If you are applying for Unemployment Benefits online, read this to make sure you do it right.

✓ Read this only if you live in the state of Washington.

Should I read this?
If you are applying for or have applied for unemployment benefits through the state of Washington’s Employment Security Division (ESD), read this.

What will I learn from reading this?
You will learn how to make sure ESD decides if you are eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) as well as for regular Unemployment Insurance (UI).

Why wouldn’t I be eligible to get regular UI?
It depends. Not everyone is eligible to get regular UI. You will not be eligible for UI if, for example, you were self-employed, or an independent contractor. But you may still be eligible to get other types of unemployment benefits!

Why do I need to know this?
A software bug has been keeping some people applying for unemployment benefits from applying for (and getting) PUA benefits. They are not being considered for benefits they could be getting.
Doesn’t ESD automatically determine my eligibility for all types of unemployment benefits at once?

No. If you are denied on your claim for regular Unemployment Insurance, they do not automatically evaluate your eligibility for PUA. You actively need to apply for PUA through your SAW/e-services account.

However, the software bug keeps you from getting the option to apply online for PUA benefits.

Instead, what you may see in your SAW account is an option to apply for Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC). This federal program extends unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks.

So how do I apply for PUA benefits?

Click on YES to apply for PEUC.
You will get a warning that going on with the PEUC request will “restart the claim.”

**Do not be concerned.** This will not re-set the claims process. You will not go to the back of the line for benefits. Go ahead and click NEXT to apply for PEUC. Answer the questions that follow.

ESD will then decide if you are eligible to get PEUC and PUA.

—if it turns out that you can get PEUC and/or PUA, you also will be eligible to get an additional $600 per week in Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC) for any weeks you were unemployed between April 4 and July 25, 2020.

**How soon should I do this?**

PEUC and PUA are only available until December 31, 2020.
What if I still have questions after reading this?

Contact an attorney:

The Unemployment Law Project (ULP) may be able to help you. Call them today:

- (509) 624-9178 or toll-free at (800) 940-9178 (Spokane)
- (206) 441-9178 or toll free at 1-888-441-9178 (Seattle)

Or, if you think you have a low income, you can call the Northwest Justice Project's CLEAR Hotline at 1-888-201-1014 weekdays between 9:15 am - 12:15 pm.

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