

Mike DeWine, Governor

Kimberly Hall, Director

### Jobless Benefits for Ohioans Most Popular Questions

#### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI)

##### What does my claims status mean (allowed, pending or denied)?

- If your claim shows as "allowed" but your weeks are showing as "denied," you will need staff assistance. Please call (877) OHIO-JOB (1-877-644-6562) or TTY at (888) 642-8203.
- If your claim shows as "pending," this means we are still processing it, and there is nothing more you need to do. If you received a confirmation number, rest assured your claim is in process, and you will receive the full amount to which you are entitled.
- If your claim shows a determination of "0-0" while it is pending, this means we are still processing your claim, and there is nothing more you need to do. If you received a confirmation number, rest assured your claim is in process, and you will receive the full amount to which you are entitled.
- If your claim shows as "denied," each claim is different, but it could have been because you earned more money than your weekly benefit amount or because you did not select "yes" that you were physically able and available to work or.

When you file your weekly claims, be sure to confirm that you were available to work and physically able to work. Answering that you were unable to work because your place of business was closed due to COVID-19 is not what the question is asking. Selecting "No" to these questions may result in your weekly claims being denied. If you believe your claim was denied in error, you may file an appeal. Please see your determination letter for instructions on how to file an appeal.

- If when you submit a weekly claim you are asked to answer additional questions, please respond immediately as this will help expedite processing.

##### What does my payment status mean (paid, paid \$0, pending or break in claim)?

- If your payment shows as "**paid**" and a date is listed, this means you should receive payment in your account or on your debit card within 24 to 48 hours after that date.
- If your payment shows as "**paid**" and the amount is listed as \$0, this means you should receive payment in your account or on your debit card within 24 to 48 hours. Once the payment is finalized, the amount will be updated.
- If your payment shows as "**pending**," this means we are still processing it, and there is nothing more you need to do. If you received a confirmation number, rest assured your claim is in process, and you will receive the full amount to which you are entitled.
- If your payment shows as "**break in claim**," you need staff intervention. Please call (877) OHIO-JOB (1-877-644-6562) or TTY at (888) 642-8203.

## **When will I receive my first payment?**

Your first payment will begin processing after a) you receive your eligibility determination AND b) you file your first weekly claim. We are working as quickly as possible to process a record number of claims. Currently, we are at least one week behind schedule in payment distribution. Each claim is important to us, and we understand the urgency of providing you with the resources you need to support your family. Please note:

- All benefits will be retroactive to the date you became eligible. If your claim is identified as needing to be backdated, you will receive an email with more information.
- Any delays in processing will not affect your total benefit amount.
- For fastest payment processing, choose direct deposit.

## **Why was my application denied?**

Each claim is different, but sometimes unemployment applications are denied because the applicant didn't earn at least \$269 in the "base period" of their claim. This a requirement for traditional state unemployment benefits. If you believe your application was denied in error, you may file an appeal. Please read your determination letter for instructions on how to do so. In addition, even if you are ineligible for traditional unemployment, you may be eligible for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program offered through the federal CARES Act.

Visit [unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/expandedeligibility](http://unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/expandedeligibility) for updates.

## **Why was my weekly claim denied?**

Each claim is different, but sometimes weekly claims are denied because the individual was not mentally or physically able or available to work, or earned more money than their weekly benefit amount. If received a determination letter stating that your weeks were denied and you believe your claim was denied in error, you may file an appeal. Please see your determination letter for instructions on how to appeal. If you did not receive a determination letter and your weeks were denied, your claim needs staff assistance. Please call (877) OHIO-JOB (1-877-644-6562) or TTY at (888) 642-8203.

## **What is being done for unemployed individuals who still cannot access unemployment? Phones (when the only option is to call) and website are not working.**

We apologize for your difficulties. The high claims volume has slowed processing times, but our unemployment team is working hard to process claims and distribute payments as quickly as possible. They are adding more customer service representatives and have expanded call center hours to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sundays. In addition, all benefits will be retroactive to the date claimants became eligible.

Please know that each claim is important to us. We understand the frustration the website and call center issues have caused during what is already a stressful time. We also understand the urgency of providing Ohioans with the resources they need to support their families. We are grateful for everyone's patience as we build our capacity to process this unprecedented number of claims and assist all the Ohioans who need help.

## **It looks like I have a new correspondence in my account. Why can't I open it?**

It may take 24 hours before you can view some correspondence. Typically, you will be able to view it once you receive an email notification that the correspondence is available. However, the high claims volume has caused delays in correspondence processing, and our system has sometimes generated email notifications before correspondence was available to view.

Additionally, if you have a correspondence that says it is a request for information, you will not be able to open it if the deadline for responding has passed.

## **Will the additional \$600 a week offered through the CARES Act be issued as part of my regular benefits, or separately?**

The additional \$600 a week will be paid via a separate weekly payment and will appear on your pay stubs with the designation "FAC". The first payment will include any retroactive payments for which you may be eligible, dating as far back as March 29.

This supplemental payment is known as Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC) and is available through July 25, 2020. It will be applied to multiple programs, including but not limited to regular unemployment benefits, PUA benefits, Trade benefits, and SharedWork Ohio benefits.

## **Do I need to apply for the additional \$600 a week offered through the CARES Act?**

No. There is nothing additional that is needed from you to receive the supplemental \$600 per week. It is paid automatically until July 25. The first payment will include any retroactive payments for which you may be eligible, dating as far back as March 29.

## **PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE (PUA)**

### **Who is eligible to receive benefits through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program offered through the federal CARES Act?**

To be eligible for PUA, the individual must NOT be eligible for regular unemployment benefits. Additionally, individuals must meet one of the following circumstances:

- 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 healthcare 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 was laid off as a direct result of COVID-19;
- The individual's place of employment is closed as a direct result of COVID-19

There is no minimum income requirement for PUA.

### **How do I apply for the PUA program?**

To pre-register for the PUA program, click [here](#). The pre-registration tool allows you to get in line early and pre-register your account, so that as soon as we launch our claims processing tool in mid-May, you can log in and complete your application.

All benefits will be retroactive to the date you became eligible, as far back as February 2, 2020. Note that the additional \$600 per week is available from March 29 through July 25, 2020.

### **Can I pre-register for PUA if I also have a pending application for regular unemployment compensation?**

Yes, even if you have a pending application for regular unemployment benefits, you still can pre-register for PUA. We recommend that you respond to the prompts as follows:

- If you believe you are potentially eligible for PUA, answer "Yes" when asked if you have previously submitted an unemployment application and "Yes" when asked if the claim was denied. This will lead you directly to the PUA eligibility questions.
- If you are unsure whether you will qualify for either program, answer "No" when asked if you have previously submitted an unemployment application. This will take you through the regular unemployment questions first. If you don't qualify for regular unemployment, you will be prompted to respond to the PUA questions.

### **How much money can I expect to receive through the PUA program?**

The benefit amount will be similar to traditional unemployment benefits plus an additional \$600 per week. (To calculate your estimated weekly payment, see page 19 of the [Worker's Guide to Unemployment Insurance](#).) Benefits will be retroactive to the date you became eligible, as far back as February 2, 2020. Note that the additional \$600 per week is available from March 29 through July 25, 2020.

### **Will the additional \$600 a week offered through the CARES Act be issued as part of my regular benefits, or separately?**

The additional \$600 a week will be paid via a separate weekly payment and will appear on your pay stubs with the designation "FAC". The first payment will include any retroactive payments for which you may be eligible, dating as far back as March 29.

This supplemental payment is known as Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC) and is available through July 25, 2020. It will be applied to multiple programs, including but not limited to regular unemployment benefits, PUA benefits, Trade benefits, and SharedWork Ohio benefits.

### **Will the additional 13 weeks of benefits offered through the CARES Act automatically be added?**

No, it will not be automatic, but you can easily apply. If your maximum 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits are about to expire, or if they previously expired after July 1, 2019, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will send you a written notice with instructions explaining how to apply.

### **Do I need to apply for the additional \$600 a week offered through the CARES Act?**

No. There is nothing additional that is needed from you to receive the supplemental \$600 per week. It is paid automatically until July 25. The first payment will include any retroactive payments for which you may be eligible, dating as far back as March 29.

### **What documents are required for me to apply for PUA benefits?**

Before you begin the PUA application process, please be sure to collect the following documents and information.

- Social security number, date of birth and driver's license or state ID number
- Name, address, telephone number, and valid email address
- Name, address, telephone number and dates of employment for 2019
- Reason for unemployment
- Dependent information (Spouse or Children), including social security number and date of birth
- Banking information for direct deposit

Self-employed individuals must submit acceptable proof of employment. This includes, but is not limited to, W-2 forms, recent pay stubs or vouchers, earnings statements (reflecting profit and loss), recent bank records showing payroll direct deposit, or a 2019 tax return, if available.