

Taco Tuesday with TANF

05/19/2020

Topic: State-of-Emergency & Unemployment Compensation

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Key:

FPUA = Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

FPUC = Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

BYE = Benefit Year End

Q: Will those who go back to work still get the waiting week paid back?

A: The claimant can back date for 6 weeks for the FPUA, otherwise they can back date for one week for other UC. The waiting week is currently still unpayable until OED makes coding updates. After that is complete all claimants who filed during the pandemic period will receive the pay for the waiting week.

Q: What determines the difference between those who get \$205 FPUA, and \$648 FPUA?

A: Claimants who do not provide proof of income (1099 form, tax return, pay stubs, etc.) will receive the \$205 amount. Those who provide proof of income may receive up to the \$648 depending on their earnings.

Q: Who is the contact for FPUA questions?

A: Greg Ivers, Employment and Training Policy Analyst, at DHS is the contact for FPUA questions. The general public and DHS field does not have a point person at OED, but DHS staff may contact Greg to ask questions. The public will need to call the processing centers or a WorkSource Oregon field office. Contact: gregory.e.ivers@dhs.oregon.gov

Do not give Greg's name or contact to applicants or recipients, this is an internal contact only

Q: If a participant starts receiving UC and does not continue to submit weekly claims, can they submit claims for back weeks?

A: Under regular rules, they can back date one week, which is also the case with the FPUC. Those applying for FPUA are able to backdate at the point of initial claim up to 6 weeks. If a claimant stops reporting weekly, they will need to contact the processing center or a WorkSource Oregon field office in order to restart the claim.

Q: What recourse do people have who can't get through the phoneline to be able to file a claim?

A: Claimants can also call the WorkSource Centers to see if they can get through. OED is currently working on adding capacity.

Q: What happens with people who were denied online so they quit claiming?

A: Denial is different than having an invalid claim. Denial of a claim is based on an issue with their claim (quit a job, discharged, not available for work, etc.). An invalid claim is when the claimant does not have enough wages or hours in the base year to qualify. It is likely that those filing initial claims right now will see that they have an invalid claim on the online system. This is because OED has not processed a large number of backlogged claims. The claimant should keep claiming every week and when the initial claim is processed the weeks claimed will become payable if they have a valid claim. If they are denied they should keep claiming while they file for a hearing. If they quit claiming entirely and their claim becomes valid after the initial claim is processed, they will have to restart their claim by calling the processing center or a WorkSource Oregon field office. Restarts can be backdated for one week.

Q: When did FPUA start?

A: FPUA technically started the week ending April 4, 2020, but OED did not get the system coded until the week ending May 16, 2020.

Q: Are they extending previously exhausted claims?

A: Claims that ended during the pandemic period will be eligible for a 13-week extension. Claimants will receive notification from OED if they qualify.

Q: Are there categories of UC that are not eligible for the FPUC?

A: No. All categories are eligible for FPUC.

Q: How long will FPUC last?

A: FPUC lasts through July 25, 2020.

Q: Can the 13-week extension go past the BYE date?

A: Yes, the 13-week extension can bypass the BYE.

Q: Does the extension extend both the number of weeks to claim and the maximum amount of the claim? Does it add available funds to the claim?

A: It does add additional funds to the claim and extends past the BYE.

This includes someone saying that they have called numerous times on the phone and can't get through; we can take their statement on this to open, but they need to continue to work with OED.

Q: What date did extensions start?

A: Extensions started the week beginning March 29, 2020. if a claimant exhausted their claim that week.

Q: With the FPUA, do we need to pend them to apply even if not a valid claim?

*A: No, if available OED screens indicates there is **not a valid** claim, we should not pend TANF.*

Q: If a claimant is approved for UC but reports not having received the first payment, are we accepting their statement?

A: No, if available screens indicate a payment was made, we count the income.

If we don't see that a UC payment was made, we take their statement and open TANF, but they need to continue to pursue a valid UC claim. If they do not continue to pursue, then we close timely.

Q: If ECLM shows that they are claiming weeks, but they have not received any money and the screen shows "Multi Issues," what does that mean?

A: Multiple Issues means that there is more than one problem with the claim.

DHS is not able to see what the issues are, so the claimant needs to contact OED. The claimant will have received a letter from OED describing the issues.

Q: Is there a recommended time to call OED?

A: Unfortunately, there is not a best time to call or contact OED. The number of new initial claims is beginning to go down, so there should be more availability of staff moving forward.

Q: What does "Suspense" mean, and how is that different from "Multiple Issues?"

A: "Suspense" means that the claim is not being paid right now because there is an issue that needs adjudication. For example, they may have been discharged, or they may not be actively seeking work, or they may be a student who has been denied.

Q: If a claimant is hired a week after filing UC but is still struggling due to loss of income during that time, are they still eligible unemployment benefit for that week?

A: Since the first week is a waiting week, it wouldn't normally be payable.

However, in our current situation that has been changed and they will receive benefits for that week once that system is in place.

Q: If someone has lived in 2 states over the past year, which state do they file their claim in?

A: If they have any wages at all in Oregon, they can file in Oregon.

Oregon will contact the other state to receive the information from them and create an interstate claim. If all of their wages are in another state, they should contact that state.

Q: What happens if a claimant entered a return-to-work date, but the employer doesn't reopen at that time?

A: In this case, there would be a stop on their claim, and they would need to contact OED. Every time there is a stop on a claim, the claimant will receive a letter from OED.

Q: What happens if they are called back to work and they decline to return?

A: Since this is different for everyone, it would need to be adjudicated. Under the CARES act, it is likely they could still receive benefits if their reason is due to the pandemic, but OED would have to make that decision. For TANF eligibility, you would need to address job separation.

Q: If someone's balance ran out, and they didn't get the extension, can they request it, or is there a date before which it's not available?

A: The extensions took effect the week beginning March 29, 2020. If they are denied an extension for any reason, they can file a new initial claim and could potentially receive benefits if they have enough wages or hours in the new base year.

Q: Are we removing UC that has ended and still waiting for extension?

A: If available screens indicates there was a break in UC benefits, and screens don't indicate there is going to be ongoing payments despite the claimant continuing to call in, then we would not count the income.

Note if the TANF recipient is already over income for the month based on the UC received, a closure notice must be sent. If by the end of the month the UC does not restart, then TANF can be reopened.