

# **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Benefits Rights and Responsibilities**

This document is intended to communicate basic rights and responsibilities under the PUA Program

## **Eligibility Requirements:**

PUA benefits are payable to individuals covered by the PUA program and include those who are not qualified for regular unemployment compensation, extended benefits under state or Federal law, or pandemic emergency unemployment compensation (PEUC), including those who have exhausted all rights to such benefits. This also includes those who are self-employed, those seeking part-time work, and those lacking sufficient work history.

Generally, PUA is not payable to those who have the ability to telework with pay, or who are receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits. However, if you are receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits that are less than your customary work week, you may still be eligible for reduced benefits (see Potential Deductions).

In order to be eligible for PUA benefits, you must also be otherwise able to work and available for work as required under Unemployment Compensation state law, except that you are unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work due to one of the COVID-19 related reasons identified in Section 2102(a)(3)(A)(ii)(I) of the CARES Act and listed below:

- You have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis.
- A member of your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- You are providing care for a family member or a member of your household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- A child or other person in your household, for whom you have primary caregiving responsibility is unable to attend school or another facility that is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency and such school or other facility is required for you to work.
- You are unable to reach your place of employment because of a quarantine imposed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- You are unable to reach your place of employment because you have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
- You were scheduled to commence employment and you do not have a job or you are unable to reach the job as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- You have become the breadwinner or major support for your household because the head of household has died as a direct result of COVID-19.
- You had to quit your job as a direct result of COVID-19.
- Your place of employment is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

## **Pandemic Assistance Period (PAP):**

The Pandemic Assistance Period (PAP) for paying of PUA benefits begins with weeks of unemployment beginning on or after January 27, 2020 and ends with weeks ending on December 31, 2020.

Individuals may not receive PUA benefits for more than a total of 39 weeks, minus any weeks paid on regular unemployment compensation or extended benefits.

**Potential Weekly Benefit Amount (WBA):**

The PUA weekly benefit amount is determined based on your wages for the 2019 calendar year. For PUA claims filed in Alabama, your weekly PUA benefit amount will range between the minimum of \$113 per week, and the state maximum of \$275 per week. Applicable weeks of PUA benefits are also subject to the additional Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) amount of \$600 per week through week ending July 25, 2020.

**Potential Deductions:**

Certain types of wages and other types of compensation, including pay when no work was performed, are deductible from your PUA benefits. These deductible earnings include wages paid for work performed, vacation pay, holiday pay, and sick pay. Workers' Compensation, and pension income may also be deductible.

**Reporting and Filing Requirements:**

In order to be eligible for any week of PUA, you must continue to file a claim each week and must self-certify each week that you continue to remain eligible under one of the ten (10) qualifying COVID-19 related reasons listed under the Eligibility Requirement section above. This is called certifying your weekly claim. You may file your PUA claim online at <https://pua.labor.alabama.gov> or by calling 800-752-7389.

You should always report your gross earnings before deductions, including all tips, room and meals. You must report all wages and other forms of compensation. This includes any pay you may receive – whether or not work was performed. You must report any vacation, holiday, and/or sick pay. You must also report any pension, and/or Workers' Compensation pay you may receive.

You must report any change in your address or other contact information.

**Appeal Rights:**

If you disagree with an examiner's determination, you may file an appeal to the Hearing and Appeals Division. This is your first level of administrative appeal. Appeal requests must be filed within 15 calendar days of the mailing date of the original decision or within 7 calendar days if the decision was handed to you in-person. If the last day to file an appeal falls on a weekend or a state holiday, the deadline to file an appeal will be the next business day after the weekend or holiday.

Appeal requests must be made by writing to:

Alabama Department of Labor  
Hearing and Appeals Division, Room 4677  
649 Monroe Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36131  
FAX: (334) 956-5891

Your request must be signed and include your full name (printed), the last four digits of your social security number, and the reason you do not agree with the decision made on your claim.

Additional information about the appeals process can be found in the Alabama Unemployment Compensation Benefits Rights Handbook located online at [https://labor.alabama.gov/docs/guides/uc\\_brr.pdf](https://labor.alabama.gov/docs/guides/uc_brr.pdf). A paper copy of this handbook was also mailed to you, or it was offered online to you, when your initial regular unemployment compensation claim was filed.

NOTE: It is important that you continue to file your weekly certifications by telephone or the Alabama Department of Labor website during the appeals process so that, if the decision is in your favor, you can be paid for eligible back weeks.