



OFFICE OF POLICY, PROCEDURES, AND TRAINING

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POLICY BULLETIN #20-57-ELI

TREATMENT OF SUPPLEMENTAL LOST WAGES (SLW) PAYMENTS FOR CASH ASSISTANCE (CA), SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) AND HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP)

Date: September 25, 2020	Subtopic(s): COVID-19, CA, SNAP, and HEAP
	<p>The purpose of this policy bulletin is to inform all Job Center, Non-Cash Assistance (NCA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Center, Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and HIV/AIDS Administration Services (HASA) staff on how to treat the new Supplemental Lost Wages (SLW) payments. This policy bulletin is informational for all other staff.</p> <p>SLW payments are funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the authority of section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Act (42 USC 5174) and Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations. SLW payments must not be counted as income or as a resource in determining eligibility for CA, SNAP, or HEAP. These payments will be issued by the New York State Department of Labor and will provide an additional \$300 in federally funded dollars each week to the Unemployment Insurance Benefit (UIB) of each eligible worker. A screen shot of how these benefits will appear in the Resource File Integration (RFI) is at the end of this procedure.</p> <p>Note: The payments are only authorized for six weeks.</p> <p><u>Cash Assistance</u></p> <p>SLW payments are excluded as income and disregarded as a resource when determining eligibility for both emergency and ongoing CA. This includes Family Assistance (FA), Safety Net Assistance (SNA), Emergency Assistance to Needy Families with Children (EAF), Emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA), and Emergency Assistance for Adults (EAA). For CA applicants or participants who are receiving UIB, the SLW portion of the UIB must be excluded from the budget. A note should be made in the case record regarding the individual's receipt of these payments.</p>

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE?
Call 718-557-1313 then press 3 at the prompt followed by 1 or
send an e-mail to *FIA Call Center Fax* or fax to: (917) 639-0298

These payments, if received retroactively, are excluded as income and therefore are not subject to the lump sum provisions.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

For SNAP, the SLW payments are excluded (not to be counted) as income and are also disregarded as a resource when determining eligibility and calculating benefits for SNAP. As set forth above for CA, SLW payments, if received retroactively, are already excluded as income for SNAP and therefore are not subject to the lump sum provisions.

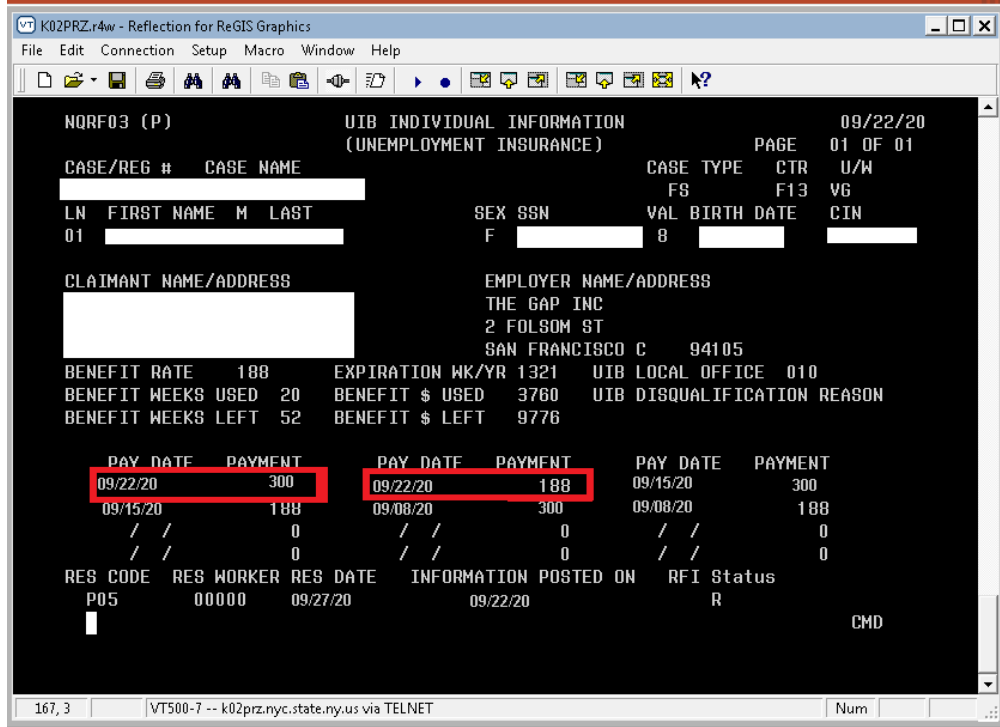
Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

SLW payments provided to individuals and families will be excluded as countable income for HEAP eligibility and benefit determinations and must not be counted in the HEAP budget. These SLW payments will be excluded from the HEAP household's income when determining eligibility for Regular HEAP, Emergency, Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement (HERR), Heating Equipment Clean and Tune (C&T), and Cooling Assistance benefits. Any remaining balance from these SLW payments are not considered a liquid resource for the Emergency and HERR benefit components.

These payments, if received retroactively, are excluded as income and therefore are not subject to lump sum provisions.

Appearance in the Resource File Integration (RFI)

Staff will be able to determine that an SLW payment has been made in RFI as the RFI payment screen will display two payments with the same date, one of which will be for \$300 (the weekly amount of the SLW payment) as indicated in the sample screenshot below.



Effective Immediately

Reference:
20 TA/DC092

Attachment:
ATTACHMENT A Lost Wages Assistance Program FAQs

WE ARE YOUR DOL**Department
of Labor**

LOST WAGES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FAQs

Q: IS THE LOST WAGES ASSISTANCE (LWA) PROGRAM FOR NEW YORKERS RECEIVING TRADITIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) OR PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE (PUA)?

A: Both traditional UI and PUA recipients may be eligible for additional benefits under the LWA program. The DOL is actively administering this program. We will notify claimants directly if they must take any action to certify and receive these additional benefits.

Q: WHEN WILL I GET MY MONEY?

A: New York State began administering the payments for the first three weeks of LWA the week of September 14. Payments for the second three weeks of LWA will be released by September 25. There is no need to call the DOL at this time — we will contact claimants with additional information. In the meantime, per federal law please continue to certify weekly to ensure you receive all benefits to which you are entitled.

Q: IF MY WEEKLY BENEFIT IS LESS THAN \$100 BECAUSE OF TAXES OR BECAUSE I WORKED ONE OR MORE DAYS IN A GIVEN WEEK, WILL I RECEIVE THE LWA PAYMENT?

A: The LWA program's \$100 cutoff is based on a claimant's benefit base rate, which is calculated before any deductions or reductions. Because the minimum weekly benefit rate in New York is \$104 for UI and \$182 for PUA, all claimants in New York are above the \$100 cutoff. That means you can still qualify for the \$300 LWA payment if your UI or PUA payment in a given week is below \$100 because of taxes, part-time work, or other reductions. However, there may be additional criteria the federal government will require New Yorkers meet to qualify for funds — the DOL will contact claimants directly when that process is established.

Q. HOW MANY PAYMENTS DO WE GET?

A. The federal government has approved NYS DOL for a total of 6 weeks of Lost Wages Assistance (LWA). These include the benefit weeks ending August 2, August 9, August 16, August 23, August 30, and September 6. Payments for the first three weeks were released the week of September 14. Payments for the second and final three weeks will be released by Friday, September 25, 2020.

Q. WILL THE PAYMENTS BE A LUMP SUM OR MULTIPLE PAYMENTS?

A. Eligible New Yorkers will receive Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) in individual payments of \$300 per week for every week they qualify for.

Q. IF I WAS ALREADY RECEIVING FPUC PAYMENTS WILL I HAVE TO CERTIFY FOR THE ADDITIONAL \$300?

- Approximately 2.1 million are already qualified for the LWA program because they indicated on their initial benefit application that their unemployment was connected to the COVID-19 pandemic. These claimants:
 - Do not need to take any further action;
 - Received an email and text message from DOL on September 19, 2020 informing them they have pre-qualified for LWA.
 - May have received LWA payments starting the week of September 14; and
- Approximately 157,000 are eligible for one or more LWA payments for the weeks ending August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, and/or September 6 but have not submitted a certification indicating they are unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as required by the federal government.
 - These New Yorkers have received a secure DocuSign email from NYS DOL with a link to certify, or they can call 833-491-0632 to certify via an automated phone system.
- Approximately 23,700 who were not eligible for the earlier weeks' payments because they were not unemployed during the first three weeks of August must certify their eligibility for one or more LWA payments for the weeks ending August 23, August 30, or September 6.
 - These New Yorkers will receive a secure DocuSign email from NYS DOL with a link to certify or they can call 833-491-0632 to certify via an automated phone system.
- New Yorkers who are pre-qualified for the second three weeks of LWA benefits, or who must certify and submit their certification by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, September 22, will receive their payments the week of September 21. Those who submit their certification at a later date will be paid on a rolling basis.

Q. HOW LONG WILL THE ASSISTANCE LAST?

A. New York State has been approved for 6 weeks of Lost Wages Assistance (LWA). FEMA has exhausted funding for the program, and it will not continue beyond the 6 weeks.