

# **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** Does the pandemic qualify everyone to apply?

**A:** Anyone can apply for benefits, but it does not necessarily mean they are eligible to receive benefits.

PUA requires individuals to meet one of the following circumstances and prove recent attachment to work or self-employment:

- The individual has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or is experiencing symptoms and is seeking medical diagnosis;
- A member of the individual's household has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- The individual is providing care for a family member or member of the household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- A child or other person in the household for which the individual has primary caregiving responsibility is unable to attend school or another facility is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 emergency, and the school or care is required for the individual to work;
- The individual is unable to reach the place of employment because of a COVID-19 quarantine;
- The individual is unable to reach the place of employment because a health care professional has advised him or her to self-quarantine due to COVID-19 concerns;
- The individual was scheduled to commence employment and does not have a job or is unable to reach the job as a direct result of COVID-19;
- The individual has become the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19;
- The individual has quit his/her job as a direct result of COVID-19;
- The individual's place of employment is closed as a direct result of COVID-19

**Q:** What information does a claimant need to apply for PUA?

**A:** (1) social security number, date of birth and driver's license or state ID number; (2) name, address, telephone number, and valid email address; (3) name, address, telephone number and dates of employment for 2019; (4) reason for unemployment; and, (5) Dependent information (Spouse or Children), including social security number and date of birth (6) banking information for direct deposit

**Q:** How much money can I expect to see?

**A:** The benefit amount will be similar to traditional unemployment benefits plus an additional \$600 per week. PUA benefits are calculated according to earnings/wages. Total wages earned for tax year 2019 will be divided by the number of weeks worked to determine the weekly benefit amount. (Benefit may be increased based on dependent allowances). If the weekly benefit amount when calculated is less than \$189.00, the individual receives the federal minimum of \$189.

**Q:** When can claimants begin to apply for PUA?

- A:** We are creating a new system that people can use to apply for benefits. We expect it to be operational in mid-May; however, step 1 of the registration process will be in place Friday, April 24, 2020.
- Q:** Are payments retroactive?
- A:** Yes. Please be assured that your benefits will be retroactive to the date that you became eligible but not earlier than February 2, 2020. Note that the additional \$600 per week is available from March 29 through July 25, 2020.
- Q:** Do they receive the \$600 starting on week 1?
- A:** The earliest week available for the \$600 will be for the week ending on April 5th. This is dependent on eligibility.
- Q:** Are these unemployment benefits extended to non-US citizen?
- A:** Yes, if they have the proper work authorization. This will be verified.
- Q:** For Self-employed, what evidence is needed to prove eligibility?
- A:** Individuals must submit their 2019 tax returns. If they have not completed their 2019 tax returns, they must submit evidence of income such as 1099 or pay stubs, etc.
- Q:** Will the \$600 be direct deposited or will checks be sent?
- A:** Benefits will be sent via direct deposit or bank debit card depending on what the claimant selects.
- Q:** With the tax deadline being pushed back, how would we proceed if they have not filed taxes for 2019 yet?
- A:** Individuals must submit their 2019 tax returns. If they have not completed their 2019 tax returns, they must submit evidence of income such as, but not all inclusive 1099, quarterly reports, general ledger, invoices, cancelled checks, W2s or pay stubs, etc.
- Q:** Self-employed individuals can also qualify for SBA PPP loan. How does this differ from an unemployment claim?
- A:** PUA is an individual benefit and is not representative of PPP (small business)
- Q:** Are there limits on how long you had to work in the state to receive the benefits?
- A:** No. What is required is proof of a recent attachment to work or self-employment.
- Q:** What if the person has worked in multiple states? He/she will have multiple W2?
- A:** Yes. Tax records or W2s be needed for in state and out of state employment.
- Q:** I have a claimant that is working part-time but was laid off from another job. Can they still file a claim?

**A:** Yes, they can file a claim. They will need to provide information about all employment including current employer. Depending on the hours and dollar amount of earning from the second employer, they may or may not be eligible for benefits at this time. A determination on their eligibility will be issued.

**Q:** For those who were separated from one job but still have another part-time job and are continuing to work there, do we list the information from the business they were separated from? and does that affect the weekly certifications?

**A:** Yes, document the employer where they were most recently let go. Their other wages will be collected through the initial claims full application / claims process which offers a more detailed request for information.

They will also be required to report their earnings from the second job each week on their weekly certification form. Those earning will impact the amount of benefits they are entitled to receive.

**Q:** What if the applicant was on a leave of absence (LOA) before their term date?

**A:** The individual is still able to file a claim. However, they must be unemployed for a COVID 19 reason.

**Q:** What about international students relying on part time jobs?

**A:** Anyone is allowed to apply for benefits. The state will determine their eligibility. The student would have to have the proper work authorization to receive benefits and this data is validated with Homeland Security before benefits will be paid.

**Q:** A student who has completed education and was looking for job but cannot because of COVID. Can they be given PUA?

**A:** They can apply; however, the individual must show that they were attached to work in order to qualify. They should file their claim to determine their eligibility for PUA.

**Q:** If you are an international student do they have to provide a copy of work visa?

**A:** Yes, anyone who is not a US Citizen will be required to provide information regarding their authorization to work. This information will be validated with Department of Homeland Security before an individual is determined to be eligible for draw benefits.

**Q:** Does sick pay equal wages?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** What if the claimant has two employers? Did they need to file two claims?

**A:** No, they should not file two claims, but they should report both employers when filing

**Q:** How does the claimant ensure they keep receiving benefits?

- A:** Much like UI, the claimant will need to certify each week they are collecting PUA. They must certify that they are able and available for work.
- Q:** Will the additional 13 weeks of PUA be automatically added to a claim if the claimant exhausts regular UI benefits?
- A:** No. For those who qualify for regular unemployment benefits, it will not be automatic. Individuals who exhaust their maximum 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits after March 29 OR who were not eligible for regular UI will be able to apply for PUA for up to 13 weeks of additional payments.
- Q:** Where to claimants go to file for PUA?
- A:** <https://unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/expandedeligibility/>
- Q:** How do claimants get notified of PUA?
- A:** PUA will be advertised in social media and announced on the ODJFS web page.
- Q:** Will federal taxes and child support be withheld?
- A:** Yes.