

## **Understanding the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)<sup>1</sup> weekly benefit amount – Am I Entitled to More Than \$179/week?**

### **How Much PUA Should I Receive a week?**

The PUA weekly benefit amount (WBA) is based on your 2019 income. The DC Office of Employment Services (DOES) breaks the year into quarters and will look at your highest earnings quarter to calculate your WBA.

If you are approved for PUA, you will automatically get \$179/week regardless of your 2019 earnings.

**If your 2019 earnings were higher than \$1,560/month or \$18,729/year, you may be entitled to more than \$179/week. If your earnings were higher than \$3,848/month, you may be entitled to \$444/week.**

### **What Information will DOES need to see if I am entitled to more than \$179/week?**

<b>Self-Employed /Gig/Contract Workers</b>	<b>Employees/W-2 earners</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DOES will use your 2019 <b>net income</b> (gross income minus expenses) to determine your WBA</li> <li>• If you filed a 2019 tax return, provide it to DOES to show your 2019 net income</li> <li>• If you did not file a 2019 return or disagree with your initial WBA, you will need to provide DOES with other documents to show your net income, like 1099s, pay stubs, bank receipts/statements, ledgers, or invoices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DOES will use your 2019 <b>gross income</b> (your earnings before taxes are taken out) to determine your WBA</li> <li>• DOES will generally calculate 2019 yearly and quarterly W-2 wages automatically for DC workers</li> <li>• Not all W-2 wages earned in other states automatically show up in DOES's system, so you may need to submit pay stubs/ W-2s for those wages to be considered</li> </ul>

### **How is my weekly benefit amount calculated?**

If you earned the same amount every month in 2019, then DOES will divide your 2019 annual income by four (4) and divide that number by twenty-six (26) to calculate your WBA. Example:

Quarter 1 (Jan. – Mar.)	Quarter 2 (Apr. – June)	Quarter 3 (July – Aug.)	Quarter 4 (Sept. – Dec.)	Total	WBA
\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$26,000	<b>\$250</b> (\$6,500 ÷ 26)

If you had higher earnings in one quarter, you may be entitled to a higher WBA than if DOES just divided your total 2019 income by four (4). You will need to give DOES proof of your income for each quarter. Example:

Q1 (Jan. – Mar.)	Q2 (Apr. – June)	Q3 (July – Aug.)	Q4 (Sept. – Dec.)	Total	WBA
\$500	\$500	\$7,000	\$10,000	\$18,000	<b>\$384</b> (\$10,000 ÷ 26)

### **What should I do if I think I am entitled to more than \$179/week?**

**You can request reconsideration of your weekly benefit amount by emailing [PUA@dc.gov](mailto:PUA@dc.gov).** Your email must be received by December 31, 2020, and include proof of your 2019 earnings.

- If DOES **approves** you for a higher benefit amount, you are entitled to receive back benefits for the weeks DOES only paid you \$179/week.
- If DOES **denies** your request, you have a right to appeal that decision to the DC Office of Administrative Hearings (oah.dc.gov). DOES must send you instructions on how to appeal their decision.

<sup>1</sup> PUA is an unemployment benefits program created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by the CARES Act for workers who have lost income due to COVID-19 and who are not eligible for traditional unemployment. PUA is available through December 26, 2020.