

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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L&I to Expand Window to Backdate Unemployment Compensation Claims to Accommodate Surge During COVID-19 Pandemic

Change will Allow for Payment of Eligible UC Claims up to 52 Weeks Old

Harrisburg, PA – Today, Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Secretary Jerry Oleksiak announced that beginning Saturday, Nov. 7, 2020, the department will temporarily expand its ability to backdate Unemployment Compensation (UC) claims from six weeks to up to 52 weeks. The change will allow L&I staff to assist claimants who attempted to file UC claims during the first weeks of the pandemic but needed to be assisted and were unable to reach a staff member due to the sudden surge in claims.

“The Department of Labor & Industry is committed to getting every eligible Unemployment Compensation claimant the money they are owed,” said Secretary Oleksiak. “This emergency regulation will help ensure that no eligible claimant will lose out on payments because of the hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

In the three weeks between March 15 and April 4, Pennsylvania’s UC system experienced a record surge of initial claims, receiving more than one million new applications for unemployment benefits in just 21 days. Due to the abrupt and unprecedented increase in claims volume, L&I could not respond promptly to many claimants who had filing issues or needed additional assistance. This resulted in an unusually high volume of claimants requesting backdated claims. While existing regulations allow for claims to be backdated on an individual basis in certain circumstances after a time-intensive investigation, the temporary regulation change will simplify the process and allow for more approvals at a faster pace. The change will allow many claimants who filed eligible claims but did not receive payments due to the six-week limit to request and receive approval for up to 52 weeks prior to the new backdated claim date.

Claimants seeking to file a backdated claim should email uchelp@pa.gov with the subject line “Back Date Request.” The email should include the exact date they were separated from their employer and any relevant information about the separation for the additional weeks the claimant wishes to claim.

Due to the anticipated high volume of initial backdating requests, claimants may experience a delay in receiving a response. Claimants should send only one email request as they will be processed as fast as possible and multiple requests will only delay UC’s ability to process in a timely manner.

Additional information is available at www.uc.pa.gov, or by following L&I on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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