



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Transitional Assistance*

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**Online Guide Transmittal 2020-31A  
May 1, 2020**

**To:** Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

**From:**  Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management

**Re:** Cross Programs: Clarifications to Unemployment and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation Benefits

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**Overview** On March 18, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act was signed into law. This legislation contains provisions for traditional unemployment assistance benefits and other types of unemployment assistance benefits.

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**Purpose** This Online Guide Transmittal is being issued to address unemployment benefits for additional groups not mentioned in the previous transmittal and includes procedures for verifying out of state unemployment benefits.

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**Federal  
Pandemic  
Unemployment  
Compensation**

The Department of Unemployment Assistance has implemented Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC), which is an additional \$600 per week for individuals collecting regular unemployment benefits. The additional \$600 will be added to unemployment benefits retroactive to March 29, 2020. These benefits will continue until July 31, 2020. The caseworker will sometimes be able to see the FPUC benefit under the “Additions” column on the unemployment screen. Even if the FPUC payment is not showing, you must add the \$600 weekly utilizing the instructions below.

**Note:** The FPUC payment is always \$600. The dependent care allowance of \$25 per child will also show in the “Additions” column. Consistent with current practice, any dependent care allowance amounts must be added to the regular unemployment benefits record, not to the second record created for the FPUC amount.

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**Federal  
Pandemic  
Unemployment  
Compensation  
(Continued)**

**At Application:** If a client is applying for SNAP and is also approved for unemployment benefits, you must count the regular unemployment benefits based on the weekly payment issued amount. **In addition, you must enter a separate unemployment compensation line item in BEACON for the \$600 weekly FPUC amount the client is receiving.**

SNAP  
Households

**During the Certification Period:** If a SNAP case has already been established and the client now reports that they are receiving the \$600 weekly FPUC amount, Simplified Reporting rules will be applied. If the household has a gross income test and the addition of the \$600 weekly FPUC amount will put the household over the gross income limit, you must verify the unemployment amount by checking DUA and enter it in BEACON so the case can be denied for over income. If the addition of the \$600 weekly FPUC will not put the SNAP household over the gross income limit you must not check DUA and you must not enter it in BEACON.

**Remember:** If the household contains an elderly or disabled member, this household does not have a gross income test.

**Note:** If an Unemployment Match appears in BEACON, you must count both the unemployment benefits and the FPUC benefits as the information in the match is considered verified upon receipt and must be counted on all Simplified Reporting cases at the time the match is received.

TAFDC and  
EAEDC  
Households

**At Application:** If a client is applying for TAFDC or EAEDC and there is pending unemployment, the case must be processed without delay. Clients applying for cash assistance must not have their case delayed due to requiring that they file for unemployment.

If the client is applying and has already been approved for unemployment benefits, you must enter the regular unemployment benefits based on the weekly payment issued amount. **In addition, you must enter a separate unemployment compensation line item in BEACON for the \$600 weekly FPUC amount the client is receiving.**

**For ongoing TAFDC or EAEDC Households:** If a TAFDC or EAEDC case has already been established and the client now reports they are receiving the \$600 weekly FPUC amount or an Unemployment Match appears in BEACON, this income must be applied to the case

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**Self Employed  
Gig Workers and  
Contract  
Workers**

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), authorized under the Federal Cares Act, provides up to 39 weeks of unemployment benefits to self - employed individuals, Gig workers, independent contractors and others who were previously ineligible for unemployment benefits. Clients that receive PUA benefits are also eligible to receive FPUC benefits (an additional \$600 per week of benefits).

Enter the PUA benefit as Unemployment Compensation on the Other Income page and enter the FPUC as an additional Unemployment Compensation line item on the same page.

The DUA screen does not show PUA claimants, therefore, you will not be able to see the payments made to these claimants on UI Online. If the client states they receive unemployment benefits, you must accept the best available proof, which may include a verbal or written self-declaration of their weekly amount. **You must also enter a separate Unemployment Compensation line item for the FPUC (the additional \$600 weekly benefit).**

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**Extension of  
Unemployment  
Benefits**

Under the CARES act anyone who has exhausted their regular unemployment benefits is eligible to receive another 13 weeks of unemployment called PEUC. They need to complete an unemployment application to receive PEUC.

The DUA screen does not show UC extension benefits at this time. You must accept best available proof, which may include the client's verbal or written self-declaration of their weekly benefit amounts. **In addition, you must enter a separate unemployment compensation line item in BEACON for the \$600 weekly FPUC amount the client is receiving.**

See Attachment A which is a flowchart outlining eligibility that includes UC extension benefits.

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**Out of State  
Unemployment  
Benefits**

Clients residing in Massachusetts may have been employed in other states (commonly neighboring states e.g., Rhode Island, New Hampshire, etc.) and had to file for unemployment in that state. Since their unemployment is administered through another state, the Department does not have access to the benefit amount. You must accept best available proof, which may include the client's verbal or written self-declaration of their weekly benefit amounts.

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**Out of State  
Unemployment  
Benefits  
(Continued)**

In addition, clients receiving unemployment benefits in all states are eligible for FPUC benefits. However, not all states have started issuing FPUC benefits at this time. If the client has not stated that they are receiving the \$600 weekly FPUC benefit, you must visit the state's unemployment webpage to determine if there is an announcement regarding whether or not FPUC benefits have been dispersed. If there is no information available, you must accept best available proof which may include the client's verbal or written self-declaration.

If you determine or the client self-reports, they are receiving FPUC, **you must also enter a separate Unemployment Compensation line item for the FPUC (the additional \$600 weekly benefit).**

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**Questions**

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.

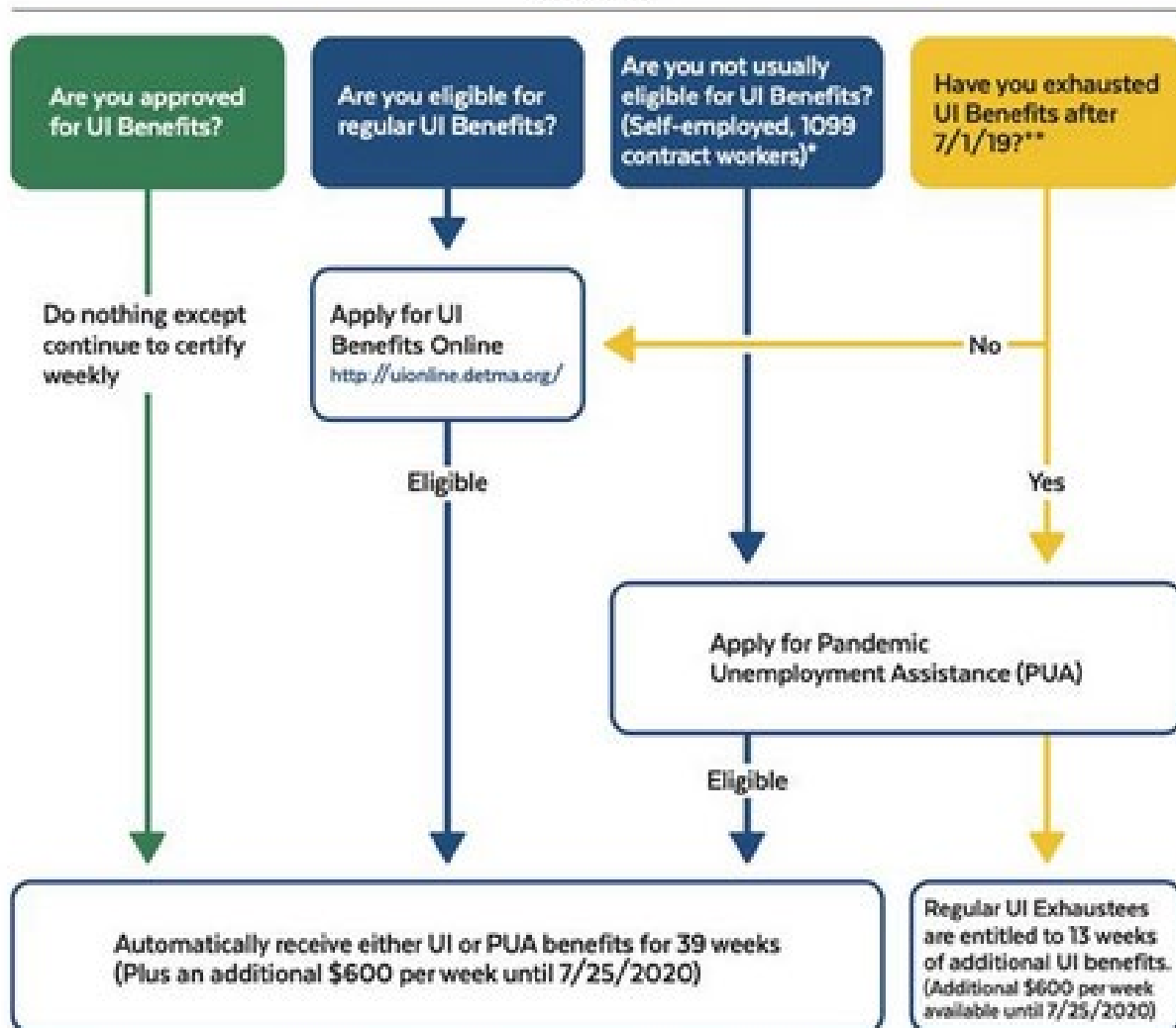
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# What you need to know and do about the CARES Act

The federal CARES Act was signed into law March 27, 2020. The Act provides enhanced Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) for Massachusetts workers.

Start here



Don't know where to start? Apply for UI Benefits first. If you don't qualify, try applying for PUA.

\* People traditionally ineligible for unemployment benefits may be self-employed, gig workers, or independent contractors. Other examples include earning less than \$5000 in the last year, or having no right to regular unemployment, either because you were denied, or you worked for a religious organization.

\*\* This group may qualify for PEUC at a later date. PEUC is Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation. That's the 13 week extension for people who were previously collecting unemployment but have used up all of their benefits, or whose benefit year ended after July 1, 2019.

For more information visit [mass.gov/dua](http://mass.gov/dua)

Filing for UI benefits by phone is based on the last digit of your Social Security Number.

Q:1 file on Monday | 2,3 file on Tuesday | 4,5,6 file on Wednesday | 7,8,9 file on Thursday | Any digit file on Friday