

PUA Questions and Answers

Redirect back to Regular UI

Q: Why did I receive a letter from the PUA Unit indicating that I may be eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits or PEUC benefits?

A: Our records indicate that you may be eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. PUA is only available to 1) individuals who are unemployed as a result of COVID-19 and cannot establish a regular unemployment insurance claim, and 2) those who unemployed as a direct result of COVID-19 who are monetarily eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits but have been disqualified through the regular unemployment insurance program.

The CARES Act created the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program to provide additional unemployment insurance benefits to individuals who have exhausted their unemployment insurance claims. The PEUC program will provide an additional 13 weeks of benefits for individuals who have exhausted their regular unemployment insurance claims. Qualified benefit payments will be retroactive. To apply for PEUC, visit an Arkansas Workforce Center near you. Click [here](#) for a list of Centers.

Q: Why was I told to not apply for regular unemployment insurance benefits in the beginning and now I'm being told to apply for them?

A: Due to claims load during the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, self-employed individuals were requested to not file through the regular unemployment insurance program.

Q: How do I file a regular unemployment insurance claim?

A: The quickest and most convenient way to file an regular unemployment insurance claim is to visit EZARC at www.ezarc.adws.arkansas.gov . If you do not have access to the Internet, you can file a regular unemployment insurance claim by calling 1-844-908-2178.

Q: How long is it going to take to get approved or denied regular unemployment insurance benefits?

A: Each unemployment insurance claim is unique and the eligibility process will vary from claim to claim depending on the facts of each case. Generally, monetary eligibility determinations are made within three business days.

Q: Why do I have to file for regular unemployment insurance benefits when my primary source of income is from being self-employed?

A: While the CARES Act creates an unemployment insurance like program available to self-employed individuals, one of the basic requirements for potential eligibility for PUA benefits is that an individual is not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits through the regular state unemployment insurance program or through other emergency unemployment insurance programs connected to the regular state unemployment insurance program.

Q: Why do I have to receive regular unemployment insurance benefits with a lower weekly benefit amount when I could receive a higher weekly benefit amount through the PUA program?

A: The CARES Act requires that eligible individuals must receive benefits through the state unemployment insurance program even if there is a difference in the weekly benefit amount.

Q: Why can't I apply for PEUC online or over the phone?

A: The Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation program is a new federal program that requires a separate application process and eligibility review. Existing UI systems are not designed for episodic programs such as PEUC.

Q: What documentation will I need to provide to show that I am not eligible or disqualified from receiving regular unemployment insurance benefits?

A: A Notice of Monetary Determination that reflects it is an Alternate Base Period claim and that no wages are reported in the base period. If you are monetarily eligible but disqualified due to a separation issue or fraud, a Notice of Agency Determination must be provided.

Eligibility or System Questions

Q: I live in Arkansas but I worked in or my business was located in another state, where should I file my PUA claim?

A: Your PUA claim should be filed in the state that you worked or your business was located.

Q: I am currently in Interim Approved status, when will I receive a formal eligibility determination for my PUA claim?

A: The PUA program is an entirely new program and required that a system be built to accommodate the legal requirements of the program. Formal eligibility determinations will be issued in the near future.

Q: I am eligible for a regular unemployment insurance claim and work part-time. My weekly earnings exceed the allowable amounts to receive regular unemployment insurance benefits, am I eligible for PUA?

A: No. Being ineligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits due to excessive weekly earnings is not a disqualification for the purposes of determining PUA entitlement.

Q: I am only receiving the minimum PUA weekly benefit amount of \$132, when will I receive a higher weekly benefit amount?

A: Once you have received your formal PUA eligibility determination, that determination will reflect your weekly benefit amount based on your income for calendar year 2019 as evidenced by your federal tax return.

Q: I have not filed my federal taxes for Calendar Year 2019, how much will I receive in weekly benefits?

A: Without your federal tax return covering 2019, you will be entitled to the minimum weekly benefit amount of \$132. Once you file your federal taxes, you may provide a copy of your federal tax return to the PUA unit and request a redetermination of your weekly benefit amount. If warranted, your weekly benefit amount will be adjusted and supplemental payments will be issued for all weeks previously paid.

Q: Is there a deadline to submit a copy of my federal tax return to obtain a greater weekly benefit amount?

A: Yes. All request for redetermination must be provided to the PUA Unit by December 26, 2020.

Q: My spouse/friend/coworker has received an Interim Approval but I have not, why?

A: Each application is reviewed based on the specific responses provided by the applicant and recent employment history. As such, your responses were likely different than your spouses. (At this point, the call agent should review the application with the caller.)

Payment Questions

Q. I filed my weekly claim but I have not received a payment. Where is my payment?

A. If you selected debit card as your preferred payment option, it can take 7-10 business days to receive your ReliaCard from US Bank. More information about the US Bank Reliacard can be found at <https://www.prepaidmaterials.com/usbankreliacard.html>. Your weekly benefit payment and \$600 federal add-on will be on your debit card when you receive it. If you selected direct deposit, your weekly benefit payment and \$600 federal add-on will be deposited into your account within 2-3 business days.

Q. I selected direct deposit, filed my weekly claim five days ago but I still have not received my weekly benefit payment, why?

A. It is possible that your payment was rejected by the banking institution because an incorrect routing number or bank account number was entered. Please log into your PUA account and reenter your banking information. Any future payments will be deposited into your preferred bank account. Once we receive the rejected funds from your banking institution, those funds will be paid to you by check and will be mailed to the address on your claim.

Q. I selected direct deposit to a refillable debit card, filed my weekly claim five days ago but I still have not received my weekly benefit payment, why?

A. It is possible that your refillable debit card provider has deemed the payment suspicious and has returned the funds to DWS. Please log into your PUA account and register for a DWS debit card provider. Any future payments will be applied to that debit card. Once we receive the rejected funds from your banking institution, those funds will be paid to you by check and will be mailed to the address on your claim.

Q. My direct deposit was deposited into the wrong account, how do I recover the funds?

A. The recovery of funds that were deposited into an incorrect account must be resolved through your banking institution.

Q: I have returned to my regular full-time self-employment or work, can I still file for PUA benefits?

A: No. To be eligible for ongoing PUA benefits, you must continue to be completely unemployed or working reduced hours.

Q: I have returned to my regular full-time self-employment or work, how do I file my weekly claims in order to receive my retroactive payments for the period of time I was unemployed?

A: Once you have been determined eligible for PUA benefits, you can log into the PUA system to claim your all of your retroactive weeks of unemployment. Claiming benefits for weeks in which you were not unemployed could result in the assessment of a fraud determination which carries civil and possible criminal penalties.