Navigating the Unemployment Insurance Process During the COVID-19 Pandemic



The type of job an applicant held prior to their work status change will determine next steps in the application process. Currently, qualifying individuals seeking unemployment benefits would typically fall under one of two categories¹:

A traditional employee who receives a W2, individuals recently separated from the military or federal government.

A 1099 employee, independent contractor, self-employed individual, "gig" employee or employee who worked for an employer who did not participate in the Unemployment Insurance program (if the employee doesn't know, he/she will need to ask the employer if it participated in Virginia's Unemployment Insurance program).

This applicant is filing an application through the state Unemployment Insurance program.

This applicant will file two applications: The first will be through the <u>state Unemployment Insurance program</u>; the second application will be for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, provided through the federal CARES Act for individuals who don't typically qualify for state unemployment benefits.

After filing the Virginia application, the applicant will receive a Monetary Determination letter by mail in about one week. This indicates the financial benefit for which an applicant could qualify. It does not guarantee the applicant will receive Unemployment Insurance benefits.

After filing the Virginia application, the applicant will receive a Monetary Determination letter that may deny benefits under the regular UI program. You may receive a text or voice message that says you have a \$0 Monetary Determination and provides directions to apply for *Pandemic Unemployment Assistance* (PUA). If you don't receive a message, please wait for a Monetary Determination letter in the mail². Please know that it is crucial that the VEC determine that the regular state UI claim is not valid in order to justify accepting the PUA application.

The applicant must file a state unemployment certification each week (recommended on Sunday, Monday or Tuesday) preferably by calling the voice response number 800-897-5630, or they may fill out the weekly <u>Continuing Claim Form</u> online, for the prior week. This weekly process should be followed as long as the applicant is unemployed.

The applicant must visit https://web.getgov2go.com/ or call 866-832-2363 each week (recommended on Sunday, Monday or Tuesday) to fill out a weekly Continuing Claim Form for the prior week as long as the applicant is unemployed.

Any applicant who is eligible to receive any amount of state Unemployment Insurance or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance will automatically qualify for an additional \$600/week (Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, or FPUC). The last payable week for FPUC is the week ending July 25, 2020.

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^{1.} A third category is for unemployed Virginians who have exhausted state Unemployment Insurance program benefits within the past 12 months. An additional 13 weeks of benefits is provided for qualifying individuals through the federal CARES Act. This program remains in development and is expected to deliver payments to qualified applicants starting in early July.

^{2.} This applicant will be denied regular Virginia Unemployment Insurance. The denial will enable the applicant to apply for federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance under the CARES Act.