

Questions from Individual Town Hall – 4/22/20

1. Who qualifies for CARES Act funds?

Individuals who are unemployed as a direct result of COVID-19.

2. I was laid off due to COVID-19. My employer called yesterday and said they were planning to reopen in 2 weeks but I was offered way less money to come back. Can I still claim for the weeks that I go back and still get some of the \$600 make up pay from the CARES Act to get closer to my usual salary until the job is up and running enough to pay my full salary?

You may be able to collect partial unemployment benefits when you are working less than 35 hours in a week and earning less than your regular unemployment weekly benefit amount, which does not include the \$600. If you are eligible for a weekly payment, full or partial, you will receive the \$600.

3. Is there a separate registration for COVID-19 employees laid off? Is that available?

Yes, if you need to file for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance or the Pandemic Extension, you will have to file for those separately from regular unemployment. Right now, these are not yet available in our system, but we hope to have them ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

4. Most people are unemployed due to COVID-19, so they have to wait to apply for unemployment when the registration is available? Is that correct?

That is correct.

5. Can I apply for the PUA and not the UI?

No, first we must see if you are eligible for regular unemployment. If you are not, then you can apply for PUA. When the PUA application is available, it will check for both regular unemployment eligibility and then for PUA eligibility.

6. Before the stimulus CARES benefit, I was drawing \$275.00 minus taxes to bring home \$248.00. With the \$600.00 benefit shouldn't I be making \$848.00 rather than \$788.00?

Taxes are withheld at 10% from both programs. \$788 is the correct amount.

7. I work in the oil field. I heard oil and gas workers are not able to get the COVID-19 relief (\$600.00 extra). Is that correct? There are some fields that won't let sales personnel on their locations due to the COVID-19 virus, so it does in a way affect oil and gas.

No. The \$600 is paid on top of any unemployment insurance program, as long as you are otherwise eligible to collect benefits for the week up until 07/25/20.

8. Does the additional \$600 bring your weekly pay up to \$600 or is this in addition to your current weekly payment amount?

The \$600 is in addition to the currently weekly payment. If you chose to have federal income tax withheld from your regular weekly payments, it will be withheld from the \$600 payment as well.

9. If we're already receiving UI, when will \$600/week payment for back pay to March 29th be issued?

CARES act \$600 payments began to be issued the week of April 20th.

10. You only receive the additional \$600.00 if you are on the pandemic unemployment, is that correct?

No, this is not correct. The additional \$600 is paid to all eligible unemployment claimants that have approved weekly certifications.

11. If I qualified for unemployment on reduced hours am I eligible for the additional \$600, or is the \$600 only available if I am completely out of work?

The CARES act additional \$600 is available to all eligible unemployment claimants that have approved weekly certifications.

12. If I'm missing a \$600/week payment from the first week, how do I rectify it?

If you feel there is a discrepancy in your payment amount, please call the Claim Center at 307-473-3789.

13. When can I apply for a PUA?

Right now, this is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

14. Do we have an idea of when PEUC will be available?

Right now, this is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

15. Regarding Pandemic Unemployment, does a person have to have the base period wages to be eligible? So, if I had \$3,000 wages in 2019 when I was a student, but now

my 2020 job is unavailable because the Governor closed my place of employment and I have been off work since March.

No, you do not have to have base period wages. But, you must certify that you are unemployed as a direct result of COVID-19.

16. If you are an independent contractor, will you need to have proof of a job search and a resume on the website?

No. This requirement is waived for this program.

17. If one of our jobs is self-employment and our hours have been reduced, when can we claim those hours for unemployment?

Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates. Each week, when you certify for payment, you must report any hours worked and earnings you made during that week.

18. I am a sole practitioner massage therapist and I have been shut down since March 20, 2020. I need to know when and if I can apply for unemployment.

Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

19. What about child care owners who have a few children in care, but their income is greatly reduced. Are they eligible for unemployment benefits?

Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates. Each week, when you certify for payment, you must report any hours worked and earnings you made during that week.

You may be able to collect partial unemployment benefits when you are working less than 35 hours in a week and earning less than your regular unemployment weekly benefit amount.

20. As an independent contractor (RV tour guide) I had a contract to begin a tour on March 18th and I also have several other contracts for over the summer. My last date of work was in October 2019. Obviously, my wages come mostly in the summer. How will this work? Also, most of my work is out of state, and the company I work for is located in Texas. I have my 1099 from last year. I am waiting for the PUA portal to sign up. But I know I don't fit "in the box". Can you reassure me?

Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

We will have to investigate your particular situation to determine whether or not you will be eligible in Wyoming or if you will need to file in Texas.

21. Is there a way as a sole proprietor to estimate how much my UI payment will be?

The minimum weekly benefit amount for PUA (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance) is \$193. This will be determined by reviewing your 2019 tax documents.

22. For self-employed (Wyoming LLC single member), what are the documentation requirements for the PUA? Do we need to provide our 2019 tax filing docs (1040, Schedule C), etc.?

We will need your 2019 tax documents.

23. Is the PUA dollar-based? By that I mean can it "run out of money" like the small business loan program?

You may be eligible to collect up to 39 weeks of benefits on the PUA program. This program ends as of 12/26/20.

24. My claim was exhausted in March. When will I get the 13-week extension?

Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

25. I am already drawing unemployment weekly, but it was supposed to end this week. Will my unemployment benefits be extended to additional weeks?

Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

26. My UI benefits expired 07/2019. Am I eligible for a 13-week extension? If so, how do I do it?

Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

27. Do the additional 13 weeks begin after the 26-week maximum?

Yes, that is correct, but the program ends as of 12/26/20.

28. So, I don't apply yet if I am not normally eligible but my job is closed due to COVID? Or do I apply now?

Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

29. What are the requirements going to be for PEUC?

You must have either exhausted your benefits on your current unemployment claim or your benefit year has expired. If you are not eligible for a new regular unemployment claim, you may be eligible for PEUC. You will have to meet our other continuing eligibility requirements for each week you file.

30. Does the PEUC extension expire on July 25th?

The PEUC program end date is 12/26/20.

31. Should we continue to file weekly online if benefits have exhausted for an additional 13 weeks? Do individuals who qualify for CARES Act qualify for an extra \$600 for the additional 13 weeks?

Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

Do not file your continued claims until the program is in place.

Yes, if you are otherwise eligible for a weekly payment, the \$600 will also be paid up until 07/25/20.

32. If my unemployment runs out in May, do I reapply then or will it continue for 13 more weeks?

Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates and then reapply.

33. If you are an independent contractor will you also be eligible for the extra \$600?

Yes, if you are otherwise eligible for a weekly payment, the \$600 will also be paid up until 07/25/20.

34. When can gig workers like myself apply for COVID relief?

Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

35. If I am told there are only 2 days of work this week and not any work next week but beyond that, I will be told on a weekly basis, can I file for UI? Can I also file for COVID?

Apply as soon as your hours have been reduced. You may be able to collect partial unemployment benefits when you are working less than 35 hours in a week and earning

less than your regular unemployment weekly benefit amount, which does not include the \$600. If you are eligible for a weekly payment, full or partial, you will receive the \$600.

36. I've only worked 3 weeks when I was furloughed, do I qualify for unemployment?

Right now, the PUA program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

We will have to investigate your particular situation to determine what type of benefits you will be eligible for.

37. Since I was laid off from a non-profit, is there any way for me to collect Unemployment?

Yes, you may potentially be eligible for PUA. Right now, this program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

38. Do you have to be off for a certain number of days? I work for a service industry so our business is day-to-day.

Apply as soon as your hours have been reduced. You may be able to collect partial unemployment benefits when you are working less than 35 hours in a week and earning less than your regular unemployment weekly benefit amount.

Each week, when you certify for payment, you must report any hours worked and earnings you made during that week.

39. If we ourselves have had to work fewer hours to homeschool our child, can we draw unemployment?"

Apply as soon as your hours have been reduced. You may be able to collect partial unemployment benefits when you are working less than 35 hours in a week and earning less than your regular unemployment weekly benefit amount.

Each week, when you certify for payment, you must report any hours worked and earnings you made during that week.

40. How do I submit certified weekly payment filing - what website or what phone number?

The fastest way to file is online at wyui.wyo.gov Weekly certifications can also be filed by calling 307- 473-3789. Calling after normal business hours is advised to file weekly certifications.

41. If I get to go back to work May 1 (if the Governor lifts orders) but my place of work was closed March through April and pandemic wasn't available yet can I still apply for back pay?

If you are self-employed, right now, the PUA program is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates. You can request a backdate.

42. How do I relay the information my hours were cut because of the COVID virus?

We will ask for your reason for separation when you apply for a claim. Indicate your hours have been reduced. You can also report this on your weekly claims for payment.

43. So we do or we do not have to register to look for work if laid off as a result of COVID-19?

You will be sent a letter when your claim is established that tells you to register for work. However, do not have to register for work at this time if your reason for being unemployed is directly related to COVID-19.

44. What if I'm job attached and they cover my health insurance when I'm not working, but if I work any hours it is taken to cover my insurance you stated my employer has to cover 50% of my wages do I see that or is that included on unemployment or does it count since they are covering my health insurance if I'm not working?

For regular unemployment claims, your employer must have paid at least 50% of your wages in 2019, and they must intend to call you back to work within 12 weeks. For COVID-19 claims, you are not required to seek work or register for work. The health insurance being paid by your employer does not have to be reported to unemployment. Earnings, however, must be reported in the week you perform the work.

45. Question about base period eligibility for UI: If part of my 2019 pay was received from workers' comp due to a work-related injury, will that be considered as part of one's weekly UI benefit?

Payments from Workers' Compensation are not considered wages and are not usable to calculate unemployment benefits. However, if your injury date was within the last 36 months and you were released from TTD within the last 60 days, you may be eligible for a wage credit freeze, where we would calculate your benefits based upon your earnings a year prior to the injury.

46. What is the realistic time frame it takes to apply for unemployment online? I have heard of people being kicked out.

For an average claim, it may take 30 minutes and you should not be timed out. If you are, you can go back in and pick up where you left off.

47. What if you are job attached, but your employer is not able to rehire you at the end of 12 weeks?

At the end of your 12-weeks job attachment, your employer must contact us to request a possible extension. If not, you may still be eligible for unemployment, but would be required to register for work and seek work.

48. How do I get a PIN number?

You may email dwscspui.benefits@wyo.gov to request a PIN reset.

49. How do we notify you that our job was affected by COVID-19? Such as I was laid off because of COVID-19.

When you file your initial claim for unemployment, there is a specific question asking if your reason for being unemployed is due to COVID-19.

50. My hours got reduced due to COVID-19 and I am receiving UI benefits, but this week my employer sold his business to another company, but the new company had no position or work for me. What do I do now?

If you already have an unemployment claim established, and are currently collecting benefits, you can continue filing for benefits.

51. I worked only the first Q1 of 2020 in Wyoming, but it was my last contract work, and significant. Should I apply with Wyoming? I was planning to stay and continue working in Wyoming. My past work (18 months) was mostly in California and Idaho.

You must file for regular unemployment in either California or Idaho. They can combine your wages from both states. If you are eligible for regular unemployment in either of those states, you would not be eligible for PUA in Wyoming.

52. I am furloughed with BNSF Railway. Due to the length of time I've been with them, I don't qualify for RR unemployment until July 2020. COVID has caused the furloughs to last longer than they should have. Should I qualify for pandemic unemployment? I don't qualify for any state unemployment because the RR doesn't pay into Wyoming UI.

You may be eligible to file for PUA. Right now, this is not yet available in our system, but we hope to have it ready soon. Please watch wyomingworkforce.org for updates.

53. What is the purpose of the US Bank debit card if not receiving payments?

The US Bank debit card is the default payment method for Wyoming unemployment. It is issued at the time the claim is filed, regardless of eligibility.

54. What happens if you don't get the 2 required job contacts? There are only so many jobs available for certain types of employment.

If you have to meet this requirement and do not, you may be disqualified from receiving benefits during that week.

55. If you were let go from a job as a contractor due to COVID-19, do they need to verify this is the reason?

If you apply for PUA, you must self-certify that your reason for being unemployed is directly related to COVID-19. Claims will be audited for fraud and claimants found to be fraudulent will be prosecuted.

56. I'm a military spouse. My husband received orders to PCS. I gave my employer 30-days' notice to find a replacement, which they did. Once they found a replacement, I helped train the new person, and then COVID-19 happened. Now there is a DOD Stop Movement, our PCS is on hold, but I am unable to work because my employer already hired someone new. I have been approved for Unemployment Benefits, but can you explain what program I am qualified for?

If you are already collecting unemployment benefits from Wyoming, you are receiving regular benefits. If you are eligible for a weekly payment, full or partial, you will receive the \$600.

57. Are you considered job attached if you are working only part-time where you have been working because of the current situation?

If your separation or reduction in hours was directly related to COVID-19, you do not have to seek work at this time.

58. I was paid a severance which I received this week. Do I have to report that when I file?

Yes, you must report severance payments when received.

59. For the census workers that were in-between time meaning they were working in Fall 2019, put on hold and were supposed to work again but the COVID-19 stopped them from going back. Can they file for unemployment?

Yes, you can apply for unemployment.

60. What if we are an independent contractor but we had wages in 2019 which made us eligible for unemployment but because they did not include income from self-employment and the weekly benefits are low because of this. Do I need to refile when the CARES program is up and running to qualify for higher benefits?

If you are eligible for any amount of regular unemployment, you must continue with that claim. You are not eligible to file for PUA.

61. How do I know if my UI status has been recorded as “due to COVID”? Is there somewhere on my claim summary that we can see that?

When you filed your initial claim for unemployment, you answered whether or not you were unemployed due to COVID-19.

62. Will the hiring freeze for the State of Wyoming positions end once Wyoming reopens the economy?

Unfortunately, at this time, we do not have a time frame as to how long the hiring freeze will last. This is a decision that is made by the Governor’s Office and we must take direction from A&I in regards to the freeze. In this sense, we are at their mercy.

63. If you use some PTO time, can you also file UI and CARES?

Yes, but you must report it.

64. Why do they ask if you were out of town for more than 2 days?

Claimants must be available for work; if you are out of town for more than 2 days you would be considered unavailable for work.

65. I am contracted with a substitute who works with me, I am paid by a contractor and if the sub works, I have to pay out of the money sent to me since I am not making that money, do I just subtract the amount being paid to the sub from the total paid?

We will need to investigate this further. Please contact us at 307- 473-3789.

66. I was offered a part-time job with the census but it's been canceled until later, can I still apply for COVID relief?

Yes, you can apply.

67. What are the rules and options for an employee who is off work due to illness (both due to COVID19 and not due to COVID). If an employee has exhausted all paid leave statuses and is still unable to return to work, what are their options to have income

and continued health insurance? (Assume employer has not reduced their hours and will rehire when they are able to work)

Employees will need to contact US-DOL regarding regulations/options under the Fair Labor Standards Act and/or Family Medical Leave Act, or the Department of Insurance. None of these questions fall under the purview of Wyoming Labor Standards.

If you are unemployed due to COVID-19, you can apply for unemployment benefits.

68. What if an employee gets sick or exposed and has to be quarantined. They don't have any sick leave and only have 2 days of EPDO. The employee has not been laid off, but cannot work for 14 days, are there any benefits available under unemployment for the time period of being sick or quarantined?

If you are unemployed due to COVID-19, you can apply for unemployment benefits.

69. How does UI work for 12 hour rotating shift employees? Does it start on a Monday and end on a Sunday. If I work one or two days during that week and get furloughed can I still get UI for the week?

You will report the hours you worked from Sunday through Saturday in a calendar week.

70. How do I go about getting help to refresh my resume so that HR software programs will flag my resume to be looked at?

All Workforce Centers provide resume assistance. Please reach out to the nearest Workforce Center and ask for additional assistance. Or you can call me at 307-777-8512 and I can direct you or refer you to a Workforce Specialist for further assistance.

71. Which job search sites does Spider Software monitor?

The Spider Software pulls from many sources. This list will give you an idea, but is not all inclusive:

- Newspaper
- Corporate Websites
- Public Job Boards
- USA Jobs

72. I have a question regarding the WIOA program. I have been told that I do not qualify as I have an advanced degree. Have any changes been made to this program due to current circumstances/COVID and/or the dislocated worker program?

If an individual has been laid off due to COVID or due to no fault of their own, and has the necessary documentation needed for eligibility, the individual should be found eligible as the advance degree does not impact the eligibility criteria.

The WIOA Case Manager would look at the advanced degree, to determine marketable skills and assist the individual in career readiness activities. For example, update the individual's resume, help with job applications, and/or provide interview guidance. If through an extensive job search, the individual cannot obtain employment with their current skills set, the program could discuss additional training options.