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CONTINUED ASSISTANCE FOR UNEMPLOYED WORKERS ACT OF 2020 FAQs

What benefits extensions are available through the new COVID-19 relief package?

Under the new COVID-19 relief package, federal unemployment benefits, including Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) have been extended for 11 weeks until March 14, 2021.

In order to receive the extended benefits, claimants must continue to certify every week. There is no need to reapply or contact DOL unless your benefit year has come to an end or you are told to submit a new application. New Yorkers can certify online at labor.ny.gov/signin or through our automated phone system by calling **1-888-581-5812** for Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims or **1-833-324-0366** for PUA claims.

How many weeks of PUA benefits can I receive?

PUA is now available through March 14, 2021 or for a total of 57 weeks of benefits, whichever comes first.

The program also now includes a phase out period – this means if you are receiving PUA benefits and have not used all 57 weeks as of March 14, 2021, you can continue receiving benefits until either you have used all 57 weeks or reach the week ending April 11, 2021, whichever comes first.

How do I submit additional documentation for new or continued PUA eligibility?

Federal law states that new PUA claimants who apply after January 31, 2021 must provide employment documentation within 21 days of submitting their application. New Yorkers who applied for PUA prior to January 31, 2021 will be required to provide this documentation by March 27, 2021 to continue receiving PUA benefits.

We are currently awaiting additional details from US DOL on what documents will be required and how they should be submitted. We will contact everyone impacted by this change in federal law with additional details.

In addition, everyone receiving PUA must continue to submit weekly certifications confirming they are still experiencing a COVID-19-related reason for unemployment.

How many weeks of PEUC are now available?

Originally, PEUC provided 13 additional weeks of benefits after an individual used all 26 weeks of state unemployment insurance benefits. The original PEUC program expired on December 27, 2020. The program has now been extended through March 14, 2021 and increased to provide a total of 24 weeks of additional benefits.

The program also now includes a phase out period – this means if you are receiving PEUC benefits as of March 14, 2021 and have not used all 24 weeks of benefits, you will be able to receive benefits until you have used all 24 weeks or reach the week ending April 11, 2021, whichever comes first.

What should I do if I am receiving benefits through the Extended Benefits (EB) program, but I am now eligible for PEUC benefits again?

Claimants who are currently receiving EB will not be able to receive PEUC until they exhaust their EB benefits. After you have received all 20 weeks of benefits from the EB program, continue to certify if you are still out of work and you will automatically transition to receive the PEUC benefits you are entitled to.

Please note: as of December 2020, EB currently provides 20 weeks of additional benefits, but this may change if New York's unemployment rate declines. We will provide additional information if that happens.

What should I do if I have already exhausted my eligible PUA or UI benefits, including benefits through the extension programs PEUC and EB?

Claimants who exhausted the PUA or UI benefits (including PEUC and EB) available before this 11-week extension and remain unemployed should submit their weekly certification and will begin receiving PUA or PEUC benefits again. When you certify, you will be asked about your "break in claims" – answer whether you returned to work since you last certified to receive the benefits for which you are eligible for moving forward.

Please note:

1. If your benefit year (the 52-week period starting when you first received benefits) has ended, you can reapply for benefits. The best way to apply is online at unemployment.labor.ny.gov.
2. If you have already exhausted your PUA or UI benefits (including PEUC and EB), federal law provides that you can only receive benefits for weeks ending on or after January 3, 2021. No retroactive benefits will be paid.

Are additional Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) benefits available through the new COVID-19 relief package? If so, when will I begin to receive these payments?

Yes - FPUC benefits have been extended. Starting the week ending January 3, 2021, New Yorkers receiving unemployment benefits will receive an additional \$300 weekly payments. Under federal law, these payments will last for 11 weeks, until the week ending March 14, 2021.

To receive FPUC benefits, claimants must be eligible for and receive state unemployment insurance, Shared Work benefits, PUA, PEUC, or EB benefits. New Yorkers will begin receiving FPUC benefits the week of January 3, 2021 – the first week these benefits can be paid under federal law.

Are FPUC benefits available for the benefit weeks of July 27, 2020 to January 2, 2020?

No. Under federal law, FPUC benefits cannot be paid retroactively for those weeks – they can only be paid starting the week ending January 3, 2021.

What should I do when I get to the end of the new federal extensions?

If you are still unemployed after you exhaust the additional 11 weeks of benefits, we recommend that you continue to submit weekly certifications. This will help the DOL provide you with retroactive benefits faster if these programs are subsequently extended or the federal government creates new benefit programs. Please note, you will not receive additional benefits until the federal government extends or creates programs you are eligible for. If that happens, we will contact you.

Does the new COVID-19 relief package have any impact on pending Lost Wages Assistance payments?

The new COVID-19 relief package ends the Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) program for all claims filed on or after December 27, 2020. Eligible New Yorkers whose claims are being adjudicated may still qualify for backdated LWA payments. As a reminder, the LWA program provided an additional \$300 in enhanced benefits for New Yorkers who were unemployed and receiving benefits during the weeks ending August 2, 2020 through September 6, 2020.

Does the new COVID-19 relief package provide additional benefits to New Yorkers who were self-employed or freelancers, but subsidized those wages with UI-eligible employment?

Yes, this new stimulus package includes a program called Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC), which provides an additional federal benefit of \$100 per week to individuals who earned at least \$5,000 a year in self-employment income but are disqualified from receiving more substantial PUA benefits because they are also eligible for UI benefits. This \$100 weekly payment would be on top of both your UI benefits and the \$300 weekly FPUC payment.

New York State is currently assessing this portion of the package and is working with US DOL on implementing the program. We will provide updates when available.