

Questions for Claimant Q&A, June 19, 2020

Please know that we have as many people working on unemployment claims as we can get. We also have as many people manning the phone lines and making calls back to people who need to be contacted as we can. There are a lot of claimants out there with questions, though, so sometimes it takes several days for us to reach you. If you have been added to a call-back list, or if you have left a voicemail message with our Unemployment Insurance staff, please be patient and wait for us to contact you. Don't call and leave another message or ask to be added to a call-back list as well. We will get to you as soon as we can, but if multiple UI representatives have multiple messages from you, it takes time away from those representatives helping others who also have questions. Also, if you are expecting a call back from our Unemployment Insurance division, please answer the phone when we call. Our representatives leave voicemail messages when they can if the person they are calling does not answer, but not everyone has voicemail. Please also check to make sure your voicemail is not full. If we cannot reach you when we call, you will have to call the 307-473-3789 number again if we miss you when we try to contact you. Please remember we also have the call center at 888-674-7699 as well, and many questions can be answered at that number with a shorter hold time.

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) Background

PEUC became available on 6/12/2020. Claimants can file for PEUC online at wyui.wyo.gov or over the telephone by calling 307-473-3789. PEUC is an extra 13 weeks of benefits for individuals who have exhausted their regular state Unemployment Insurance claim. The weekly benefit amount stays the same as the original Unemployment Insurance claim. PEUC is effective 3/29/2020 through 12/26/2020. The 13 weeks must be used within that time frame. Claimants must be able, available and looking for work; registered in Wyoming at Work; complete 2 job searches per week and keep track of those work searches to be eligible for PEUC. Claimants that are filing for retroactive weeks must have met these work and work search requirements during each week they are filing for. The extra \$600 from the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) is paid in addition to PEUC if a claimant is (or was) eligible to receive a payment for a week between 3/2/2020 and 7/25/2020. FPUC payments end 7/25/2020. As of the date of this Virtual Town Hall, FPUC has not been extended.

1. How do I get proof to the Unemployment office that I am registered with Wyoming at Work and am doing what they ask?

[If the individual is registered in Wyoming at work they do not need to send proof; Wyoming unemployment staff can look that up on their end. If the individual is out of](#)

state, we do need proof (printed registration page) sent to us. Proof can be mailed to PO Box 2760, Casper, Wyoming 83602 or faxed to 307-473-3726.

2. Are weekly benefits for self-employed workers being determined based on net or gross wages? Is this a change from how calculations were set up to determine weekly benefit amounts for self-employed workers in March and early April?

The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program is different from any other Unemployment program and is based on net self-employed wages. If a claimant provided an initial estimate when first filing their claim using gross wages we would later need to modify this to use actual net wages instead. This can decrease the weekly benefit amount.

3. Last Friday, after applying online I mailed in 11 weeks of weekly forms for PEUC back pay, starting with the week ending April 4th. They haven't been scanned into the correspondence tab yet, about how long will it take to process those? I'm worried they got lost or something, should I fax them in as well?

We ask that you only provide the information one time; if you mail it and fax it it duplicates effort on our end and can cause problems. It takes a nightly job to put extension in, after that it takes a human to review the claim and then it takes a couple of more days for the process to complete. We do not have a standard time frame as each claim can be different.

4. When can we expect the Retro pay from PEUC to be Paid?

After the PEUC claim is established, a human must manually back date the claim and complete another step to pay a retroactive claim. If a claimant filed the weeks on WYUI in the past, the system can then complete the process. If the back-dated claims are not currently in the system we will send you claim forms and you will need to mail or fax them back to us. If the back-dated claims are for a time period that is less than 6 weeks you can file them online via wyui.wyo.gov. If the back-dated claims are more than 6 weeks in the past, we have to mail you the forms and manually process them.

5. When are the paper forms for PEUC retro pay going to be mailed out? Is this still the procedure?

Back-dated claims are not automatic; claimants need to call us or send in a written request to start the back-date process. Please include your name, the last 4 digits of your social security number and the specific dates you are trying to file back-dated claims for.

6. I was told that I would be able to file for past weeks with the PEUC. But when I started the only week available was for the week ending June 14th. What should I do?

The process to back-date a claim is manual. The WYUI system is set up to have claims start the week a claimant is approved making past weeks unavailable by default. Since the back dating process is manual, it takes human intervention on our end to get the back-dated claim processed. Claimants can use the 13 week extension any time between now and 12/26/2020; claims don't necessarily have to be back dated. Claimants must also meet (or have met for past weeks) the standard Unemployment Insurance requirements to get the payment. These requirements are being able and available for work, registered in Wyoming at Work, searching for at least 2 jobs per week and keeping track of the job searches.

7. If you are called back to work but have since moved to a different town can you still claim benefits as long as you are doing work searches in the new town? Or are you expected to go back to the old job?

If the individual relocated, they can still file as long as they are in the United States. Claimants must be registered for work with their local American Job Center/Workforce Center in the new location. Claimants that refuse a new offer for work will have an issue that we have to address. We routinely research claims to make sure individuals are still eligible.

8. If a person was furloughed (job attached) at the beginning of May and has been told to return to work on September 1st (via a letter from their employer), will they be required to do job searches in August? Total time unemployed, job attached, will be 16 weeks.

Job attachment in Wyoming lasts for 12 weeks. After 12 weeks if the individual is not back to work they are required to register for work and look for work. This continues as long as the claimant is filing for Unemployment. Employers can request an additional 4 weeks of job attachment by sending in a formal request on company letterhead. The additional 4 weeks of job attachment may be approved if the circumstances are due to COVID.

9. I have health conditions that put me at higher risk of contracting COVID; my Dr has strongly recommended that I not be exposed to the virus at my job at a large motel. Can I leave and still collect unemployment?

There is a potential that the individual will be eligible for Unemployment, but each claim can be different and is evaluated on a case by case basis. Every separation has to be evaluated on an individual basis and make sure it meets federal and state regulations. Claimants must be able and available for work and completing the work search requirements.

10. How do you select which day of the week you send out benefits payments? Is this week on time.

Payments are made every week day; nightly system batch jobs process weekly certifications that were filed the previous day. As long as there are no issues stopping payment; payments are made. For example, if a claimant files on a Sunday or Monday, the claim should pay out on Tuesday to our bank which then has to go to your bank or the debit card. Claimants should see payment a couple of days after WYUI indicates “paid”. We have not had any system problems preventing payments for a couple of weeks now.

11. I sent a request through the WYUI page under the request for assistance to inform you of the dates that I have completed the required two contacts. Is that the best way to contact you regarding backdating our PEUC claim?

Filing online is the best way to file weekly certifications because it captures everything in writing. To request a backdated claim please mail, fax or call us and include your full name, the last 4 digits of your social security number, and the specific dates you are trying to file for. We are backlogged on the Request for Assistance items in the WYUI system so it is better to mail, fax or call us.

12. Should substitute teachers claim through the summer? We have been told yes, we have been told no, we need an answer with a concrete explanation.

There is a federal rule called “reasonable assurance”; if you work for a school district in any capacity then you have to express if you have a reasonable assurance that you will go back to back to work after a scheduled break. Since summer is a scheduled break individuals are likely not eligible. There was leniency during COVID because of the shut down that lasted through the end of the school year. Individuals could collect unemployment if they have other qualifying non-school wages. Currently, Wyoming Unemployment is approaching this type of situation it as if everything is open per government. If the teacher's contract falls through or if schools don't open we might be able to go back and look at missed weeks during the summer. During this time frame substitute teachers can keep submitting weekly certifications, keep meeting the normal weekly requirements (able and available for work, at least two documented job searches per week just in case there is a possibility of filing for retroactive claims.

13. How do I know if I successfully registered for unemployment under Wyoming's requirements?

To find out if your claim went through log onto your WYUI account (wyui.wyo.gov) and look under the Inquiry tab and you will see the claim. The dollar amount eligible to receive is shown here. Claimants can also look on the Correspondence tab; if we processed the claim there will be a letter indicating the weekly benefit amount. Most claimants will see a B9 form. Claimants on Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) will see a PUA-25 form. Documents available in Correspondence will have more details. If there are issues holding up the claim it can be seen on the Inquiry tab. For PEUC (Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation) claimants ONLY, there is a defect

in WYUI: if you see the word “sequestration” and the benefit amount on the Inquiry tab, be aware the amount shown may be incorrect. In the Correspondence tab the B9 form has the correct amount. We are working to fix this defect.

14. I'm not clear on what the dollar amount is for the PEUC Extension benefit. Is it the lower Wyoming UI amount, the federal \$600, or both?

The dollar amount is the regular UI amount from the most recent eligible claim plus \$600 in FPUC (Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation). The additional FPUC amount is only for claims filed for weeks between 3/29/2020 and 7/25/2020. Some of the online screens are misleading on the weekly benefit amount right now so check the B9 document in the Correspondence tab to view the correct amount.

15. If someone is collecting PUA, do they need to additionally file for the PECU 13 week extension or is it automatic?

If someone is on PUA (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance) and they are currently eligible for PEUC due to a prior exhausted claim they need to apply for PEUC as soon as possible. The extension weeks must be paid prior to weeks from the PUA program. If a claimant is only eligible for PUA they are not eligible for PEUC (these are individuals with no prior no regular Unemployment claim from 7/1/2018 through now).

16. Just to clarify, substitutes teachers should still file our claims weekly just in case we are not back to school in the fall?

Individuals that may want to go back and try to receive payment for that timeframe should continue to file weekly claims.

17. I read that PUA applicants do not need to do work searches. Do normal unemployment applicants laid off due to COVID-19 need to do 2 weekly work searches? Also, if someone is collecting PUA, do they need to complete the 2 work search per week requirement for PEUC, or is it waived as it is for PUA?

The PUA (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance) program is very different from the other unemployment programs. For the life of the PUA claim (up to 39 weeks), individuals do not have to seek work. This remains in effect unless the US Department of Labor changes the PUA program requirements. All other unemployment programs follow the job attachment and COVID-related unemployment rules; after 12 weeks of being work search exempt, claimants must register and seek work. Almost everything in Wyoming is open now and most restrictions are gone; our hope is to get everyone back to work as soon as possible.

18. What is the fax number we would send the back dated weekly claims for PEUC? Also what is the best number to try and call?

The Fax number is 307-473-3726. Please include your full name, last 4 digits of your social security number and a brief explanation about being on the PEUC extension and need to file backdated claims. Also include the specific dates. Make sure the information is legible - especially with handwritten information or type the information if possible. Claimants can go to any one of the local Workforce Centers (full list of locations here: <http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/contact/employment/>) and use the resource computers to type up and print out the information. The Call Center phone number is 307-473-3789. The additional/remote call center phone number is 888-674-7699.

19. I received a letter that I'm required to register with workforce and complete job searches now that 12 week job attachment has expired. I went online and made my resume active, other than actually applying for jobs is there anything else I need to do?

We recommend claimants read the Unemployment guidebook for details. The book can be found online here:

http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/_docs/ui/Wyoming-Claimant-Guidebook.pdf

Claimants must meet the basic eligibility requirements of being able and available for work; actively looking for work, registered in Wyoming at Work and making a minimum of 2 job contacts every week. The job contacts must be with different companies each week. Claimants must keep a written record of the job searches in case they are selected for an audit. If a claimant is working part time they must keep track of earnings and hours worked and accurately report these when filing the claim each week. If a claimant receives vacation, sick leave or severance pay or otherwise becomes unavailable for work they must also include this information in their weekly certifications.

20. I applied for the PEUC last Friday, nothing is showing on my account online yet, and no new correspondences either. Just checking to make sure that is normal?

That is normal because there are a few steps involved on our end in the process including a few nightly system processes which are run only on week nights. We are working on resolving one more programming issue where a claimant files for the extension but never reopened the regular claim. The WYUI system is not recognizing the extension that was filed. In this case, there is nothing the claimant needs to do; we have to fix it.

21. Is PUA paid for 26 weeks or 39 weeks?

PUA (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance) is for up to 39 weeks.

22. Would we put our work search contacts on the form that we fax in for back dated PEUC.

Yes, there is a spot on the back of the form -- fill it out and turn it in. These are the exact same questions as when a claimant files online.

23. Does someone on PUA need to file for the PEUC 13 week extension if eligible before Dec 26? Or, does PEUC have absolutely nothing to do with PUA?

If an individual is receiving PUA (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance) but they happen to be eligible for the PEUC, they are required to file for the extension first. Claimants in this situation are asked to apply for the extension as soon as possible. We will also query our database to find these instances and contact the individuals.

24. I was let go, rehired because of the PPP, and let go again. Did my 12 weeks start the first time I submitted a claim or the second time when I filed an additional claim?

For the job attachment and being exempt, the time frame is 12 weeks from the effective date of the claim. If you meet the requirements now and you are truly job attached (going back in 12 weeks), and the employer paid 50% of your base period wages, job attachment would start over.