

Missouri Begins Processing Claims for the Self-Employed and Others Ineligible for Regular Unemployment; Plans to Roll Out Program Next Week for Those That Have Exhausted Their Unemployment Benefits

Sourced: Missouri Department of Labor

Jefferson City, MO — The Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' (DOLIR's) Division of Employment Security (DES) is now processing unemployment claims for the self-employed, gig workers, independent contractors, and those who otherwise do not qualify for regular unemployment benefits and have been impacted by the coronavirus. Under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program, those who qualify will be eligible for weekly benefit payments of between \$133 and \$320 per week plus a \$600 federal supplement available under the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program. The federal guidelines provide the \$600 federal supplement only applies to weeks that are payable from March 29, 2020, through July 25, 2020. These two programs are not regular unemployment insurance but are new, fully federally funded assistance programs. Both of these provisions have been enacted as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

To be eligible for a PUA claim, individuals must first file a regular unemployment claim and be found ineligible. Most self-employed individuals who file a claim will receive a notice that they are not an insured worker. This is because they are not covered under the regular unemployment insurance system.

Individuals in these groups who have been negatively impacted by the coronavirus, and have not already filed a claim, are encouraged to file online at uinteract.labor.mo.gov.

When filing, individuals should:

- Indicate “none” when asked for states in which they have worked, unless they have worked for an employer in the last 18 months. This is important because those that were self-employed and impacted by coronavirus may have worked for an employer in the last 18 months and could be eligible for the state's regular unemployment insurance program.
- Receive a notification from DES with further instructions on what information will be needed and how to complete the filing process for the PUA. If those unemployed selected to be notified electronically, an email will be sent the following day after the claim is filed stating to check their correspondence tab

in UInteract. All others will be mailed the instructions and should receive within the time it takes to be delivered by the US Postal Service.

Individuals who have filed an unemployment claim and have received a notification that they are not an insured worker will also be contacted by the DES mid to late week with further instructions on what information will be needed and how to complete the filing process for the PUA. The same notification by DES as stated above will apply.

The DES notification will require those self-employed, gig workers, independent contractors, and those who otherwise do not qualify for regular unemployment benefits to provide proof of employment and they may also choose to provide proof of earnings to potentially increase the amount of benefits received each week.

Examples of acceptable forms which provide proof of employment include business cards, advertisements, telephone listings, business licenses, etc. Examples of acceptable forms of proof of earnings will include copies of income tax returns with related Schedules C, E, F and SE, Form K-1 and/or Form 1099-Misc. Individuals will receive instructions from the DES on how to securely submit proof through the UInteract system.

The PUA benefits will be retroactive to when an individual was negatively affected by the coronavirus, however, the individual will need to provide proof. PUA payments are estimated to be issued within 10 days of eligibility determination. Claimants should log into UInteract.labor.mo.gov for the most up to date status of eligibility and payments.

Individuals who do not have enough work history or who were unable to begin their new job because of the pandemic are also encouraged to apply for unemployment. If they receive a notice that they are not an insured worker, they will also receive notification from the DES on how to complete their application for the PUA program.

Additionally, the DES anticipates it will also begin rolling out the provisions of the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program beginning the week of April 26, 2020. This program will provide up to an additional 13 weeks of unemployment to those that have exhausted their regular unemployment benefits. Once the PEUC program is operational, the DES will notify all potentially eligible individuals. The DES encourages claimants who have exhausted their unemployment benefits, and still have an active benefit year, to continue to file weekly requests for payments.

The DES continues to urge people to file for unemployment benefits at uinteract.labor.mo.gov. UInteract is available 24/7 and is mobile-friendly. Over 90%

of the people who have applied through UInteract have been able to do so without assistance. Claimants should take extreme care to provide accurate information. Typos, wrong dates, or other errors, will cause a delay in processing payments.

Before calling the DES, check for additional information on unemployment by visiting labor.mo.gov/coronavirus, watch how-to videos at labor.mo.gov/des/videos, check for correspondence and claim status on your account at uinteract.labor.mo.gov and ask unemployment questions of the Department's virtual assistant at labor.mo.gov.