

Interim Pandemic Assistance

Interim Pandemic Assistance Program Background and FAQs

On November 17, 2020, Governor Bullock announced the Interim Pandemic Assistance (IPA) program. The Governor authorized up to \$25 million to be expended from Montana's allocation of federal CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Funds to eligible Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claimants. This program allows a new additional \$200 weekly payment for eligible UI claimants who are unemployed or partially unemployed due to disruptions caused by COVID-19. This payment would be in addition to a claimant's weekly benefit amount and apply to the UI and PUA weeks ending November 28 through December 19, 2020.

Q: Who is eligible for IPA?

A: The program defines eligible individuals as those unemployed or partially unemployed due to COVID-19 disruptions and who are receiving unemployment benefits through:

- the regular state UI program;
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (federal self-employment unemployment benefits); or
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (13-week federal extension).

IPA does not extend to individuals receiving benefits as participants in an approved state worker training program.

Q: What do I need to do to receive the IPA payment?

A: Just keep filing your weekly payment requests in MontanaWorks.gov or mtpua.mt.gov. IPA payments are only available to claimants who certify their status of being unemployed is "due to disruptions caused by COVID-19" that particular week. When filing in MontanaWorks, be prepared to answer the question: "Were you unemployed, partially unemployed, unable or unavailable to work due to disruptions caused by COVID-19 this week?"

Q: How much will I receive in IPA?

A: Eligible Montanans will receive an IPA payment of \$200 per week. It will come as a separate payment from their weekly benefit payment.

Q: When can I expect IPA?

A: Interim Pandemic Assistance will be available for benefit weeks ending November 28 until December 19, 2020. All weekly payment requests and certifications must be submitted by December 28, 2020, for payment to be issued. IPA will be paid retroactively if claims are approved for intervening weeks. All payments under the program will be completed by December 30, 2020.

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Q: How long are IPA payments available?

A: This assistance will apply to four benefit weeks, those ending November 28, through December 19, 2020, or until the funding is exhausted. All weekly payment requests and certifications must be received by DLI by December 28, 2020. All possible payments under the program will be issued by December 30, 2020.

Retroactive payments will not be paid when the IPA program ends.

Q: Are IPA payments taxable?

A: IPA payments are taxable under federal law, just like regular UI or PUA benefits. IPA payments will not be subject to tax withholding or other statutory offsets.