

The New Federal Laws and Unemployment – Help when COVID-19 stops you from working

On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law.

This response to the corona virus adds:

1. \$600 to the amount of Unemployment Insurance (UI) you get **every week** between March 29th and July 25th 2020.
2. 13 more weeks of federal UI benefits to the number of weeks you can already get in state UI. This 13-week extension is called **Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)**.
3. 100% federal funding when due to high unemployment, up to another 26 weeks of federal benefits “trigger” on. These benefits, called **Extended Benefits** or **EB** are available for certain workers after PEUC runs out.
4. A new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program for workers who do not normally qualify for regular Unemployment Insurance.

Additionally, **Lost Wages Assistance (LWA)** available through FEMA adds \$300 weekly to your UI amount for certain unemployed workers unemployed during from July 26 through September 5, 2020.

[How do these changes help me and what do I have to do?](#)

[If you get Unemployment Insurance now](#)

You do not have to do anything different. Just keep recertifying. Every week you were unemployed since March 29, you should get an extra \$600/week until July 25th. And if you were unemployed starting August 1st, you should get an extra \$300/week in Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) on September 15, 2020 back to July 26, 2020 to September 5, 2020.

When you were approved for UI, the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) also approved a number of weeks up to 26 weeks for you to get UI. Once that number of weeks passes, you should get 13 more weeks automatically from the federal PEUC program. And after you have used up PEUC, you may be eligible for up to 20 more weeks of Extended Benefits (EB), depending on how many weeks you collected UI.

More information on UI is on pages 5 to 11.

If you had to stop working because of COVID-19

Apply for unemployment insurance as soon as you can.

Do I apply for Regular UI or PUA?

Regular Unemployment Insurance (UI), is the program for Massachusetts regular employees who lost their jobs before COVID-19. If you are a regular employee and you lost your job due to COVID-19 apply to this program. "Regular employees" have taxes withheld from their pay and get a W-2 form. Once your state checks run out you can also get 20 weeks of federal extended UI benefits or **Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation or PEUC** for any claim that you had applied for after July 7, 2018. And if you use up all your **PEUC** benefits, depending on how many weeks of regular UI you got, you may be eligible to get up to 20 weeks of **Extended Benefits or EB**.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), is a temporary unemployment insurance program. Congress created this program to help workers who are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance.

Apply for regular unemployment insurance if

1. You were earning \$5,100 or more from an employer in the prior 4 completed calendar quarters (approximately the past year), AND
2. Your employer was withholding taxes from your paycheck (or gave you a W-2 form for your taxes), AND
3. Your loss of income is due to COVID-19, OR
4. Apart from COVID-19, you were laid off, quit for good cause or had urgent, personal reasons for leaving your job, or you were fired and any alleged misconduct or rule violation was not intentional on your part.

You **cannot** get regular UI if:

- You can work from home and get paid.
- You are getting paid leave from your employer. Or
- You are not a citizen and you do not have work authorization.

See

- [COVID-19 related reasons for stopping work](#) to learn if your loss of income counts as "due to COVID."
- [COVID-19 and Regular Unemployment Insurance program](#) and

- [How do I apply?](#)

More information on Regular UI is on pages 5 to 11.

[Apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance \(PUA\)](#) if

You **lost income due to COVID-19** and:

- You do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance because of the kind of work you do. Or
- You cannot get regular UI because:
 - You already used up your regular UI and the 13 week PEUC extension and the 20 week EB extension if you are eligible for it.
 - Before you left work due to COVID-19, you were disqualified from regular UI when you lost your prior job and now you cannot get the 8 weeks of work you need to qualify for UI again.
 - You didn't earn enough or work long enough (generally at least 15 weeks) to get regular UI, OR
 - You were denied regular UI (you need to have applied for regular UI first) because you are a member of the clergy, a religious worker, a college or high-school student who lost part time work, including a work-study job due to COVID-19, or you cannot work because you need to provide full-time care to a child or adult in your home whose care facility is not available due to COVID-19.
- You **cannot** get PUA if:
 - You can work from home and get paid.
 - You are getting paid sick leave from your employer.
 - You are not a citizen and you do not have a United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) issued Alien Registration number (A number) and work authorization.
 - You earned \$5,100 or more in W-2 wages the previous year, which made you eligible on the basis of these earnings for UI. Because these wages made you eligible for regular UI, you were required to, but did not, apply for regular UI first.

See

- [COVID-19 related reasons for stopping work](#) to learn if your loss of income counts as "due to COVID."

- [COVID-19 and Regular Unemployment Insurance program](#) and
- [How do I apply for PUA?](#)

More information on PUA is on pages 12 to 20.

COVID-19 and Regular Unemployment Insurance

If you had to leave work because of COVID-19 you should be able to get Unemployment Insurance

If your hours were cut because of COVID-19, you may be able to get some Unemployment Insurance.

Keep in mind

If you get any UI at all, you will also get \$600 for every week you could not work between March 29 and July 25. You may also be eligible for an extra \$300 for every week you are unemployed as of July 26, 2020 until the week ending September 5, 2020 but only retroactively as long as the FEMA money lasts.

You will get 13 more weeks of federal UI (PEUC) added to the number of weeks you already get state Unemployment Insurance.

You may be eligible for up to an additional 20 more weeks of federal UI (EB) after you have used up PEUC.

COVID-19 related reasons for stopping work

You may qualify for regular Unemployment Insurance if you are not working because:

- You were diagnosed with COVID-19 or you have symptoms.
- A member of your household was diagnosed with COVID-19.
- You are caring for a family or household member who tested positive or was diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Your employer, or a government order told you to "self-quarantine."
- You have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine.
- Your immune system is compromised due to a serious health condition.
- You have a reasonable belief that because of COVID-19 going to work could harm your health, the health of your child or dependent, other immediate family member or household member.
- You do not have childcare or your child's school is only open for virtual learning. If your child's school is open for in-person learning, if you have a reasonable belief of harm to your child, family or household member, those factors will also be considered.

- Your place of work closed or reduced your hours because of COVID-19
- You had to quit your job because you tested positive for COVID-19 or you came into contact with someone who tested positive.

How much money do I need to have earned to qualify for regular UI?

You need to have earned \$5,100 in the past year and your total earnings need to be more than 30 X your weekly benefit [amount](#).

You cannot get regular UI if

- You can telework full-time with pay. But if your hours are reduced, you may be able to get some UI.
- You are getting paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits for the same hours you usually worked. But, if your paid leave is based on hours that were reduced because of COVID-19, you may be able to get some UI. See [How much UI can I get?](#)
- You quit a job that offers paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits.
- You are not a US citizen **and** you do not have a valid Social Security Number and work authorization.
- You quit work just to collect UI. This is UI fraud. Any UI payments collected fraudulently have to be paid back with interest before a new UI claim will be honored.
- If you applied for regular UI because you had W2 earnings of at least \$5,100 and you are a college or high school student who lost part time work due to COVID-19, or you are a clergy or religious worker (but you can get PUA for these reasons as long as you apply for regular UI first and get a denial).

How much UI can I get?

1. Everyone who gets any state or federal UI can get an **extra** \$600 per week from March 29, 2020 to July 25, 2020. This means if you only get \$1.00, you still get the \$600/week. This \$600/week is in addition to any state or federal UI you get in these 4 months.
If you are doing workshare (your employer applies for work share so that you work less hours and get UI to cover the days you don't work) you will get the extra \$600/week.
This \$600 a week has ended and a new added weekly benefit of \$300 called "**Lost Wages Assistance**" was available if you have been unemployed since July 26, 2020 to September 5, 2020.
2. The UI you get is:

About half the amount you earned every week when you were working. The most you can get is \$855/week.

Plus:

\$25/week for each child for whom you provide more than 50% support, and who is:

- under 18,
- under 24 and a full-time student, or
- cannot work because of mental or physical disabilities. There is no age limit for these children.

There is a limit on the weekly amount you can get for your children. You can only get \$25/week per child up to 50% of your weekly unemployment benefit.

Part-time Work

If you work part-time while you are getting UI, you can still get partial UI benefits. You can earn up to 1/3 of your benefit and your benefit will stay the same as if you were not working. This is called the "earnings disregard." Wages you earn over 1/3 of your benefit are deducted from your UI amount. You cannot earn more than your Unemployment benefit with the earnings disregard and still get Unemployment. This means that you cannot earn 133% or more than your weekly unemployment benefit.

For example:

If your **regular** UI benefit is \$300/week:

- You can earn \$100/week and you will not lose any of your regular UI benefit.
- Once you earn more than \$100, the UI benefit you get goes down with each dollar over \$100 that you earn.

As long as you get UI and you earn less than your benefit amount and earnings disregard, or \$399 or less in the example, you will get an additional \$600/week between 3/29/2020 and 7/25/2020. Even if you only get \$1.00 of partial UI, you still get the extra \$600 a week between 3/29/2020 and 7/25/2020 and an extra \$300 a week between 7/26/2020 and 9/5/2020.

How many weeks of UI benefits can I get?

Right now, the maximum number of weeks you can get Unemployment is up to 26 weeks regular benefits. Some people get less than 26 weeks because

of the way that the law calculates UI benefits. For an explanation about how this works, see <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/how-your-unemployment-benefits-are-determined>.

You can also get 13 weeks of the PEUC federal extension after your UI benefits run out as long as your benefits ran out after July 6, 2019.

You can also get up to another 20 weeks of the EB extension. This means you can technically get up to 52 weeks from the date you apply but unless Congress extends these dates, PUA and PEUC will not be paid after December 26, 2020. The end of EB weeks depends on the state's unemployment rate, when it gets much lower, it will end.

Your benefits go back to when you stopped work and applied for UI.

If you have been unemployed for a few weeks and your employer did not tell you to apply for UI, or you were delayed because it was difficult to apply, you can get UI benefits for the weeks you missed. This is called a "predate."

Be sure to note in the UI Online system when you first became unemployed.

How do I apply?

File a claim with the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA)'s [UI Online](#).

UI Online is available daily from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Applying through UI Online is the fastest way to get UI benefits. But the website, other than the initial application, is only in English. Stand-alone initial applications that can be completed on a smartphone or tablet are now available in Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese or Haitian Creole. However, all other tasks including the English application on UI Online require a desktop computer.

If you have trouble completing the application online, ask for help by calling 877-626-6800. The Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) has dedicated phone lines for people who speak Spanish and Portuguese. If you speak another language, the DUA will use an interpreter.

How do I prove to the DUA that I should get UI benefits?

DUA will ask you the name of your employer or employers during the past 15 months.

They will get your wage records from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) to see how much you earned from each employer. To get

these records, DUA needs the **exact name of your employer**. Be sure and use the name of the employer and the employer's ID number that is on your W2.

Important

Use the employer search tool in the online application, to answer the questions about your employer. DUA is denying many Unemployment applications because the name of the employer does not match DOR's records.

After DUA checks your earnings records with DOR, they will notify you. Check the notice to make sure the information they have about your earnings is correct and that all the wages you earned in the prior year is correct. They call this information "monetary eligibility". If the monetary eligibility is wrong, call 877-626-6800.

If the DUA approves your application and if you might return to your work after the coronavirus pandemic dies down, **stay in touch with your employer**.

You do not need to give DUA any medical documentation to show you are not working because of the coronavirus. However, if your employer is asking you to return to work and you are unable to return because of reasonable concerns for your health, it will be helpful for you to get a note from your health care provider.

If you miss a UI deadline because of the coronavirus or its effects, you may be excused for missing the deadline. But **pay attention to all communications from the Department of Unemployment Assistance** so you can avoid any problems or delays in getting UI.

How Do I Continue to Get Benefits?

In order to continue to get benefits you have to certify on a **weekly basis** that you are able, available and actively seeking work that is suitable for you during this pandemic. You can certify on-line (English only) or Telecert with a TeleCert PIN. See DUA's instructions for creating a [TeleCert PIN](#).

TeleCert line is available in Spanish, Portuguese and Cantonese.

TeleCert instructions are available in 13 [languages](#).

If you are on "standby" status with your employer, meaning that you are temporarily unemployed because of a lack of work due to COVID-19, you

must keep in touch with your employer and be available for all hours of suitable work offered by your employer. Provided that you do these things, you should answer "YES" to the work search questions (were you able to work/available to work/did you look for work) each week.

Even if you are not yet getting benefits, or are appealing a denial, you should continue to certify each week.

How Do I Get The 13 Week Federal Extension of Unemployment or PEUC?

If you have used up or "exhausted" your regular benefits, PEUC will automatically begin.

If your "benefit year" – the 52 week period after you applied for unemployment has ended -- you have to file a **new claim** for regular UI and you must get benefits under that claim (even if the amount is lower). If you are not eligible for a new claim, you can get PEUC on your **prior claim**.

If you were getting PUA after exhausting your regular benefits or after your benefit year had ended, you will have to reopen your "exhausted" claim through UI Online. (We know this is all very exhausting!)

How Do I Get the Federal Extended Benefit or EB And How Long Can I Get EB?

If you have used up or exhausted your regular benefits and PEUC, you may be eligible for EB.

To be eligible for EB, your benefit year (the 52-week period after you applied for regular UI) must end on or after May 9, 2020.

You must have had 20 weeks of work in your "base period," the one-year period before you applied for regular UI. You can prove that you met the "20-week test" in 3 ways:

- 1) your total earnings in the base period were more than 40 times your weekly benefit amount, OR
- 2) your total earnings in the base period were equal to or higher than 1.5 times the amount you earned in the highest paid calendar quarter, OR
- 3) you worked for 20 weeks in your base period in a job that is covered under the unemployment program. Because DUA does not have a record of weekly earnings, you will need to prove that you meet this test with your weekly wage record.

The number of weeks of EB depends on the number of weeks you got regular UI. The number of weeks of EB is the smaller of 20 weeks or half the number of weeks you got regular UI. If you got the full 26 weeks of regular UI, you get the full 20 weeks of EB. If, for example, you only got 20 weeks of regular UI, you get 16 weeks of EB.

If you are on PUA, you do not get Extended Benefits.

Non-citizens

If you are a non-citizen you need a valid Social Security Number and work authorization to apply for UI.

Getting UI does not count as a public charge. It does not affect your immigration status.

Reminder- Save your time off!

If you are getting paid leave, you cannot get UI at the same time.

You do not need to use up all your unpaid sick time, vacation time, personal time. If you do not have any paid leave, apply for Unemployment as soon as you stop working.

Remember to apply for other benefits too

See:

[SNAP Food Assistance - Workers who lost hours or job due to COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 and MassHealth and Health Insurance](#)

More information

See the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance webpages [COVID-19 unemployment information](#). If you have trouble completing your UI application online or you have questions about the status of your application, call 877-626-6800 or use the [DUA Unemployment contact form](#).

COVID-19 and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

The CARES Act expanded Unemployment benefits so more workers can get help during the COVID-19 emergency.

[Apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance](#), (PUA) if you **had to stop working because of COVID-19 and:**

- You used up all your state and federal UI benefits, or
- Your “benefit year” ended sometime after July 5, 2019, which means you claimed Unemployment any time after July 6, 2018. The benefit year is the 52 weeks after you file a claim for Unemployment benefits, and you used up all your benefits during your benefit year,
- You are totally or partly unemployed or you do not have as much work as you did and you are:
 - o Self-employed in your own business or on a farm.
 - o An independent contractor and you can show reportable income.
 - o A “gig worker” and you can show reportable income.
 - o An Americorps or Peace Corps worker and your placement site closed and you lost income
 - o You are eligible for PUA if you meet one of the following:.
 - (1) Clergy or working for a religious organization.
 - o (2) Only looking for part-time work.
 - (3) a full-time student including a high school student who worked part-time (although the term part-time student does not appear in the application, you are eligible just by including yourself as someone whose job ended or the hours were reduced).
 - (4) You are unable to work because you must provide full-time care to a child or adult because no other care is available due to COVID-19. This includes school that is fully or partially on line. However, if a school is fully open,

you cannot get PUA if you choose to keep your child at home and this is the only reason for your PUA eligibility.

- However, for reasons (1) to (4), **if you had \$5,100 or more in W2 earnings in the prior year, you will have to apply for regular UI first, get a denial and then apply for PUA.**

Or

- The Department of Unemployment Assistance denied your application for regular UI because:
 1. You had "insufficient wages"
 - they might use this reason to deny your application because:
 - You did not earn at least \$5,100 in the prior year, so they said you are "monetarily ineligible." There is no minimum earning requirement to get PUA.
 - Your earnings were in the wrong months of the year before you applied for UI so DUA said you are "monetarily ineligible."
 - You did not work enough weeks last year (usually about 15 weeks) to qualify for regular UI.
 - You left a prior job where you worked before the job that ended due to COVID-19 for a reason that DUA said disqualified you for UI. Usually, you need to "serve" a disqualification by working for 8 weeks. Now, the disqualification will be "served" if you get PUA for 8 weeks, and at that point you may need to collect regular UI if you hadn't used up all your weeks.
 2. The disqualification that allows you to get PUA includes a prior fraud disqualification that you got when you were getting regular UI that happened before your COVID-19 related unemployment.

COVID-19 related reasons for stopping work

The PUA application asks if you are not working because:

- You were diagnosed with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) or you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis.
- A member of your household was diagnosed with COVID-19.
- You were providing care for a family or household member who was diagnosed with COVID-19.
- A child or other person you are the main care-giver for cannot attend school or another facility as a result of COVID-19.
- You have become the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19.
- You cannot reach your place of employment because of a quarantine imposed as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- You cannot reach your place of employment because you have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine.
- You are self-employed or an independent contractor and COVID-19 has severely limited your ability to perform your normal work.
- You do not have a recent history of full-time work and you were scheduled to start a job with a new employer. You cannot start that job or the offer was withdrawn as a result of COVID-19.
- Your place of employment closed because of COVID-19.
- You quit your job, you were laid off or your hours were reduced because of COVID-19.

If you cannot work for one of the above reasons and then you have a new reason, as long as it is listed, you can continue to get PUA.

You cannot get PUA if

- You do not have one of the above COVID-19 related reasons for not working.
- You can telework full-time with pay. But if your hours are reduced, you may be able to get some PUA.
- You can telework full-time with pay. But if you cannot telework because of domestic violence, sexual violence, or stalking, you can get PUA.
- You are getting paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits for the same hours you usually worked. But, if your paid leave is based on hours that were reduced because of COVID-19, you may be able to get some PUA. See [How much PUA can I get?](#)

- You quit a job that offers paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits.
- You are not a US citizen **and**
 - you do not both a valid Social Security Number and
 - an identification number ("A number") issued by the United States Citizenship Immigration Services (USCIS), and the "A" number indicates that you have work authorization.
- You were **not** impacted by COVID-19 and you quit work just to collect PUA. This is fraud.
- A recent federal guideline states that you are not eligible if your child's school offers full-time in-person school and you choose not to send your child to school (and you do not have a covid-19 related reason for making this choice).

How much PUA can I get and for how long?

1. If did not earn anything after you stopped work, you will immediately get at **least \$267/week** PUA. The most you can get is \$855/week. The amount you get depends on your earnings in 2019. If you earn **more** than \$89/week while collecting the \$267, DUA subtracts every dollar over \$89 that you earned, from the \$267 minimum PUA benefit. While you are receiving PUA in any week that you earn \$356 (\$267 + \$89) or more, you will not get any PUA for that week, including no additional supplement of either \$600 or \$300.
2. Everyone who gets any PUA, gets **\$600/week** or **\$300/week** plus your PUA benefit. So, for every week you cannot work **between** March 29 and July 25, 2020 you get at least \$267 plus \$600 for a total of **\$867/week**, and for every week you cannot work starting the week of July 26, 2020 through September 5, 2020, you get at least \$267 plus \$300 a week for a total of **\$567** a week. However, the extra \$300 a week will stop when the program runs out of money.
3. You also get:

\$25/week for each child for whom you provide more than 50% support, who is

 - under 18,
 - under 24 and a full-time student, or
 - cannot work because of mental or physical disabilities. There is no age limit for these children.

There is a limit on the weekly amount you can get for your children. You can only get \$25/week per child up to 50% of your weekly unemployment benefit. This \$25/week is a "dependency allowance."

DUA adds the dependency allowance to your benefit after they verify the information about your children.

When you first apply for PUA, until DUA can verify your income, you will get:

- the minimum \$267/week.
- \$600/week for the weeks you did not work between 3/29/2020 and 7/25/2020, and
- \$300/week for the weeks you did not work starting the week ending 8/1/2020 until the week ending 9/5/2020.

After DUA verifies your earnings from 2019, you may get more than \$267 up to \$855. If that is the case, you will be able to earn up to 1/3 of the higher amount before DUA subtracts these earnings from your benefit.

You can get PUA benefits for up to 46 weeks but all payments will stop on December 26, 2020 unless a new federal law extends this date. Any weeks of benefits you get from regular UI and EB will be subtracted from this 46 week total but the weeks of benefits you get on PEUC do not get subtracted.

Important

If you get PUA benefits by mistake, you **must** pay it all back. The PUA benefit overpayment cannot be waived.

When can I start getting PUA benefits?

You should expect to get your first PUA benefit payment within the first week of when you apply.

Any weeks you did not work full-time because of COVID-19, between February 2, 2020 and December 26, 2020, you qualify for PUA benefits.

You can get PUA benefits back to February 2, 2020.

You can get the extra \$600/week back to March 29, 2020 up until July 25, 2020.

You can get the extra \$300/week of Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) back to July 26 until the week ending September 5, 2020 while the FEMA money is available.

Note:

DUA will give you benefits back to the date you stopped working, on or after February 2, 2020. The PUA application asks, "When were you impacted by COVID-19?" Put the date you had to stop working in this box.

How many weeks of PUA benefits can I get?

Right now, the maximum number of weeks you can get PUA is 46 plus any weeks you get PEUC. However, the benefits will stop on December 26, 2020 unless there is a federal extension.

How do I apply for PUA?

Apply for PUA:

- online in English and Spanish at [Mass.gov/PUA](https://www.mass.gov/PUA) or
- over the phone. 877-626-6800

Before you apply collect all the information they will ask for. You need:

- The date you had to stop working - they ask when COVID-19 first "impacted" you. You can get benefits payments back to the first date you were "impacted" by COVID-19 starting on or after Feb 2, 2020 so this date is important.
- Your social security number
- If you are not a citizen of the United States, the number the immigration service gave you. The application will ask you for your "UICIS issued identification number." After you provide this number, you will be asked to provide a document that shows you have work authorization. (This request will come in the form of a work authorization fact-finding notice that will require you to upload the documents through a fact-finding link on your PUA account.)
- Your home address
- Your mailing address (if different from home address)
- Your telephone number
- Your email address
- Your birth date
- Your wage records for 2019, which includes:
 - 1099 forms
 - Pay stubs
 - Bank statements or receipts
 - If you have it, your 2019 tax return
 - Ledgers, contracts, invoices and billing statements

- For self-employed: net income (gross income minus business expenses)
- The social security numbers and dates of birth for your dependent children
- If you want your PUA payments deposited into your bank account, you need your bank account and routing numbers.

Why Do I Need to Prove My Identity?

As a result of a massive fraud scam, DUA now requires proof of identity. This proof must be uploaded through a fact-finding link provided by DUA (check your home page regularly for fact-finding links requesting information).

Documents needed to prove identity include:

- A social security card or other government-issued document that includes name and SSN
- Driver's license (it appears that only a Massachusetts driver's license is accepted) or other government issued document that has an official picture of you
- Name and birth date on a government issued document such as a Massachusetts driver's license, Massachusetts ID, or passport.

Note:

- The instructions indicate that your application will be quicker if you include a picture of yourself holding up your photo identification, and we recommend submitting such a picture.
- If you cannot upload documents yourself, please call (877) 626-6800 for assistance. Mailing documents to DUA will cause a long delay in processing your claim.
- You must always include both sides of a document.

The DUA's updated PUA identity verification instructions can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/pua-fact-finding-for-id-verification/download>.

What Do I Need to Do to Keep Getting PUA Benefits?

You need to certify weekly that you continue to be unable to work as a direct result of the impact of COVID-19.

You must certify in English online at <https://ui-cares-act.mass.gov/PUA>.

The default setting is in English. To claim benefits in Spanish, you must select Spanish in the top right-hand corner when you go to <https://ui-cares-act.mass.gov/PUA> **before you log in**. This will translate the PUA account and allow you to claim the benefits in Spanish.

To certify by phone, call 877-626-6800, Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM EST. You can certify by telephone in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Cantonese.

You may be required to provide more information. This is usually required with a fact-finding link. Be sure and check your home page frequently for fact-finding links requesting information.

Note: Regular UI and EB are deducted from your total # of weeks on PUA and PEUC are not deducted.

Important

If you apply online, you must complete your application all at once. You cannot save it and return later. So collect all your information **before** you start the application. If you are **stopped** from continuing the application, be sure and call DUA at 877-626-6800 to see if this is a mistake.

Non-citizens

If you are a non-citizen with a valid Social Security number and A-number issued by the United States Citizenship Immigration Services (USCIS) you can apply for PUA. You will need to document your work authorization with an additional document.

You must upload your work authorization document with the fact-finding document that you will find in your PUA account.

Getting UI does not count as a public charge which means it will not affect your immigration status.

Why could I not complete the PUA Application if I have not lived or worked in Massachusetts in 2019?

You are eligible for PUA if you were impacted by COVID-19 in 2020. The PUA application wrongly blocked individuals from continuing your application

if you did not work or reside in Massachusetts in 2019. DUA has fixed this problem and you can now apply.

Reminder - Save your time off!

If you are getting paid sick leave, you cannot get PUA at the same time.

But you do not need to use up all your unpaid sick time, vacation time, personal time, before you collect PUA.

Remember to apply for other benefits too

See:

[SNAP Food Assistance - Workers who lost hours or job due to COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 and MassHealth and Health Insurance](#)

More information

See the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance webpages [COVID-19 unemployment information](#). If you have trouble completing your UI application online or you have questions about the status of your application, call 877-626-6800 or use the [DUA Unemployment contact form](#).

For information specifically about PUA go to www.mass.gov/pua where you can get the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Guidebook, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Eligibility Checklist, and [other information](#). You can also get the guide book in:

- [Spanish](#),
- [French](#),
- [Vietnamese](#),
- [Arabic](#),
- [Chinese Simplified](#),
- [Khmer](#),
- [Portuguese](#),
- [Haitian Creole](#),
- [Lao](#),
- [Russian](#),
- [Italian](#), and
- [Korean](#).

However, for now, the PUA application is in English and Spanish only and you can certify weekly that you are eligible to continue getting PUA in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Cantonese.

Greater Boston Legal Services and Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Current as of 11/18/2020

For updates, and related materials on COVID-19 and unemployment go to: www.masslegalservices.org/library/directory/covid-19/work-and-unemployment.

For updates to this fact sheet, see www.masslegalservices.org/library/directory/covid-19-and-ui.