

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**January 11, 2021**

**Contact: Bret Crow**  
**Phone: (614) 307-9562**  
**Email: [Bret.Crow@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Bret.Crow@jfs.ohio.gov)**

## **Ohio to Expedite Payment to Hundreds of Thousands of Ohioans** **Federal unemployment benefits are extended until March 13**

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Many unemployment claimants in Ohio will soon begin receiving the \$300 weekly supplement made possible by the new federal stimulus legislation, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced today after receiving the first portion of needed guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor. In addition, existing Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claimants will soon be able to resume filing weekly claims for benefits.

“We are committed to making the updates as quickly as we can so that we can bring much-needed relief to eligible claimants,” said ODJFS Director Kimberly Henderson. “System programming will be needed for this effort, and we appreciate everyone’s patience as that occurs. Ohio stands ready to assist those in need as soon as possible, within the bounds of the new law. Those eligible will receive all benefits to which they are entitled.”

The federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, signed on December 27, extends and amends pandemic unemployment programs and benefits through March 13, 2021.

ODJFS will automatically recalculate PUA and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) claims and notify claimants when they are able to certify for their next benefit payment.

Individuals whose CARES Act benefits expired as of December 26 (with the exception of the Federal-State Extended Benefits program) will pick up where they left off and may file benefits retroactive to the week beginning December 27. Notably, the legislation does not impact traditional unemployment benefits. In addition, ODJFS expects that the programs and benefits that were extended with little to no changes in the new law – such a full federal funding of SharedWork Ohio, continuation of federal funding for the first week of benefits, and continued claims in PEUC and PUA that still have weeks remaining to file – will be implemented without delay.

For implementation updates, please visit [jfs.ohio.gov/caa](https://jfs.ohio.gov/caa).



**Background:****Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**

- This program supports business owners, the self-employed, independent contractors and others who don't qualify for traditional unemployment benefits.
- Once implemented, the extension will provide up to an additional 11 weeks of benefits, to a maximum of up to 50 weeks.
- Will require a weekly certification specifying a specific "COVID-19 CARES Act reason," beginning on January 26.
- Will require individuals to substantiate employment or self-employment in the most recent tax year, beginning on January 31.
- Will require identity verification at the outset of a claim, beginning on January 26.
- Will impose new limitations on backdating claims.
- Applications will be accepted until March 13, 2021. Individuals who are eligible for PUA benefits on the week ending March 13 and who have remaining weeks to claim will be able to continue to file through April 10.
- Will provide states with new authority to waive PUA and Lost Wages Assistance overpayments, under certain conditions.
- Requires PUA appeals to be conducted in the same manner and extent as traditional unemployment appeals.
- **Implementation Update:** PUA claims can be filed for weeks prior to December 27. However, due to the transition, new PUA applications and claims for weekly PUA benefits cannot be accepted at this time. ODJFS expects to have the PUA system back up and running by the third week in January for those who previously were approved to receive up to 39 weeks of these benefits, so they can again file weekly claims. System programming will be needed before new claims can be filed. All claimants will receive all benefits they are eligible for.

**Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)**

- Once implemented, the extension will provide up to an additional 11 weeks of benefits, to a maximum of up to 24 weeks, for eligible individuals who exhaust their traditional unemployment benefits.
- Applications will be accepted until March 13, 2021. Individuals who are eligible for PEUC benefits on the week ending March 13 and who have remaining weeks to claim will be able to continue to file through April 10.
- Will provide states the option to allow individuals to continue receiving PEUC even if they qualify for traditional unemployment in a subsequent benefit year, if certain other



conditions are met. This includes if their traditional unemployment weekly benefit amount would be at least \$25 lower than the PEUC amount.

- **Implementation Update:** New PEUC applications can be filed, and individuals with remaining weeks to claim out of the original 13 weeks can continue to claim benefits for those weeks and be paid. However, the additional 11 weeks will require system programming. Individuals may file claims for those weeks, but the system cannot yet pay them. Once the programming is complete, individuals will receive all payments they are eligible for.

### Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)

- Once implemented, will provide up to 11 weeks of an additional \$300 weekly benefit to eligible claimants in multiple programs.
- Will be available for weeks of unemployment between December 27, 2020, and the week ending March 13, 2021.
- **Implementation Update:** ODJFS expects to be able to issue FPUC payments by the third week in January. All claimants will receive all benefits they are eligible for.

### Employer Benefits

- Extends full federal funding for Ohio's SharedWork program.
- Extends 50% credits to reimbursing employers for traditional unemployment benefit charges.
- Extends federal payment of the first week of traditional unemployment benefits, at 50% instead of 100%.
- Requires claimants to be notified about state return-to-work requirements.
- Extends the waiver of interest to states whose Unemployment Insurance Trust Funds require federal borrowing.

In addition, the legislation created a new program:

### Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation

- For individuals eligible for traditional unemployment benefits who also have earned wages in self-employment.
- Once implemented, will provide an additional \$100 a week, on top of the \$300 FPUC benefit.





## **Claim Activity**

In total, since the start of the pandemic, more than 1.7 million individuals have received unemployment benefits in Ohio. This includes more than 888,000 who have received traditional unemployment benefits and more than 821,000 who have received PUA. Over the last 42 weeks, Ohio's unemployment system has received more initial unemployment claims (2,097,854) than the previous five years combined.

-30-

*The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.*

