



Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Available in Illinois

The Illinois Department of Employment Security is now providing unemployment benefits through the CARES Act Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program. PUA provides benefits for individuals (1) who are out of work due to a specific COVID-19 related reason and (2) who have been determined ineligible for state unemployment benefits.

ELIGIBILITY

You may qualify for PUA if you do not qualify for or cannot collect regular unemployment benefits, including if you:

- are self-employed and not subject to unemployment insurance tax;
- perform work as an independent contractor;
- perform work not subject to unemployment insurance tax, such as for a religious organization;
- did not earn enough in wages or work enough hours to qualify for regular unemployment benefits;
- exhausted regular and extended unemployment benefits.

In addition, to be eligible, you must be unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable and unavailable for work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Covered situations include individuals who:

- are directly caring for a member of the household diagnosed with COVID-19;
- have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or are seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19;
- are unable to reach the place of employment because of a quarantine imposed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency;
- are primary caregivers for a child or person in the household who is unable to attend school or another facility closed due to COVID-19, and that attendance is required for their work;
- were scheduled to start a new job and were unable to because the business closed as a direct result of COVID-19 public health emergency; or
- owned or worked for a business that closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Federal law provides that PUA benefits are retroactive to the first week a worker was impacted by a qualifying COVID-19 reason, potentially from the week starting February 2, 2020 through the week ending December 26, 2020. The PUA process can take as little as one week or several weeks, depending on the complexity of the claim.

HOW TO APPLY

Everyone is required to first apply for regular Unemployment Insurance. *NOTE: If you have already filed for UI and are awaiting a decision, please do not file again.* Within 7-10 days of filing your claim for regular unemployment, we will send you a blank debit card and UI Finding. Hold on to your debit card. If you are eligible for regular unemployment, payment will be made to you on this debit card. If you are denied regular unemployment and apply for PUA, those benefits may be paid to you on this debit card. If we need to send you a new debit card, it may take a few weeks.

You will also receive a UI Finding, which will tell you whether you are monetarily eligible for benefits. If your UI Finding says you are *not* monetarily eligible (weekly benefit amount shows \$0), this means that according to our records, you were not paid enough wages during your base period from an employer to qualify for regular unemployment benefits. If you receive a UI Finding that says you are not monetarily eligible, and you disagree, you can appeal by uploading proof of wages using IDES's [UPLOAD PORTAL](#). If, during your base period, you did not receive any payments for services that you performed for others (e.g., if you were a sole proprietor), you may apply for PUA.

Please access the PUA application from IDES's homepage: ides.illinois.gov.