

From Senator Tom Killion
Pennsylvania's 9th District
Chester & Delaware Counties

E-Newsletter

COVID-19: Unemployment Update

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Information Available for Claimants Struggling With Unemployment Compensation System

The spike in the number of applicants in the Unemployment Compensation system has created longer response times and a large backlog of cases that sometimes take weeks to resolve. A number of services are available online to help resolve some questions regarding the system.

Claimants can [check the status of their application](#) online, find answers to [frequently asked questions](#) and read [tips on how to file an initial claim](#) and more at www.uc.pa.gov.

Claimants who have filed an initial claim in mid-March who have not received a PIN should contact the Department of Labor and Industry as soon as possible. The same

guidance applies to individuals who tried to re-open an existing claim in mid-March and are still listed as “inactive” when they try to file a bi-weekly claim.

If you meet one of these criteria or have other questions or problems that are not covered on the department’s website, please feel free to contact me for assistance.

Expanded Unemployment Benefit Payments Begin This Week

The federal CARES Act provides expanded unemployment benefits of \$600 per week to eligible claimants. These payments are in addition to regular benefits provided through the unemployment system. The Department of Labor and Industry reports that these payments should arrive by Wednesday of this week for eligible claimants who received their regular payments for the week ending April 4.

Claimants who have not yet received a payment will receive the extra \$600 per week in the days following receipt of their first payment. An additional 13 weeks of benefits will be available to claimants who have been affected by the pandemic.

More information on the state’s efforts to implement the provisions of the CARES Act is available on [a new website](#) created by the Department of Labor and Industry.

Benefits Available Soon for Contractors, Self-Employed Workers

The CARES Act temporarily makes benefits available to other individuals who are not normally eligible, such as people who are self-employed, independent contractors and gig workers. However, these individuals cannot apply through the current unemployment system; the federal government requires the state to create a new platform to provide these benefits.

The Department of Labor and Industry expects to have the new system up and running within the next two weeks. Claimants will be able to receive backdated payments to January 27 or the first week that they were unable to work due to the coronavirus, whichever is later. More information about the new program is available on the department's [frequently asked questions](#) page.

Utility Providers, Other Companies Provide Assistance Programs

The COVID-19 crisis has affected millions of Americans across the country. Most major utility companies are offering special assistance programs to help families who have been impacted by the pandemic. Some of the programs include delayed or partial payments, hardship funds, budget billing and other programs to help customers.

More information about the different kinds of programs and services to help utility customers is available on the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's [website](#).

Individuals and families who are struggling to pay bills during this pandemic should reach out to their utility companies, mortgage/rental companies, credit card companies and other lenders to see what programs may be available to help.