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N E W S R E L E A S E

Louisiana gig workers could benefit from special, one-time Mixed Earners Unemployment Program

BATON ROUGE, La.- Unemployment claimants from 2020 and 2021 affected by the COVID-19 pandemic could be eligible for a one-time supplemental unemployment benefit.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) has implemented the Mixed Earners Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) program. It's a one-time federally funded program offered to help workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. LWC estimates thousands of people could qualify for the program. MEUC will provide \$100 in supplemental unemployment benefits for each week of qualified eligibility to people who meet BOTH of the following criteria:

1. Eligible for at least \$1 in benefit payments from Dec. 27, 2020, to July 31, 2021, in one of the following programs:
 - a. Regular, state-funded unemployment insurance (UI)
 - b. Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE)
 - c. Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX)
 - d. Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)
 - e. Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) **excluding Hurricane Ida**
 - f. Extended Benefits (EB)
 - g. Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA)
2. In addition to wages qualified for unemployment through the programs listed above, also had at least \$5,000 in self-employment **net** earnings in the tax year PRIOR to the year when the unemployment claim was initially filed.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Individuals who qualified for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) are NOT eligible for MEUC.

"This pandemic is not over and during the height of it there were a lot of people in need. Our goal is to make sure that everyone who is eligible to get this extra money does just that," said LWC Secretary Ava Cates. "If you think you may qualify, you need to act fast because the deadline is coming quickly."

While MEUC is available to eligible claimants with DUA claims from 2020 and 2021 disasters, this does NOT include Hurricane Ida. Louisiana had ended its participation in pandemic-related federal unemployment programs prior to Hurricane Ida's landfall in the state on Aug. 29, 2021.

LWC will directly email anyone who may be eligible for MEUC with instructions to log in to the agency's HiRE website and complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire has to be completed within 30 days of notification.

HiRE will automatically validate the questionnaire responses, and individuals with qualifying unemployment claims will be given a link via HiRE to create an account with Steady, an advanced income intelligence platform. LWC is partnering with Steady to provide a means for claimants to quickly provide secure, verified documentation of their 1099 and self-employment income via Steady's Income Passport. Once the claimant verifies the self-employment income report produced in real time by Steady and gives permission for Steady to share the information with LWC, the documentation will be securely sent to LWC and connected to the qualifying unemployment claim for the next step in the MEUC payment processing.

Claimants found eligible for MEUC will be notified of their qualification by LWC and paid automatically for all qualified weeks. No additional action by the claimant will be required.

Claimants are advised that any federal income tax and/or child support deductions that were in place for the qualified weeks previously paid will also apply to the \$100 MEUC supplemental weekly benefits. Also, claimants should be aware that the extra MEUC benefits could impact income eligibility for Medicaid, LaCHIP, SNAP, and other income-based assistance programs.

Any fraudulent attempts to receive MEUC could result in an overpayment of benefits, which would be required to be repaid. Repayment could include garnishment of future federal and/or state income tax refunds. If it is determined that the fraud was knowingly committed, a possible criminal investigation and charges could follow, along with a 52-week disqualification for future unemployment benefits.

About Steady

Steady is the leading income intelligence platform for America's hourly and 1099 workers, removing the barriers to earn by harnessing AI and the insights from over 3 million workers. The company's income intelligence supports government leaders who design programs that are informed by earning trends and empowers workers. Steady is the only organization that can deliver income transparency and help Americans earn more and thrive in an increasingly complex economy.

About the Louisiana Workforce Commission

The Louisiana Workforce Commission is an agency of state government that administers programs designed to enhance workforce growth and provide family-sustaining jobs for Louisiana residents. The commission monitors employment, administers unemployment compensation and tax funds, provides training resources for employers and employees and oversees worker compensation benefits. The agency also gathers and supplies information on the labor market and occupational sectors in Louisiana.