

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Ohio Begins Implementing New Federal Unemployment Programs

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Starting on Friday, April 24, Ohioans who are unemployed as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic but who don't qualify for regular unemployment benefits can begin pre-registering for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), a new federal program that covers many more categories of workers, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced today.

In addition, more than 400,000 unemployment claimants in Ohio began receiving weekly \$600 supplements this week in addition to their regular benefits as a part of the new federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC) program. The weekly supplements are available through July 25 and will appear on claimants' pay stubs with the designation "FAC." Both the PUA program and the PUC supplements are authorized by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

"We are thrilled to provide this much-needed assistance to Ohioans unemployed as a result of the pandemic," said ODJFS Director Kimberly Hall. "I also know that many eligible Ohioans are still waiting to receive benefits, and I am very sorry for the delay. We understand the urgency of providing individuals with the resources they need to support their families. Since mid-March, we have focused on expanding staff support, working longer hours, and partnering with private sector experts to add more technological capacity to our system. We will not rest until all eligible Ohioans are served."

To pre-register for PUA benefits, Ohioans should visit unemployment.ohio.gov and click on "Get Started Now." The benefit amount will be similar to traditional unemployment benefits, plus an additional \$600 per week through July 25. The pre-registration tool will allow individuals to get in line early and pre-register their account, so that as soon as the agency has the technical ability to process their claims in May, they can log in and complete their paperwork.

For those eligible, PUA benefits will be retroactive to the date they qualified, as early as February 2. The program will provide up to 39 weeks of benefits to many who historically have not qualified for unemployment benefits, such as self-employed workers, 1099 tax filers, part-time workers, and those who lack sufficient work history. Individuals who have exhausted all regular unemployment and any weekly extensions also may be eligible for the program. Anyone with questions should call (833) 604-0774.



There is no minimum income requirement for PUA. To be eligible, individuals must not qualify for regular unemployment benefits and must meet one of the following circumstances:

- The individual has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or is experiencing symptoms and is seeking medical diagnosis;
- A member of the individual's household has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- The individual is providing care for a family member or member of the household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- A child or other person in the household for which the individual has primary caregiving responsibility is unable to attend school or another facility is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 emergency, and the school or care is required for the individual to work;
- The individual is unable to reach the place of employment because of a COVID-19 quarantine;
- The individual is unable to reach the place of employment because a health care professional has advised him or her to self-quarantine due to COVID-19 concerns;
- The individual was scheduled to commence employment and does not have a job or is unable to reach the job as a direct result of COVID-19;
- The individual has become the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19;
- The individual has quit his/her job as a direct result of COVID-19;
- The individual was laid off by his/her employer as a direct result of COVID-19;
- The individual's place of employment is closed as a direct result of COVID-19.

Over the last five weeks, ODJFS has received nearly 1 million initial regular unemployment claims, far more than the last two years combined. As of April 23, more than 456,000 of those applications were approved, just over 182,000 were denied, and more than 376,000 individuals are receiving payments. Many who were denied benefits may be eligible for PUA.

For updates about the new expanded eligibility programs, answers to frequently asked questions, and helpful tips and checklists, please visit unemployment.ohio.gov and click on "Expanded Eligibility."

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The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.

