



## **MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 21-01**

**Date:** January 6, 2021

**To:** Eligibility Services Supervisors and Staff  
Program Managers  
Regional Directors  
Regional Attorneys  
Hearings Officers

**From:** Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy  
State Office 2115

**Subject:** **1. COVID-19 Update: Recovery Rebates**  
**2. COVID-19 Update: Federal Pandemic Unemployment (FPUC)**  
**3. COVID-19 Update: Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**  
**4. COVID-19 Update: Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)**

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The information in this bulletin provides temporary guidance regarding policies and procedures for processing case actions during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications should no longer be used for processing case actions and determining eligibility. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures.

Active bulletins are posted on the following websites:

- [Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook \(MEPDH\)](https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins>;
- [Texas Works Handbook \(TWH\)](http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins) at <http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins>.

## Background

On March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of disaster for all counties in Texas due to the COVID-19 outbreak. On the same date, President Donald J. Trump declared a national emergency. HHSC is providing the following policy clarifications and temporary changes to eligibility policies to accommodate processing of case actions during this emergency period.

On December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, H.R. 133, designated funds for a second stimulus check, called a recovery rebate, and an extension of pandemic unemployment compensation payments.

## 1. COVID-19 Update: Recovery Rebates

### COVID-19 Policy

H.R. 133 provides additional tax credit recovery rebates to eligible individuals. Those who qualify will receive a recovery rebate from the Internal Revenue Service of \$600 for individuals or \$1200 for those filing a joint return, plus an additional \$600 per qualifying child.

### Texas Works MAGI and CHIP

Recovery rebates are excluded as income in the month of receipt.

**Note:** Resources are not considered as a factor in determining eligibility for Texas Works MAGI and CHIP.

### SNAP, TANF, TP 32, TP 36 and MEPD

#### *Income*

Recovery rebates are excluded as income in the month of receipt when determining eligibility. The payments are also excluded when determining the co-payment for MEPD institutional and waiver recipients.

#### *Resources*

Any funds retained from a recovery rebate are excluded as a resource for 12 months following the month of receipt. Excluded funds may be commingled with other funds but must be separately identifiable. If the funds are commingled, staff must use bank statements to identify any remaining excluded funds. When withdrawals are made from a commingled account, assume the non-excluded funds are withdrawn first. If the person is eligible without excluding the funds from the recovery rebate, there is no need to identify or monitor the excluded amounts.

### All Programs

Households are not required to report the receipt of recovery rebates as a change during the certification period. If the household reports receipt of the payments at application or recertification, staff must document in TIERS case comments only and indicate that the payments are excluded for eligibility purposes.

**Note:** If the amount of the Recovery Rebate changes due to future federal legislation, the payments should still be excluded for the purposes of determining eligibility.

### **Automation**

Changes to TIERS are not required.

### **Correspondence**

Correspondence changes are not required.

### **Handbook**

Handbook updates are not required.

### **Training**

Training is not required.

### **Effective Date**

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.

## 2. COVID-19 Update: Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)

### COVID-19 Policy

FPUC payments of \$300 per week are paid in addition to the amount of regular unemployment benefits, extended unemployment benefits, PUA, or PEUC benefits received by claimants. FPUC is available for weeks of unemployment beginning on or after Dec. 27, 2020 and ending on or before March 14, 2021.

#### All Programs

The \$300 weekly FPUC payments **are not** considered unearned income.

#### SNAP

Any funds retained from FPUC payments are excluded as a resource for 9 months following the month of receipt.

### Staff Procedures

#### All Programs

FPUC payments will not be identified separately on the **TWC Wages and Benefits** section in Data Broker. Staff will be able to identify the receipt of FPUC if the person's weekly payment amount exceeds the person's Weekly Benefit Amount (**WBA**) under the **Claimant Status** section.

To determine the gross regular unemployment payment amount, subtract \$300 for each week that the FPUC was received from the total gross unemployment payment amount.

For the remaining amount of gross unemployment benefits, enter only one **Unearned Income** entry in the TIERS LUW. Staff are no longer required to enter FPUC payments in TIERS. Follow these steps to enter the amount of regular UIB:

1. add an **Unearned Income** LUW or update the existing unemployment payment entry;
2. select the Unearned Income Type Source as **Unemployment Compensation**;
3. select the Unearned Income Source as **State**;
4. enter the remaining amount of gross unemployment as biweekly payments in the **Payments** page; and
5. enter the following in **Case Action Documentation Summary**: "<Person's name> is receiving \$300 a week in FPUC income. UIB income was projected with WBA only. Did not enter FPUC payments as the income is not countable."

#### Example

1. Verify the amount of FPUC the person is receiving. The **WBA** listed under **Claimant Status** should show the approved UIB amount. The **WBA** should

equal the **Ddct**, **Dist**, and **Amt** when added together under **Benefit Payments** after subtracting the \$300 FPUC.

### TWC Wages and Benefits

SSN: [REDACTED] DATE FILTER: D, -720

**CLAIMANT STATUS:**

Name: [REDACTED]  
 C/O: [REDACTED]  
 Address: [REDACTED]  
 City: [REDACTED] State: TX Zip: [REDACTED]  
 Last Changed: 09-02-09  
 Phone: [REDACTED]

Tax Withholding: N Debit Card: N Child Support: N  
 SSN: [REDACTED] Clm Sta: COMPLETE Clm Sta Dt: 09-15-20  
 Pgm: REG Clm ID: 09-13-20 Sub Pgm: UI Clm Type: IC Clm Dt: 09-13-20  
 Rltd IC: 09-13-20 Pay St: TX File Dt: 09-15-20 File Meth: TELE File Loc: 6490

-----Current Monetary-----  
 -----Last Employer-----  
 Acct: 130726771 Clm Type/Dt: IC / 09-13-20 **WBA: 109.00**  
 Name: ACCENTCARE INC MBA: 2,687.00  
 Addr: C O TALX UC EXPRESS PO BOX 283 Balnc: 971.00  
 SAINT LOUIS, MO 63166-0283 Paid: 1,716.00  
 Redet: 09-15-20

Sep Type: LP Notice: PERMANENT LAY -----Non Monetary-----  
 Worked :2018-08-10 Thru 2020-09-14 SOC: 390 Pend Invstn: N Status: PAYING  
 Title :CARE PROVIDER Det Sep:  
 Eligible :09-30-20

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**BENEFIT PAYMENTS:**

Week Op	Payments	File Date	Sts	Amt	Erngs	Pgm	Ddct	Dist	Amt	Date	Id
A	BWE										
-	01-02-21	01-03-21V	PD	0	0	REG	0	0 0 0	409	01-04-21	B48688840
-	12-26-20	01-03-21V	PD	0	0	REG	0	0 0 0	109	01-04-21	B48688840
-	12-19-20	12-20-20V	PD	0	0	REG	0	0 0 0	109	12-21-20	B47743250
-	12-12-20	12-20-20V	PD	0	0	REG	0	0 0 0	109	12-21-20	B47743250
-	12-05-20	12-06-20V	PD	0	0	REG	0	0 0 0	109	12-07-20	B46760685
-	11-28-20	12-06-20V	PD	0	0	REG	0	0 0 0	109	12-07-20	B46760685
-	11-21-20	11-22-20V	PD	0	0	REG	0	0 0 0	109	11-23-20	B45808784
-	11-14-20	11-22-20V	PD	0	0	REG	0	0 0 0	109	11-23-20	B45808784
-	11-07-20	11-08-20V	PD	0	0	REG	0	0 0 0	109	11-09-20	B44710671
-	10-31-20	11-08-20V	PD	0	0	REG	0	0 0 0	109	11-09-20	B44710671

For example: The WBA entered into TIERS would be  $0 + 0 + 409 - 300 = 109$  WBA for the above case.

2. Project income using the regular **WBA** into TIERS. Do not enter FPUC payments into TIERS. (TWH A-1324.19, Unemployment Compensation)
3. Add the following message to your case comments, "<Person's name> is receiving FPUC income in the amount of \$300 weekly. UIB income was projected with WBA only. Did not enter FPUC payments as the income is not countable."

**Note:** End date any active FPUC payments previously listed under the **Stimulus Unemployment Compensation** under the Unearned Income Type Source using two months prior to application date. These payments ended July 31, 2020. (MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin #20-09, COVID-19 Policy Updates #6, 1. Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPCU), released on April 22, 2020) Document negative management if applicable. (TWH A-1750, Documentation Requirements)

**Automation**

Automation changes are not required.

**Correspondence**

Correspondence changes are not required.

**Handbook**

Handbook updates are not required.

**Training**

Training is not required.

**Effective Date**

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.

### 3. COVID-19 Update: Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

#### COVID-19 Policy

PUA payments are for certain people who are not eligible for regular unemployment benefits, extended unemployment benefits, or PEUC. This type of unemployment may be provided to a person who is otherwise unable to work because of certain circumstances related to COVID-19. H.R. 133 extended the availability of PUA payments set to expire on December 31, 2020. (MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin #20-09, COVID-19 Policy Updates #6, 2. Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), released on April 22, 2020) PUA is available for a maximum of 50 weeks of unemployment benefits beginning on or after Jan. 27, 2020, and ending on or before March 14, 2021.

#### All Programs

PUA payments count as unearned income. (MEPDH E-4600, Unemployment Benefits and TWH A-1324.19, Unemployment Compensation)

#### Staff Procedures

##### All Programs

On the **TWC Wages and Benefits** section in Data Broker, the **Pgm** field in the **Benefit Payments** section reflects the code **DUA**. Continue to calculate the bi-weekly unemployment payment amount by using the last two **BWE** weeks with same **Date** paid and adding the following amounts together:

- **Ddct** amount;
- **Dist** amount; and
- **Amt** amount.

If FPUC was received with the PUA, subtract \$300 for each week that the FPUC was received from the total unemployment payment amounts. Enter the bi-weekly PUA amount by selecting **Unemployment Compensation** as the **Unearned Income Type** on the **Unearned Income – Details** page in the **Unearned Income** LUW in TIERS.

*Example*

**BENEFIT PAYMENTS:**

Week Op	-----Payments-----	File Date	Sts	Amt	Emgs	Pgm	Ddct	Dist	Amt	Date
A	BWE									
-	12-26-20	12-30-20W	PD	0	0	DUA	0	0 21 0	186	12-31-20
-	12-19-20	12-30-20W	PD	0	0	DUA	0	0 21 0	186	12-31-20
-	12-12-20	12-16-20W	PD	0	0	DUA	0	0 21 0	186	12-17-20
-	12-05-20	12-16-20W	PD	0	0	DUA	0	0 21 0	186	12-17-20
-	11-28-20	12-06-20W	PD	0	0	DUA	0	0 21 0	186	12-07-20
-	11-21-20	12-06-20W	PD	0	0	DUA	0	0 21 0	186	12-07-20

**Example Key**  
 Pgm Code

**Automation**

Changes to TIERS are not required.

**Correspondence**

Correspondence changes are not required.

**Handbook**

Handbook updates are not required.

**Training**

Training is not required.

**Effective Date**

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.



## 4. COVID-19 Update: Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)

### COVID-19 Policy

PEUC payments are for people who have already received the maximum weeks of regular unemployment benefits. H.R. 133 extended the availability of PEUC payments set to expire on December 31, 2020. (MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin #20-09, COVID-19 Policy Updates #6, 3. Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), released on April 22, 2020) A person may receive PEUC payments for a maximum of 24 weeks of unemployment until March 14, 2021.

If an unemployment claimant is eligible for PEUC payments on March 14, 2021, and has a remaining balance of the available 24 weeks, the claimant may continue receiving PEUC payments until April 5, 2021.

### All Programs

PEUC payments count as unearned income. (MEPDH E-4600, Unemployment Benefits and TWH A-1324.19, Unemployment Compensation)

### Staff Procedures

#### All Programs

On the **TWC Wages and Benefits** section in Data Broker, the **Sub Pgm** field in the **Claimant Status** section is expected to reflect the code **TUC**. Continue to calculate the bi-weekly unemployment benefits by using the last two **BWE** weeks with same **Date** paid and adding the following amounts together:

- **Ddct** amount;
- **Dist** amount; and
- **Amt** amount.

If FPUC was received with the PEUC, subtract \$300 for each week that the FPUC was received from the total unemployment payment amount. Enter the bi-weekly PEUC by selecting **Unemployment Compensation** on the **Unearned Income – Details** page in the **Unearned Income** LUW in TIERS.

*Example*

**BENEFIT PAYMENTS:**

Week Op	Payments-----	File Date	Sts	Amt	Erngs	Pgm	Ddct	Dist	Amt	Date
A	BWE									
-	12-26-20	12-28-20V	PD	0	0	TUC	0	0 0 0	330	12-29-20
-	12-19-20	12-28-20V	PD	0	0	TUC	0	0 0 0	330	12-29-20
-	12-12-20	12-17-20V	PD	0	0	TUC	0	0 0 0	330	12-18-20
-	12-05-20	12-17-20V	PD	0	0	TUC	0	0 0 0	330	12-18-20
-	11-28-20	11-30-20V	PD	0	0	TUC	0	0 0 0	330	12-01-20
-	11-21-20	11-30-20V	PD	0	0	TUC	0	0 0 0	330	12-01-20

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 Pgm Code

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