

Updated September 15, 2020

In April, the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) published Know Your Rights in the Workplace: COVID-19 in English & Spanish as a resource to highlight the different programs available to workers in Connecticut during the COVID-19 pandemic. Know Your Rights in the Workplace: COVID-19 | *Quick Facts* relays the **most up to date information** based on current federal and state legislation/executive orders.

During this time, it's critical that every worker in our state knows their rights in the workplace. If you or someone you know need assistance, call CWEALF's free [Legal Education Information & Referral line](#): 860-524-0601 or [email](#). ¡Se habla español!

**** NOTE:** The Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC), a program that provided \$600 weekly supplemental aid to eligible workers, expired on **July 25, 2020**. The State of Connecticut is prohibited by law from continuing the program without federal reauthorization.

State & Federal Programs Available to Workers in CT:

Lost Wages Assistance Program

Connecticut's unemployed workers will receive additional federal benefits through the Lost Wages Assistance Program. Those who are eligible will receive \$300 a week for six weeks; totaling \$1,800. This program is retroactive to July 26 and will be available for claim weeks beginning August 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 of this year. Workers who lost their jobs in September are not eligible for this program.

You may be eligible for the Lost Wages Assistance Program if...

- You receive at least \$100 a week in unemployment compensation.
- You received Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), federal funding available to business owners, the self-employed, independent contractors and others.
- You qualified for federal pandemic unemployment compensation that provided the additional \$600 per week federal assistance.
- You are a worker with a trade readjustment allowance recognizing job losses or reduced work due to trade practices.

****NOTE:** Unemployed workers who received Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) have already self-certified that their unemployment is due to COVID-19. All other applicants for the Lost Wages Assistance Program must self-certify when they apply for the program on the Connecticut Department of Labor's website. [Click here to learn more](#).

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

This program is available for workers who are typically ineligible for state unemployment insurance benefits, including those who lack an extensive employment history, gig workers, freelancers, independent contractors, or people who are looking for part-time work. It is a \$600 weekly benefit increase, and it expires on December 31, 2020. [Click here to learn more.](#)

To qualify for PUA benefits, you must not be eligible for regular unemployment benefits and be unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work because of certain health or economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes:

- Workers who lack an extensive employment history
- Gig workers
- Freelancers
- Independent contractors
- People looking for part-time employment
- Note: PUA also covers workers who have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)

Through the FFCRA, eligible workers can take emergency paid sick leave and public health emergency leave (an expansion of family medical leave). This law will expire on December 31, 2020.

Emergency Paid Leave under the FFCRA:

Emergency paid sick leave is available for immediate use by the employee, regardless of how long the individual has been employed by the employer. Workers are eligible for up to 80 hours (10 work days) of emergency paid sick leave. Workers using emergency paid sick leave will receive either their full paycheck or $\frac{2}{3}$ of their paycheck depending on their reason for leave. [Click here to learn more.](#)

You may be eligible for emergency paid sick leave if...

- You work for an employer who has less than 500 employees.
- You are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and need to obtain a medical diagnosis or care.
- You need to care for a family member who is self-isolating because of a diagnosis or symptoms.
- You need to care for a child if their school or place of daycare is closed.
- You are experiencing any other substantially similar condition to COVID-19.

Public Health Emergency Leave under the FFCRA:

Public health emergency leave is available for employees who have been employed for at least 30 calendar days. Workers are eligible for up to 12 weeks of public health emergency leave and will receive $\frac{2}{3}$ of their weekly earnings. The first ten (10) days of public health emergency leave is unpaid. [Click here to learn more.](#)

You may be eligible for public health emergency leave if...

- You work for an employer who has less than 500 employees.
- You have been employed for at least 30 calendar days.
- You are unable to work (or tele work) to care for a child under the age of 18 because their school or place of care is closed due to COVID-19.

Connecticut's Paid Sick Leave

Eligible workers can take paid sick leave to recover from a short-term illness or to care for a sick child or spouse. Those who are eligible can accrue one (1) hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked, and can take a maximum of 40 hours (5 days) of paid sick leave per year. Throughout this leave, workers received their normal rate of pay. [Click here to learn more.](#)

You may be eligible for paid sick leave if...

- You are a service worker that is paid on an hourly basis or are not exempt from minimum wage and overtime requirements.
- You, your spouse or your child up to the age of 18 become sick with a short term illness
- You are seeking preventive care or assistance related to family violence or sexual assault.

Connecticut's Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Workers might also be eligible for unpaid, job protected leave through the Connecticut Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to recover from longer term illnesses or surgery, to care for an ill loved one with a serious illness, or to welcome a new child. Connecticut's FMLA provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave in a 12-month period. [Click here to learn more.](#)

You may be eligible for state family and medical leave if...

- You work for an employer who has 50 or more employees.
- You have worked for your employer for at least 12 months.
- You have worked for at least 1,250 hours over a 12 month period with your employer.
- You are recovering from a longer term illness or surgery.
- You are caring for an ill loved one with a serious illness.
- You are welcoming a new child.

Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Workers who are not eligible for Connecticut's FMLA, might be eligible for the federal program. This is still unpaid, job protected leave that can be used to recover from longer term illnesses or surgery, to care for an ill loved one with a serious illness, or to welcome a new child. Federal FMLA provides up to 16 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave in a 2-year period. [Click here to learn more.](#)

You may be eligible for federal family and medical leave if...

- You work for an employer who has 75 or more employees.
- You have worked for your employer for at least 12 months.
- You have worked for at least 1,000 hours over a 12 month period with your employer.
- You are recovering from a longer term illness or surgery.
- You are caring for an ill loved one with a serious illness
- You are welcoming a new child.

Additional resources on COVID-19:

- [Frequently Asked Questions on the state of Connecticut's actions related to COVID-19](#)
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness: [COVID-19 & Homelessness Resource Guide](#)
- Connecticut Department of Social Services: [DSS Response to COVID-19](#)
- Connecticut Fair Housing Center: [COVID-19 Related Fact Sheets & Information](#)
- Hartford Courant: [Coronavirus crisis resources in Connecticut](#)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Information and Resources](#)
- Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA): [PURA Directs Utilities to Cease Residential Shut-offs During COVID-19 Outbreak](#) (ends on October 1, 2020 or October 31, 2020)
- The Village: [COVID-19 Resources](#)

For general information, contact cwealf@cwealf.org

For legal assistance, contact CWEALF's free Legal Education Information & Referral line: **860-524-0601**
or [contact us through email here](#). ¡Se habla español!