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PRESS RELEASE

FAQ: PUA WORK SEARCH REQUIREMENT

The CNMI Department of Labor (Department) is publishing the following questions and answers regarding the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) work search requirement.

General Information

1. What is a work search requirement?

As a condition for receiving PUA, continuing recipients must conduct three or more work search contacts or activities every week and keep a log or record of the work search contacts.

2. How do I satisfy the work search requirement?

Activities that constitute work search contacts, include but are not limited to:

- a. Registering for work with the Department's Division of Employment Services or online at the Department's website: www.marianaslabor.net.
- b. Registering for work with a private employment agency or placement facility of a school, college or university;
- c. Applying for work, submitting resumes or interviewing with potential employers;
- d. Utilizing employment resources available at employment offices that identify the individual's skills in occupations in demand in the local labor market area;
- e. Attending job search seminars, job clubs, or other employment workshops that offer instruction in improving an individual's skills for seeking and obtaining employment; and
- f. Conducting other work search activities which are made by individuals in the same or similar occupation who are genuinely interested in obtaining work or as may be provided by the department.

3. When do I need to start satisfying the work search requirement?

The Department will begin requiring all Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) recipients to conduct work searches consistent with Hawaii law effective August 01, 2021 through September 04, 2021.

4. Why is the work search requirement effective now and not before?

According to federal law, the CNMI must follow Hawaii Employment Security Law. The active search for work requirement was temporarily suspended in Hawaii at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hawaii reactivated the work search requirement when its economy began to recover and when COVID-19 cases continued to drop.

Three-Job-Search Contacts

1. How many job search contacts must be made and reported each week?

Claimants must make a minimum of three (3) job search contacts per week.

2. Who needs to make three job contacts?

Everyone needs to have three job contacts, except for full-time employees who are attached to an employer or members of a referring union.

3. Do I still need to make three search contacts if I am working full-time?

If you are working full-time, you are employed, so you do not need to make three search contacts. You must report all hours worked and all gross earnings on your claim certifications.

4. What does the term "suitable work" mean?

Suitable work means work in the individual's usual occupation or work for which the individual is reasonably fitted. There are various factors that the Department will use in determining whether an individual is reasonably fitted for a particular job, including the claimant's prior earnings, experience, and length of unemployment.

5. How does suitable work relate to looking for three jobs?

Looking for work is a requirement to receive PUA benefits if you are not otherwise exempted. If you refuse to accept offers of suitable work or refuse to return to work, your claim will be pending until the Department further investigates your reasons for the refusals.

6. Does applying for any job count as a job search contact?

No, it does not. You must apply for jobs for which you are qualified. For example, if you do not have a medical background and apply for a job as a hospital physician, that application will not be counted as a job search contact.

7. I opened an account on marianaslabor.net. Is that a job search contact?

No, simply creating a user account does not count as a job search contact. You must upload your resume and access the online services to search for the latest job openings and training programs.

8. I am having trouble logging into my marianaslabor.net account. Who do I contact for help?

You can contact the Division of Employment Services at (670) 664-3190 for assistance.

Three-Job-Search Exemptions

1. What happens if I do not make three job search contacts?

You may not be eligible for PUA benefits if you fail to meet the minimum job search requirement. For any week that you do not make three job search contacts, you must report that when submitting the claim certification for that week. You must also report on the claim certification if you were unable to make the job search contacts due to an illness, childcare,

transportation, or any other issue. A PUA Coordinator may also follow up to inquire about why you did not look for work.

2. How do I show that I made three job search contacts?

You must keep a written log of your job search contacts using the CNMI PUA program's "Record of Contacts Made for Work" form. The downloadable form can be found at: www.marianaslabor.net under "Forms & Publications".

3. Could you provide examples of a job search contact?

The following are several examples of a job search contact:

1. Registering for work on the Department's website (www.marianaslabor.net) or at a private employment placement agency;
2. Applying for work with employers by submitting resumes or interviewing;
3. Using employment resources at the Division of Employment Services to identify potential job openings;
4. Attending job fairs, seminars, or other workshops that offer instructions in improving your skills in seeking and obtaining employment; or
5. Conducting other work search activities that individuals in the same or similar occupation would engage in.

Please contact the Division of Employment Services before going to their location to use their employment resources.

To register for work, visit <https://www.marianaslabor.net/>

4. Will I be asked to provide my written log of job search contacts to receive benefits?

Yes. You will be asked to provide your written log of job search contacts if your claim is selected for review. Failure to provide your written log of job search contacts will result in further investigation and delayed processing.

5. I have an underlying health condition and cannot look for work. Am I exempted from making three job search contacts?

No, you are not exempted from making three job search contacts due to underlying health conditions. You must disclose that you are unable and unavailable for work on your claim certifications.

6. Do I have to look for work if I am filing for PUA because my self-employment was impacted due to covid-19?

Yes.

You must actively seek to resume your self-employment. Examples may include, but are not limited to, advertising your business, bidding on jobs, contacting potential clients, or seeking assistance from the CNMI Small Business Development Center.

7. I cannot look for work because my child's school is not in session over the summer. Am I still required to make three jobs search contacts?

Yes, you are still required to make three job search contacts. Although we understand that some childcare facilities have not reopened or reduced their capacity because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we expect that you will make efforts to expand your search for childcare and make three job search contacts.

8. I am unable and unavailable to work. Do I need to make three job search contacts?

Yes, by law, you are required to be able and available for work in order to receive PUA. You must report your inability and unavailability to work on all claim certifications that your inability and unavailability to work applies to.

Three Job Searches

1. What if the type of job that I had before is not available or if I find the work available to be unsuitable to me? Do I still need to make three job search contacts?

You must make three job search contacts, unless you are a full-time employee that is attached to an employer, or participating in a Department approved training.

2. What if I apply for a job, but only part-time work is available. Do I still need to make three job search contacts?

Yes, as a part-time employee you are required to make three job search contacts.

3. I registered for work at marianaslabor.net prior to the pandemic; do I need to register again?

If you have previously registered for marianaslabor.net, you do not need register again. However, you will need to update your information and make sure that your profile is viewable to employers.

Written log

1. Will I be asked to provide my written log of job search contacts to receive benefits?

Yes, you must keep your written log of job search contacts and submit it upon request by the Department.

2. How long do I need to keep my written log of job search contacts?

You must keep your written log of job search contacts for the duration of your claim.

3. How do I upload my job search contact log onto the PUA site (hiremarianas.com)?

Individuals do not need to upload their job search contact log onto the PUA site when they file their weekly claim certifications. However, they must keep a record of all their job search contacts and submit that record when requested.

4. I applied for a job on another site and there is no business name or contact information included. How do I report this on my job search contact log?

Print and include a copy of the job posting and your application to the business on the contact log.

Job Status

1. What actions do I take if I am still attached to my employer but I am asked the work questions when I file my claim certifications?

If you are still attached to a full-time employer, please ask your employer to submit a “Verification of Partial Unemployment Status for PUA” form. Only your employer can submit the form. An PUA Coordinator will review each form and change your claim status if necessary.

The form can be found at www.marianaslabor.net under “Forms & Publications”.

2. If I had a part-time job before the covid-19 pandemic and am returning to my part-time job, do I need to make three job search contacts?

Yes, you are required to make three job search contacts.

3. If I received a job offer but it doesn’t start for another 2 months, do I need to make three job contacts?

Yes. In order to qualify for PUA Benefits you must continue making three job contacts per week until you have returned to work.

4. If I have a full-time job but have had my hours reduced, do I need to make three job contacts?

No, you do not. However, if when filing your claim certification, you are asked whether you looked for work, how many employers you contacted, etc., then please ask your employer to submit the “Verification of Partial Unemployment Status for PUA” form on your behalf. This form will verify that you are a full-time employee who is still attached to the employer, which exempts you from the job search requirement.

The form can be found at www.marianaslabor.net under “Forms & Publications”.

5. I am a student, but have a part-time job. Do I need to make three job contacts?

Yes, if you are a part-time employee, you must make three job search contacts. If you are unable to search for work because of your schooling, you must disclose that information on your claim certifications.

6. I have two part-time jobs. Do I still need to make three job search contacts?

Yes, all part-time employees, regardless of the number of jobs, are required to make three job search contacts.

7. Will I still be able to receive PUA benefits if I go to back to work or get a part-time job?

You may still receive PUA benefits if you earn less than your weekly benefit amount and otherwise qualify.

8. I am scheduled to start a new job. Do I still need to make three job search contacts?

Yes, you are required to make three job search contacts in order to meet the work search requirement to receive PUA Benefits.

9. I am scheduled to start a new job, but need to attend a training or wait for a background check before I start. Do I still need to make three job search contacts?

Yes, you must make three job search contacts in order to meet the work search requirement to receive PUA benefits. However, any activity related to your pending job opportunity counts as a contact. For example, attending a training, undergoing a physical, or submitting to a drug test can be counted as a job search contact.

10. I agreed to work for an employer that will pay me when the company is in stable financial condition. What do I report on my claim certifications?

You would report your hours and earnings during the week that you work. For example, if you worked three hours and were informed that you would be paid \$40 for that work at a later time, you would report that you worked three hours and earned \$40 on the week that you worked.

Further Information

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 (BRI) Handbook. Continued eligibility is determined on a week-by-week basis. A copy of the BRI can be obtained at www.marianaslabor.net under “Forms & Publications”.

CNMI DOL continues to make itself available for inquiries and assistance with claims that need assistance. PUA claimants who need assistance are encouraged to email info@puamarianas.com or call the following numbers: (670) 322-8870/71/72/73/74.