



**PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE LINK FOR
SELF-EMPLOYED NOW ACTIVE AND POSTED TO FILING SITE**
More than 38,000 complete first step and can now file on PUA site

May 7, 2020

WETHERSFIELD – Today, the Connecticut Department of Labor made active the filing site so those who are self-employed can complete filing applications for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). The site, located on www.filectui.com, can be identified by a red button labeled with the PUA designation. The site will accept applications from self-employed individuals, including independent contractors and “gig” workers, who have already applied through the state unemployment system, and have received a determination notice in the mail from the Connecticut Department of Labor.

“Due to the pandemic and the devastating effect it has had on many that are self-employed, for the first time ever, these individuals are facing workplace situations never seen before. Unemployment benefits will help them weather such challenging times and help our economy recover faster,” said State Labor Commissioner Kurt Westby.

According to Westby, more than 38,000 self-employed individuals have completed the first step of the federally-required two-step process. The first step, which requires individuals to file an application on the state unemployment system, generates a determination notice that is sent to applicants by mail. The notice, also known as a UC-58, notifies those eligible to file as a self-employed person that wage data is not available and disqualifies them for state benefits. Under guidelines set by the federal government, this two-step process ensures accurate accounting and integrity measures.

Because self-employed individuals already applied through the state unemployment system, the newly-built PUA site will have a record of a person’s state benefit ineligibility status. The PUA system requires applicants to create an account with a unique password and user ID. The secure site also collects the applicant’s name, birthdate and social security number, in addition to wage information.

Applicants will also be asked the date when COVID-19 impacted their employment. Federal guidelines allow this to go back to Feb. 2, 2020. If an unemployed status goes back to retroactive weeks, the system requires applicants to provide weekly earnings through the current week filing.

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To prevent overpayments, self-employed applicants who are not eligible for state benefits could be eligible for the weekly minimum PUA rate of \$198; \$15 for each dependency up to five; and the \$600 Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) payment. The first payment will also include any retroactive FPUC, beginning with week ending April 4, 2020.

Based on earnings, self-employed individuals could qualify for between \$198 and \$649 in weekly PUA benefits. The agency has formed a new partnership with the Department of Revenue Services (DRS) to validate self-reported wages to determine if earnings require a higher weekly benefit amount. If an increased PUA benefit is warranted, the claim will be re-determined at the higher weekly PUA rate and the PUA system will automatically issue adjustment payments and provide future benefit weeks at this higher amount.

If self-reported wages can not be validated, the weekly PUA rate will remain at the minimum of \$198 weekly. Any claim can be subject to federal audit and DRS is providing resources to periodically validate submitted claim information to help ensure the integrity of the benefit program.

“This is new territory for this agency and the self-employed individuals who have never before been eligible to collect unemployment insurance,” Westby said. “Benefits for those who have lost jobs are traditionally supported by state Trust Funds that employers pay into on a quarterly basis. In these times when the pandemic has forced so many small businesses to temporarily close, we feel honored to help these workers for the first time ever.”

Westby added: “I want to thank the Department of Revenue Services and Acting Commissioner John Biello for the invaluable assistance the agency is providing to help ensure the integrity and success of this new program. The agency also would like to acknowledge the work of TATA Consultancy Services, our developer and partner for the PUA ReEmployCT system. Their technical expertise was much appreciated as we worked to develop this application to meet the needs of our self-employed residents.”

The following offers more detail for completing the Step Two process once the UC-58 has been received in the mail:

- Go to CTDOL www.filectui.com and click on the red PUA button, labeled PUA/Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.
- The system will have a record of your ineligibility status to receive state benefits.
- Complete the PUA application –
 - Applicants should have 2019 IRS tax returns, 1099 forms, 2019 W-2 statements, pay check stubs, bank receipts or business records. Those without wage records for 2019 can self-attest their earnings, but could be subject to audit.

- Applicants will be asked the date when COVID-19 impacted their employment. Federal guidelines allow this to go back to Feb. 2, 2020. If an unemployed status goes back to retroactive weeks, the system asks the claimant for weekly earnings through the current week filing.
- To assist with the application:
 - Answer “Yes” to the “Are you self-employed?” question.
 - Answer “Yes” to “Are you a corporate officer?” if applicable.
 - Select one of the four lack of work separation reasons: Lack of Work; Layoff; Temporary Shutdown; Position Eliminated.
 - For Employer Name, use the business name or “Self-Employed.”
 - For Employer Registration Number, use your own registration number (if you have one); otherwise, use ER# (9999995).
- Applicants are advised to select their method of payment, direct deposit or debit card, prior to submitting a PUA application. The agency recommends direct deposit for much faster payment. Payment selection is made by selecting the “method of payment” green button on the www.filectui.com filing site.

Under the federal guidelines, self-employed individuals can collect PUA for 39 weeks. Frequently asked questions (<http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/DOLCOVIDFAQ.PDF>) posted to the agency’s homepage and www.filectui.com cover topics that include work availability and circumstances related to COVID-19, tax withholding and partial payment if a person is only partly unemployed due to COVID-19, and acceptable wage documents that can be submitted. An individual working a full-time job is not eligible to apply for PUA benefits.

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