



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 2, 2020**

## **L&I Reminds Eligible Pennsylvanians to Apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Benefits**

**Harrisburg, PA** – If you're self-employed, an independent contractor, gig worker, or someone not normally eligible for regular unemployment compensation (UC) and haven't yet applied for benefits under Pennsylvania's Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program, the Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) is reminding you to submit your application at [www.uc.pa.gov/PUA](http://www.uc.pa.gov/PUA).

L&I's new PUA website, [which launched its application phase April 18](#), is expected to be fully operational by the end of next week or earlier. Individuals who already applied can soon file their weekly claims for which they should be paid approximately two to three days later if there are no issues to resolve. Eligible Pennsylvanians who already submitted their applications have taken that important first step which puts them in a position to file weekly claims as soon as the system is fully active.

PUA applicants will soon be able to file for all weeks, including those dating back to the first week of unemployment. If approved, you will receive in one lump sum the backdated payments to January 27, 2020 or the first week you were unable to work due to COVID-19 (whichever of the two dates is later.)

Additionally, when you begin receiving PUA payments, you will **automatically** receive an extra \$600 per week through the [Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation \(FPUC\)](#) program. FPUC payments are made separately from your regular PUA payments, and should generally be in your account a week after you receive your PUA payment. FPUC benefits are for the week ending April 4, 2020 through the week ending July 25, 2020. These payments will also be paid in one lump sum for any backdated weeks.

Even if you soon return to work as part of [Pennsylvania's yellow phase reopening](#), you will still be able to claim and receive backpay if your PUA application is approved. Individuals who return to work part time must report their weekly earnings when claiming weekly benefits, and those who return full time may simply stop filing. Claims can be reopened at a later date if your employment situation changes.

Since March 15, more than 1.7 million Pennsylvanians have filed for regular UC and more than 136,000 have filed for PUA.

## Who Should File for PUA

Eligible individuals who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19, including:

- Self-employed;
- Independent contractors;
- Gig workers;
- People without sufficient work history to qualify for regular UC; and
- People who have exhausted regular UC or extended benefits.

## PUA Benefits

In general, PUA:

- Provides up to 39 weeks of unemployment benefits;
- May not be more than the state's maximum weekly benefit rate for regular UC of \$572;
- May not be less than \$195, which is half of the state's average weekly payment.
- Payments will be backdated to January 27, 2020 or the first week you were unable to work due to COVID-19 (whichever of the two dates is later); and
- Benefits will not be payable for weeks of unemployment ending after December 31, 2020.

## Information Needed to Show Previous Income

Acceptable documentation of wages earned or paid during calendar year 2019 can include, but is not limited to:

- 2019 tax returns;
- 2019 1099s
- Paycheck stubs;
- Bank receipts;
- Ledgers;
- Contracts;
- Invoices; and/or
- Billing statements.

## Learn More

Additional COVID-19 information from L&I:

- [PUA frequently asked questions](#)
- [L&I COVID-19 Info for Workers and Businesses](#)
- [Unemployment compensation](#)
- [Frequently asked questions](#)

Visit the commonwealth's [Responding to COVID-19 guide](#) for the latest guidance and resources for Pennsylvanians or the Pennsylvania Department of Health's dedicated coronavirus webpage for the [most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19](#).