



**Frequently Asked Questions
Pandemic Unemployment Assistance**

Contents

General PUA Questions.....	3
General PUA Questions Cont'd	Error! Bookmark not defined.
PUA Eligibility	4
PUA Payment Questions	6
PUA Application Questions.....	7
PUA Required Tax Documentation and Wage Questions	8

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program Assistance: 888-660-7782

General PUA Questions

When can I apply for PUA?

You must apply for regular unemployment insurance benefits first to determine whether you are eligible for regular unemployment benefits or PUA benefits. If you haven't yet applied for regular unemployment, click [here](#). Depending on your application submission, you may be immediately prompted to complete the PUA claim application. If you do not get prompted, you will need to wait for DOL to review your submission. Once a determination has been made, you will be notified.

What if my claim for regular UI benefits has been denied and I get an error message when I try to proceed to apply for PUA benefits?

If you were denied for regular unemployment benefits it does not impact your eligibility for PUA benefits. Your application is under review and the Department of Labor will notify you if you are eligible to apply for PUA.

When I try to complete my PUA application, it says my record does not exist and that I need to complete the regular unemployment application. And when I try to complete the regular unemployment application it says I already exist. What do I do?

If you have followed all the steps in applying for PUA (including filling out the initial unemployment application first) and are receiving an error message when trying to verify their information in PUA, this means your UI application requires further review by the Department. You will not be able to complete the PUA application until that review is complete. The Department will notify you of your eligibility.

What weeks will PUA cover?

PUA provides wage replacement for eligible claimants back to the week of March 15, 2020, when Governor Scott's Executive Order went into effect.

I am trying to call the assistance line and it will not let me wait on hold, it just hangs up. How can I get through?

If you call the PUA line and get the message that all representatives are busy, it is because the lines are busy, and the queue is full. Please read through the FAQs to help resolve questions before calling back again.

I have exhausted my regular UI benefits, should I apply for PUA or what do I do?

If you have exhausted your 26 weeks of regular unemployment insurance benefits and are trying to begin using the additional 13 weeks of Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Assistance (PEUC), you should not try to apply for PUA. You will likely receive an error message if you do try to apply because you already have an established unemployment claim. There is nothing you need to do until the PEUC program is implemented.

PUA Eligibility

How do I know if I am eligible for PUA?

If you are an independent contractor, are self-employed, have been denied or are not eligible for regular unemployment benefits or PEUC (extended benefits program), you may be eligible for PUA benefits.

How do I know if I am self-employed?

Federal guidelines for PUA identify “self-employed” individuals as those whose primary reliance for income is on the performance of services in their own business. This also includes independent contractors and others.

Am I eligible for PUA if I have never worked before or it has been a long time since I worked last?

You may be eligible for PUA if:

- You were scheduled to begin working and do not have a job currently or are unable to begin that job as a direct result of COVID-19
- Your job offer was rescinded because of COVID-19
- You have become the breadwinner or primary supporter for a household because the head of household has died as a direct result of COVID-19

Am I eligible for PUA if my work allows me to telework for pay?

No. If you can telework and are being paid by your employer, you are not eligible for PUA.

Am I eligible for PUA benefits if I am not working but I am receiving paid sick leave or another form of paid leave from my employer?

You may be. If you are receiving partial payment for sick leave, you may be eligible for a reduced weekly benefit amount (WBA). If your paid leave amount is greater than your WBA, you will not be eligible.

I applied for regular unemployment benefits and my claim is in adjudications and I have not heard back. Can I also apply for PUA?

No. You cannot apply for PUA if you have a current application that is being processed through regular unemployment adjudication. If you are denied regular unemployment insurance benefits, you may be eligible for PUA but cannot apply for PUA until that determination has been made.

Can I receive PUA benefits if I am still working but my hours are reduced?

If you are working fewer hours due to COVID-19 and have lost income, you should apply for unemployment insurance benefits. Your eligibility for regular unemployment or PUA will be determined after you apply.

What circumstances disqualify me from PUA?

If you are able to telework with pay or are receiving paid sick leave or any other form of paid leave you will not qualify for PUA.

I worked full-time and was laid off. But I also own a side business that is closed due to COVID-19, am I eligible for PUA?

If you were laid off from full-time employment you are likely eligible for regular unemployment. If you are already collecting regular unemployment, you cannot apply for or receive PUA benefits on top of that.

I earn most of my income through my full-time job, but I also own my own business. Am I considered self-employed for PUA benefit purposes?

No. PUA Federal guidelines define an individual as self-employed when the individual's primary income is through services in the individual's own business.

I'm self-employed now, but I worked for an employer in 2019. Where do I apply?

If you earned more than \$4,025 in calendar year 2019 from an employer (or employers) who took taxes out of your paycheck, you may be eligible for regular unemployment benefits. The first step in determining your eligibility is to complete the [initial unemployment application](#) which will determine whether you are eligible for regular unemployment insurance or PUA.

If I live in Vermont and am self-employed in another state, where should I file for PUA benefits?

You must file with the state where you were working at the time of becoming unemployed, partially unemployed or unable to work because of a COVID-19 related reason listed in section

2102(a)(3)(A)(ii)(I) of the CARES Act. If you worked in more than one state during this time, you may file in any of those states.

If I refuse to return to work when called back by my employer because I want to receive general unemployment benefits, am I eligible for PUA?

No. If you refused work in order to file for unemployment benefits, you would not qualify for PUA.

If I am on approved unpaid medical leave from my employer, and I'm not eligible for state unemployment because I am not able or available to work, am I eligible for PUA?

It depends. If the medical leave is based on one of the COVID-19 related reason listed in section 2102(a)(3)(A)(ii)(I) of the CARES Act, you may be eligible for PUA benefits. If your situation is not covered in one of the COVID-19 related reasons and are otherwise not able to work or available for work, you are not eligible for PUA.

I am eligible for regular unemployment but not collecting payments due to a 100 percent offset. Am I eligible for PUA?

No. In this case, you are eligible to collect regular unemployment and are deemed to be receiving payments even when they are used to reduce an existing overpayment. You cannot be eligible for regular unemployment and PUA.

PUA Payment Questions

Is there a waiting period before I will get my first benefit check?

No, there is not a minimum waiting period. However, depending on your weekly claim certification, it may take time to review or adjudicate your claim.

I am self-employed, but I also have a part-time job working for another employer. What will my weekly benefit amount be?

If you establish your PUA claim as a self-employed individual, then wages from your self-employment will only be calculated into your weekly benefit amount. If you continue to work part-time you must report wages and hours worked during each weekly claim certification.

Am I eligible for the \$600/week federal benefit that other UI claimants are getting?

Yes. If you are eligible for PUA you are also eligible for the \$600/week benefit. You do not need to do anything additional it will automatically be included in your weekly benefit payment.

Do I need to keep filing to get weekly payments?

Yes. You need to file each week for which you wish to receive PUA benefits.

- You are filing weekly claims for the prior week. (e.g. *If you file a weekly claim April 12, you are filing for the benefit week of April 5-11.*) When you do this, you are certifying you were unemployed or partially unemployed that week.
- You must file a weekly claim no later than Friday at 4:00 pm. (e.g., *If you were unemployed during the week of April 5-11, you can file the claim beginning April 12, but no later than April 17 at 4pm*).
- You **MUST** report hours worked and wages **EARNED** (regardless of when you will be paid) if you worked during a week for which you are filing a benefit. Failing to do so will create an issue on your claim, delay payment, or could potentially disqualify you from receiving benefits.

Will I have to pay federal and state taxes on benefits I receive?

Yes. When filing, you have the option to have taxes withheld or not, but all benefits are subject to state and federal taxes.

When will I get paid?

After you complete the initial unemployment application, the PUA application, and have filed your first weekly claim certification, your payment will be processed within 3 business days. You can choose a payment method of direct deposit or paper check (direct deposit is the quicker method).

PUA Application Questions

Can I stop and resume in the middle of my PUA application?

Yes. If you do not know how to answer a question, or need to stop and get more information, you can pause and go back at a later time.

How do I correct my application or weekly claim certification if I accidentally answered a question or entered the wrong information?

You are able to change your phone number, mailing address, and payment method, as well as uploading tax documents, when completing your weekly claim certification. You cannot change answers on your application at this time. Some answers to questions require claims to go through the adjudication process.

I followed the instructions to complete my PUA application. I get "Ineligible Claim. Your Pandemic Unemployment Assistance claim has been determined as ineligible for receiving

any future benefits. If you have any questions, please contact the Vermont Department of Labor at (877) 660-7782." What do I do?

If you received this email, it is because based on your answers to the questions asked, you were determined ineligible for PUA.

I tried logging in to complete my PUA application and I need to reset my password, but I never got an email to reset it?

If you receive this error, please try to reset it again as the issue has been resolved as of 4/24/20. If you are trying to log in to file your weekly claims for regular unemployment using your PIN, you are not able to log in because that is a separate portal.

I completed my PUA application and entered the wrong bank account information. How do I fix it?

If you need to update your bank account information you can change the payment method when filing your weekly claim certification.

I was deemed ineligible and I want to appeal the decision. What do I do?

If you received an ineligible determination, you are not eligible for PUA. If you feel this is incorrect, you may file an appeal by faxing the Appeals Unit at 802-828-4289 or mailing your appeal to the Department of Labor at P.O. Box 488, Montpelier, VT 05601-0488. In your appeal, please include: your name, the company name, and the name and date of the document being appealed. Once your request for an appeal has been processed, you will be notified in writing of the date and time of a scheduled hearing.

What happens if I provide false or misleading information to get PUA benefits?

Providing false or misleading information to obtain benefits is fraud. If you are found to have committed fraud, you are subject to penalties and/or criminal prosecution.

PUA Required Tax Documentation and Wage Questions

When reporting wages on the PUA application, do I use gross or net wages?

Self-employed individuals must use their NET wages. Others who are not self-employed must report GROSS wages.

What if I am paid on a commission or sales basis, not salary or hourly?

If you are paid by sales or commission, you can enter your wages in either the salary or hourly field, as long as they equal to the overall wages earned in the quarter.

What tax documents are acceptable to upload?

Schedule C, Schedule E, Schedule F: if you are a self-employed individual or sole proprietor that files a Schedule C, Schedule E or Schedule F, with your income taxes, report gross income on the application

1040: If you are using your 1040 income tax return, report line 1 wages from your income tax return (this excludes any pension or social security income)

W2: if you are using a W2 tax document to report wages, report the wages included in box 1 on the w2 statement

What if I have not filed my 2019 taxes yet?

If you have not filed your 2019 taxes yet, you have 21 days to do so. However, until you upload a supporting document, you may only receive the minimum benefit amount.

Why do I need to upload 2019 tax documents if the deadline to file taxes is not until July 15?

Tax documentation for 2019 is required because your benefit amount is based on wages in the last 4 quarters. Providing 2019 wages will determine the most accurate weekly benefit amount. If you are determined to be eligible for benefits, and do not provide documentation within 21 days, you will only receive the minimum benefit amount until you upload those documents. You have 21 days from completing your initial PUA application to upload those documents.