



This brochure explains what to do if you lose your job. Under Georgia law, unless you are discriminated against, a government worker, a union worker or a contract worker, you can be fired "at will". This means you can be fired for any reason or no reason at all. You do have the right to apply for unemployment.

### Job Firings

Almost all employees are protected from being fired because of race, age, sex or handicap. If you believe that you have been fired for a discriminatory reason, you should contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) at 404-562-6800.

Unless you have been discriminated against, the law provides little protection for workers in Georgia. Most employees can be fired "at will" (without a reason). However, there are a few types of employees who have additional rights.

Government workers are usually protected by a merit system. They cannot be fired without good reason and advance notice. They also have the right to a hearing so that they may present their side of the story.

Union workers who are fired can file claims based on their union's grievance procedure. Their rights are spelled out in the union's contract with the employer.

Workers with written contracts may be able to sue the employers if the terms of the contract have not been followed.

### Unemployment Benefits

Most employees are covered by unemployment insurance. The Georgia Unemployment Insurance Fund is administered by the Department of Labor.

Requirements for receiving unemployment insurance payments:

1. You must be unemployed through no fault of your own. This means you were not fired for good cause or you did not voluntarily quit without a good, work-related reason.
2. You must have earned enough money at your previous job. The Department of Labor should have a full earning record for you. You may ask to see this record.
3. You must be physically able to work.
4. You must be available for work. This means that you must have transportation and be ready to accept a suitable job.

### Summary

Almost all employees in Georgia are only protected from certain kinds of discrimination. Some employees have extra protection from other kinds of unfair treatment. If you think your legal rights have been violated, seek advice immediately.

Most employees are covered by unemployment insurance. When they lose their jobs, they may be entitled to benefits. The Atlanta Legal Aid Society can help if you are denied unemployment benefits, or if you are granted benefits and your employer appeals. For more information, contact the Legal Aid office nearest you.

# Contact Us

DeKalb County  
246 Sycamore Street  
Suite 120  
Decatur, GA 30030  
(404) 377-0701

Clayton County Pro Bono Project  
1000 Main Street  
Forest Park, GA 30050  
(404) 366-0586

Cobb County  
30 S. Park Square  
Marietta, GA 30090  
(770) 528-2565

Fulton County  
151 Spring Street, N.W.  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404) 524-5811

South Fulton &  
Clayton Counties  
1514 East Cleveland Avenue  
Suite 100  
East Point, GA 30344  
(404) 669-0233  
(Wagon Works Building)

Gwinnett County  
180 Camden Hill Road  
Suite A  
Lawrenceville, GA 30045  
(678)376-4545

For TTD/TTY users, call the Georgia Relay  
Center at (800) 255-0135.

Copyright Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Inc.  
September 30, 2011



## What to Do if You Lose Your Job

Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Inc.