On June 4, 2020, the U.S. Department of Labor reported initial unemployment claims continue to show a decreasing trend. For the week ending May 30, 2020, 1,877,000 initial claims were filed, a decrease of 249,000 from the prior week.
However, total unemployment across the nation increased slightly to 14.8 percent (approximately 21 million individuals) for the week ending May 23, 2020.

As the country reopens, total unemployment claims should decrease. Impacted individuals who remain unemployed should be aware, however, that the additional $600 weekly unemployment benefit under the federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program will expire in just a few weeks.

For both impacted individuals and employers who have relied on the FPUC benefit when planning for furloughs and layoffs, the exact date of the expiration of this program is important. The language of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the method in which unemployment agencies pay weekly benefits can make the end date of this benefit somewhat confusing.

What is federal pandemic unemployment compensation?

Federal pandemic unemployment compensation is the additional $600 benefit added
to the weekly unemployment amount received by impacted individuals. This provision is contained in Section 2104 of the CARES Act. The FPUC program is funded by the federal government.

The additional $600 per week benefit is available to individuals who are collecting regular unemployment compensation (including Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) and Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX)), as well as the following unemployment compensation programs: Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC); Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA); Federal-State Extended Benefits (EB); ShortTime Compensation (STC); Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA); Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA); and Self-Employment Assistance (SEA).

**When will the additional $600 FPUC benefit end?**

The CARES Act specifies that FPUC benefit payments will end after payments for the last week of unemployment “on or before July 31, 2020.” This date refers to the applicable state unemployment agency’s weekly benefit week, not the last day in July a person does not work.

In most states, the unemployment week runs on a Saturday-to-Saturday or Sunday-to-Sunday weekly benefit schedule. FPUC will not be paid on a partial week or daily basis. The end date listed in the CARES Act is Friday, July 31, 2020. Thus, according to the FPUC operating instructions, “in states where the week of unemployment ends on a Saturday, the last week that FPUC is payable is the week ending July 25, 2020. For states where the week of unemployment ends on a Sunday, the last week that FPUC is payable is the week ending July 26, 2020.” In these states, the $600 benefit will not be paid for workdays during the week of July 27-31, 2020.

**Will an individual receive notice of the last FPUC benefit payment?**

If state law requires notification of the final unemployment payment, then the state unemployment agency must notify an individual when he or she receives the final FPUC payment.

**Will the FPUC benefit be extended?**

The House has proposed an extension of the FPUC benefit in the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act. However, the Senate has voiced strong opposition to the extension of the FPUC program.


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