



Arkansas Division of
Workforce Services



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CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) INFORMATION – FEDERAL LEGISLATION

With Congress and the President responding to COVID-19 in multiple ways, it is challenging to keep up with how these recent changes to federal law may impact an individual's situation at work. The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS) is closely tracking recent legislative changes and how they may apply to state government operations and programs. ADWS will provide updates as changes are received, and as the U.S. Department of Labor provides additional federal guidance.

NOTE: The regular unemployment insurance (UI) program continues to be in effect. In Arkansas, most people who are currently employed and quit are not eligible for unemployment benefits. If an employer offers sick leave and/or other leave options to address COVID-19 in lieu of layoffs, then a person who quits on his/her own volition would probably not qualify for UI benefits. At this point, no federal legislation changes this part of Arkansas's program eligibility for unemployment benefits.

To date, the following changes to federal law have been passed by Congress and signed by the President:

Phase I: Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act

Signed by President Trump and became law on March 6, 2020. *The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services does not administer this Act.*

Phase II: Families First Coronavirus Response Act

On March 18, 2020, President Trump signed H.R. 6201, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) into law. *The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services may receive Emergency UI funding, but we do not administer this act.*

On March 28, the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) published additional implementation guidance pursuant to the FFCRA. The new guidance includes application of new **paid leave requirements**, fact sheets, and other materials, including two posters – one for [federal workers](#) and one for all [other employees](#) – that will fulfill notice requirements for employers obligated to inform employees about their rights under the new law. In addition, the WHD released a [question and answer](#) document about paid leave and posting requirements.

As a reminder, the WHD website is the best place for guidance on how the FFCRA applies to an individual's particular circumstances:

[Fact Sheet for Employees](#)

[Fact Sheet for Employers](#)

[Questions and Answers](#)

Phase III: Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES)

On March 27, President Trump signed H.R. 748, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, known as the CARES Act, into law. The CARES Act expands unemployment insurance with the following programs:

- **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)** – Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, or PUA, is a federal program for people who are not eligible for regular state unemployment benefits, extended benefits or Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), and are unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable to work due to COVID-19. This includes independent contractors, self-employed workers, agricultural workers, non-profit employees, gig economy workers (flexible or freelance work, often conducted via online platform), individuals who work for employers exempt from participating in the regular UI program, part-time workers without enough work history to qualify for regular UI benefits, individuals impacted by COVID-19 but not eligible for regular UI benefits due to a prior disqualification, etc. Click [here](#) to apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance or visit www.ARUnemployment.com.
- **Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)** – The Pandemic Emergency Compensation Program (PEUC) is a federal emergency unemployment compensation program designed to provide up to 13 weeks of benefits to individuals who have exhausted their regular unemployment compensation. Qualified benefit payments will be retroactive. To apply for PEUC, visit an Arkansas Workforce Center near you. Click [here](#) for a list of Centers.
- **Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)** – The FPUC program provides an extra \$600 to people who are drawing any type of unemployment benefits through the week ending July 25, 2020.