

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Department of Employment Services



MURIEL BOWSER  
MAYOR

DR. UNIQUE MORRIS-HUGHES  
DIRECTOR

### PRESS RELEASE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### CONTACT

Diane Watkins (DOES) – 202-671-1904; [diane.watkins@dc.gov](mailto:diane.watkins@dc.gov)

## Federal American Rescue Plan Further Extends Unemployment Benefits for DC Workers

(WASHINGTON, DC) – Today, the Department of Employment Services (DOES) announced that the American Rescue Plan (ARP), the new federal coronavirus relief package signed yesterday by President Biden extends unemployment benefits programs under the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the Continued Assistance for Unemployed Workers Act (CAA) that were scheduled to expire tomorrow, March 13, through September 6, 2021. DOES is currently reviewing additional unemployment provisions in the ARP and expects to begin distributing any new guidance in the coming weeks. Claimants are encouraged to apply for unemployment compensation online at [dcnetworks.org](https://dcnetworks.org). District workers can also apply by phone at (202) 724-7000.

“The American Rescue Plan extension of unemployment insurance benefit programs will provide the continued and additional financial support that District workers so desperately need,” said DOES Director Dr. Unique Morris-Hughes. “We are processing claims daily and improving communications to ensure DOES unemployment insurance programs are easier to understand and navigate. Our priority remains getting payments out the door so that District workers are able to provide for themselves and their families.” The new law increases the availability of unemployment insurance benefits for those that are self-employed, contract workers, those ineligible for state unemployment benefits or have exhausted benefits.

ARP provides an extension of the Shared Work, or Short-Term Compensation Program funding that allows employers to avoid layoffs by reducing employee hours that might then be supplemented with unemployment insurance benefits. The new law also provides emergency staffing flexibility and suspends federal income taxes on unemployment insurance benefits up to \$10,200 for those whose income is less than \$150,000.

The U.S. Department of Labor has indicated that there will not be a gap in benefit weeks. Claimants should continue to file weekly certifications. Eligible payments will be made retroactively if necessary.

District workers are eligible to receive an expansion of UI benefits through these unemployment benefits programs:

**Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)** – PUA covers individuals who are not eligible for regular UI benefits for up to 79 total weeks. This includes self-employed individuals, independent contractors, and gig economy workers.

**Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)** – PEUC covers individuals who have recently exhausted all rights to regular UI under state or federal law for up to 53 total weeks.

**Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)** – FPUC covers individuals currently receiving regular UI or PUA, and individuals eligible under PEUC. In addition to regular UI or PUA benefits, eligible individuals will receive an additional \$300 per week.

**Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC)** – MEUC provides a \$100 weekly supplement to eligible individuals with annual self-employment income of at least \$5,000. To be eligible for MEUC, individuals must have received at least \$5,000 of self-employment income in the most recent taxable year ending prior to the individual’s application for regular UI.

**Question:** How do I know if I should apply for “regular” UI benefits or PUA?

**Answer:** You must file for regular UI benefits before completing the PUA application. If you are eligible for regular UI, then that is the benefit you will receive. PUA is only available to individuals that are ineligible for regular UI.

**Question:** I’m filing my first PUA application. Can my claim be backdated to February 2020?

**Answer:** No, all new PUA claims filed after December 26, 2020 can only be backdated to December 1, 2020.

**Question:** How long will these additional benefits be available?

**Answer:** The American Rescue Plan extends unemployment benefits for eligible individuals through September 6, 2021. There are different eligibility requirements for each program.

Additional information will be shared at [does.dc.gov](https://does.dc.gov) and on DOES social media pages as it becomes available.

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#### **Social Media**

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