**GENERAL STATEMENT**

The [federal CARES Act](https://www.uc.pa.gov/COVID-19/CARES-Act/Documents/Federal%20CARES%20Act_Assistance%20Definitions_Final%204.9.20.pdf)was signed into law March 27, 2020. The Act provides enhanced Unemployment Compensation (UC) benefits and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) for Pennsylvanians.

This new law provides:

* Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) - Additional Benefits
* ​​Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) - Additional $600 per week, on top of regular benefits, to all UC recipients
* Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) - Self-Employed, Contractors, Clergy and those working for religious organizations.
* Extended eligibility for individuals who have traditionally been ineligible for UC benefits (e.g., self-employed workers, independent contractors)

​ **Please refer to below pdf flow chart:**

<https://www.uc.pa.gov/COVID-19/CARES-Act/Documents/FederalCaresAct_Porcess4.17.20_FINAL.pdf>

**Order of unemployment benefits payment is mandated by the federal government, not by the state of PA.  Basically:**

* Regular unemployment benefits **MUST** come first.  A person cannot choose to be paid any other benefit type if that person qualifies for regular UC.

* When a person exhausts UC, they will be eligible for 13 weeks of **Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC).**  This program is not available yet but will be soon AND will be retroactive.

* When **no more UC or PEUC exists**, then a person may possibly be eligible for**Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**.

* **If a PUA applicant is eligible for ANY regular UC payments he/she is NOT eligible for PUA.**

**If you are eligible for PUA, you may qualify to receive:**

* 26 weeks of PUA benefits
* An additional $600/week until July 25, 2020 (beginning April 4, 2020)
* An additional 13 weeks of benefits if you are still unemployed after 26 weeks

**PUA FAQ:**[**https://www.uc.pa.gov/COVID-19/CARES-Act/Pages/PUA-FAQs.aspx#**](https://www.uc.pa.gov/COVID-19/CARES-Act/Pages/PUA-FAQs.aspx)

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) information and filing:  <https://www.uc.pa.gov/unemployment-benefits/file/Pages/Filing-for-PUA.aspx>

**Apply for PUA**

​An application specific for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims is available at <https://pua.benefits.uc.pa.gov/vosnet/default.aspx>  For additional assistance in completing the application, please refer to the PUA Claimant Guide located on the same webpage.

Make sure to review the [**PUA System Guide**](https://www.uc.pa.gov/unemployment-benefits/file/Documents/PUA%20System%20Guide%205.2020.pdf)for helpful information on what to have ready to prepare for registering and filing your initial claim. You’ll also want to collect proof of earnings documents in advance. Acceptable documentation of wages can include but is not limited to:

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| * ​2019 tax returns; * your 2019 1099 form(s); * paycheck stubs; * bank receipts; | * ledgers; * contracts; * invoices; and/or * billing statements. |

You do NOT need a Personal Identification Number (PIN) with the PUA system, you will have the username and password that you create.

You will NOT receive a confirmation email after submitting your initial PUA claim, you can go into the PUA dashboard to see the claim.

You CAN manage everything through your PUA dashboard - check on your claim status, upload documents, see payment information, etc.

**Able and Available Requirement**

An individual satisfies the able and available provisions by certifying each week that he or she is not able or available to work because one of the COVID-19 related reasons listed in section 2102(a)(3)(A)(ii)(I) of the CARES Act, but he or she would otherwise be available.

For a list of COVID-19 related reasons, please refer to the answer to “How do I know if I am eligible for PUA?” question in the frequently asked questions on our website at: [https://www.uc.pa.gov/COVID-19/CARES-Act/Pages/PUA-FAQs.aspx#](https://www.uc.pa.gov/COVID-19/CARES-Act/Pages/PUA-FAQs.aspx)

**Am I Eligible for PUA?**

​You may be eligible for **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)** if you are self-employed, do not have sufficient work history to qualify for regular UC, or have exhausted your rights to regular UC benefits or extended benefits.

You may be eligible for PUA even if you have never worked before **AND**

* you were scheduled to commence employment and do not have a job or are unable to reach the job as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency; **OR**
* your job offer was rescinded because of COVID-19; **OR**
* you have become the breadwinner or major supporter for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19.

PUA provides up to 39 weeks of benefits to covered individuals who are not eligible for regular UC and who are otherwise able and available to work except that they are unemployed, partially employed, or because of any one of the following COVID-19-related reasons:

* You have been diagnosed with or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are seeking a medical diagnosis;

* A member of your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

* You are providing care for a family member or a member of your household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

* Your child or other person in the household for whom you are the primary caregiver is unable to attend school or another facility that is closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that school or facility care is required for you to work;

* You are unable to reach your place of employment because of a quarantine or stay-at-home order due to the COVID-19 pandemic;

* You are unable to reach your place of employment because you have been advised by a health care provider to self-isolate or quarantine because you are positive for or may have had exposure to someone who has or is suspected of having COVID-19;

* You were scheduled to start a new job and do not have an existing job or are unable to reach the job as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

* You have become the breadwinner/major supporter for a household because the head of your household has died as a direct result of COVID-19;

* You had to quit your job due to being diagnosed with COVID-19 and being unable to perform your work duties;

* Your place of employment is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

An application specific for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims is available at <https://www.uc.pa.gov/unemployment-benefits/file/Pages/Filing-for-PUA.aspx>, select "[File for PUA](https://www.uc.pa.gov/unemployment-benefits/file/Pages/Filing-for-PUA.aspx)."

A PUA handbook is available and contains instructions on your weekly filing requirement and other useful claims information.  You may view this handbook online.  <https://www.uc.pa.gov/unemployment-benefits/file/Pages/Filing-for-PUA.aspx>

**Base Year for PUA**

The base period to be used to determine PUA is the most recent tax year, which is calendar year 2019.

**Employee (W-2) and Independent Contractor (1099/Schedule C)**

If someone worked as an employee and received a W-2 and also was an independent contractor, the individual must first file a UC claim and if not UC eligible then he/she should file a PUA claim.

**Filed for UC and Found Eligible**

If someone files for regular Unemployment and is found eligible, the UC claim must be exhausted or gone, and has no PEUC or State Extended Benefits (EB) eligibility or exhausted PEUC or EB, before a PUA claim can be filed.

**Filed for Regular UC and Has Not Received a Financial Determination & PIN**

If an individual files for regular UC, they must be notified of his/her UC eligibility (receive a financial determination) before they can file for PUA.  The PIN is not required for a PUA application. The PIN is for UC purposes only and does not apply to PUA.

**Full Time Employee and Cannot Work Second Gig Job**

If someone is still working full-time as an employee and cannot work his/her second gig job, the individual would need to file a UC claim first. There are base year wages that are covered for UC purposes. If not UC eligible then he/she should file a PUA claim.

**Regular UC Exhausted**

If you have exhausted your regular Unemployment Compensation, you would need to apply for Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC). That program allows for 13 weeks of entitlement at your regular UC Weekly Benefit Amount.  If the PUA program is available after PEUC has been exhausted and state Extended Benefits (EB) has not triggered on, you may be eligible for PUA.  In either case, should the you reach the Benefit Year End (BYE) date for the regular UC claim, you will be need to reapply for regular UC to see if you qualify for a new UC claim.

**School or Government Employee**

If the claimant answered YES to, “Have you worked for a school or government in the last 2 years?”, the application states not eligible for PUA.  If an individual had wages as an employee, the individual must file a regular UC claim first. If not eligible for regular UC, the individual can file a PUA claim.  Some government employees, for example, are appointed and are ineligible for UC.

**Americorps/Peace Corps Participants**

An individual participating in Americorps and Peace Corps who would not qualify for regular UC, whose volunteer site is closed down as a direct result of COVID-19, and who has suffered a loss of income is eligible for PUA.

**Family Business Owner**

If a claimant worked in or is part-owner of a family business, he/she and all members of the family business may be eligible for PUA benefits. This is not limited to the traditional family of husband, wife and children, but includes any family members related by blood, adoption or marriage who customarily work as a family unit. Minor children of a family often work in the family business or share in the profits of the family business and may also be entitled to PUA.

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**Filed for Traditional UC:  Independent Contractor**

The Department will review your claim using currently in place procedures for fact finding.  If an examiner’s determination is issued that you are ineligible, you may file a Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Claim.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) information and filing:  <https://www.uc.pa.gov/unemployment-benefits/file/Pages/Filing-for-PUA.aspx>

**Filed for Traditional UC:  Corp Officer/Self Employed**

If you filed a traditional unemployment claim and received a Notice of Financial Determination that you are financially ineligible, no further action is required.  You may file a Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Claim.

If you filed a traditional unemployment claim and received a Notice of Financial Determination that you are financially eligible based on wages earned as a corporate officer.  The Department will review your claim using currently in place procedures for fact finding.  If an examiner’s determination is issued that you are ineligible, you may file a Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Claim.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) information and filing:  <https://www.uc.pa.gov/unemployment-benefits/file/Pages/Filing-for-PUA.aspx>

**Financial Eligibility - Minimum Monetary Requirement**

There is no minimum monetary requirement for an individual in their base year to be eligible for PUA. However, base period wages are considered when calculating the individual’s Weekly Benefit Amount (WBA).  The base period to be used to determine PUA is the most recent tax year, which is CY 2019