERY HUGE initial expense for moving into a new place to stay.

For Dispatch, a second perk, may be where the [Japanese government can pay the rent](#) for at least 3 months to the apartment landlord or apartment agency. Their income and assets must be depleted to qualify. However, JETs/direct hires are expected to have enough savings!!

As for getting health insurance from city hall and reducing its payments, you must go to Hellowork first. Do that when you already have received your rishokuhyo from your employer. Then, Hellowork will give this hard-covered paper and on the backside, it has info on it like what is shown in the photo. Bring that to city hall and your healthcare insurance payments will be reduced. You don't have to make payments based on last year's income.



So, what about me and how did I become unemployed? In winter of 2019, I had a scheduled plan to pursue a career elsewhere which would end my Japan experience and yet, be able to explore the wonders of various job opportunities. Then COVID-19 came. Everything came to a sudden stop with delays and all these unexpected challenges for an uncertain future. On the brightside, a pause in life can be good for society to reflect and to be still in peace. Moreover, I was fortunate to have a direct hire job in which I was already enrolled into the unemployment system and I don't have any visa issues due to having a PR visa. I wouldn't say all is well, but if you would like to support me, I'm also the content creator of [Eigo Ganbare](#) and have a patreon page. I have been making free team-teaching resources for JET ALTs, direct hire ALTs, and dispatch ALTs since 2010. I do my best to make the ALT community a better place. So, a small gesture of support to [Eigo Ganbare on Patreon](#) will be just like its motto: Helping Eigo Ganbare, helps you!

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"You should write a blog about this. You save lives!"

- FB JET Ladies+ Group

* In regards to **nenkin** payments, please check with city hall if you're eligible [for an exception](#).