

Jamaica

Exchange rate: US\$1.00 =
132.00 Jamaican dollars (J\$).

Old Age, Disability, and Survivors

Regulatory Framework

First and current law: 1965 (national insurance), implemented in 1966.

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Note: Noncontributory (social assistance) old-age and disability benefits exist under the PATH cash transfer program (see Family Allowances).

Coverage

Employed and self-employed persons.

Voluntary coverage is available.

Exclusions: Casual workers and unpaid family labor.

Special complementary system for civil servants, teachers, employees of local governments, and certain other public-sector employees.

Source of Funds

Insured person: 2.75% (3% as of April 2020) of gross covered earnings; J\$150 (J\$200 as of April 2020) a week for household workers and the voluntarily insured.

There are no minimum earnings used to calculate contributions.

The maximum annual earnings used to calculate contributions are J\$1,500,000. (There are no maximum earnings used to calculate contributions for household workers.)

The insured person's contributions also finance cash maternity benefits (household workers only) and medical benefits.

Contributions are paid weekly, monthly, or quarterly, depending on the category of employment.

Self-employed person: 5.5% (6% as of April 2020) of annual covered earnings.

The minimum weekly contribution is J\$150.

The maximum annual earnings used to calculate contributions are J\$1,500,000.

The self-employed person's contributions also finance medical benefits.

Employer: 2.75% (3% as of April 2020) of gross covered payroll; J\$150 (J\$200 as of April 2020) a week for household workers.

There are no minimum earnings used to calculate contributions.

The maximum annual earnings used to calculate contributions are J\$1,500,000. (There are no maximum earnings used to calculate contributions for household workers.)

The employer's contributions also finance cash maternity benefits (household workers only), medical benefits, and work injury benefits.

Government: None; contributes as an employer.

Qualifying Conditions

Old-age pension (Retirement Pension): Age 65 with at least 520 weeks of paid contributions and an annual average of 10 weeks of paid or credited contributions during the working life.

Contributions are credited for each contributory week the insured received disability or work injury benefits.

Contributions can be made up to age 70.

Spouse's supplement (Spouse Allowance): Paid for a dependent spouse aged 55 or older (women) or aged 60 or older (men) who has been married to the insured for at least three years and does not receive any social insurance benefit.

The old-age pension is payable abroad upon request if the insured resides abroad.

Old-age grant (Retirement Grant): Age 65 with at least 52 weeks of paid contributions but does not meet the contribution requirements for an old-age pension.

The old-age grant is payable abroad upon request if the insured resides abroad.

Disability pension (Invalidity Benefit): Must be assessed with a permanent incapacity for work of at least 10%, have at least 156 weeks of paid contributions, and have an annual average of 10 weeks of paid or credited contributions during the working life.

Contributions are credited for each contributory week the insured received disability or work injury benefits.

Spouse's supplement (Spouse Allowance): Paid for a dependent spouse aged 55 or older (women) or aged 60 or older (men) who has been married to the insured for at least three years and does not receive any social insurance benefit.

An independent medical advisor appointed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security assesses the disability and recommends the frequency of any reassessment of the disability.

The disability pension ceases at the normal retirement age and is replaced by the old-age pension.

The disability pension is payable abroad.

Disability grant (Invalidity Grant): Must be assessed with a permanent incapacity for work of at least 10% and have less than 156 weeks of paid contributions.

An independent medical advisor appointed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security assesses the disability.

The disability grant is payable abroad.

Survivor pension: The deceased received or was entitled to receive an old-age or disability pension or had at least 156 weeks of paid contributions and an annual average of at least 10 weeks of paid or credited contributions at the time of death.

Eligible survivors include a widow(er) (married or in a common-law relationship) and full orphans younger than age 18. Widow(er)s may also receive benefits based on their own earnings record. The widow(er) must have been married to the deceased for at least three years or cohabited with the deceased for at least five years at the time of death.

The widow(er)'s pension ceases upon remarriage or entering into a new common-law relationship.

Remarriage settlement: Paid when the widow(er) remarries or enters into a new common-law relationship.

The survivor pension is payable abroad upon request if the survivor resides abroad.

Survivor grant: The deceased did not meet the contribution requirements for an old-age or disability pension but had at least 52 weeks of paid contributions.

Eligible survivors include a widow(er) (married or in a common-law relationship) aged 55 or older, permanently incapable of work, or caring for children younger than age 18; a widow who is pregnant with the deceased's child; and full orphans younger than age 18. The widow(er) must have been married to the deceased for at least three years or cohabited with the deceased for at least five years at the time of death.

Special child's benefit: Paid to a guardian caring for an extramarital child younger than age 18 who is orphaned if the child's deceased mother received or was entitled to receive an old-age or disability pension and the child's father is deceased, cannot be identified, or his whereabouts are unknown; a lump sum is paid if the child's deceased mother was not entitled to receive an old-age or disability pension but had at least 52 weeks of paid contributions.

The special child's benefit is payable abroad.

Funeral grant: The deceased or the deceased's spouse received or was entitled to receive an old-age or disability pension at the time of death.

The funeral grant is payable abroad.

Old-Age Benefits

Old-age pension (Retirement Pension): The pension consists of a basic benefit and an earnings-related benefit.

Basic benefit: J\$3,400 a week is paid if the insured had an annual average of 39 weeks of paid or credited

contributions; J\$2,550 a week with 26 to 38 weeks; or J\$1,700 a week with 10 to 25 weeks.

Earnings-related benefit: J\$0.06 a week is paid for every J\$13 of employee or employer contributions paid during the working life.

Spouse's supplement (Spouse Allowance): J\$900 a week is paid.

Benefit adjustment: The basic benefit component and the spouse's supplement are adjusted periodically based on actuarial evaluations.

Old-age grant (Retirement Grant): A lump sum of J\$50,000 is paid.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Disability pension (Invalidity Benefit): J\$320 to J\$3,200 a week is paid for an assessed degree of disability of 10% to 100%, depending on the degree of disability.

Spouse's supplement (Spouse Allowance): J\$900 a week is paid.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted periodically based on actuarial evaluations.

Disability grant (Invalidity Grant): A lump sum of J\$50,000 is paid.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension

Spouse's pension: The old-age pension the deceased received or was entitled to receive is paid.

The pension is paid for life to a widow(er) aged 55 or older or permanently incapable of work; until the youngest child reaches age 18 to a widow(er) caring for children younger than age 18 or a widow pregnant with the deceased's child; or for one year to a widow(er) younger than age 55 without children or with children aged 18 or older.

Remarriage settlement: A lump sum of 12 months of the spouse's pension is paid.

Orphan's pension: J\$4,900 a week is paid.

Survivor grant

Spouse's grant: A lump sum of J\$50,000 is paid.

Orphan's grant: A lump sum of J\$55,000 is paid.

Special child's benefit: J\$4,900 a week is paid; a lump sum of J\$55,000 is paid if the child's deceased mother was not entitled to receive an old-age or disability pension.

Funeral grant: A lump sum of J\$90,000 is paid to the person who paid for the funeral.

Administrative Organization

Ministry of Labour and Social Security (<http://www.mlss.gov.jm/>) administers the program through its National Insurance Division and local offices.

Tax Administration Jamaica (<https://www.jamaicatax.gov.jm/>) collects contributions.

Sickness and Maternity

Regulatory Framework

First and current laws: 1947 (sick leave), implemented in 1973; 1965 (national insurance); 1979 (maternity leave); and 2003 (medical benefits).

Type of program: Universal (medical benefits), social insurance (cash maternity and medical benefits), and employer-liability (cash benefits) system.

Note: The public health care system, which is financed through general taxation, provides limited medical services for free or at a nominal cost in public dispensaries and hospitals. Further information regarding the legal basis of this program is not available.

Coverage

Universal (medical benefits): Residents of Jamaica.

Social insurance (cash maternity benefit): Household workers who reside in Jamaica.

Exclusions: Self-employed and salaried women.

Social insurance (medical benefits): Social insurance pensioners.

Employer liability (cash benefits): Employed persons, including casual workers.

Exclusions: Certain company managers (cash sickness benefits only) and self-employed persons.

Source of Funds

Insured person

Universal and social insurance: See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors.

Employer liability: None.

Self-employed person

Universal and social insurance: See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors.

Employer liability: Not applicable.

Employer

Universal and social insurance: See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors.

Employer liability: The total cost.

Government

Universal and social insurance: Contributes as an employer; the universal medical benefits are also partially financed by earmarked taxes on tobacco and alcohol.

Employer liability: None; contributes as an employer.

Qualifying Conditions

Cash sickness benefit (employer liability): Must have at least 110 days of employment.

Cash maternity benefit for household workers (social insurance): Must have at least 26 weeks of paid contributions in the 52 weeks before the expected date of childbirth.

Cash maternity benefit (employer liability): Must have at least 52 weeks of continuous employment before the expected date of childbirth and provide employer notice of intention to take maternity leave. The employer may request a medical certificate.

Medical benefits for chronic diseases (National Health Fund, universal): Must be diagnosed with one of 17 chronic diseases. There is no minimum qualifying period.

Medical benefits (National Insurance Gold, social insurance): Must be receiving a social insurance pension. There is no minimum qualifying period.

Sickness and Maternity Benefits

Sickness benefit (employer liability): 100% of the employee's normal wages is paid for up to 10 days a year (pro-rated for casual workers).

Maternity benefit for household workers (social insurance): 100% of the national legal weekly minimum wage is paid for eight weeks from the time the claim was made or from the date of childbirth, whichever is later. The claim can be made from 11 weeks before the expected date of childbirth to six months after childbirth.

The national legal weekly minimum wage is J\$7,000.00.

Schedule of payments: The maternity benefit for household workers is paid as a lump sum.

Maternity benefit (employer liability): 100% of the employee's normal wages is paid for at least eight weeks.

Workers' Medical Benefits

Medical benefits for chronic diseases (National Health Fund, universal): Partial subsidy for approved prescribed medicine for specified chronic illnesses.

Medical benefits (National Insurance Gold, social insurance): Benefits include medical treatment, surgery, hospitalization, prescribed medicine, and laboratory services, up to a maximum according to a schedule.

Dependents' Medical Benefits

Medical benefits for chronic diseases (National Health Fund, universal): Dependents are covered in their own right.

Medical benefits (National Insurance Gold, social insurance): Not applicable.

Administrative Organization

Ministry of Labour and Social Security (<https://www.mlss.gov.jm/>) provides general supervision for cash sickness and maternity benefits and administers social insurance cash maternity benefits through its National Insurance Division and local offices.

Tax Administration Jamaica (<https://www.jamaicatax.gov.jm/>) collects contributions.

National Health Fund (<https://www.nhf.org.jm/>) administers the medical benefits.

Work Injury

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1938 (workmen's compensation).

Current law: 1965 (national insurance), implemented in 1970.

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Coverage

Employed persons.

Exclusions: Household workers, self-employed persons, and military personnel.

Source of Funds

Insured person: None.

Self-employed person: Not applicable.

Employer: See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors.

Government: None; contributes as an employer.

Qualifying Conditions

Must be assessed with a work injury or occupational disease. Occupational diseases are specified by law.

Temporary Disability Benefits

J\$3,200 a week is paid for any continuous period of work incapacity lasting at least four days, for up to 52 weeks.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Permanent disability pension (Employment Injury Disablement Benefit): For an assessed degree of disability of 10% to 100%, J\$320 to J\$3,200 a week is paid depending on the degree of disability.

A medical board assesses the disability.

The permanent disability pension is payable abroad.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted periodically based on actuarial evaluations.

Workers' Medical Benefits

Benefits include necessary medical and surgical treatment, rehabilitation, appliances, hospitalization, and medicine.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor benefit: J\$4,900 a week is paid for 52 weeks to a widow(er) of any age; if there is no widow(er), to the guardian of the deceased's children younger than age 18.

The survivor benefit is payable abroad.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted periodically based on actuarial evaluations.

Funeral grant: See Old Age, Disability, and Survivors.

The funeral grant is payable abroad.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted periodically based on actuarial evaluations.

Administrative Organization

Ministry of Labour and Social Security (<https://www.mlss.gov.jm/>) administers the program through its National Insurance Division and local offices.

Tax Administration Jamaica (<https://www.jamaicatax.gov.jm/>) collects contributions.

Unemployment

Regulatory Framework

Under the 1974 Employment (Termination and Redundancy Payments) Act, employers must provide severance pay in cases of redundancy to employees with at least 104 weeks of continuous employment. The payment amount is two weeks of the employee's pay for each year of continuous employment up to 10 years plus three weeks of pay for each year of continuous employment exceeding 10 years.

Family Allowances

Regulatory Framework

First and current law: 1886 (poor relief).

Type of program: Social assistance system.

Coverage

Low-income and vulnerable persons.

Source of Funds

Insured person: None.

Self-employed person: None.

Employer: None.

Government: The total cost.

Qualifying Conditions**Family cash transfer (Programme for Advancement through Health and Education [PATH], means tested):**

Paid for children from birth to completion of secondary education, pregnant women and nursing mothers, persons with disabilities, poor adults aged 18 to 59, and persons aged 60 or older who are not receiving any pension.

School-age children must maintain an 85% attendance level at school.

Pregnant and lactating women and children younger than age 6 (72 months) must make regular visits to health centers.

Partial benefit: A reduced benefit is paid if a beneficiary does not meet the school attendance or medical requirements.

Means test: The household must be classified as poor based on the Beneficiary Identification System (BIS).

The BIS is a targeting system used to identify poor and vulnerable families based on their incomes, consumption patterns, housing conditions, and access to public services.

Family Allowance Benefits**Family cash transfer (Programme for Advancement through Health and Education [PATH], means tested):**

J\$1,300 a month is paid for each eligible child younger than age 6; J\$1,350 to J\$2,100 a month for each school-age child, depending on grade level; J\$1,600 a month for a pregnant woman, nursing mother, person with disabilities, or poor adult; and J\$2,250 for a person aged 60 or older.

Partial benefit: At least J\$600 a month is paid for each beneficiary not meeting the school attendance or medical requirements.

Schedule of payments: Benefits are paid every two months.

Eligible persons are also entitled to receive in-kind benefits, including free school lunches, exemption from secondary school tuition fees, and free medical care at public health centers and hospitals.

Eligibility is reviewed every four years.

Administrative Organization

Public Assistance Division of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (<https://www.mlss.gov.jm/pub/index.php>) assesses eligibility and administers the program.