

# Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)



We have compiled this list of frequently asked questions about the **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)** program to be able to assist you. For more information, please visit our websites: [www.getkansasbenefits.gov](http://www.getkansasbenefits.gov) or [www.dol.ks.gov](http://www.dol.ks.gov); or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.



## **What is Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)?**

PUA is a broad program that expands access to unemployment, in addition to what state and federal law already pay. This includes those who traditionally are not able to get unemployment such as:

- Self-employed
- Independent contractors
- “Gig” workers such as Uber and Lyft drivers
- Employees of religious organizations whose employment has been impacted by COVID-19;
- Those who lack sufficient work history to file a claim or have been disqualified for state benefits but who are impacted directly by COVID-19.



## **I have not worked in the last two years. Can I get PUA benefits?**

Likely not. Like all unemployment programs there must be a connection to the labor market either by showing work history or showing concurrent attempts to join the labor market.



## **I have not been working, but I had an offer to start a job that was rescinded or delayed due to COVID-19, can I get PUA?**

Potentially. Definite plans to join the labor force are enough of a connection. You must still be directly impacted by COVID-19.



## **What does it mean for my unemployment to be directly impacted by COVID-19?**

This means that your unemployment must be caused directly by COVID-19 in one of the following ways:

- You have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are seeking diagnosis because you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- You live in a house where someone in that same household has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- You are providing care for a family member or household member who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- You are the primary caregiver for someone who cannot attend school or some other facility because it has been closed because of COVID-19, AND the availability of that school or facility is needed in order for you to work.

- You cannot report to work due to an imposed quarantine resulting directly from COVID-19 (cannot be self-imposed).
- You have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19.
- You were scheduled to begin employment but are unable to do so as a direct result of COVID-19 (the business closed, you were mandated quarantine, or have been diagnosed).
- You have become the head of the household because of the death of the usual head of household that was caused by COVID-19.
- You have been forced to quit your job as a direct result of COVID-19.
- Your work has closed because of COVID-19.
- You are an independent contractor who does not have a traditional place of business, but you cannot provide or sell your services due to the direct impact of COVID-19.



**I was offered the option to work from home, but I chose not to work. Am I eligible for PUA?**

No. If you are able to work from home, you cannot be paid PUA.



**I am not working due to COVID-19, but I am being paid leave from my employer. Am I eligible for PUA?**

Likely not. If you are being paid by the employer as if you were working your usual work hours and rate of pay, then you are not eligible for PUA. If you are being paid leave but not being paid your usual wages, then you may be eligible for some PUA—it would depend on the amount you are being paid just like if you are earning money while on unemployment benefits.



**I formerly worked on a small farm or for a church or religious organization. Am I eligible for PUA?**

Yes, provided your unemployment was caused directly by COVID-19, you may be eligible for PUA.



**How much will I receive if I am eligible for PUA?**

Like state unemployment, this depends on your work history during the base period. The base period for PUA is the most recent tax year (i.e. 2019). We will use the same calculation as we use for state unemployment to determine your benefit amount. If you lack sufficient work or earnings but otherwise meet all requirements, then you will be eligible for the minimum. The minimum you can receive is \$192. The maximum you could receive is \$488.



### **Does FPUC also apply to PUA payments?**

Yes. In addition to your weekly amount, you are eligible for the additional \$600 payments for weeks between March 29, 2020, and July 25, 2020.



### **How long is PUA available?**

PUA is available for eligible claimants from February 2, 2020, until December 26, 2020. It is only available for 39 weeks within that period of time. If you received state unemployment or extended benefits, then the number of weeks for PUA is reduced from 39 by the number of weeks you received state and extended benefits.



### **How do I apply for PUA?**

The program is not currently operational. However, at this time, you can apply for regular unemployment insurance benefits as you must be ineligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits in order to qualify for PUA. When the program is up and running, we will share information on our website, social media, and the news on additional steps to apply for PUA.



### **Do I need any documentation for my application?**

Yes. You will need to provide proof of your quarterly earnings during 2019.



### **The program is not operational yet, but is there anything I can do to get ready for when it is up and running?**

Yes. You should file a state unemployment claim. One of the things we must do is show that you are not entitled to state benefits. A denial from the state will be the best evidence of this. You should also start gathering needed employment documents to prove your quarterly earnings in 2019.



### **When will PUA be operational?**

At this time, we estimate that we will be able to accept applications for PUA by May 12, 2020 and that payments will begin being issued by May 25, 2020.