

Information on the VT Dept of Labor's Resources for the Self-Employed

The Vermont Department of Labor held a Virtual Town Hall on Tuesday, April 7th to discuss *Resources for the Self-Employed*. The following are notes from that event compiled for the Vermont Regional Development Corporations (RDCs):

Cameron Wood of the Department of Labor shared details for this new program, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) which covers the self-employed, sole proprietors, single member LLCs, independent contractors and part-time workers. All people in these categories will be eligible for state UI plus the federal \$600/week.

Initial applications will determine eligibility. People will need to file weekly claims and payments will be made based on weekly certification of these claims. There are 11 criteria outlined in the CARES Act and US Department of Labor guidance and people will have to meet one of the 11 on the list.

Included in this list are:

- Place of employment is closed and one is not able to work because they are ordered to stay home due to COVID-19.
- Need to be able and available for work.

Those who can telework with pay or who are receiving paid leave or sick pay will be ineligible.

To determine the amount of the benefit the department will need wage information. The DOL isn't sure yet what tax year the feds will require.

If one has received a monetary denial letter they should maintain that information and go to the DOL [website](#) and sign up for their [newsletter](#). DOL will let people know when the program is up and they are hoping they will be able to take initial application information but it is important to keep that denial letter. If one hasn't filed before they don't need to do that yet – if someone does file they will likely receive this denial letter if they have been self-employed in the last 18 months. The DOL needs further federal guidance before proceeding with these applications. Claims will be backdated so people shouldn't be concerned about losing any coverage.

Scenario – a couple owns a business but they don't take a salary. They will have to validate wage information. There has to be a reportable amount of wages in a base period. DOL will have to rely on tax returns. An independent contractor may be able to demonstrate wages through their weekly paycheck. For those who don't take a salary or show a loss this too will need to be validated through their tax filing. Failing all else people may still be able to get the lowest weekly benefit of \$191.00 and everyone will still get the additional \$600 per week.

There are also the PPP and the EIDL applications to apply for and it is recommended that people fill these out and then decide if they want to commit to the programs later. People can go to the [Small Business Development Center](#) for guidance or email ACCD at commerce.covid19@vermont.gov.

The Vermont Department of Labor will continue their series of Virtual Town Halls with the next one being:

THURSDAY, APRIL 9

• ***Employer Services and Rapid Response***

- **Time:** 2:00pm-3:00pm
- **Overview:** Description of step-by-step process for employers that feel they may need to lay off employees, such as steps to take, who to notify and work with, as well as what to do when and if they are looking to hire.
- **Speakers:** Cameron Wood (Director, Unemployment Insurance), Cindy Robillard (Business Services Manager), and Dirk Anderson (General Counsel)
- **Online Link:** bit.ly/VTlaborTownHall_April9

Previous events are uploaded to the Department's YouTube Channel, and may be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/VTLabor-Youtube>.

The Department of Labor will continue to hold these events as needed and will provide topics that are timely and of current community benefit. For further information and updates on the Vermont Department of Labor, please visit labor.vermont.gov.