



TO: **W-2 Agencies
Training Staff**

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BWF/BRP OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 21-10

DATE: 06/08/2021

W-2 ☒ EA ☒ CF ☐ JAL ☒

RAP ☒ TMJ ☐ TJ ☐ Other EP ☐

SUBJECT: *COVID-19 Expanded Unemployment Insurance Benefits Under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021*

CROSS REFERENCE:

[BWF Operations Memo 20-09](#)

[BWF/BRP Operations Memo 21-09](#)

[BWF/BRP Operations Memo 21-11](#)

[Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act of 2020](#)

[Consolidated Appropriations Act Of 2021](#)

[American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to:

1. Communicate information on the extensions to COVID-19 Unemployment Insurance Benefits under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; and
2. Provide reminders on how to treat COVID-19 Unemployment Insurance Benefit payments when determining financial eligibility for Wisconsin Works (W-2), Emergency Assistance (EA), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Job Access Loans (JAL).

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 has contributed to a sharp rise in unemployment, and legislation enacted at both the state and federal levels is intended to temporarily expand unemployment insurance benefit

programs in addition to providing more robust benefits. The federal [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act of 2020](#) provided economic relief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the federal government provided continued emergency relief through the Continued Assistance for Unemployed Workers Act of 2020, which is commonly referred to as the Continued Assistance Act and part of the [Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021](#). Most recently, the [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#) was passed on March 11, 2021. This legislation extends unemployment benefits that were first authorized by the CARES Act earlier in 2020, and later extended by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

This memo provides information on the unemployment benefits that were extended through the American Rescue Plan Act. Up-to-date information will also be added to the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) [Unemployment Insurance](#) (UI) websites on an ongoing basis. As these programs are implemented or extended, individuals may receive their unemployment insurance benefits as retroactive lump sum payments following a period of delay.

For clarification on how to count UI benefit payments received as retroactive lump sums, see [BWF/BRP Operations Memo 21-11 COVID-19 Retroactive Unemployment Insurance Payments and Lump Sum Income Policy Clarification](#). For background on the expanded benefits and case processing instructions, see [BWF Operations Memo 20-09 COVID-19 Expanded Unemployment Insurance Benefits](#).

For information on additional relief provided in the American Rescue Plan Act, see [BWF/BRP Operations Memo 21-09 American Rescue Plan Act Stimulus Payments and Tax Credits](#).

COVID-19 EXPANDED FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

Temporary federally funded unemployment compensation (UC) programs created under the CARES Act and Continued Assistance Act were extended to the week ending September 4, 2021, under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021:

- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC);
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA);
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC); and
- Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC).

COVID UI Benefit	CARES Act	Continued Assistance Act of 2020	American Rescue Plan Act of 2021
FPUC	Week ending April 4, 2021 – Week ending July 25, 2020	Week ending January 2, 2021 – Week ending March 13, 2021	Week ending March 20, 2021 – Week ending September 4, 2021
PUA	Retroactive to week ending February 8, 2020 (or the first week an individual is out of work due to COVID-19, whichever is later)	Week ending January 2, 2021 – Week ending March 13, 2021	Week ending March 20, 2021 – Week ending September 4, 2021
PEUC	Retroactive to week ending April 4, 2020 (or the first	Week ending January 2, 2021 –	Week ending March 20, 2021 –

COVID UI Benefit	CARES Act	Continued Assistance Act of 2020	American Rescue Plan Act of 2021
	week after an individual exhausts regular UI, whichever is later)	Week ending March 13, 2021	Week ending September 4, 2021
MEUC	N/A	Week ending January 2, 2021 – Week ending March 13, 2021	9-week extension to Week ending September 4, 2021

FEDERAL PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) is a temporary emergency increase in unemployment insurance benefits. In 2020, the FPUC payment amount was \$600 a week. In 2021, the FPUC payments were reduced to an additional \$300 per week.

Individuals who are collecting unemployment insurance benefits from the following programs are automatically eligible for the temporary \$300 emergency payment increase:

- Standard UI, including;
 - Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE)
 - Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service members (UCX)
- Extended Benefits (EB);
- PUA;
- PEUC;
- Work-Share (STC); and
- Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA).

DWD began issuing FPUC payments made available through the Continued Assistance Act on January 15, 2021, and implemented the extension under the American Rescue Plan Act on March 17, 2021. Most individuals did not experience a lapse in FPUC payments in March.

Additional information on the \$600 and \$300 FPUC payments can be found on the [DWD FPUC](#) web page.

PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA expands eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits to individuals who are not otherwise eligible for regular UI. The following groups may be determined eligible for PUA benefits if unable to work as a direct result of the public health emergency:

- Individuals who are currently or formerly self-employed;
- Individuals who are currently or formerly independent contractors; and
- Individuals with limited work history.

Under the federal Continued Assistance Act, the federal government requires that people seeking PUA benefits send proof of employment or self-employment, or planned start of employment or self-employment, for the year prior to their PUA application date. Individuals who

fail to provide required documentation will be required to repay PUA benefits received for the week of December 27, 2020, or later.

DWD began issuing the majority of PUA payments made available through the Continued Assistance Act and implemented the extension under the American Rescue Plan Act on March 30, 2021.

Additional information on PUA, including information on acceptable forms of employment documentation, can be found on the [DWD PUA](#) web page.

PANDEMIC EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program provides an additional 13 weeks of emergency unemployment insurance benefits for people who remain unemployed after they have exhausted their Regular UI benefits.

DWD began issuing FPUC payments made available through the Continued Assistance Act on March 5, 2021, and implemented the extension under the American Rescue Plan Act on March 17, 2021.

Additional information on the PEUC, including responses to Frequently Asked Questions, can be found on the [DWD PEUC](#) web page.

MIXED EARNER UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) is a temporary program providing an additional \$100/week payment to individuals who are receiving regular UI benefits and meet the minimum threshold for earnings. In order to be eligible for MEUC, individuals must also have earned at least \$5,000 in net earnings from self-employment in the tax year prior to the individual's initial claim.

Individuals must apply for MEUC and supply necessary documentation to prove their net self-employment earnings. The MEUC program does not apply to individuals receiving PUA.

Additional information on the MEUC, including responses to Frequently Asked Questions, can be found on the [DWD MEUC](#) web page. DWD will continue to update this page with information on the implementation of the MEUC benefit when it becomes available.

COVID-19 POLICY

COVID-19 EXPANDED FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

There is no change to policy for counting the COVID-19 Expanded Federal Unemployment Insurance benefits as income.

For all programs, including W-2, JAL, RCA, and EA, workers must disregard the \$300 emergency Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) payments as income.

For all programs, including W-2, JAL, RCA, and EA, workers must count the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) benefits as income in the month received and as an asset in the month remaining. Information on how to treat Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) will be provided when this new benefit is implemented.

OTHER PROGRAMS

Workers may also find information on other programs via the Department of Health Services' Process Help *COVID-19 Information* Page. The *All Programs: COVID-19 Temporary Processes* sub-page includes information on Economic Unemployment Relief/Other payments.

CONTACTS

For W-2 Policy Questions: [BWF Policy Question SharePoint](#)

For W-2, CARES and WWP Functionality Questions: BWF Work Programs Help Desk
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DCF/DFES/BWF/LW