

Jamaica

Exchange rate: US\$1.00 equals
88.30 Jamaican dollars (J\$).

Old Age, Disability, and Survivors

Regulatory Framework

First law and current law: 1965 (national insurance), with amendments.

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Note: Government-financed social assistance benefits of J\$650 a month are provided to low-income and vulnerable persons older than age 60 and to low-income and vulnerable persons with disabilities.

Coverage

Employed and self-employed persons.

Voluntary coverage is possible, if older than age 18 and younger than the normal retirement age.

Exclusions: Casual workers and unpaid family labor.

Source of Funds

Insured person: Employees contribute 2.5% of covered earnings. Household workers, Jamaica Defense Force personnel, and voluntarily insured persons contribute a flat-rate J\$20 a week.

The maximum earnings for employee contribution calculation purposes are J\$9,620 a week or J\$500,000 a year. (There are no maximum earnings for contribution calculation purposes for household workers or Jamaica Defense Force personnel.)

The insured's contributions also finance cash maternity benefits.

Contributions are paid weekly or monthly, depending on how the employee is paid.

Self-employed person: J\$20 a week, plus a maximum of 5% of covered annual earnings if gross annual earnings exceed J\$20,800.

The maximum earnings for contribution calculation purposes are J\$9,620 a week or J\$500,000 a year.

Employer: 2.5% of covered payroll.

The maximum earnings for contribution calculation purposes are J\$9,620 a week or J\$500,000 a year.

The employer's contributions also finance cash maternity benefits and work injury benefits.

Contributions are paid weekly or monthly, depending on how employees are paid.

Government: None; contributes as an employer.

Qualifying Conditions

Old-age pension: Age 65 (men) or age 60 (women) with at least 1,443 weeks of paid contributions, including an annual average of 39 weeks of paid or credited contributions. Retirement is necessary from age 65 to 70 (men) or age 60 to 65 (women).

Partial pension: A reduced pension is paid for annual average contributions of between 10 and 38 weeks.

Deferred pension: A deferred pension is possible.

Spouse's supplement: Paid for a dependent wife aged 55 or older or a husband aged 60 or older with a disability.

Old-age settlement: Paid if the insured does not satisfy the qualifying conditions for a pension but has at least 52 weeks or 1 year of contributions. Retirement is necessary until age 70 (men) or age 65 (women).

Old-age benefits are payable abroad if the insured resides abroad for at least a year.

Disability pension: The insured must be younger than normal retirement age, be assessed with a permanent incapacity for work, and have at least 156 weeks of paid contributions.

The disability is assessed by an independent medical advisor appointed by the Minister of Labor and Social Security who recommends the frequency of any reassessment.

Disability settlement: Paid if the insured was ineligible for a pension but has at least 52 weeks of paid contributions.

The disability is assessed by a doctor appointed by the Minister of Labor and Social Security.

Disability benefits are payable abroad for a limited period for medical treatment.

Survivor pension: The deceased was a pensioner or had at least 156 weeks of paid contributions, including an annual average of 39 weeks of paid or credited contributions, at the time of death.

Eligible survivors are a widow(er) aged 55 or older, caring for children younger than age 18, or permanently incapable of work; a widow who is pregnant with the deceased's child; and full orphans younger than age 18. If eligible, a widow may receive other benefits based on her own earnings. A widow(er) younger than age 55 without children receives a limited pension for 1 year.

The pension ceases if the widow(er) remarries or cohabits and a lump sum is paid.

Survivor benefits are payable abroad if the survivor resides abroad for at least a year.

Survivor settlement: Paid if the deceased was ineligible for a pension but had at least 52 weeks of contributions. A widow(er) must have been married or cohabiting with the deceased for at least 3 years.

Special child's benefit: Paid to a guardian caring for a child born out of wedlock, younger than age 18, who is orphaned, whose deceased mother was eligible for a pension, and whose father is dead or his whereabouts are unknown; a lump sum is paid if the deceased mother was not eligible for a pension.

Funeral grant: Paid if the deceased or the deceased's spouse received or was entitled to receive an old-age or disability pension at the time of death; had at least 26 weeks of contributions in the 52 weeks immediately before the time of death; or had at least 52 weeks of contributions in the 104 weeks immediately before the time of death.

Old-Age Benefits

Old-age pension: A basic benefit of J\$2,000 a week is paid with an annual average of 39 weeks of paid or credited contributions plus an earnings-related benefit of J\$0.06 a week for every J\$13 of employer/employee contributions paid during the working lifetime.

Partial pension: A reduced pension of J\$1,500 a week (with annual average contributions of 26 to 38 weeks) or J\$1,000 a week (with 10 to 25 weeks) is paid, plus an earnings-related benefit of J\$0.06 a week for every J\$13 of employer/employee contributions paid during the working lifetime.

Deferred pension: Calculated in the same way as the old-age pension.

Spouse's supplement: J\$670 a week is paid.

Old-age settlement: A lump sum of J\$30,000 is paid.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Disability pension: If the insured has an assessed degree of disability of at least 10%, a basic benefit of between J\$250 and J\$2,500 a week is paid.

The maximum benefit is paid with an assessed degree of disability of 100%.

Disability settlement: A lump sum of nine times the maximum weekly basic old-age pension is paid.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: A basic benefit of J\$2,000 a week is paid if the deceased had an annual average of 39 weeks of paid or credited contributions (reduced to J\$1,500 a week with annual average contributions of 26 weeks to 38 weeks; J\$1,000 a week with 10 to 25 weeks) plus an earnings-related benefit of J\$0.06 a week for every J\$13 of employer/employee contributions paid during the working lifetime.

Remarriage settlement: A lump sum of a year's pension is paid.

Survivor settlement: A lump sum of J\$30,000 is paid.

Orphan's pension: J\$3,500 a week is paid for full orphans younger than age 18.

Orphan's settlement: A lump sum of J\$30,000 is paid for full orphans younger than age 18.

Special child's benefit: J\$3,500 is paid each week until the child is age 18; a lump sum of J\$30,000 is paid if the deceased mother was not eligible for a pension.

Funeral grant: A lump sum of J\$60,000 is paid to the person who meets all or part of the cost of the funeral. The funeral grant is normally not paid for a death occurring abroad.

Administrative Organization

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

Sickness and Maternity

Regulatory Framework

First and current laws: 1965 (national insurance), with amendments; and 2003 (national health insurance).

Type of program: Social insurance system. Cash maternity benefits and medical benefits.

Coverage

Cash maternity benefits: Female employees aged 18 or older who are residents of Jamaica.

Exclusions: Self-employed women.

Medical benefits: All residents of Jamaica.

Source of Funds

Insured person: See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above.

Self-employed person: None for cash maternity benefits.

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

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

Medical benefits are financed mainly from general taxation, with a small portion financed through cost-sharing copayments. The complementary universal National Health Fund is financed by a percentage of the total contributions made to the social insurance program and by earmarked taxes on tobacco and alcohol. The National Insurance Gold program for social insurance pensioners is funded by contributions made to the social insurance program only.

Qualifying Conditions

Cash sickness benefits: No statutory benefits are provided.

Cash maternity benefits: The insured must have at least 26 weeks of paid contributions in the 52 weeks before the expected date of childbirth.

Medical benefits: Must be a resident of Jamaica.

Sickness and Maternity Benefits

Sickness benefit: No statutory benefits are provided.

Maternity benefit: The benefit is equal to the national minimum weekly wage and is paid for 8 weeks.

The national minimum weekly wage is J\$4,070.

Workers' Medical Benefits

Medical care is provided free or at a nominal cost in public dispensaries and hospitals. The National Health Fund provides universal complementary coverage for prescription drugs for some chronic illnesses.

A complementary health insurance program, National Insurance Gold, offers additional health coverage for social insurance pensioners.

Dependents' Medical Benefits

Medical care is provided free or at a nominal cost in public dispensaries and hospitals. The National Health Fund provides universal complementary coverage for prescription drugs for some chronic illnesses.

A complementary health insurance program, National Insurance Gold, offers additional health coverage for social insurance pensioners.

Administrative Organization

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

Work Injury

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1938 (workmen's compensation).

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

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Coverage

Employees aged 18 to 70 (men) or aged 18 to 65 (women).

Exclusions: Household workers, unpaid family labor, self-employed persons, and Jamaica Defense Force personnel.

Source of Funds

Insured person: None.

Self-employed person: Not applicable.

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

Government: None; contributes as an employer.

Qualifying Conditions

Work injury benefits: There is no minimum qualifying period.

Temporary Disability Benefits

The weekly benefit is J\$2,500 and is paid after a 3-day waiting period, for up to 52 weeks.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Permanent disability pension: If the insured has an assessed degree of disability of at least 10%, a basic weekly benefit of between J\$250 and J\$2,500 is paid.

The maximum benefit is paid with an assessed degree of disability of 100%.

The disability is assessed by a medical board or medical appeal tribunal.

Workers' Medical Benefits

Benefits include necessary medical, surgical, and rehabilitative treatment; appliances; hospitalization; and drugs.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor benefit: A lump sum of J\$150,000 is paid to a widow(er) of any age; in the absence of a widow(er), to the guardian of the deceased's children or a dependent mother aged 55 or older. If there is more than one child, the amount is split equally.

Funeral grant: A lump sum of J\$50,000 is paid to the person who pays for all or part of the funeral. The funeral grant is normally not paid for a death occurring abroad.

Administrative Organization

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

Family Allowances

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1941.

Current law: 2001.

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 allowances: Children younger than age 18, pregnant women, and nursing mothers. (Social assistance is also provided to persons older than age 60 or disabled, see Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above.)

Benefits for school-age children are conditional on maintaining an 85% attendance level at school.

Benefits for pregnant women and nursing mothers are conditional on maintaining regular visits to health centers.

Family Allowance Benefits

Family allowances: Each eligible family member receives J\$650 a month.

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.

Administrative Organization

Public Assistance Division of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (<http://www.mlss.gov.jm/pub/index.php>) assesses eligibility and administers social assistance benefits as part of the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH).