



CARES ACT UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS SUMMARY

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act”) makes several important expansions to the unemployment relief systems that states administer. It provides the following federally funded unemployment benefit expansions:

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) -- FPUC provides an additional \$600 per week for individuals receiving regular unemployment benefits, PUA, PEUC, or extended benefits if they are triggered under Illinois law, beginning March 29, 2020 and concluding the week ending July 25.

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) -- PEUC provides up to 13 additional weeks of federally funded unemployment benefits for individuals who have exhausted regular unemployment benefits.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) -- PUA provides up to 39 weeks of federally funded unemployment benefits to individuals not typically eligible for unemployment benefits who have become unemployed as a direct result of COVID-19.

Recipients still must be able to work, available to work, and actively seeking work, although the Act permits states flexibility in administering the “actively seeking work” requirement for those who are ill with COVID-19, are quarantined, or have their movement restricted.

The CARES Act expands who is eligible to receive unemployment benefits. Individuals who would not have qualified for unemployment benefits under the pre-existing system—for instance those who are seeking part-time employment, or who do not have sufficient work history—are eligible to receive benefits for a maximum duration of 39 weeks, provided they are unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work due to certain specified reasons related to the COVID-19 crisis. Such reasons include having a COVID-19 positive member in their household or if an individual experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and actively seeking a diagnosis.

Neither an employer nor a union can guarantee whether an individual will qualify for regular unemployment benefits or federal stimulus unemployment benefits provided by the CARES Act. The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) makes the determination whether an individual is eligible for unemployment compensation. That said, IDES is encouraging every individual who is unemployed or underemployed to file a claim for regular unemployment benefits, even if they believe they are not covered by the unemployment system. According to IDES, applying for and being denied regular unemployment benefits can be evidence that an individual qualifies for benefits under the PUA program which provides benefits to individuals who are unemployed or underemployed for reasons attributable to COVID-19 and not otherwise covered by the state’s regular unemployment insurance program.

For more information about IDES benefits or to file a claim visit: <https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/>