

# Puerto Rico Secretary of Labor Announces New Unemployment Benefits Available for Private Employees

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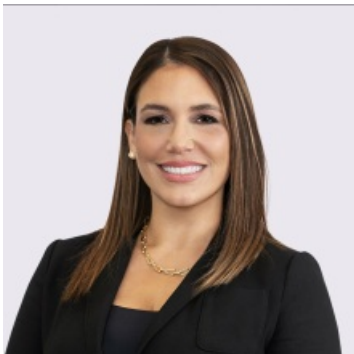
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In the wake of the Coronavirus/COVID-19, the Secretary of the Puerto Rico Department of Labor (Secretary) announced today the availability of additional unemployment benefits in Puerto Rico for eligible employees, as well as self-employed workers and independent contractors, due to the enactment of the federal statute known as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES).

Among the new unemployment-related benefits for Puerto Rico employees are:

- a \$600 supplement to state-paid unemployment compensation for those who already qualify for up to four months. This means an increase on the current Puerto Rico weekly unemployment compensation of \$190 to a maximum of \$790 weekly.
- a pandemic unemployment assistance program which provides similar unemployment benefits to unemployed workers who would not normally be eligible, such as self-employed workers and independent contractors.
- an extension of unemployment compensation by 13 weeks beyond the eligibility time provided under current law, which is 26 weeks, until December 31, 2020.

It is important to note that employees who are available to telework with pay or receive some form of sick leave or other paid leave benefits, and those who continue receiving their salary, are excluded from receiving unemployment benefit.

The Secretary noted that all that remains is for the federal government to establish the guidelines and processes for implementing these new benefits to make them effective and available to eligible individuals in Puerto Rico.

For more information, please reach out to the authors of this article or the Jackson Lewis attorneys with whom you regularly work.

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