



Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services



PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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PROGRAM PURPOSE

On March 27, 2020, the President of the United States signed the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#) into law, which includes the Relief for Workers Affected by Coronavirus Act set out in Title II, Subtitle A. Section 2102 of the CARES Act created a new temporary federal program, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). Section 2102 of the CARES Act has since been amended on December 27, 2020, with the [Continued Assistance for Unemployed Workers Act of 2020 \(CAA\)](#), part of the [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021](#) and on March 11, 2021 with the [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 \(ARPA\)](#). PUA provides, in general, up to 79 weeks of unemployment benefits for unemployed individuals and funding to states for the administration of the program.

PUA is authorized by the rules set forth in the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) oversees the PUA program which is administered by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES).

Like Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA), the PUA program is an emergency program activated in response to a crisis and designed to provide benefits to certain individuals who are ineligible for or who have exhausted entitlement to regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) or Extended Benefits. PUA is also like DUA in that it has a defined assistance period and a set minimum weekly benefit amount (WBA) which is determined based on each state's WBA.

The federal regulations covering the DUA program can be found in the [Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 20, Part 625 \(20 CFR 625\)](#).

The purpose of this handbook is to inform you of your rights and responsibilities under PUA. You must follow the instructions in this handbook in order to qualify for PUA benefits.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

PUA was created specifically to address the nationwide COVID-19 pandemic as a temporary benefit for individuals who have exhausted their entitlement to regular unemployment insurance as well as coverage for individuals who are not eligible for regular UI (such as individuals who are self-employed or who have limited recent work history).

PUA is payable for weeks of unemployment, partial unemployment, or inability to work caused by one or more of the COVID-19 related reasons listed in the section below beginning on or after January 27, 2020. PUA is payable for eligible weeks of unemployment from February 2, 2020 through September 4, 2021.

More information regarding the PUA program is available at [des.az.gov/pua](#). Reemployment Assistance and services are also available to those who apply for PUA.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR PUA?

PUA provides benefits to covered individuals, as defined in Section 2102 of the CARES Act, who are not eligible for regular Unemployment Compensation, Extended Benefits (EB), or Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) Included are claimants who have exhausted all rights to or are not eligible for these benefits

To qualify for PUA as a covered individual, you must meet three conditions:

- 1 You must not qualify for or have exhausted all rights to regular UI, EB, PEUC, or any other unemployment compensation program under state or federal law
 - This can include individuals who are self-employed, seeking part-time employment, or lacking sufficient work history (meaning they did not have enough wages in covered employment during the last 18 months to establish a claim under regular UI)
- 2 You must self-certify that you are able to work and available for work except that you are unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work due to one of the COVID-19 reasons listed below This is a requirement of receiving PUA benefits and you will be asked to self-certify when you file your initial claim and again when you file your weekly certifications in the PUA portal
 - You have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are seeking a medical diagnosis For example:
 - This can include if you had to quit your job as a direct result of COVID-19 because you tested positive for the coronavirus or you were diagnosed with COVID-19 by a qualified medical professional, and continuing work activities, such as through telework, is not possible by virtue of such diagnosis or condition
 - This can also include if you had to quit your job due to direct contact with someone who tested positive for the coronavirus or has been diagnosed by a medical professional as having COVID-19, and you were required to resign from your position in order to quarantine on the advice of a qualified medical professional
 - A positive coronavirus test is not required to qualify for PUA Any diagnosis from a qualified medical professional, including one made via phone or telehealth, is also sufficient
 - A member of your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 For example:
 - A member of your household has been diagnosed by a medical professional with or tested positive for COVID-19 and you are unable to work as a result
 - You are providing care for a family member or a member of your household who has been diagnosed, by a qualified medical professional, with COVID-19

- “Providing care” for a family member or a member of your household means the provision of care requires such ongoing and constant attention that your ability to perform other work functions is severely limited
 - You are not eligible for PUA under this reason if your family member or member of your household is able to adequately care for themselves
- A child or other person in your household for which you have primary caregiving responsibility is unable to attend school or another facility that is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency and such school or facility care is required for you to work
 - “Primary caregiving responsibility” means you are required to remain at home to care for the child or other person in your household
 - This includes if your job allows for telework, but the provision of care to the child or other person requires such ongoing and constant attention that it is not possible for you to perform work at home
 - After the school year is originally scheduled to end, a school is no longer considered closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. However, if the facility that you rely on to provide summer care for a child is also closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, you may continue to qualify for PUA. For information regarding school reopenings, please refer to the [AZUI Returning to Work Guidance](#)
- You are unable to reach your place of employment because of a quarantine imposed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. For example:
 - You are unable to reach your place of employment because doing so would be in violation of a state or municipal order restricting travel that was instituted to combat the spread of COVID-19
- You are unable to reach your place of employment because you have been advised by a qualified medical professional to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19
 - You may also qualify if you are unable to reach the place of employment due to a stay-at-home, shelter-in-place, or other order that requires you to stay home in quarantine to reduce the spread of COVID-19
 - Regardless of the underlying reason for your increased risk for COVID-19, this section applies to all individuals who are advised by a medical professional to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19
 - Without having been advised by a medical professional to self-quarantine, an individual who does not go to work due to general concerns about exposure to COVID-19, and who does not meet any of the other COVID-19 related criteria for PUA, is not eligible for PUA
- You were scheduled to start 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

For example:

- You are unable to reach the offered job because doing so would require the violation of a state or municipal order restricting travel that was instituted to combat the spread of the coronavirus or the employer who offered the job has closed the place of employment
- You do not have a job because the employer with whom you were scheduled to begin employment has rescinded the job offer as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency
- You have become the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19 and you are now the person in the household expected to provide such financial support
- You had to quit your job as a direct result of COVID-19 For example:
 - You were diagnosed with COVID-19 by a qualified medical professional, and although you no longer have COVID-19, the illness caused health complications that render you objectively unable to perform your essential job functions
- Your place of employment is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency For example:
 - The business where you worked is closed due to an emergency declaration or due to necessary social distancing protocols
 - If the business where you worked has multiple parts and one or some of those parts is shut down due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19, you may be eligible for PUA if you worked for the part of the business that is shut down
 - If you are working reduced hours while your place of employment continues to operate, you are not eligible for PUA under this reason
 - If your place of employment was closed due to COVID-19 but has re-opened, you are no longer eligible for PUA, even if you were not offered to return to work
- You are self-employed (including an independent contractor and gig worker) and experienced a significant reduction of your customary or usual services because of the COVID-19 public health emergency
 - For example, if you are a driver for a ridesharing service who receives an IRS Form 1099 from the ride sharing service, you may not be eligible for PUA benefits under the other criteria outlined above, because you do not have a “place of employment,” and thus cannot claim that you are unable to work because your place of employment has closed However, you may still be able to apply for PUA as an independent contractor with reportable income

- If you work as an independent contractor with reportable income, you may qualify for PUA benefits if you have been forced to suspend operations as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, for instance if an emergency state or municipal order restricting movement makes continued operations unsustainable
- You were denied continued unemployment benefits because you refused to return to work or accept an offer of work at a worksite that, in either instance, is not in compliance with local, state, or national health and safety standards directly related to COVID-19 This includes but is not limited to, those related to facial mask wearing, physical distancing measures, or the provision of personal protective equipment consistent with public health guidelines
 - For example: You were laid off in June 2020 and began receiving regular UI You were recalled back to work in October 2020, however, because the worksite was not in compliance with the local mask mandate, you refused to return to work, and you were disqualified from continued receipt of regular UI under state law You may be eligible to apply for PUA under this COVID-19 related reason.
 - For example: You were laid off in October 2020 and began receiving regular UI You received a new job offer in January 2021; however, the new worksite was unsafe due to non-compliance with physical distancing measures under state law You were disqualified from continued receipt of regular UI under state law You may be eligible to apply for PUA under this COVID-19 related reason
- You were providing services to an educational institution or educational service agencies and you are unemployed or partially unemployed because of volatility in the work schedule that is directly caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency
 - If you do not have a contract or reasonable assurance:
 - If you are providing services to an educational institution or educational service agency and lack a contract or reasonable assurance and, as a result, is not subject to the “between and within terms” denial provisions and is not otherwise eligible for regular UI you may self-certify eligibility for PUA under this COVID-19 related reason
 - If you do not have a contract or reasonable assurance to return and you self-certify eligibility under this new COVID-19 related reason (or another COVID-19 related reason that is applicable to your situation), you may use wages from the educational institution to potentially qualify for a WBA that is higher than Arizona’s minimum PUA WBA
 - If you have a contract or reasonable assurance:

- You are generally not eligible for PUA if you have provided services to an educational institution or educational service agency, are filing for a week that is between or within terms, have a contract or reasonable assurance to return in the subsequent year or term, and, as a result, you are denied regular UI However, you may be eligible for PUA if you have other non-educational employment from which you are able to self-certify that you are unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work for a different COVID-19 related reason
- You are experiencing a reduction of hours or a temporary or permanent lay-off
 - If you are an employee and your hours have been reduced or you were laid off as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency
- Additionally, you may qualify for PUA if you meet any additional criteria established by the U S Secretary of Labor for unemployment assistance under Section 2102 of the CARES Act

PLEASE NOTE: Many of the qualifying circumstances described above are likely to be short-term

- For example, a school is not closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency after the date the school year was originally scheduled to end
- Similarly, if you were advised to self-quarantine by a qualified medical professional because of your exposure to a person who has tested positive for the coronavirus, you may be able to return to your place of employment within two weeks of the exposure if you have not exhibited symptoms of or tested positive for COVID-19

When completing the self-certification, you must acknowledge you understand that making this certification is under penalty of perjury; that intentional misrepresentation in self certifying is fraud; and that you may be subject to criminal prosecution if you are found to have committed fraud Additional information can be found at des.az.gov/pua

- 3 You must provide documentation of employment of self-employment, or planned commencement of employment or self-employment if you receive a payment of PUA on or after December 27, 2020 See the section below entitled “Documentation of Employment or Self-Employment, or Planned Commencement of Employment or Self-Employment” for details regarding this requirement

The Department will continue to apply their able, available, and actively seeking work standards Additional information can be found at des.az.gov/pua When you file for PUA during the Pandemic Assistance Period and you meet the eligibility requirements to qualify for any other UI benefits, your entitlement to PUA benefits will be suspended until you exhaust all your UI entitlement

WHEN AND WHERE TO FILE

Before applying for PUA, you should apply for regular Unemployment Insurance to determine if you are eligible for UI. If you are not eligible for regular UI and you believe you are entitled to PUA, you should file for PUA online at pua.azdes.gov and click on *File a PUA Claim*. If you have already filed a claim for regular UI and received a notice that you are not monetarily eligible, you will need to file for PUA separately using the link above.

The PUA portal accepts initial claims and documentation to establish your eligibility and weekly benefit amount for PUA. You will need to provide basic demographic information and the following for any and all employment from the most recent tax year that ended prior to your unemployment directly resulting from COVID-19, including self-employment and platform or “gig” work:

- Name and address of the employer(s) (if there was an employer other than yourself)
- Employer’s telephone number (optional if unknown)
- Your occupation, beginning date, and last date you worked for each individual/company
- Reason for separation (examples are layoff, furlough, quit, discharged/fired)

PROOF OF INCOME/WAGES – REQUIRED

Within 21 calendar days of filing your initial application for PUA, federal law **requires you to submit documentation to substantiate your wages earned from employment or net income earned from self-employment** during the most recent tax year that ended prior to the first week you certified that your unemployment was due to COVID-19.

Your wage information will be used to determine your PUA weekly benefit amount. Please prepare to provide documentation of any wages and/or self-employment. Acceptable documentation can include, but is not limited to:

- Tax Returns, including Schedule C (if completed);
- W2s or 1099s;
- Copies of paycheck stubs showing your earnings;
- Bank receipts showing deposits;
- Your business records, including: ledgers, invoices or billing notices you provided to your clients or customers, business licenses, business lease agreements and invoices, and advertisements for your business or services.

You do not need all documents listed above, only those relevant to your work history. Additionally, if you do not have any of the documents listed above, or those documents do not reflect your full income, you may submit copies of other documents that you believe would demonstrate your income. Note that documentation of income from self-employment must show **net** income, including any deductions. If you do not have sufficient wages or you do not provide proof of wages, and you are otherwise eligible, you will receive the minimum weekly benefit amount of \$117.

Proof may be submitted to this agency:

- Online (fastest option) by uploading the document(s) to your claimant portal
- By fax at the following numbers:
 - (602) 362-5391 (Phoenix)
 - (888) 417-3639 (Toll-Free)
 - Specify PUA on the cover page to expedite the proper routing of your documents and include your: name, address, and SSN. On the top of each page you submit, write your name and SSN

If you fail to follow these instructions, processing of your benefits may be delayed

DOCUMENTATION OF EMPLOYMENT OR SELF-EMPLOYMENT, OR PLANNED COMMENCEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT OR SELF-EMPLOYMENT

The Continued Assistance Act (CAA) requires that all claimants who receive a **PUA payment on or after December 27, 2020**, must submit documentation substantiating their prior employment or self-employment, or planned employment or self-employment at some point between the beginning of the most recent tax year that ended prior to the date they filed their initial PUA application and the date they became unemployed as a direct result of one of the COVID-19 reasons listed in Section 2102 of the CARES Act. For instance, claimants who filed an initial PUA application in 2021 should provide documentation from some point between January 1, 2020 and the date they filed their initial PUA application, and claimants who filed an initial PUA application in 2020 should provide documentation from some point between January 1, 2019 and the date they filed their initial PUA application.

Pursuant to the Federal law, failure to submit this documentation by the deadline below will result in your disqualification from PUA, and you will be required to repay any PUA benefits you received after December 26, 2020.

Deadline for Submitting Documentation

The deadline for submitting this documentation depends on the date you filed your initial PUA application:

- If you filed your initial application for PUA on or after January 31, 2021, you are required to submit documentation within 21 calendar days of your initial application date or the date DES notifies you of this requirement, whichever is later.
- If you filed your initial application for PUA before January 31, 2021, you are required to submit documentation within 90 calendar days of your application date or the date DES notifies you of this requirement, whichever is later.

Types of Acceptable Documentation

Proof of employment includes, but is not limited to:

- Paycheck stubs

- Earnings and leave statements showing the employer’s name and address
- W-2 forms

Proof of employment with organizations such as the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, and educational or religious organizations includes, but is not limited to:

- Documentation of your employment provided by the organization for which you worked
- Signed affidavits from people who can verify your attachment to the organization for which you worked

Proof of self-employment includes, but is not limited to:

- State or Federal employer identification numbers
- Business licenses
- Tax returns
- Business receipts
- Signed affidavits from people who can verify your self-employment

Proof of the planned commencement of employment may include, but is not limited to:

- Letters offering employment
- Statements or affidavits signed by individuals verifying an offer of employment, including the individual’s name and contact information

Proof of the planned commencement of self-employment may include, but is not limited to:

- Business licenses
- State or Federal employer identification numbers
- Written business plans
- Lease agreements

You do not need all of the documents listed above; only those relevant to your work history. Additionally, if you do not have any of the documents listed above, you may submit copies of other documents that you believe would demonstrate your prior employment or self-employment, or planned commencement of employment or self-employment. You do not need to submit documentation to cover the entire applicable tax year. You only need to submit documentation that demonstrates the existence of employment or self-employment at some point between the start of the applicable tax year and the date of filing your initial PUA application. The documents you submit will be evaluated by DES.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you move, you must report your new address as soon as possible. You can manage and update your address information directly by going to pua.azdes.gov. On your dashboard, go to the “My Personal Profile” section and select the “Update Contact Information” link to complete the information.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

In addition to filing an application for PUA, you may still be required to go in-person to an ARIZONA@WORK Job Center near you to register for work at www.azjobconnection.gov and for reemployment services

How to File for Weekly PUA Benefits

To file for weekly PUA benefits, you must:

- File online at pua.azdes.gov for each week of PUA benefits claimed
- You will have to file certifications for each week that you are claiming eligibility for benefits on the Sunday immediately following that week
- Certify each week for as long as you continue to claim and be eligible for benefits, generally up to 79 weeks of total benefits
- If you work or earn any money, you must report the total amount earned before deductions when you file your weekly claim. You must report any work you do during a week, even if you have not been paid at the time you file your weekly claim
- You must engage in a systematic and sustained effort to search for work, completing four qualifying work search activities on four different days of the week, and you will need to report your work search activities for each week you claim benefits
- You cannot file your next weekly continued claim until the prior week has ended
- If you file your initial PUA claim after the week in which you become unemployed, you will be provided with additional instructions for filing retroactive benefit weeks
- Be able and available for work. You are still considered able and available even if you are unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable/unavailable for work due to one of the COVID-19 reasons listed on pages 4-8 of this Handbook

Report All Work and Income from Employment/Self-Employment

Income includes but is not limited to:

- Payment Protection Program earnings
- Holiday pay
- Vacation pay
- Severance pay
- Tips

ACTIVELY SEEKING WORK

To be eligible for unemployment benefits each week, you must engage in a systematic and sustained effort to search for work by completing four work search activities on **four different days of the week**. If you file a weekly claim and do not complete a sufficient search for work, Arizona law requires that you be **disqualified from receiving benefits until you have returned to work and earned eight times your weekly benefit amount**.

When you file your weekly claim, you will be presented with a work search screen which will allow you to enter the work search activities you completed during the week for which you are filing. Work search can and should include a mixture of activities. DES may audit your work search submissions for up to two years from your claim effective date to check that you met all eligibility requirements for each week you claimed benefits, so keep records and details of your submitted work search activities that can be shared upon DES' request.

The list below includes examples of valid job contacts:

- Applying for a job with former employers;
- Applying for a job with employers who have or may reasonably be expected to have openings suitable to you;
- Making contacts or in-person visits to employers that have, or are reasonably expected to have, job openings;
- Responding to appropriate "want ads" for work which appears suitable to you;
- Going on interviews with employers (virtually or in-person);
- Registering and continuing active checking with your union hiring or career placement facility;
- Registering with a career placement facility connected with a professional organization in your field;
- Registering with a job placement facility of a school, college, or university;
- Registering for suitable work with a private employment agency or an employer's placement facility;
- Registering with a temporary work agency;
- Applying for or taking an exam for an opening in government civil service;
- Creating a reemployment plan;
- Creating a resume;
- Uploading a resume to online job boards;
- Registering for work with Arizona Job Connection (AJC);
- Documented use of online career tools;
- Logging on and looking for work in AJC or another online job matching system;
- Using reemployment services at an ARIZONA@WORK location, or completing similar online or self-service activities (e.g. obtaining and using labor market and career information, participating in skills assessment for occupational matching, instructional workshops, or other specialized activities);
- Following through on job referrals or job development attempts;
- Applying for and/or participating in employment and training services provided by partner programs at an ARIZONA@WORK location;
- Creating a personal user profile on a professional networking site;

- Participating in work-related networking events (e.g. job clubs, job fairs, industry association events, networking groups, etc.);
- Any other action the Department determines to constitute an effective means of seeking work suitable to you

In addition to the above, the following are acceptable work search activities if you were self-employed prior to your unemployment that was a direct result of one of the COVID-19 reasons listed in Section 2102 of the Coronavirus Aid and Relief (CARES) Act:

- Reporting documented efforts to expand your business beyond the services typically performed, including attending a webinar or workshop to develop business-related skills or to learn a new marketable trade;
- Reporting documented efforts to market your business to new and reasonably available customers, including submitting bids or proposals or making cold calls to former or potential clients;
- Accessing small business services with the Arizona Commerce Authority

INDIVIDUALS NOT COVERED

Individuals who can telework with pay and choose not to work are not eligible for PUA. However, individuals who telework less than their customary work week may still be eligible for PUA. Additionally, if domestic violence, sexual violence, or stalking prevents you from teleworking and you are not eligible for regular UI, you may be eligible to receive PUA.

ONLINE REGISTRATION

During online registration, you must establish a Username and Password. You must remember your Username and Password to use each time you claim benefits by telephone or online.

Warning: Your Username/Password has the same legal authority as your signature. Protect these security measures and do not share them with anyone. If you believe someone knows your information or accessed your file, you must immediately contact the UI Call Center at 1-877-600-2722.

DEBIT CARD OR DIRECT DEPOSIT

Benefit payments will be made through debit card or direct deposit. If you select to receive your benefits on a debit card, you will receive your debit card in the mail shortly after you file your claim. It will have instructions on how to activate the card. You may inquire about the balance on your debit card without a charge by contacting the customer service center listed on the card.

If you have problems with the debit card, contact Comerica Bank at 1-833-915-4041. DES does not have access to your debit card account balance and cannot answer questions about disputed charges. If you have questions about your statement, please contact Comerica Bank.

You will need your bank's routing number and your account number in order to set up direct deposit through the PUA portal. You can manage and update your direct deposit information directly by going to pua.azdes.gov and click on the "File for PUA" link. From your dashboard, go to the "My Personal Profile" section and select the "Update Banking Information" link. If you use direct deposit, be sure to check your balance each week to determine when your benefits have been paid.

PUA WEEKLY BENEFIT AMOUNT

PUA is payable to you for a week of unemployment only if you are not entitled to benefits from any other unemployment program.

The PUA WBA is computed according to the same formula used in Arizona UI Law to compute UI weekly benefit amounts under the regular UI program. Special rules apply to the method used to calculate the PUA WBA for certain individuals. (See page 16, Special Rules for Computing the Weekly PUA Benefit Amount.)

If you claim a week during which you were employed less than full-time, your weekly PUA amount payable may be reduced by the income or wages you earned in that week, regardless of when you received this income. You may earn up to \$30.50 in a week without affecting your WBA. If you earn over \$30.50 in a week, the Department will deduct each dollar in earnings over that amount from your WBA.

The maximum weekly amount of PUA payable must be reduced by the amount of certain types of benefits you qualify to receive, or would receive, if you took all procedural steps necessary under the law, contract, or policy to receive this payment:

- A supplemental unemployment benefit (SUB) payment pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement;
- Any worker's compensation by virtue of the death of the head of your household as the result of the pandemic, prorated by weeks, if you have become the head of your household and are seeking suitable work; and
- The prorated amount of any retirement pension or annuity under a public or private retirement plan or system to the extent they would be deducted from regular unemployment compensation.

Deductions

- **Pensions and annuities** are subject to the pension deduction provisions of Section 625.13 of the Federal DUA Regulations and Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) 23-791 of the Arizona UI Law. If you are receiving pensions and annuities that would be deductible from regular UI benefits under Arizona UI Law, they will be deductible from weekly PUA in the same manner. Examples of the most common deductible pensions and annuities include:
 - a. State and local government pensions
 - b. Federal Civil Service pensions

c Military retirement pensions

If you become eligible for an additional pension or annuity, or should the amount of the current pension or annuity change, this new amount must be reported immediately

- PUA benefits are included in your gross income for federal income tax purposes and subject to federal income tax withholding if you elect to have federal withholding deducted from your PUA payments. You will receive Form 1099-G to file with your income tax return
- If you are responsible for child support payments, it will be deducted from your PUA payments

How is the PUA Weekly Benefit Amount Computed?

Your WBA is computed under the provisions of Arizona UI Law, except that it is based on your wages paid and/or net income earned from self-employment during your **most recent federal tax year** that ended **prior to your unemployment that was a direct result of COVID-19**. This is your **base period**.

Special Rules for Computing the PUA WBA

Weekly Amount of PUA in Cases Involving Death of Head of Household

If you are an unemployed individual who has become the breadwinner or major support because the head of household has died as a direct result of the pandemic, you may be eligible to receive PUA benefits. You must now be able to and available for work. Pages 4,5,6, 7, and 8 of this Handbook list possible exceptions to this. If it is not possible to compute a weekly PUA amount for you due to a lack of sufficient employment in your base period, your weekly amount for PUA will be the weekly amount the deceased head of your household would have been entitled to if they had not died. If a PUA claim can be established using your actual wages, you will receive the higher of the two entitlements.

Rules for Family Businesses

If you worked in or were part owner of a family business, you and all members of the family business may be eligible for PUA benefits. All members of the family who were customarily or routinely employed or self-employed as a family unit, or in the same self-employment business prior to the date you and the other family business members became unemployed as a direct result of the pandemic, will be eligible to apply for PUA benefits. The wages from this employment or net income from self-employment will be allocated equally among all adult family members that are considered part of the working family unit. All family members must be over the age of majority, as defined by state law, on or before their application for PUA. The applicant's equal portion of the wages or net income will be used to determine their PUA WBA.

Exception: If the documentation substantiating employment or self-employment and wages from the family business justifies a different allocation, it will be used rather than the equal allocation.

The term “family” as used for determining a WBA, includes any family members related by blood, adoption, or marriage who customarily work as a family unit

Rules for Minors

Children under the age of majority may be entitled to PUA if they meet the definition of a covered individual and meet the eligibility requirements for a week of unemployment

Computing the PUA WBA of Minors

If the method used by the Department to compute a PUA WBA for an individual under the age of majority uses the actual wages earned or received during the base-year period in employment or self-employment, rather than an equal allocation of the wages as provided for family members over the age of majority, the PUA WBA for these individuals will be based on whether they were working full-time or part-time when they became unemployed as a direct result of the pandemic. In either case, the PUA WBA is calculated in the same manner as if they were not employed in a family-owned business.

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)

Individuals eligible to receive PUA are also eligible to receive FPUC, authorized under section 2104 of the CARES Act

- For weeks of unemployment beginning on or after March 27, 2020 and ending on or before July 25, 2020, FPUC provides an additional \$600 per week for eligible weekly claims
- For weeks of unemployment beginning with benefit week ending January 2, 2021 and ending on or before September 4, 2021, FPUC provides an additional \$300 per week for eligible weekly claims

DURATION OF BENEFITS

The eligibility period for PUA is January 27, 2020 through September 4, 2021. The first payable Benefit Week Ending (BWE) is February 8, 2020 and the last payable BWE is September 4, 2021. PUA provides up to 79 weeks of benefits.

For each week you file a PUA claim, your reason for being unemployed must be a direct result of one of the COVID-19 reasons listed in Section 2102 of the CARES Act.

DISQUALIFICATION OR TERMINATION OF BENEFITS

You may be disqualified or your PUA benefit may be terminated if you:

1. Became employed in a suitable position;
2. Returned to your pre-pandemic self-employment status;
3. Refused without good cause to accept suitable employment or did not resume or commence suitable self-employment;
4. Refused without good cause to accept a referral to suitable employment;

- 5 Were not able to or available for work, except that you are not able to or available for work as a direct result of COVID-19; or
- 6 Were determined unemployed due to reasons other than a direct result of the pandemic
- 7 Did not meet the requirement to actively seek work during any week of unemployment;

Note: for the purposes of this handbook, the Department will determine whether a position, offer of employment, or self-employment is “suitable” by considering, during the first four weeks of a benefit period:

- a The degree of risk involved to a claimant’s health, safety and morals;
- b The claimant’s physical fitness and prior training;
- c The claimant’s experience and prior earnings;
- d The claimant’s length of unemployment and prospects for securing local work in the claimant’s customary occupation; and
- e The distance of the available work from the claimant’s residence

After the first four weeks of a benefit period, the department shall consider any employment offer that pays one hundred twenty percent of the individual’s weekly benefit amount to be suitable work

The Department will not define a position or offer of employment as suitable if:

8. The position offered is vacant due directly to a strike, lockout or other labor dispute;
- 9 The wages, hours or other conditions of the work offered are substantially less favorable to the claimant than those for similar local work;
- 10 The claimant would be required to join a company union or to resign from or refrain from joining a bona fide labor organization

A claimant is considered to have refused an offer of suitable work if an offer of work is withdrawn by an employer after a claimant either:

- 11 Tests positive for drugs after a drug test given by or on behalf of a prospective employer as a condition of an offer of employment
- 12 Refuses, without good cause, to submit to a drug test that is required by a prospective employer as a condition of an offer of employment

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

It is your responsibility to give correct answers to any questions asked regarding your initial and weekly claims for PUA benefits

Failure to furnish requested documents or information could result in a delay of your benefits

All information is subject to verification PUA benefits are provided through federal funds Criminal and/or civil penalties for violations of federal and/or state laws will be enforced for willfully making false statements or concealing information to obtain or increase your PUA benefits

KEEPING RECORDS

It is your responsibility to keep accurate records of the weeks you claim, payments you receive, wages you earn, and work search contacts you make When you inquire about your claim, we will be better able to assist you if you keep accurate records

APPEALS INFORMATION

If DES denies your PUA benefits, a written determination will be issued You will be informed of your eligibility for PUA benefits This determination may cover one or more weeks of PUA or your total eligibility for PUA benefits

If you disagree with the determination, you may file a request for reconsideration or an appeal **within 15 days** from the date of the determination The last day to file your request for reconsideration or appeal appears on the front of the determination notice you will receive You must file your request for reconsideration or appeal on or before this deadline

You may file:

- **Online:** Go to uiappeals.azdes.gov You should leave the initial Social Security number and PIN fields blank You will give your Social Security number and an explanation of why you believe the determination is wrong later in the process
- **By Telephone:** Call (877) 600-2722 (toll free), (602) 364-2722 (Phoenix), or (520) 791-2722 (Tucson) Be prepared to speak with a DES representative about why you believe the determination is wrong
- **By Fax or by Mail:** Fill out the Request for Reconsideration/Appeal (form UIB-0126A-FF) form It can be downloaded from www.azui.com (click How to File an Appeal, then Filing an Appeal) Attach a copy of the determination You or your authorized representative must sign the form Your appeal must include your name and Social Security number on every page Submit the signed form and a copy of the determination as follows:
 - Fax: (888) 417-3639 (toll free) or (602) 362-5391 (Phoenix)
 - Mailing address: Department of Economic Security
Unemployment Insurance Administration
ATTN: PUA Processing / MD 5895
PO Box 29225
Phoenix, AZ 85038-9225

The request for reconsideration or appeal must be received by close of business on the last day to file

FRAUD

If you knowingly make a false statement or withhold information in order to collect Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits you are not entitled to, this may be considered fraud and you could be disqualified from receiving benefits. The Department may take civil or criminal action and you may be required to repay the amount you receive illegally. Unemployment Insurance fraud is a potential Class VI Felony punishable by up to two years in prison and fines up to \$150,000 for each overpaid benefit week.

PRIVACY ACT

The Privacy Act of 1974 requires that you be furnished this statement because you are asked to provide your Social Security Number. Your Social Security Number is requested under the authority of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 [26 U.S.C. 85, 6011(a), 6050B, and 6109(a)]. Disclosure of your Social Security Number is mandatory and must be furnished to process your claim for PUA benefits. Should you decline to disclose your Social Security Number, your claim for PUA benefits will not be processed.

Your Social Security Number will be used: (1) to process your claim and determine your eligibility for PUA, (2) to report your PUA benefits to the Internal Revenue Service as income, (3) for statistical purposes, (4) for cross-matching by public assistance agencies or other government entities in the official performance of their duties.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Although federal and state laws prohibit the revealing of information about your PUA claim to your spouse, relatives, friends, non-interested parties and private interest groups, federal legislation requires that such information will be used for other governmental purposes, including verifying eligibility for other governmental programs. Confidentiality will be the responsibility of all agencies using the information.

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