

Community Legal Aid

A non-profit law firm serving the legal needs of low-income individuals and families in central northeast Ohio



www.communitylegalaid.org

Changes coming to unemployment programs

Ohioans currently receiving unemployment -- or those still waiting for a decision -- will see some changes in the coming weeks to their benefits.

First, Ohio's unemployment program will be extended to offer an additional 20 weeks for those who exhaust their benefits.

Second, the additional \$600 many are receiving from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, will come to an end on July 25.

"At Community Legal Aid, we have been keeping a close eye on updates and changes to these programs that so many Ohioans are relying upon right now," shared executive director Steven McGarrity. "We know thousands in our community are going to be impacted by this, and we want to get the word out there so people know what to expect, and how to get help if they need it."

The nonprofit law firm has been sharing information with clients and the community about the various unemployment programs available during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"It's a little confusing, but there is actually a lot of help out there right now," McGarrity said. "We want to make sure people can navigate and find the program that's right for them."

Ohio's traditional unemployment program, which existed far before the pandemic began, is now offering the additional weeks mentioned above to help those still struggling to find work.

In addition to Ohio's program, the CARES Act, signed into law on March 27, created three new unemployment programs:

- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) provides up to 13 weeks of additional benefits for those who exhaust their maximum 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits on or after July 1, 2019. This program is available through

December 26, 2020.

- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) provides up to 39 weeks of benefits to many who historically have not qualified for unemployment benefits, such as self-employed workers, 1099 tax filers, part-time workers, and those who lack sufficient work history.
- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) provides an additional \$600 a week to existing benefit amounts for those in multiple programs, including regular unemployment benefits, PUA, trade benefits, and SharedWork Ohio benefits. This will END ON JULY 25, but regular unemployment benefits will still continue -- only the additional \$600 will be ending.

Those with questions about these programs should review the frequently asked questions at <https://unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/>.

“Their frequently asked questions is a good resource, and the site can help you walk through what you may or may not be eligible for,” McGarrity explained.

Legal Aid is also encouraging anyone who is denied unemployment to file an appeal immediately and then to contact their team.

“We may be able to help you through the appeal, or may be able to recommend other resources or steps you could take,” McGarrity said.

Residents looking for more information should visit <https://www.communitylegalaid.org/covid19/unemployment>.

Printed: August 11, 2020

<http://www.communitylegalaid.org/node/1363/changes-coming-unemployment-programs>

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