EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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DEED begins making Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) payments

April 24, 2020 | Economic Development

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) announced today that the agency has begun making Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) payments to people who are self-employed, independent contractors, and other eligible recipients who are not eligible for regular unemployment benefits. PUA is a new program that was authorized by Congress in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) and signed into law on March 27, 2020.

“In less than one month, DEED’s unemployment insurance team has created the infrastructure to implement this brand new program, determine eligibility, prevent fraud and adapt to the unprecedented challenges caused by COVID-19,” said Commissioner Steve Grove. “While it will take us some time to determine eligibility for everyone who applies for PUA, we are working closely with the Department of Revenue to expedite that process. Minnesota is proudly one of the first states in the nation to implement all three components of the federal CARES Act and provide critical financial assistance to hundreds of thousands of people who have been impacted by this pandemic.”

Here’s what Minnesotans need to know about applying for PUA:

- If you have already applied for regular unemployment benefits, you do not need to do anything extra to qualify for PUA. DEED will automatically establish a PUA benefit account for you if you are eligible.
- If you have not applied for unemployment benefits yet, special instructions for self-employed and 1099 workers are available here (https://www.uimn.org/assets/application-step-by-step-instructions-selfemployed_tcm1068-425640.pdf) . These instructions include steps you can take to make your account easily identifiable as potentially eligible for PUA.
    - If you applied for unemployment benefits without following those instructions, don’t worry – you don’t need to change anything. Your account will still be reviewed for PUA eligibility.

- If you have not heard from DEED yet, don't worry. We expect to be in touch with most people who are eligible for benefits under PUA by the end of April. There is no need to call or follow-up; you will hear from us proactively if we need additional information to determine eligibility.
- You will receive information about PUA benefits in your online account, by email, and by mail.
- Applicants who receive PUA benefits will also receive the $600/week additional payment.
- PUA benefits will be backdated to whenever you first became eligible due to COVID-19.
- Additional information, including answers to many commonly asked questions, can be found here: **COVID-19 information for self-employed people and independent contractors** (https://www.uimn.org/applicants/needtoknow/news-updates/covid19-pua.jsp)

Since March 16, 2020, a record number of more than 540,000 people have applied for unemployment insurance benefits in Minnesota. Despite this massive influx of applications, the Minnesota UI program was able to quickly begin authorizing the additional FPUC $600 weekly payments, implement the 13-week extension of unemployment benefits (PEUC), and begin processing payments under PUA.

Anyone who has been separated from their job, had their hours reduced or cannot work due to the COVID-19 pandemic is encouraged to apply online at uimn.org.

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