PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE (PUA)

NC DEPARTMENT
of **COMMERCE**
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

Updated October 26, 2020

File your claim at des.nc.gov

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance
866-847-7209
During periods of high call volume, you may experience longer wait times.

North Carolina Division of Employment Security

WHAT IS PUA?

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, or PUA, is a federal program for people:

- Who are unable to work as a direct result of COVID-19 AND
- Are not eligible for regular state unemployment benefits, such as independent contractors or self-employed workers.

PUA provides benefits to qualifying individuals who are otherwise able to work and available for work, except that they are unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work due to one of the COVID-19 related reasons under the federal CARES Act.

You must certify that you continue to be out of work each week due to a COVID-19 related reason to receive ongoing PUA benefits. Click here for more information about eligibility.

HOW TO APPLY

- The fastest and most efficient way to apply for unemployment benefits is to create an online account and file online at des.nc.gov.

- Click on the Apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance link to complete the application process.

- If you are currently receiving state unemployment benefits, you will not see a link to file for PUA. You must be ineligible for regular state unemployment benefits to receive PUA.

- DES must review claims individually to determine whether a person is eligible for PUA. When claim volumes are high, it may take several weeks for to receive a determination of benefits.

PUA PAYMENTS

To receive payments, you must complete a Weekly Certification for every week you file for benefits. In your Weekly Certification, report any wages you earned during that week.

Any benefits owed for previous weeks will be paid retroactively.

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TIPS FOR APPLYING FOR PUA

1. **DES recommends you upload all necessary documents with your application before you click 'Submit.' However, you can submit your application even if documents, such as tax returns, are not yet available.**

If you do not have your documents when you start your application, you can save your work and come back to it when you are ready to submit all of your information. Failure to provide documentation could result in an individual being provided the minimum weekly benefit amount for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

Examples of documents to show past employment and income:
- 2019 tax returns
- Recent paycheck stubs
- Bank receipts
- 1099s
- Billing statements, notices
- Business licenses
- Contracts, invoices, ledgers

Examples of documents to show COVID-19 as the reason for loss of work:
- Documentation from medical professionals related to diagnosis or isolation instructions
- Notices from school or childcare providers
- Notices from county or state government regarding business closures or stay at home orders
- Documentation that a job offer or need for your services was canceled or delayed because of COVID-19

2. **If you're a 1099 employee, list the name and address displayed on your 1099 when completing the last employer section on your application.**

On the Employment History page, select **Add North Carolina Employer.**

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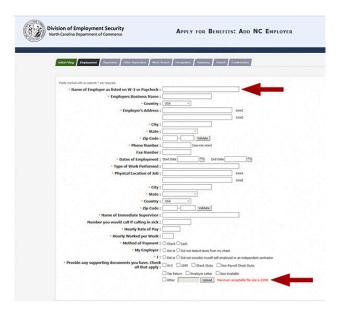**Pandemic Unemployment Assistance**
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On the next page, self-employed workers and independent contractors should click on the green **Manual Entry button.**

On the Manual Entry page, enter the name and address you use for work purposes. (i.e., Joe Claimant or Joe Claimant's Business)

Upload your proof of income before submitting your claim.

3. **Complete your Weekly Certifications for every week you are filing for benefits.**

A Weekly Certification is a series of yes/no questions that helps determine your eligibility for benefits each week. If you do not complete a Weekly Certification, you will not be considered for payment.

Log into your online account to complete your Weekly Certification. If you do not have online access, call 888-737-0259.

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