

## **Business Q&A Town Hall: Questions and Answers**

1. Many of our employees have had their work hours reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our understanding is that the CARES Act provides for unemployment benefits for employees in these situations to make up the difference between their reduced wages and their regular wages. When we checked, we were told they are not eligible for benefits if their current wages exceed the amount they would receive if they were unemployed. If they were unemployed, they would be eligible for their regular unemployment benefit plus \$600 per week. Is there any way for them to be granted unemployment benefits to make up the difference between their reduced salaries and regular salaries?

On May 20, 2020, Governor Gordon signed SF1002 which includes additional unemployment compensation. We are working through processes to determine what is needed for eligibility, specifics on how the program will work and details surrounding a Short-Time Compensation program. This type of unemployment compensation will be similar to a layoff aversion program, where employees would receive a reduced UI benefit payment that is based on a prorated share of the weekly benefit amount. The purpose of this type of benefit is to keep employers from completely laying people off and to keep people working. This will help employers retain employees who are trained and have been working for some time. We have to make significant programming changes to the WYUI computer system to allow for this new unemployment program. We will announce the information as soon as it is available.

2. I tried to fax our 102a forms multiple times and the line was busy. I finally mailed the forms. Will the Division set up an alternative for employers to submit these forms electronically or could they be emailed to a general Unemployment mailbox?

Currently we have two fax lines; the main number is 307-473-3726 and the backup number is 307-235-3277. If the forms are returned by mail, the UI Tax Division uses the postmark date for timeliness determination. We do not have an email account that can receive these forms, however, there is an option to respond electronically through the UI SIDES online system. On the 102 form itself,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way down, there is a link to file a protest online by visiting the national UI SIDES website. The website is: [uisides.org](http://uisides.org). Once at the website, click on separation information and enter the requested information. For FEIN and State ID do not enter any dashes. The State ID and PIN number are found on the 102a form. This system allows employers to respond

electronically and not have to mail or fax the form back to us. On the WYUI system, employers may elect to receive email notifications instead of notification by U.S. Mail. The notifications are emailed and employers can log onto their WYUI account and pull up correspondence. Completed forms still need to be faxed or mailed back or responded to using the UI SIDES site. Employers needing assistance with WYUI or with the UI SIDES system can call the Employer Tax Help Line at 307-235-3217. Notifications come in email instead, go into wyui account, pull up correspondence.

3. If we have an employee refuse a job how do we report that?

To report this activity, go to [www.wyomingworkforce.org](http://www.wyomingworkforce.org), scroll down right hand side and click on Report Fraud. Under #2, click the link "visit here". Enter information or call the 307-235-3236 number which goes to our fraud department. UI staff will investigate the information provided.

4. When will the PEUC be available? 13 week extension?

Our programmers are working on making the changes to our WYUI computer system. We hope to have it up soon but we do not have an exact date yet. There will be a town hall next Friday, May 29th at 10am specific to PEUC. [Register for that Town Hall here.](#)

5. Will the PEUC be backdated to when the act came into place?

This will be discussed in the town hall presentation next week; but it is effective the date Governor Gordon signed the plan. Claimants should be sure to enter the last actual day of work when they apply/file. Read the fields carefully when filling out the Unemployment Insurance claim -- using the wrong date in the field that asks for the last day of employment can create difficulties in receiving backdated claims.

6. What is being done about employment candidates that I find on Indeed and WyomingAtWork.org who are not accepting interviews because they would rather collect unemployment benefits? I have been told on numerous occasions, when I reach out to a candidate, that they are not actively looking for employment.

Concerns about UI fraud can be reported via the fraud phone number, 307-235-3236. There may be a difference between not coming for interviews versus turning down actual job offers. We do encourage people to report suspected fraud.

7. How do we know if an employee/former employee is receiving UI benefits? Do we just have to wait for the bill?

Employers can call benefits Help Line, 307-473-3789, and request to find out if individuals have an open claim and are still receiving benefits. Employers receive a quarterly benefit charge statement that itemizes claimants that received benefits; some employers may wish to know if someone is still drawing benefits.

8. I have been drawing unemployment and the company I own received the PPP money. How do I report the paycheck I will receive for the month? How does that affect my unemployment? I'm on salary and it's for the whole month.

When they file their weekly pay order, include the hours and the funds received/earned for the week. Based on those amounts WYUI will calculate any benefits/eligibility.

9. Did you say this was being recorded? And how do I find it?

Yes, this is being recorded. You can find it at: [wyomingworkforce.org/news/2020-04-17a/](https://www.wyomingworkforce.org/news/2020-04-17a/) or go to [www.wyomingworkforce.org](https://www.wyomingworkforce.org) and click on the Virtual Town Hall series link.

10. If a company gives a severance package, or an employee has a large cash out for their vacation pay before getting laid off, how does unemployment work in those situations? For instance, if they are given a three-month severance package, but it's a lump sum payment, does unemployment start after the last official day worked, or after the three months? Same with vacation pay -- if an employee has four weeks of vacation pay before getting laid off, does the unemployment start after the last day worked or the last day they get paid out?

For regular unemployment, the claim effective date is the Sunday of the week they file their initial claim. If the claimant files for UI after the week they received their severance, they are eligible for the weekly benefit amount with no deductions. Same with the vacation pay. If they receive severance or vacation during a week that they file for weeks for unemployment, they must report the vacation and/or severance. These amounts will be deducted that week per statute. The only exception would be if they are receiving a monthly pension.

## Other Information Presented

An additional component of the CARES Act for employers is the plan for employers with reimbursing accounts (such as non-profit and government entities) to receive a refund on some of their charges. After employers have paid their bill for the quarter, we are going to be able to give a 50% refund back to the employer. We are working on details of how this will work and working on implementation. Employers do have to pay the full benefit charge bill up front. For questions, stay tuned and we will provide full details for how it will work soon.

Unemployment has implemented a second call center (888-674-7699) for benefits. This is an outside call center that can answer many simple questions; more difficult questions will still need to be forwarded to a UI employee. This will free up UI employees to work on the more complex questions and ultimately help people more quickly.

A new question just came in ...