

*Updated March 30, 2021*

In April of last year, 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!

## State & Federal Programs Available to Workers in CT:

### American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) continues the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act II (CARES) passed in 2020. ARPA extends the programs available for unemployed workers in the United States throughout the COVID-19 pandemic:

**\*\*NOTE:** Each unemployment claim is valid for 52 weeks, so if you originally filed for unemployment at the beginning of the pandemic last year, you will need to re-file to continue to receive that aid. To begin the re-filing process, [click here](#).

#### *Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)*

- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) provides an additional \$300 per week benefit to all individuals who already receive unemployment insurance benefits. The program is in effect in Connecticut until the week ending September 04, 2021. Claimants do not need to apply directly to the program because the additional benefit is added to their regular benefits.

#### *Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)*

- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) is available for workers who are typically ineligible for state unemployment benefits, including those who lack an extensive employment history, gig workers, freelancers, independent contractors, or people who are looking for part-time work. The program has been extended from 50 weeks to a total of 79 weeks. PUA provides a \$600 weekly benefit increase and is effective March 14, 2021 to the week ending September 04, 2021. [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 and workers who have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits.

### *Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)*

- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) extends unemployment insurance benefits for those individuals who have exhausted their benefits. The CARES Act II added 11 weeks to the program for a total of 24 weeks. Eligibility for this program ends on March 13, 2021. If you have not exhausted the 24 weeks of PEUC as of March 13, 2021, and you are still receiving unemployment benefits for that week, and are eligible, you will be paid through this program through the week ending on April 10, 2021.

### **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)**

The FFCRA provided eligible workers emergency paid sick leave and public health emergency leave (an expansion of family medical leave) until December 31, 2020.

**\*\*NOTE:** Although this program expired on December 31, 2020, employers can still voluntarily provide a paid leave option until September 30, 2021 to receive a tax credit. Speak directly with your employer or the Human Resources Department at your workplace for more information. To learn more about the program, [click here](#).

### **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.

**\*\*NOTE:** In 2019, Governor Lamont signed P.A. 19-25: An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave into law and the Connecticut Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority is currently in the process of implementing the program. Payroll contributions to Connecticut's paid leave program began in January 2021 and eligible workers will receive benefits in January 2022.

## **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](#)
- The Village: [COVID-19 Resources](#)

For general information, contact [cwealf@cwealf.org](mailto: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!