Unemployment Compensation Update for UC Claimants

Resources and Answers to FAQ's for UC Claimants as Pennsylvania Transitions to a New UC System

KEY RESOURCES:

- During the transition period, UC staff will be responding to calls (1-888-313-7284; Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM) and emails (UChelp@pa.gov).
- Important dates and information on how to use the new system, including upcoming virtual workshops, on-demand workshops, instructional videos and more at uc.pa.gov.
- Instructional videos, including for the following topics, are available at https://www.uc.pa.gov/unemployment-benefits/UCBenMod/Pages/Resources.aspx:
  - Login – Create a New Keystone ID
  - Login with an Existing Keystone ID
  - Reset a Forgotten Password
  - How to File an Appeal
  - Waiting Room 101

FAQ's:

What is happening with the UC system?

Pennsylvania is making a much-needed upgrade from a more than 40-year-old outdated Unemployment Compensation (UC) system to a new, modern system. The new system will be easier to use, be mobile and tablet-friendly, provide faster access to relevant information and streamline the unemployment claim filing process.

There will be a brief disruption to the UC system while these upgrades are being made. The Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) has taken steps to minimize the amount of time the UC system will be offline.

During this transition, UC staff will still be responding to calls (1-888-313-7284; Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM) and emails (UChelp@pa.gov). The PA CareerLink® UC courtesy phones, however, will not be online.

Important Note: The federal PUA program is <u>not</u> affected by this transition.

Why does the UC system have to be taken offline during the transition?

The system must be taken offline to migrate – or move – every individual claimant's data from the current mainframe to the new system.

This data migration is the most complex part of any IT system upgrade, especially considering the amount of data that must be transferred from the outdated system to the new, modern system.

L&I is working to minimize the disruption to claimants and the amount of time the system will be offline.

The UC Service Center will be keeping phones (1-888-313-7284; Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM) and email (UChelp@pa.gov) open during the transition and offline period. They will still take new inquiries from claimants and place them in the queue for when the system comes online. They will also be able to assist individuals who are experiencing issues and will be able to answer questions about the offline period and the new UC system generally.

Will I be able to file my biweekly claims while the system is offline?

No, the ability to do your bi-weekly filing will be offline from June 3 through June 7.

No matter what your filing schedule used to be, you **can** file from May 30 through June 2. This gives you the chance to receive payment for the week ending May 29 before the system goes offline. You will then be able to file online again starting Tuesday, June 8.

Will I be able to open a new claim during the transition?

No, the ability to file a NEW claim will be offline during the transition period. You can open a new claim until Sunday, May 30 at 10:00 PM, or beginning again on Tuesday, June 8 when the new system is operational. The system down time will not affect your eligible payments.

Is the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program affected?

No, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program is a different system and will not be affected. You can file as you would normally file.

If my benefits are on hold when the UC system is taken offline, will I have to wait for the new system to get my benefits?

Issues won't be able to be resolved while the system is offline. If you have any concerns, UC's phone lines (1-888-313-7284) and email (UChelp@pa.gov) are still available during the transition period. If your issue requires work in the new system, it will be put in a queue and resolved in the order it was received.

Is the Work Search requirement changing?

The Work Search and Work Registration requirements, that have been temporarily suspended for all UC claimants due to the COVID-19 pandemic, are in the process of being restarted.

The Work Search requirement will restart the week of July 11, 2021. This means that beginning July 18, 2021, individuals receiving benefits through any unemployment program in Pennsylvania will need to certify each week that during the previous week they fulfilled the work search requirement by applying for two jobs and participating in one work search activity each week.

L&I has not yet made an announcement regarding the restart date of the **Work Registration** requirement; however, unemployment benefit recipients are encouraged to register with PA CareerLink® (www.pacareerlink.pa.gov) as soon as possible to take advantage of free assistance with finding a new job.

I heard the new system will have a "waiting room." What does that mean?

Anytime the new UC system experiences an unusually high number of users trying to file for benefits, it will implement something called the "waiting room." When this happens, users will be placed in a queue and given an estimated timeframe to file their claims.

The "waiting room" allows users to keep their place in line while others access the system, prevents the new system from running slowly, and allows for a better experience for each individual.

Once you're in the waiting room:
- Do **not** exit the browser – this will cause you to lose your place in line and you will have to reenter the queue.
- Ensure you have a stable internet connection and use Chrome, Safari, Firefox, or Edge to access the new system.

Additional information is available at www.uc.pa.gov.

How do I use the new Unemployment Compensation System?

Many resources and important information are available at www.uc.pa.gov. This includes workshops, user guides, instructional videos and more.

- Instructional videos, including for the following topics, are available at https://www.uc.pa.gov/unemployment-benefits/UCBenMod/Pages/Resources.aspx:
  - Login – Create a New Keystone ID
  - Login with an Existing Keystone ID
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What is a Keystone ID and why will I have to use it to login to the new system?

You will no longer log into the online UC system using your Social Security Number and a PIN. A Keystone ID is a username and password that you will use to log into the new online system. If you have an existing Keystone ID, you will use it to access the system. If you do not have a Keystone ID, you can create one the first time you access the new system.

Keystone ID is a secure online account management system used by several Pennsylvania commonwealth agencies that allows a user to log into multiple online services with the same credentials. You will also be able to log into other services, including PA CareerLink and COMPASS, using your Keystone ID.

Go to www.uc.pa.gov for video tutorials that will show you how to:
- Create a new Keystone ID
- Login with an existing Keystone ID

How will claimants be notified if there are any problems with the rollout of the new UC system?

L&I plans to use a variety of methods to let people know if something changes from the transition plan. Issues that affect only certain small groups of people may be communicated directly to these claimants by email or through the messaging dashboard in the new system.

Issues that are more widespread may be communicated in other ways, including via:
- L&I's social media pages, including:
  - Facebook - www.facebook.com/PALaborIndustry/
  - Twitter - https://twitter.com/palaborindustry
- Banners on the website – www.dli.pa.gov – and UC system login page
- Media outlets