DLIR ANNOUNCES NO GAP IN BENEFITS EXTENDED IN THE ARPA OF 2021

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DLIR ANNOUNCES NO GAP IN BENEFITS EXTENDED IN THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

HONOLULU — The Department of Labor & Industrial Relations (DLIR) today announced updates for unemployment insurance and assistance benefits as a result of President Biden signing the new federal stimulus bill. Title IX of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 extends key unemployment insurance and assistance provisions of both the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) as well as the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).

“We are relieved that Congress has acted to continue to provide unemployment insurance benefits and assistance to claimants as our Hawaii Ohana continues to struggle from the effects of COVID-19 disruption in our community” said Director Anne Perreira-Eustaquio. “We will automatically enroll claimants in the appropriate extension, so claimants will not need to take any extra steps to receive benefits. Claimants will see a new benefit amount in the online portal and receive a written monetary determination in the mail ”

At this time, the DLIR does not expect there will be a gap in benefits for most claimants as long as they remain eligible. Similar to the recent extension of the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), the department will batch process extensions so some claimants may have short delays in the ability to file claim certifications. Once a claimant’s monetary determination has been established, claimants will be able to file weekly claim certifications and will receive a monetary determination by mail.

“We know that these benefits provide a critical lifeline to tens of thousands of our claimants, and we’re quickly implementing the new extensions,” said Director Anne Perreira-Eustaquio.

Highlights of the unemployment insurance benefits and assistance in the federal stimulus include:

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)

- Extends the FPUC benefit of $300 through the week ending Sept. 4, 2021.
- A claimant must be eligible for regular UI, PUA, or PEUC to receive FPUC.

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)

- Extends PEUC until the week ending Sept. 4, 2021.
- Increases the maximum duration of PEUC benefits from 24 to 53 weeks, however, the DLIR notes there are only 25 weeks between March 20 to Sept. 4 effectively making the extension from 24 to 49 weeks. It appears this quirk in the law may be a drafting error.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

- Extends PUA benefits through the week ending Sept. 6, 2021.
- Increases the maximum duration of PUA benefits from 50 to 79 weeks.
- Adds hold harmless provision for PUA payments made to individuals that become eligible for PEUC by the amendments of the Act on the date of enactment.

Emergency Unemployment Relief for Nonprofit Organizations

- Extends federal funding for reimbursers until the week ending Sept. 4.
- Increases the reimbursement rate from 50% to 75% for the amounts of compensation paid for weeks of unemployment beginning after March 31, 2021, and ending with the week ending Sept. 4.

Emergency State Staffing Flexibility

- Extends emergency state staffing flexibility until September 6, 2021.

Temporary Assistance to States with Advances

- Extends temporary assistances for states with advances (loans to pay benefits) until September 6, 2021.

Important note: None of the benefits described above, nor unemployment benefits of any kind, are available to employees who are terminated for cause, quit their job without good cause, or refuse to return to work. Attempts to collect benefit payments in these situations could be viewed as fraudulent. Investigation of job separation is part of the eligibility determination process.

For more information about unemployment insurance and other labor issues please visit the FAQs at https://labor.hawaii.gov/covid-19-labor-faqs/.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
TDD/TTY Dial 711 then ask for (808) 586-8866

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