
Puerto Rico Natural Disaster Unemployment News

As a result of Hurricane Maria, a presidential declaration of disaster was expanded from the original disaster order of September 10, 2017. The expanded disaster order was put into effect **September 18, 2017**, for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. All 78 municipalities are covered by this order. This declaration provides that Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) may be available.

Updated Filing Details: The Puerto Rico Department of Labor website, located at <http://www.trabajo.pr.gov>, is now operational and its call center is accepting unemployment insurance claims from residents. Some residents may also be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance

- Deadline to file October 31, 2017
- Filing online is the best resource. For those without internet access they can call 787-945-7900. Please note there may be extensive wait times.
- Applications filed after the deadline will be considered untimely and DUA benefits may be denied unless the individual provides good cause. Applicants must submit their Social Security number, check stubs and documentation to support the Claim that they were working or self-employed when the disaster occurred. In some cases, additional documentation may be required. To receive DUA benefits, all required documentation must be submitted within 21 days from the date the DUA application is filed.

What is Disaster Unemployment Assistance?

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is a partnering program between the USDOL and FEMA to provide funds to state UI agencies for the payment of UI benefits under certain circumstances. It provides disaster unemployment assistance to individuals who have lost employment as the result of a major disaster and are NOT otherwise eligible for regular UI benefits.

Individuals are eligible if they lived, worked, or were scheduled to work in the affected areas and:

- No longer have a job or place to work; or
- Cannot reach the place of work; or
- Cannot work as the result of damage to the place of work; or
- Cannot work due to injury sustained in the disaster
- Became the breadwinner or major supporter of a household due to the death of head of household resulting from the disaster

DUA benefits are only payable during the Disaster Assistance Period (DAP) and shall not exceed 26 weeks. The weekly benefit amount for which the person may be eligible is determined by the governing laws in the state in which the claim was filed. Any benefits claimed under the DUA program are 100% federally funded which means employers' UI accounts will not be charged.