



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 TASK FORCE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) available for Workers and Self-Employed Individuals in the CNMI

The CNMI Department of Labor (DOL) officially announces that it will be accepting applications for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) as a result of COVID-19 for workers in the CNMI starting **June 17, 2020** through **December 26, 2020**.

WHAT IS PUA?

On March 27, 2020, the President signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020, which includes the Relief for Workers Affected by Coronavirus Act set out in Title II, Subtitle A. Section 2102 of the CARES Act creates the new temporary Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program.

The PUA program provides temporary benefits to individuals whose employment or self-employment has been lost or interrupted as a direct result of COVID-19. Direct result means loss of employment or self-employment because of a reason directly related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The PUA program, in general, provides up to 39 weeks of unemployment benefits. The U.S. Department of Labor oversees the PUA program and reimburses the CNMI Department of Labor for both the program administration and benefit payment costs.

WHAT IS FPUC?

Individuals who receive at least one dollar (\$1) of PUA benefits for a week, will also receive an additional \$600 supplemental payment under the FPUC program described under section 2104 of the CARES Act. However, the time period that a claimant can receive the FPUC supplemental payment is more limited than the duration of the PUA payments. For the CNMI, FPUC is payable only for weeks of unemployment beginning on or after March 29, 2020. FPUC is not payable to any individual for any week of unemployment occurring after July 31, 2020.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR PUA/FPUC?

PUA and FPUC are available to citizens of the United States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, the CNMI, Guam, Republic of Palau, The Federated States of Micronesia, American Samoa, The Republic of the Marshall Islands and qualified aliens who reside and work in the CNMI who became unemployed, unable to work, or not available to work as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Individuals who are self-employed, those seeking part-time employment, or individuals who were about to start a job but could not begin work because of COVID-19 are also eligible for PUA and FPUC.

A list of acceptable COVID-19 related reasons to qualify for PUA are as follows:

- ✓ The individual has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
- ✓ A member of the individual's household has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- ✓ The individual is providing care for a family member or a member of the individual's household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- ✓ A child or other person in the household for which the individual has primary caregiving responsibility is unable to attend school or another facility that is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency and such school or facility care is required for the individual to work;
- ✓ The individual is unable to reach the place of employment because of a quarantine imposed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency;
- ✓ The individual is unable to reach the place of employment because the individual has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;
- ✓ The individual was scheduled to commence employment and does not have a job or is unable to reach the job as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency;
- ✓ The individual has become the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19;
- ✓ The individual has to quit his or her job as a direct result of COVID-19;
- ✓ The individual's place of employment is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency; or
- ✓ The individual is an independent contractor who is unemployed (totally or partially) or is unable or unavailable to work because of the COVID-19 public health emergency has severely limited his or her ability to continue performing the customary job.

Individuals who wish to receive PUA benefits must provide proof of identity and demonstrate their status as U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or qualified aliens. This is irrespective of territory law eligibility criteria for regular unemployment benefits. Qualified aliens include:

- Legal permanent resident ("green card" holder)
- An asylee, refugee, or an alien whose deportation is being withheld
- Alien paroled into the U.S. for at least one year
- Alien granted conditional entry (per law in effect prior to April 1, 1980)
- Cuban/Haitian entrant
- Aliens in the U.S. who have been abused, subject to battery or extreme cruelty by a spouse or other family/household member, or have been a victim of a severe form of human trafficking
- Aliens whose children have been abused and alien children whose parent has been abused who fit certain criteria

APPLICATION FILING DATES

Individuals may apply for PUA if they have had a week(s) of unemployment on or after February 2, 2020 through December 26, 2020 as a result of COVID-19. PUA is available for individuals who have lost their jobs, had their regular work hours reduced, or were self-employed individuals but are no longer able to work as a direct result of COVID-19. Individuals may file applications for PUA from June 17, 2020, through December 26, 2020.

HOW AND WHERE TO APPLY

Claimants may apply for PUA either online or in-person.

To submit a PUA application online, visit www.hiremarianas.com.

PUA applications and other forms may also be obtained at either of the following location(s):

SAIPAN:

CNMI Department of Labor
Division of Employment Services
Building # 1334, Ascencion Dr.
Capitol Hill, Saipan MP 96950

ROTA:

Sinapalo Youth Center
Sinapalo 1
Rota, MP 96951

TINIAN:

Edu's Plaza, 1st Floor
San Jose Village
Tinian, MP 96952
or
Tinian Public Library
San Jose Village
Tinian, MP 96952

Individuals who have questions about the PUA/FPUC programs are encouraged to call any of the following numbers between 8:00 am through 4:00 pm, Monday – Friday.

SAIPAN:

670-989-9089
670-989-9090
670-989-9080
670-989-9081
670-989-9083
670-989-9084

ROTA:

670-989-9001

TINIAN:

670-989-9000

PUA is available for eligible unemployed employees, self-employed individuals, farmers and fishermen engaged in business at the time of the coronavirus pandemic.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

To receive PUA, individuals must submit in-person or upload online the following:

- A government issued picture identification (Driver's license, passport, alien registration card, etc.)
- Social Security Card number
- If applicable, copies of the most recent federal income tax form(s), check stubs, and other proof of earnings
- If applicable, evidence of self-employment earnings, business license, including financial documents such as 2017 Federal/CNMI income tax forms, profit and loss statement, and proof of business loss due to the disaster.

Individuals must provide proof of identity and citizenship (U.S. citizen, U.S. national or qualified alien) and proof that they are legally authorized to work in CNMI. If it is later discovered that an individual is not a qualified alien and/or is not authorized to work due to a false statement made

by the individual, any PUA paid will be considered as “overpaid.” PUA payments are not subject to any waiver provisions and, therefore, any overpayments established must be repaid in full.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Individuals who are determined eligible for PUA must file weekly claim certifications (to demonstrate their continued eligibility) either in person or online by using any of the filing methods described above. Individuals who file a PUA claim will receive information about their benefit rights and responsibilities. To remain eligible for PUA, individuals must continue to meet ALL eligibility requirements and conditions (found in the PUA/FPUC Benefits Rights Information Handbook). Continued eligibility is determined on a week-by-week basis.

Individuals who willfully conceal material facts or knowingly making false statement(s) to obtain PUA to which they are not entitled will be required to repay all benefits fraudulently collected and may be subject to prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

FRAUD HOTLINE

Individuals are encouraged to call **670-989-9095** to report any perceived instances of wrongdoing or fraud pertaining to PUA/FPUC.

CNMI DOL is an equal opportunity employer/program and auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Visit CNMI DOL’s website at www.marianaslabor.net to download copies of PUA applications and forms or for more PUA/FPUC-related information.

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