



## **FAQ for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation: COVID-19**

### **What is Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)?**

Section 2104 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020 provides for a temporary emergency increase in unemployment compensation benefits, referred to as the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program.

### **Who is eligible to receive FPUC?**

FPUC is payable to individuals who are otherwise eligible for unemployment benefits for weeks of unemployment beginning March 29, 2020 and ending July 31, 2020.

### **How much is the emergency increase?**

FPUC provides an eligible individual with an additional \$600 per week.

### **When does the emergency increase start?**

In Illinois, claimants are eligible for the additional benefit for weeks of unemployment beginning with the week of March 29, 2020. Claimants who were unemployed for that week will certify for benefits either the week of April 5th or April 12th.

### **How long will FPUC be available?**

FPUC is payable for every week that an individual is eligible for underlying unemployment benefits through the week of July 26, 2020.

### **How is FPUC paid?**

Eligible individuals receive FPUC payments at the same time as their unemployment payments.

### **Will payment of FPUC reduce my regular benefits?**

No. The method governing the computation of regular unemployment compensation will remain the same.

**Will payment of FPUC affect my right to Medicaid and SCHIP?**

No. Under the CARES Act, FPUC payments must be disregarded when determining the amount of income under Medicaid or SCHIP.

**How is the payment of FPUC calculated?**

If a claimant is eligible to receive at least \$1 of unemployment benefits for the claimed week, the claimant will receive the full \$600 FPUC.

**Will child support be deductible from FPUC?**

Child support obligations must be deducted from FPUC payments in the same manner and to the same extent as these obligations are deducted from regular unemployment compensation.

**Is FPUC taxable?**

Yes, the \$600 FPUC is taxable. IDES will include FPUC when preparing the 1099G tax documents and must withhold taxes from the weekly benefit amount and from the \$600 FPUC if an individual elects to have taxes withheld.

**If I am denied FPUC do I have a right to appeal?**

FPUC hinges on whether a claimant is eligible for underlying unemployment benefits under the regular or federal programs. If a claimant is found ineligible for benefits (and therefore FPUC as well), they would have a right to appeal that finding. Instructions on how to appeal are contained in the Finding that will be sent to the claimant.

**Since FPUC provides an additional \$600 per week, can I quit my job and collect unemployment?**

No. Quitting work without good cause just to obtain additional benefits under the regular unemployment program or the federal programs qualifies as fraud and could subject the individual to criminal penalties.

**Can I refuse to go back to work to keep collecting the FPUC?**

No. Claimants must certify every two weeks that they are able and available to work, and if they refuse to go back to work, they are no longer eligible for unemployment benefits, including FPUC.

**If after receiving FPUC I am found ineligible, must I repay the FPUC?**

An FPUC overpayment occurs when an individual has received an FPUC payment to which he or she is not entitled, and it will need to be paid back. The amount owed may be deducted from future benefits.

**How can I receive and respond to other notices sent by IDES, such as determinations and hearings notices?**

Currently, IDES can only send determination and hearing notices via the U.S. Postal Service. If an alternative mode of response other than U.S. Mail, fax, or MyTax/SIDES is possible, it will be provided on the Notice. (e.g. a party to a Benefit Appeal Hearing may submit certain documents or requests by e-mail to the ALJ).

**I hired new employees, am I still required to report the new hires?**

Yes. Please report your new hires electronically on MyTax.

**I work part time in a fast food restaurant while attending high school. The restaurant is closed by order of the State, and I am not being paid. Am I eligible for unemployment insurance?**

You could be eligible for regular unemployment benefits if you are able, available for and actively seeking full-time work. Because you are in high school and have history of only working part time, this could be difficult to show. A student who is unable to work full time due to their academic schedule is not eligible for regular unemployment. However, if you aren't eligible for regular unemployment benefits, you may qualify under the federal stimulus legislation because your unemployment was the result of COVID-19. IDES will provide information about how to apply for this benefit as soon as it is finalized. Please do not apply at this time.

**I am an adjunct professor and do not receive school pay during the summer, so I usually take a summer job (restaurant or bartending work, temp service jobs, etc.). Will I be able to receive benefits if I am unable to find a summer job due to COVID-19?**

An adjunct professor cannot use academic wages in their base period to establish eligibility for regular unemployment between terms if they have reasonable assurance of returning to the academic position after the summer break. If the adjunct professor does not have reasonable assurance, then they would be eligible for regular unemployment benefits based on all wages during their base period, which includes academic wages. If the adjunct professor has reasonable assurance to return the next term, then it is possible to collect regular unemployment benefits based upon non-academic wages in their base period. If the adjunct professor has reasonable assurance and does not have non-academic wages then it is possible they could be eligible for benefits under the federal stimulus package and they are able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work.

**I received a debit card in the mail but it did not have any funds on it. Why not?**

The debit card is mailed soon after the claim is filed and processed. The funds are placed on the debit card 2 days after the claimant certifies. Due to the volume of claimants applying for and receiving benefits, the bank has experienced issues which resulted in a delay of payments for some individuals.

**My driver's license is expired and I don't have an Illinois ID. How can I make a claim?**

When applying for unemployment insurance, an individual is required to documentation of a valid social security number and another form of non-expired identification that displays the person's name, address, and date of birth.

**Are most claims adjudicated without a phone interview?**

No. Most cases require a representative to speak with the claimant.