



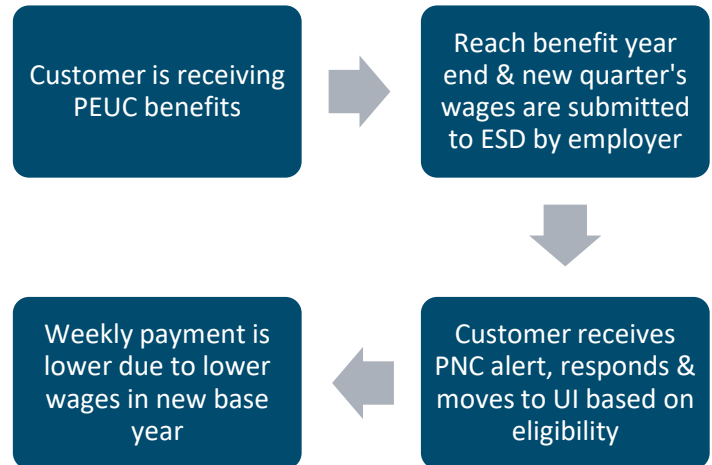
Potential new claims

What is a potential new claim (PNC)? Numerous unemployment benefit programs are now available due to the pandemic. Because of this, **we are required by the federal government** to routinely look at claims and ensure customers receive benefits from the correct program, even if they have stopped submitting weekly claims. If they are not, we must switch them to the right program.

Why is this important to claimants? In a word – overpayments. It’s critical that customers read the information we send them and respond by the deadline, which is 10 days. Not responding can result in overpayments, sometimes very large ones. Overpayments may still occur even if claimants do respond because the law may require they switch to a new program which may have a lower benefit amount. In those circumstances, we’re doing all we can to waive these overpayments wherever legally permissible. **The most important thing for claimants to do is look out for all emails, postal mail and web notices from us and follow the instructions.**

Why someone changes programs. Many situations might trigger a required change. Common reasons are: a claimant’s reason for being unemployed changes, a claimant reaches a new benefit year, or ESD receives new wage information from customers or their employers. In many cases, if the claimant moves to a different program it will be from a new pandemic-only federal program to regular, state-funded unemployment.

Customers may see a change in their weekly benefit amount. Customers who move from a pandemic-only program – with a higher minimum benefit – to regular unemployment may see their weekly benefit amount reduced. This can also happen in the opposite direction. Again, we are required by federal law to move them to a different program.



Situations vary. This is one example.

Easing the impact — any way we can

- Giving twice as much time for customers to respond
- Waiving overpayments wherever we can
- Reaching out through many channels
- Calling those with the biggest overpayments to help them take next steps

Impact to employers

If the former employee moves from a federally funded program to state-funded UI, the employer’s tax rate may go up. Legislation was passed during the 2021 legislative session to mitigate pandemic-related tax impacts for employers. These measures will help, but some employers will still see an increase to their tax rates.

This process is confusing

Although we’re required by federal and state law to re-evaluate claims, the process can be very confusing for customers. Our system is not designed for so many programs to interact. And because each individual’s circumstances vary, they might receive several letters from us and find them a challenge to understand and navigate. We’re using all channels available to alert customers and make it as clear as possible. **Again, the most important thing is to respond to all emails, postal mail and web notices from us.**

Learn more on our website: www.esd.wa.gov/unemployment/potential-new-claim