



## Department of Workforce Services

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### Federal aid to more Wyoming residents coming soon

\* Audio included as attachment \*

CHEYENNE – The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) is readying to update its Unemployment Insurance (UI) system to distribute unemployment funds from the Coronavirus stimulus package to boost jobless benefits. DWS is reviewing information received over the weekend from the U.S. Department of Labor to begin putting processes in place to distribute important funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act.

Congress and President Trump have enacted emergency programs to assist those left unemployed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and now the U.S. Department of Labor and all 50 state governments are working diligently to put those programs in place. The UI provisions in the CARES Act create new federal benefit payment programs.

Governor Gordon has signed the necessary agreement so Wyoming is prepared to accept federal funding for unemployed workers as soon as the programs can be implemented.

“The programs aim to provide temporary relief to workers affected by the Coronavirus by paying more benefits for longer periods of time than provided under regular unemployment compensation law,” said DWS Workforce Programs Administrator Holly McKamey Simoni. “We are working quickly to make that aid accessible to the people of Wyoming. DWS is currently reviewing the guidance that was received over the weekend from the U.S. Department of Labor. There is a lot of work to be done to ensure those funds are administered correctly, but we hope to be able to provide these benefits as soon as possible.”

McKamey Simoni added that Wyoming is fortunate it has the latest UI program technology in the WYUI system, which was completed last year. “We anticipate this state-of-the-art technology will help us deploy funds more efficiently than other states which are currently operating with more antiquated systems.”

The following is a short summary of each program that Wyoming is planning to implement, once procedures are in place to properly distribute funding.

**Pandemic Unemployment Assistance** or PUA, is the program that will provide unemployment benefits to those not ordinarily eligible for them. This includes individuals who are self-employed or contract employees. This benefit is retroactive to January 27, 2020.

**The Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation** program, or FPUC, provides \$600 per week to any individual eligible for any of the Unemployment Compensation programs. This benefit begins March 29, 2020. It will take a while to get the program in place, but those who receive this benefit and were receiving UI benefits at that time will get benefits back to this date.

**The Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation** program, or PEUC, allows for an additional 13 weeks of benefits added to the end of regular unemployment benefits. This means claimants may collect unemployment benefits for a longer period of time than under normal circumstances.

“These programs are on their way, and we’re working as fast as we can to get them to the people of Wyoming quickly,” McKamey Simoni said. “It is important to note that all of these programs are retroactive. Even if it takes numerous weeks to put them in place, the benefits will cover those who were unemployed at least back to March 29th, and one program reaches back to late January.”