



**JB Pritzker, Governor**  
**Kristin Richards, Acting Director**

# NEWS RELEASE

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**Federal Rules End Extended Unemployment Benefits for Self-Employed**  
*Because Illinois' Unemployment Rate Has Dropped,*  
*Federal Government Reduces Extended Benefits for PUA Recipients,*  
*Regular Unemployment Recipients Continue to Receive 11 Additional Weeks Under PEUC*

**SPRINGFIELD** – Because Illinois' unemployment rate has dropped, federal rules now prohibit individuals from seeking seven additional weeks of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), a new federal effort to cover individuals who did not qualify for regular unemployment and which largely covers those who are self-employed.

“This is precisely why I’ve encouraged Congress to set out long-term rules that help the people most hurt by this pandemic, and why it’s imperative that they pass something immediately that corrects this gap,” Governor JB Pritzker said. “Our federal leaders must come together around a solution, and we will be ready to help people get the benefits they need to get through this pandemic.”

According to unemployment data published by the federal government, Illinois' unemployment rate is now below the threshold for the state's High Unemployment Period (HUP) to be active, and individuals no longer qualify for additional weeks of benefits provided during by HUP. Under federal law, when a state is in the HUP, there are seven additional weeks added to PUA eligibility, as well as seven additional weeks added to Extended Benefits (EB) eligibility under state law. As a result of Illinois' unemployment rate dropping, under state and federal law, the seven additional weeks for both programs are no longer available.

The maximum number of weeks available to PUA claimants has reduced from 57 weeks to 50 weeks. Additionally, extended benefits (EB) for regular state unemployment insurance benefits reduced from 20 weeks to 13 weeks. Federal law provides regular unemployment insurance benefit recipients with a transition to added weeks of Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) benefits but is currently silent with regard to extra assistance for PUA claimants.

PUA claimants who have exhausted the 50th week or more have been, or will be, notified they will have reached the maximum number of weeks allowable under federal law. Barring additional federal action or extensions to federal unemployment programs, PUA claimants who have exhausted the maximum number of weeks will no longer be eligible to collect unemployment insurance benefits.

The Department is closely monitoring any action from the federal government to extend PUA benefits, in addition to the other federal unemployment benefits programs, set to expire on March 13, 2021. As was done with the [CARES Act](#) and the [Continued Assistance Act](#), IDES will publicly provide individuals with programmatic updates, changes, and information pertaining to unemployment programs as they are made available by the federal government and the U.S. Department of Labor.

Those with questions or in need of assistance with unemployment benefits at this time are encouraged to visit [IDES.Illinois.gov](http://IDES.Illinois.gov).

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