

## A Message for Our Community

### On the Pandemic Extended Unemployment Compensation Program

from Anne Perreira-Eustaquio, Director-DLIR

I wanted to personally reach out to all of you and acknowledge that we at the DLIR have heard your concerns and frustrations over the processing of Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) claims.

The PEUC provides an additional 13 weeks of benefits to claimants whose UI claims expired after July 1, 2019 and have a zero-dollar (\$0) balance. To apply for the PEUC program, claimants need to answer five prequalification questions. If any of those questions are answered incorrectly, the application will need to be reviewed by the Unemployment Insurance Division.

As I know that many of you have been waiting to have your PEUC claim processed, I would like to share with you the four most common reasons why your PEUC claim may be pending.

1. As mentioned above, a prequalification question was answered incorrectly.
2. There is a potential overpayment of benefits. This issue typically arises when your reported earnings and your employer's report of your earnings differs after you have already received benefits. This may occur, for example, if you reported that you did not have earnings and were paid benefits, but your employer reported that you earned \$600 (because it paid you vacation pay). Because vacation pay is considered reportable earning, your PEUC claim will be in a pending status because you have a potential overpayment of benefits.
3. There are pending issues on your claim. For example, if your employer reported that you did not accept all work offered to you, that issue needs to be addressed before your PEUC claim is processed.
4. You may qualify for a new UI claim either in Hawaii or another state if you have earnings that were not used for a prior claim.

Once these issues are addressed, each PEUC claim is processed manually by a UI staff member due to the limitations of the State's Mainframe computer system.

If it is found that you may have an overpayment of benefits, before establishing your PEUC claim, the following steps must be taken:

1. A UI claims examiner must speak with you to obtain factfinding regarding the possible overpayments.
2. If it is determined by the claims examiner that there is a valid overpayment, the overpayment must be established on your claim.
3. The application for your existing PEUC claim must be cancelled.

4. The original UI claim must be reopened since it has not yet been exhausted because of the overpayment.
5. The overpayment must then be off set by the additional open weeks on your original claim.
6. Staff must then establish a new PEUC claim with a new start date.

I understand that having your PEUC claim pending is frustrating. However, the issues above need to be addressed so that the State can adequately ensure that the claimants receiving benefits are eligible for such benefits or the U. S. Department of Labor has the authority to terminate the agreements with Hawaii and jeopardize the PEUC program.

I hope this has provided you with information about the PEUC claim process and help you to understand your claim better. Many of you have reached out to me and I send you all a heartfelt thank you for your support and kind words of encouragement to the staff here at DLIR. I assure you we are continuing to work tirelessly to process your claims. We are committed to doing whatever it takes within our power to diligently process every claim so that assistance is provided to all of you.

We will get through this together.

Take care, Stay Safe and Aloha.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anne Eustaquio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anne Perreira-Eustaquio