

How to apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

Attention: Beginning Monday, April 27, you can submit proof of your income for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) online through a new app.

PUA is a federal benefit available to workers who are unable to work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and do not qualify for unemployment insurance benefits in any state. The types of employment that PUA covers is listed below:

- ◆ The self-employed,
- ◆ Those seeking part-time employment,
- ◆ Church employees,
- ◆ Gig economy workers,
- ◆ Nonprofit and governmental workers,
- ◆ Workers who have exhausted regular unemployment compensation benefits,
- ◆ Individuals lacking sufficient work history, and
- ◆ Those who otherwise do not qualify for regular unemployment compensation or extended benefits under state or Federal law or PEUC.

You are required to file a claim, answer COVID-related questions, and submit proof of your income to be eligible for PUA. This can all be done online on the website. Please follow the instructions below:

Step 1

Apply for Unemployment Benefits

- ⇒ If you have not already done so, file an unemployment insurance claim application here: <https://initialclaims.labor.alabama.gov/>.
- ⇒ Read to the bottom of the page and click "Proceed."
- ⇒ ADOL will determine if you are eligible for a state unemployment claim.

Step 2

Visit your UI Claim Tracker

The day after you have filed an unemployment insurance claim application, visit your UI Claim Tracker page at <https://uiclaimstracker.labor.alabama.gov/>. This will tell you what your next steps are. If you are eligible to file for PUA, the UI Claim Tracker will provide a link to the new application which will allow you to answer questions and upload your documents.

If you have already filed a claim and been determined monetarily ineligible, the UI Claim Tracker will be updated with the link for you to upload your information.

Step 3

Submit proof of income

If you are eligible for PUA, follow the link in your UI Claim Tracker to the new app where you will:

⇒ **Complete the questions in the app.**

NOTICE: YOU DO NOT HAVE TO RESPOND ONLINE

Once you apply for regular Unemployment Benefits, and have been found ineligible for these benefits, you will automatically be mailed a letter with \$0 monetary determination. While this document extends appeal rights, it is not necessary for you to file an appeal. If you do not have internet access or do not wish to apply online, you may respond as directed in the paper notice.

Responding online will still be the fastest way to apply for PUA benefits. If you respond online, you may disregard the paper notice.

⇒ **Upload your proof of income document(s).** Your wage history needs to be established. The app will tell you which documents you need to upload. Some examples are:

- 2019 1099 Miscellaneous Income only
- 2019 W-2
- 2019 Pay stubs
- 2020 Pay stubs
- Form 1040 - U.S. Individual Income Tax Return
- A business license

If you have already sent in your financial documents via mail, fax, or email, you can either wait for them to be processed, or you can resubmit via the UI Claim Tracker. If there are no issues on your claim, the UI Claim Tracker will be the faster method for processing.

Following submission of documents, the application will tell you to visit the UI Claim Tracker page the following day to see updated status.

Step 4

Step 4: Next Steps

You will receive a determination letter by mail and will begin receiving the minimum allowable amount for PUA. **This may not be your final determination.**

ADOL will review your proof of income and issue a second determination letter to you if your benefit amount changes after review. If additional information is needed, you will be contacted.

The UI Claim Tracker page will keep you up-to-date on your claim's current status.

IF you have not provided sufficient documentation, you will be contacted if additional information is available. No additional action is necessary by you after you receive the notice unless we contact you directly.

Important note: None of the benefits described above, nor unemployment benefits of any kind, are available to employees who quit without good work-related cause, refuse to return to work, or refuse to receive full-time pay. Refusing to return to work could result in a disqualification for benefit eligibility. Attempts to collect unemployment benefits after quitting a job without good work-related cause is considered to be fraud. The CARES Act specifically provides for serious consequences for fraudulent cases including fines, confinement, and an inability to receive future unemployment benefits until all fraudulent claims and fines have been repaid. Employers are encouraged to utilize the New Hire system to report those employees who fail to return to work.

Other Important Information for Claimants

- PUA payments may be taxable. These payments will be included on your 1099G that you receive for the 2020 tax year. Taxes will be withheld from PUA payments if you have elected to have taxes withheld from your unemployment insurance benefits.
- You must continue to file your weekly claim application. When your proof of income has been reviewed and approved, you will be paid for all eligible back weeks you have reported.
- It takes an average of 21 business days for a first payment to be made on a claim.

Information for Employers

- Employers will not be charged for benefits paid to employees receiving PUA.
- If you have offered work to employees as the pandemic ends and your employee refuses to return to work, you must notify Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL) [HERE](#).
- Employers should ensure they are current and timely in filing quarterly unemployment insurance taxes so their employees receive benefits as quickly as possible.
- Employers should respond to all "Notice of Claim" notifications if a claim is filed for someone that is not working due to a reason other than COVID-19.
- Employers should respond to the "Notice of Claim" notifications to report any paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits.