

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

Maine Department of Labor
Implementation

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What is Pandemic Unemployment Assistance?

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) is a new federal program that the Maine Department of Labor is implementing for those who are not typically eligible for unemployment. This program runs through December 26, 2020.

The types of employment that PUA covers are:

- Self-employed workers
- Farmers/Fishermen
- Independent contractors
- Nonprofit employees not already covered by regular state unemployment benefits
- Gig economy workers
- Workers who do not have enough work history and earnings to be eligible for traditional unemployment benefits
- Others who have been determined ineligible for regular unemployment benefits

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Who is Covered by PUA?



COVID-19

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program Are you covered?

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) provides payment to workers not traditionally eligible for unemployment benefits (self-employed, independent contractors, workers with limited work history, and others) who are unable to work as a direct result of the coronavirus public health emergency.

COVID-19 SCENARIOS	COVERED	NOT COVERED
Diagnosed with COVID-19 or with COVID-19 symptoms and seeking diagnosis	✓	
Member of household has been diagnosed with COVID-19	✓	
Providing care for family or household member diagnosed with COVID-19	✓	
Primary caregiver for child unable to attend school or another facility closed due to COVID-19	✓	
Unable to reach place of employment due to an imposed quarantine or because advised by medical provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19	✓	
Scheduled to commence new employment and cannot reach workplace as direct result of COVID-19	✓	
Became major breadwinner because head of household died from COVID-19	✓	
Quit job as a direct result of COVID-19	✓	
Place of employment closed as a direct result of COVID-19	✓	
Self-employed / Independent Contractors / 1099 filers / Farmers – and affected by COVID-19	✓	
Seeking part-time employment but affected by COVID-19	✓	
With insufficient work history and affected by COVID-19	✓	
Otherwise not qualified for regular or extended UI benefits and affected by COVID-19	✓	
Individuals that can telework with pay		X
Individual receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits (regardless of meeting a category listed above)		X

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www.maine.gov/unemployment

The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available to people with disabilities upon request.

How is MDOL reaching out to potential PUA claimants?

Communication Campaign

- Press Releases and Interviews
- Social Media
- Website
- Outreach to and collaboration with associations and state agencies that have contact with the various populations that would benefit from the PUA program
- We will work with them to reach out to their memberships regarding the program and provide them the following;
 - ✓ information on the program
 - ✓ how to apply and
 - ✓ the documentation needed when we have the ability to intake the documentation.



Maine's Two-Phase Implementation Plan

Phase One – May 1st

- Programming changes to the ReEmployME system to facilitate a claim for PUA for the self employed.
- Maine will be making all claimants who file for PUA qualified for the minimum monetary eligibility.
- Claimants will initially receive \$172, which is 50% of the Average Weekly Benefit Amount.
- In addition, PUA claimants will also be eligible to receive an Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation payment of \$600 per week with each unemployment claim filed through July 25, 2020.



Maine's Two-Phase Implementation Plan (continued)

Streamlining the process for the following populations:

- Claimants who have filed for regular Unemployment Insurance and deemed monetarily ineligible.
- Claimants identified as disqualified for standard Unemployment Insurance.
- MDOL will notify claimants via email and USPS mail in regards to filing their weekly claim.

Facilitation of Payment As Quickly As Possible

- Payment will occur through the method of payment identified by the claimant when the claim was filed – either direct deposit or bank card.
- MDOL will be doing an automatic reach back to March 15, 2020 which correlates to the date that the Governor declared a State of Emergency.

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Phase Two – End of May

- In order to get the maximum PUA benefits to all PUA claimants, the department will also be implementing the capability to download federal income tax documents that define their net income via ReEmployME.
- The application will intake that documentation, validate first and last name, Social Security Number, and net income from the appropriate Schedule, W-2 or 1099 downloaded and then archive the documentation being provided.
- The department will intake this information and determine if a claimant is eligible for additional PUA benefits and make a retroactive redetermination to their PUA Weekly Benefit Amount.



Next Steps

If you haven't filed yet, what are your next steps?

- Create an account on ReEmployME at the following link:
www.maine.gov/unemployment
- Verify your email – this is a separate step after updating your profile
- Set up direct deposit – it is a faster payment method than the debit card option
- File your claim
- Continue filing your weekly certification



Q & A

Q. When should I send in my federal tax documents?

A. The Department will have your email address from your PUA claim and will email you when Phase II is implemented and outline what documentation we need and direct you to the URL we have setup up for the new web application.

Q. Can I send my documentation in now?

A. Please don't send in your documentation now. The purpose of implementing the solution in Phase II is to allow the most efficient and effective way for the department to get your documentation and facilitate determining if you are eligible for a higher PUA benefit.

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Q & A (continued)

Q. How is the Department going to know how to get hold of me to let me know when Phase II is implemented ?

A. We have your email address from your claim being filed. Be sure that you have completed the email verification link. We will be emailing you when the application is available and outline what documentation is needed and provide you the URL you need to click on to provide the necessary documentation.

Q. If I am eligible for PUA benefits, will I also get the \$600 Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) payment?

A. Yes. Anyone who receives at least \$1 each week in unemployment will also receive a \$600 FPUC payment. However, the \$600 FPUC program is only in effect through the claim week ending July 25, 2020. If you are still unemployed and filing benefit claims after that, you will only receive your “base” unemployment benefit payment.

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For More Information:

Frequently asked questions,
instructions on how to apply, and
other resources can be found at:

www.maine.gov/unemployment/pua

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