

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DES Announces Pandemic Unemployment Assistance System to Launch May 12

New Partnership With Outside Vendor To Expedite Program Launch

PHOENIX – (April 24, 2020) The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) announced today it has acquired the services of [Geographic Solutions Inc.](#) to implement a Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program system and get assistance to Arizonans faster. Since receiving guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor, DES has been working to engage a private vendor to develop the system. Applications will be processed beginning the week of May 12 and payments will begin for eligible claimants that same week.

“We recognize the critical importance of these benefits for Arizonans who are out of work due to COVID-19,” said Tom Betlach, from the Office of the Director. “This solution will help get benefits to people faster, with payments being made retroactively for those eligible. We will continue to put forward all available resources, including working nights and weekends, to stand up this brand-new program to get individuals the help they need.”

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

On March 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020, which enacts a number of changes to unemployment compensation. These changes include the creation of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), which provides benefits for certain individuals who are not otherwise eligible for Unemployment Insurance.

This includes individuals who:

- have exhausted all rights to such benefits,
- are self-employed,
- are seeking part-time employment,
- lack sufficient work history, or
- otherwise do not qualify for regular unemployment compensation or extended benefits under state or Federal law or Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation.

In general, PUA provides up to 39 weeks of benefits to qualifying individuals. Payments will be retroactive to the date of eligibility back to the week of February 2, 2020. Individuals who are eligible under PUA will receive a weekly benefit amount, ranging from \$117 to \$240 per week and will also be eligible for the additional \$600 per week included in the CARES Act. Individuals

will be eligible to receive these retroactive payments based on their eligibility status in those prior weeks.

PUA is a brand-new program that is being built from the ground up, in accordance with guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Labor. The requirements for this program are different from the existing Unemployment Insurance program and cannot be seamlessly integrated into the existing system.

DES continues to communicate with all individuals who have been denied for being monetarily ineligible for regular Unemployment Insurance back to the effective date of the PUA as outlined in the CARES Act. The Department will contact these individuals when further action is needed. Individuals should keep a record of their earnings each week as this information will be required to determine ongoing eligibility for PUA.

Last week, unemployed Arizonans received a record-high \$150.9 million in Unemployment compensation, which included the \$600 in additional weekly compensation provided by the CARES Act. Retroactive \$600 per week payments were also issued to eligible claimants who filed weekly certifications back to March 29, 2020.

Visit <https://des.az.gov/pua> for updates and additional information.

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