
Updated Information About Unemployment Insurance for Gig Workers

If you're a self-employed worker who's lost income in this crisis, you may now qualify for unemployment benefits. The amount of financial help varies. But if your application is approved, you will be paid at least the minimum weekly benefit amount as long as you continue to be unemployed due to COVID-19 related reasons. Also, if your benefit amount is at least \$1 each week, you will receive an additional \$600 weekly through July 25.

First things first, how do I know if I'm eligible for Unemployment Benefits?

Eligibility is determined on a case by case basis, but you can check the [ESD's new Eligibility Checker](#) to better understand if you should apply. In order to qualify for the federal PUA benefits, you must be able to indicate one of the COVID-19 related reasons you are unable to work. Please pay close attention to Page Two of the ESD Eligibility Checker to ensure your reason for unemployment will qualify.

Okay, I'm eligible. Now what?

Step 1: Apply for Regular (State) Unemployment

You must apply for regular Washington State unemployment benefits and get denied before you can apply for the expanded benefits provided by the federal government under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program. To get started on your application, create your account [here](#).

[Download this guide](#) and use it when you apply - it can help you navigate the application and avoid issues that will delay your benefits.

Step 2: Apply for Expanded (Federal PUA) Unemployment Benefits

When your application for regular Washington State benefits has been denied, an alert will show up in your eServices account and email inbox. You then can apply for the federally funded PUA program. This application is similar to the regular Washington State unemployment application, with an additional page that asks for your 2019 self-employed income and documents.

You will need to upload documents verifying your income. The fastest way to expedite your unemployment benefits is to submit your 2019 federal tax return. If you have not filed your 2019 tax return, you may file proof of W2 and 1099 income from last year's wages.

Step 3: Submit Your Weekly Claim

After applying, start submitting weekly claims right away—even before you're approved—to get paid faster.

Some tips and tricks for applying... 



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Tips and Tricks

- The ESD's website now has a specific information page for self-employed and independent contractors, which you can [visit here](#).
- Make sure to have all the proper information and documents in hand before applying, this will ensure you can fill out your application completely:
 - For a checklist of items to have ready for the regular Washington State application, [click here](#).
 - For a checklist of items to have ready for the federal PUA application, [click here](#).
- Due to high traffic on the ESD website, the site often crashes. If this happens, hit the refresh button multiple times and the page will reload. If this doesn't work, exit the page and log on again.
- At the bottom of your application is a "Save" button. Save your application often in case the site crashes.

Have More Questions?

- Want a guided tour of the unemployment and expanded benefits applications? The ESD will be hosting a number of webinars to walk people through the Washington State unemployment application and the federal PUA expanded benefits application. [Find out more here](#).
- The best way to stay up to date about unemployment insurance updates is by signing up the Employment Security Department's (ESD) [COVID-19 action alerts](#).