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Advisory #69 Montana's Pandemic Unemployment Benefits are Changing

Announcement from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry:

Montana is open for business. As of May 1, more than 330,000 Montanans are fully vaccinated. Our unemployment rate is down to 3.8% -- nearly back to pre-pandemic lows. Today, the biggest threat to Montana's economy isn't the virus -- it's a critical labor shortage affecting nearly every industry. Weekly job postings in the state are higher than they were prior to the pandemic. As a result, Montana will be returning unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, eligibility and rules to their pre pandemic status. Here's what you need to know about the changes:

Pandemic Extended Unemployment Insurance What It Is: During the pandemic, unemployment benefits for claimants have been extended beyond the traditional 13 weeks by Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC). PEUC allowed claimants to extend their time on unemployment where they normally would have expired. How It's Changing: Beginning June 27, 2021, Montana will no longer participate in PEUC. Claimants who have exhausted their regular UI benefits will no longer be eligible for payments. Any benefit payments filed prior to June 27, 2021 will include payment for PEUC weeks if you are found eligible.

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) What It Is: FPUC is a \$300 weekly add-on benefit for all types of unemployment assistance. How It's Changing: Beginning June 27, 2021, Montana will no longer be issuing the \$300 weekly FPUC benefit. Any benefit payments filed prior to June 27, 2021 will include the FPUC payments if you are found eligible.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) What It Is: PUA presently provides benefits to the self-employed, the underemployed, independent contractors, and individuals who have been unable to work due to health or COVID-19 affected reasons. How It's Changing: Beginning June 27, 2021, the Montana will no longer participate in the federal PUA program. Any benefit claims filed prior to June 27, 2021 will include PUA payment if you are found eligible.

Mixed Earners Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) What It Is: MEUC is a \$100 supplemental benefit for those who are eligible for regular UI benefits, but also earned at least \$5,000 in self-employment income in their most recent taxable year. How It's Changing: Beginning June 27, 2021, Montana will no longer be issuing MEUC benefits. Any benefit payments filed prior to June 27, 2021 will include the MEUC payments if you are found eligible.

Work Search/Able & Available Requirements What They Are: Pandemic-related eligibility rules had suspended requirements that claimants be able to work, available to work, and be actively seeking work. How They're Changing: Beginning June 27, 2021, these requirements will be reinstated for UI claimants. Claimants will need to be able and available for work, and actively seek employment. For more information about these requirements and how to fulfill them, [click here](#)