

Revised - Policy Clarification

Cash Assistance – PCA-20244-150

Medical Assistance – PMA-20244-350

Food Stamps – PFS-20244-550

Submitted: 12/14/2020

Agency: CAOs

Subject: Finalizing or Continuing the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Unemployment Compensation (UC) Income received due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency

Question: Is there any guidance on the PUA that ended December 31, 2020, and the new extension?

Response By: Policy Clarification Unit/DFA/DHS/DFPPM

Date: 1/12/21

Yes. The PUA and the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program were extended until March 14, 2021 and the maximum number of weeks an individual can claim coverage under UC, PUA or PEUC was expanded from 39 weeks of coverage to 50 weeks.

The COVID relief package was signed into law on December 27, 2020 and included an extension to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act provisions for the PUA and PEUC and renewed the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) through March 14, 2021. The approved FPUC payments are \$300 per week in addition to the calculated UC benefit. **The FPUC payments are exempt for income and resources per OPS 20-05-02 and PFS-20275-550.** The Pennsylvania (PA) Department of Labor and Industry began issuing payment the week of January 11, 2021.

The CAO should use the following guidance, OPS 20-05-02 and PFS-20275-550 regarding UC payments.

- At application, the CAO will count the UC income being received. If applicants have applied for UC benefits, reimbursement forms should be completed **for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) applicants. Delayed UC, PUA or PEUC benefits are subject to reimbursement criteria for TANF. FPUC payments that coincide with the PUA and PEUC are delayed**

and should not be counted at application. See the PA Department of Labor & Industry at <https://www.uc.pa.gov/Pages/AlertDetails.aspx> for current status and ability to file claims on the PUA and PEUC payments.

- Recipients must report the change in income on the Semi-Annual Review form or at Renewal. The CAO will take action and update income accordingly. Reimbursement forms should be completed for TANF recipients expecting delayed UC, PUA or PEUC benefits. Reminder that Lump Sum retroactive PUA or PEUC payments are excluded as income for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) but are counted as a resource. For treatment of lump sum payments see CAH 157 Lump Sum, SNAP HB 540.42 Lump Sum Resources and MAEH 357 Lump Sum.
- Recipients are required to report new or increased unearned income of \$50 or more. They are not required to report decreases in unearned income.

The CAO will act on all reported changes.

- If UC ended, the CAO will finalize the income keeping the following in mind;
 1. Individuals were covered under the PUA for a maximum of 39 weeks or until the week ending December 26, 2020. PUA has been extended to a maximum of 50 weeks or until March 14, 2021 but currently there is a lapse in receipt of benefit payments. It will end at that time regardless of how many weeks an individual may have remaining.
 2. Individuals covered under the PEUC were set to expire the week ending December 26, 2020. It has been extended until March 14, 2021 but currently there may be is a lapse in receipt of benefit payments.
 3. The FPUC ended on the week ending July 25, 2020. It has been renewed through March 14, 2021, and the amount reduced to \$300 per week. PA began issuing FPUC payments the week of January 11, 2021 for individuals receiving regular UC. FPUC payments that coincide with the PUA and PEUC are delayed. There may be a lapse in receipt of benefit payments.
 4. Also, the Lost Wages Assistance program, which provided an extra \$300 per week, closed on the week ending September 5, 2020 in PA due to the fund's depletion.

See related Policy Clarifications for further guidance:

PCA-20081-150, PMA-20081-350, PFS-20081-550, ~~PFS-19961-550~~,
PFS-20275-550, OPS 20-05-02