



Questions & answers: Lost Wages Assistance Program

What is the LWA program?

The Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) program is a temporary emergency measure to provide an additional \$300 per week to those who have lost work due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are receiving unemployment benefits.

The LWA was authorized through an Aug. 8 Presidential Memorandum.

Will Washington apply for the LWA program?

Yes, Washington's Employment Security Department will apply for the LWA program through Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) no later than Friday, Aug. 21, 2020.

How much money will a person get each week?

Individuals who are eligible for LWA will receive an additional \$300 on top of their weekly unemployment benefits. The state is not providing an additional \$100 on top of this amount.

For how many weeks will eligible people receive the money?

According to current guidance from the federal government, those who are eligible will receive the \$300 per week benefit for three weeks. Payments will start once our application to FEMA is approved and we implement the program.

Whether claimants receive more weeks of benefits will depend on how long the program is available from the federal government.

Do I need to submit an application for the LWA?

No, there is not a separate application for the LWA program. Individuals who meet the self-certification requirements will be eligible for the additional LWA benefits. Individuals who are disqualified for benefits are not eligible for LWA.

Who is eligible for the LWA?

Not everyone who has filed an unemployment claim will be eligible.

To qualify for the program, claimants must:

- Have received unemployment benefits from July 26, 2020, through Aug. 15, 2020, and
- Self-certify that they are unemployed or partially unemployed due to disruptions caused by COVID-19. This will require a new step for claimants currently receiving regular unemployment benefits, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation and Extended Benefits. Those who are receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance will likely not need to certify because they already have.

If I am eligible, when will I receive the LWA benefit?

We don't know yet. ESD is working as quickly as possible to implement this temporary measure and distribute payments to Washingtonians once our application is approved. Announced on Aug. 8, federal guidance for this program continues to evolve.

We will have a better idea of when payments will start once Washington's application is approved by the federal government.



Is the LWA the same program that paid the extra \$600 per week under the CARES Act?

No. The \$600 per week available under the CARES Act expired at the end of July. LWA has different eligibility requirements and is a limited pool of money to be shared among all states that apply and are approved.

What does self-certification mean?

Individuals will have to complete a one-time self-certification that states they are unemployed, partially unemployed or unable or unavailable to work due to disruptions caused by COVID.

Individuals who have applied and been approved for PUA already self-certified at the time of their application and they answer questions weekly about their eligibility. So, these individuals already have satisfied the LWA self-certification requirement.

Why is LWA only for three weeks?

Currently, LWA is limited to those who received unemployment benefits from July 26 through Aug. 15. The LWA program has a limited budget, so the length of time the LWA program is available, the amount that is paid out will be determined by the number of participating states, the number of payments that go out, and how fast the limited federal funds are exhausted.

Do you have to take home more than \$100 in benefits in order to receive the extra benefits?

No. The \$100 requirement is specific to weekly benefit amounts. Since Washington's minimum weekly benefit amount is higher than the \$100 required by LWA, this is not a concern for Washington claimants. As long as claimants are eligible to receive at least \$1 in benefits, they can receive LWA.

For example, individuals who take home less than \$100 each week because money is being deducted from their weekly benefit payment will still be eligible for the entire \$300.

How much money could the LWA program contribute to Washington's economy?

We estimate that the LWA could provide more than \$400 million to families, individuals and our state's economy. Any additional funds to help unemployed workers are welcome.