

News Release



Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Eligibility Expanded; Traditional Unemployment Recipients To Begin Receiving \$300 Payments

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO— The U.S. Department of Labor recently issued guidance expanding eligibility for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). PUA supports self-employed individuals, independent contractors, and others who do not qualify for traditional unemployment benefits.

“We are extremely grateful our federal partners took this step to expand PUA to these additional groups of people,” said Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro. “As we continue to grapple with the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, many Summit County residents are in dire need of financial assistance. We will continue to aid the state in any way we can as it works provide these critical benefits to our residents.”

The new guidance expands eligibility to include the following three groups of people:

1. Those previously receiving traditional unemployment benefits who refuse to return to work or refuse an offer of work because the workplace is not in compliance with local, state, or national health and safety standards directly related to COVID-19.
2. Those who provide services to an educational institution or educational service agency and are fully or partially unemployed as a direct result of COVID-19.
3. Those who are laid off or had their work hours reduced as a direct result of COVID-19.

For the first group identified above, the guidance extends to the federal PUA program, similar protections Ohioans in the traditional unemployment program have had since June as a result of Governor DeWine’s Executive Order 2020-24D. Individuals not eligible for traditional unemployment benefits may be eligible for PUA. This includes those whose earnings in their previous wages averaged less than \$280 per week.

System updates are underway to make PUA available to those in the three new groups. This will make it possible for all eligible individuals to claim all available weeks provided by the American

Rescue Plan, which extended weeks from up to 50 weeks to up to 79 weeks, ending on September 4, 2021. While this work is ongoing, individuals with PUA weeks remaining from the previous extension can continue to claim them if they remain unemployed, through April 10, 2021.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has also begun issuing supplemental weekly \$300 payments to traditional unemployment recipients in accordance with the American Rescue Plan. Additionally, the federal legislation provides for 53 weeks of traditional unemployment benefits, up from 24 weeks.

Residents can apply for unemployment benefits at unemployment.ohio.gov or call 877-644-6562 or TTY at 888- 642-8203, Monday through Friday 7AM to 7PM, Saturday 9AM to 5PM, and Sunday 9AM to 1PM.

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