



NOTICE OF PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE CLAIM FILED

An unemployment claim has been filed under your social security number for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program in Pennsylvania. The department has received communications from many individuals who did not actually file claims, and discovered their identities had been previously stolen from other sources and are now being used to open unemployment claims and obtain benefits.

If you did not open an unemployment claim, please return to the Department any checks or electronic payments you may receive from us. A press release issued Sunday, May 24, 2020, is below and includes return instructions.

Since the time the release was issued, the Department has begun issuing US Bank Reliacard debit cards to all individuals on the PUA program. If you receive a debit card and have not filed for PUA benefits, you should NOT activate the debit card. Please either mail the debit card to:

Department of Treasury Comptroller's Office
Attn: Mark Accorsi
Room 113, Finance Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

...or email a picture of the US Bank ReliaCard to officeofinvestigations@patreasury.gov at the PA Treasury Office of Investigations. We must be able to read the 16-digit number on the front of the card, the expiration date, and the name on the card. The card can then be destroyed.

Regardless of which method you choose to return the funds, please also provide your own name and phone number.

For the foreseeable future, the department will be issuing debit cards to all PUA claimants as an added precaution, in lieu of using direct deposit to issue payments.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 24, 2020

**L&I's Anti-Fraud Division Uncovers Attempted COVID-19 Unemployment Scams,
None of L&I's Systems or Data Were Breached
Pennsylvanians Urged to Report Known or Suspected Identify Thefts Immediately**

Harrisburg, PA – Secretary Jerry Oleksiak today announced the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry's (L&I) anti-fraud division has discovered attempts by scammers to try and bilk COVID-19 unemployment benefits using personal information obtained from sources outside of L&I. The scammers are using this personal information to apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits – no L&I systems or data have been compromised.

"We have been on very high alert since reports began surfacing recently of scammers targeting unemployment benefits programs across the country. We are working closely with other state and federal agencies, as well as law enforcement, to investigate these incidents," said Oleksiak. "I want to assure everyone, particularly people who have submitted information to L&I through our unemployment compensation programs, that none of our programs or data have been breached.

“These fraudsters are using personal information that they have obtained without permission from other sources to file for PUA benefits and route their payments to their own bank accounts. It is possible that many Pennsylvanians are not aware their identities were previously stolen and should keep a close eye on their credit rating, as well as remain vigilant in protecting their personal information.”

L&I will be sending additional information to all PUA claimants via U.S. Postal Service on Tuesday to ensure they applied and confirm that their personal information has not been compromised.

Anyone who receives a paper check in the mail and **did not file** for unemployment benefits in Pennsylvania should **not** cash the checks. The checks should be returned to:

Department of Treasury Comptroller’s Office
Attn: Mark Accorsi
Room 113, Finance Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Anyone who receives a direct deposit and **did not file** for unemployment benefits in Pennsylvania should **not** use the funds. The funds should be returned to:

Department of Labor & Industry
651 Boas St., Room 500
Harrisburg, PA 17121

Payments must be made by personal check, cashier’s check, certified check, or money order to the “PA UC Fund”. Please include a brief signed statement with the reason you are sending in the payment and include your printed name, address, last four of your social security number, phone number and email address.

Cashing the checks or using direct deposited funds knowing that you have not applied for PUA or any other UC program may be deemed fraud and repayment will be required

We will be sure to provide important information and alerts for Pennsylvanians as this situation evolves.

L&I’s anti-fraud division remains committed to preventing, identifying, and blocking scams and is continuing its aggressive efforts to do so, including:

- Cross matching data with other state agencies and across the country to detect fraud activity.
- Working with the U.S. Department of Labor to prevent and detect fraudulent activities related to UC.

Report Fraud

Report fraudulent activity regarding Pennsylvania’s UC benefits:

- Online
 - o Identity theft – if you suspect or know that someone is using your personal information such as your name, Social Security number, or date of birth without your knowledge or consent to file for UC benefits, complete and submit the Identity Theft Form at <https://www.dlsecureweb.pa.gov/FRTS/IdentityTheft.aspx>
 - o Unemployment claims fraud – if you know of individuals who are collecting UC benefits illegally, including people who are working and not reporting their wages for PA UC benefit purposes; or people who cannot work due to an illness, disability or incarceration, complete and submit the Unemployment Claims Fraud Form at <https://www.dlsecureweb.pa.gov/FRTS/BenefitsFraud.aspx>

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- Phone
 - o **PA Fraud Hotline – 1-800-692-7469**
 - Police
 - o File a police report with the municipality you resided in at the time the unemployment benefits in question were paid. **A copy of the police report must be provided to the Office of Unemployment Compensation.**

If you are a victim of identity theft you may also report it to the Federal Trade Commission and start a recovery plan at <https://www.identitytheft.gov/>.

The Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office has also provided some helpful tips and instructions to consumers to check your credit more often through the COVID-19 emergency at <https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/taking-action/consumer-alerts/shapiro-issues-consumer-alert-check-your-credit-more-often-through-covid-19-emergency/>

Recognize and Avoid General UC Scams

Take these additional steps to protect yourself against general unemployment scams:

- Never give out your personal information over email or text message.
- Don’t wire money, and always ignore the following requests:
 - o Communications related to your UC benefits from someone asking for money;
 - o Someone who says they can help you file for your benefits for a fee; and
 - o Anyone claiming to work for L&I who says they need a fee to complete your application.
- Don’t open or respond to unsolicited emails or text messages.
- Never give out your personal information on websites or social media channels – especially those that claim they can help you apply for UC benefits. Third parties can’t apply for your benefits.
- Don’t trust or rely on UC info from unofficial websites – always visit **www.uc.pa.gov** for Pennsylvania unemployment program information.
- L&I may need to call you. If you file a claim, save the following unemployment phone numbers to your phone so you know you’re receiving a legitimate call from L&I:
 - o 888-313-7284 – regular UC
 - o 855-284-8545 – Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) phone numberWe will ask you for some personal identification information including the last four digits of your Social Security number, but we will not ask for your full SSN.

Additional information is available on the L&I website, Facebook or Twitter.