



SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT
AND WORKFORCE

PLEASE CAREFULLY READ THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR UI CLAIM. OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS, CLAIMANTS WILL SEE A PROMPT TO FILE FOR A NEW INITIAL CLAIM IN THE MYBENEFITS PORTAL. ESTABLISHING A NEW BENEFIT YEAR, IS REQUIRED BY LAW.

BACKGROUND

How regular UI works.

When you apply for UI benefits, you establish an active unemployment claim for 52 weeks. These 12 months (which may be different than a calendar year) are referred to as a benefit year.

Ordinarily you will receive benefits during the benefit year, provided you meet all eligibility requirements, until:

1. Your benefit year expires or
2. You receive the maximum benefit amount assigned to your claim (20 weeks under normal state UI); whichever comes first.

Under a regular UI claim, if you collect all the benefits you were eligible to receive, you cannot apply for a new year until your current benefit year ends. If you tried to file a new claim without going back to work*, this would be called “*double-dipping*.”

NEW REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE FEDERAL PROGRAMS

What has changed and why you will see a link to file a new claim.

However, the federal government created two new programs in response to the pandemic, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), which provide additional benefits to individuals who have exhausted their normal state UI benefits or those who are not eligible for state UI, but have a COVID-19 related job loss. Federal law requires you to be ineligible for normal state UI before you can be eligible for either PEUC or PUA.

Now that your benefit year is ending, you must apply for a new state UI benefit year to check your eligibility for these funds.

In order to successfully move from one benefit year to another, you may find a link in the MyBenefits portal to file a new initial claim in order to determine your UI eligibility for the new benefit year. If you do not see a link, just continue to certify your weekly claim.

When you complete your claim, you may see messaging in your portal about *double-dipping*. This message is built into the system for a normal claim year. Due to the expansion of the federal programs, most claimants will either continue receiving benefits through the program they have been on or they will find that the new claim will move them from one program to another.

You may have been receiving PEUC and PUA benefits, but you may now receive state UI benefits because federal guidelines require that an individual receive regular unemployment instead of PEUC and PUA benefits if they qualify for regular unemployment benefits.

If your weekly benefit amount on the new initial unemployment claim is at least \$25 less than the weekly benefit amount of your PEUC claim, then you will be allowed to remain on your PEUC claim. In other words:

- If the calculation for your new initial unemployment claim reduces your weekly benefit amount by \$25 or more, you will remain on your PEUC claim. For example, you were receiving \$250 for your weekly benefit amount and the new initial claim calculates \$200 for your weekly benefit amount. You will stay on your PEUC claim at \$250 per week.
- If the calculation for your new initial unemployment claim reduces your weekly benefit amount by less than \$25, you will move to the new program. For example, you were receiving \$250 for your weekly benefit amount and the new initial claim calculates \$235 for your weekly benefit amount. You will move to the new program and receive \$235 per week.

All claimants who remain eligible for state or federal UI benefits will continue to receive the additional \$300 weekly Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) payment, as part of the American Rescue Plan through claim week ending September 4, 2021.

WHAT TO DO

Please make sure to file the new claim if you are prompted with a link and then continue to file your weekly certifications to prevent any delay in your payments. If you do not complete the initial claim, you will disqualify yourself and your benefits will stop. It is important that you complete the process.

Immediately after completing the initial claim, you will see a link to complete your weekly certification. You should go ahead and complete this step as well, and it is important that claimants continue to certify each week so that once eligibility is re-established, if there was any delay in payments, claimants will receive all the weeks of benefits to date.

If you have questions or need assistance, please call our contact center at 1-866-831-1724.

***Double-Dipping:** If a claimant receives UI benefits in a benefit year, before they receive benefits in the next benefit year, they must perform "insured work" as defined in Section 41-27-300. In this insured work, they must earn wages from a single employer in an amount no less than eight times the weekly benefit amount established for the individual in the preceding benefit year. If they do not return to work and earn eight times the weekly benefit amount and attempt to file another UI claim it is called *Double-Dipping*.

