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KDOL Updates Information on Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

Program Launch Consistent With Similar State Timelines

Topeka – As part of the unemployment extension provisions contained in H.R. 133, the Continued Assistance for Unemployed Workers Act of 2020 (Continued Assistance Act), increased the maximum amount of benefits available under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program from 39 weeks to 50 weeks. The extension of this program is now available. To file for the additional weeks, claimants should log into their unemployment benefits claim portal.

PUA expands access to unemployment for those who are unemployed as a direct result of COVID-19 and not eligible for or exhausted regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) or Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) benefits. This includes those who are self-employed, independent contractors, gig workers, employees of religious organizations, and those who lack sufficient work history or have been disqualified for state benefits.

Claimants currently receiving PUA benefits who previously exhausted PEUC benefits may only collect PUA if they have exhausted any entitlement to PEUC. Because the Continued Assistance Act also increased the maximum amount of benefits available under the PEUC program, claimants actively filing for PUA with a previous PEUC claim are no longer eligible to receive PUA. For claimants who continue to be unemployed or partially unemployed, KDOL will provide further instruction by the end of February on how to reopen their PEUC claims. If these claimants later exhaust benefits under the PEUC program and continue to be unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work as a direct result of COVID-19, they may be eligible to resume collection of PUA benefits if the PUA program is still in effect.

Claimants filing for PUA with no previous PEUC claim should continue to file their claims each week for the PUA program as directed. Under federal law, these additional PUA benefits may only be collected for weeks ending on or after Dec. 27, 2020.

The PUA program expires on March 14, 2021. This means that the last payable week for PUA is the week ending March 13, 2021. However, if you receive a PUA payment for the week ending March

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13, 2021, and have remaining entitlement on your claim, you may be eligible to participate in a phase-out period and you may continue to collect PUA through the week ending April 10, 2021.

Since March 15, 2020, KDOL has paid out over 3.9 million weekly claims totaling over \$2.6 billion between regular unemployment and the federal pandemic programs. For more information, or to apply for unemployment benefits, go to www.GetKansasBenefits.gov.

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