



Maine Equal Justice  
People Policy Solutions

## Q & A: What happens to my unemployment when the benefit year ends?

**Q. I started getting unemployment when the pandemic started in 2020. Now my benefit year has ended, and I need to start a new benefit year.\* What will happen to my benefits?**

\* Your benefit year is the 52-weeks after you opened your claim for unemployment claim.

**A: If you applied for unemployment benefits and opened a benefit year sometime in 2020** that benefit year may have ended or will end within the next several months. This means you must open a new benefit year.

- In most cases this will be done automatically by the Department of Labor.
- But in some cases, you may get a message in your account telling you to file a new benefit year.
- If this happens to you, you must go to “unemployment claim” in your account and file an unemployment claim to complete this process.

If you are getting benefits through the federal PUA or PEUC programs, your new benefit year will probably be set up automatically. If you worked since you opened your claim last year, especially if you have out of state wages or federal civilian or military wages, your claim may require additional review. **It is important to keep filing your weekly claim for benefits, even if your claim is being reviewed.**

There are several different scenarios, depending on your individual circumstances:

### **SCENARIO #1:**

#### **You received only regular State UI during the old benefit year.**

- Because you were working for part of the year or working part time and collecting partial benefits, you never collected Pandemic Extended Unemployment Compensation (PEUC). You open a new benefit year and you worked and earned enough money to be eligible for regular State UI on your new benefit year.
- In this case, you will receive regular State UI in your new benefit year. Your weekly benefit amount may have changed. You will receive the new weekly benefit amount based on your wages in the past year.

### **SCENARIO #2:**



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**You have been receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) as a self-employed, contract worker, gig worker or because you can't get regular unemployment for another reason.**

- In this case, you will still need to open a new benefit year. The Department will look at your earnings, if any, in the past year to see if you qualify for regular state UI benefits in your new benefit year. If you do not, you will continue to collect PUA while it is available.

### **SCENARIO #3:**

**You received regular State UI and then Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) since you became unemployed and opened your benefit year in 2020.**

- In this case, you must open a new benefit year. The Department will look at your earnings, if any, in the past year to see if you qualify for regular state UI benefits in your new benefit year.
- **If you are not eligible to receive the regular State UI benefits you will continue to receive the PEUC while it is available.**
- **BUT if you have worked and earned wages since you first applied for unemployment benefits,** it may take time to determine if your earnings were high enough to allow you to collect regular State UI on your new benefit year.
- This is especially true if you have worked in another state or for the federal government in the last year. You can help speed up this process by reporting this employment to the MDOL and providing information about your employer/s and dates of employment.

### **SCENARIO #4:**

**All of these circumstances must apply:**

1. You received PEUC on your old benefit year
  2. You are eligible to receive regular State UI in your new benefit year
  3. The WBA (weekly benefit amount) for your old benefit year is at least \$25 more than the WBA for your new benefit year.
- **If all three of these circumstances apply,** you will continue to receive PEUC at your old higher WBA while it is available.
  - If PEUC is discontinued, you will receive your regular State UI benefits at the lower weekly benefit amount.