



## GOVERNMENT-FUNDED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT EXTENSION PROGRAMME ADMINISTERED BY THE NATIONAL INSURANCE BOARD

The Government of The Bahamas is funding an extension to the NIB unemployment benefit for a period of 13-weeks. The National Insurance Board (NIB) will administer this programme, on behalf of the Government. Eligible persons may register on the portal beginning **Monday, July 20, 2020.**

### FACT SHEET

#### Who qualifies for the COVID-19-related Unemployment Benefit extension programme?

Persons are eligible for the programme if they became unemployed due to the COVID-19 shutdown (March 23-June 30, 2020), and meet one of the following criteria:

- Exhausted the 13 weeks of NIB's unemployment benefit (UEB) payments paid as a result of layoff/termination due to COVID-19.
- Persons **under** the age of 35 who had been working in March 2020 and making contributions to NIB, but whose UEB Claim was disallowed because they had not yet made the requisite number of NIB payments (i.e. persons just entering the work force)
- Enrolled in the Hurricane Dorian UEB Extension Programme and have exhausted 13 weeks of extended payments.
- Self-employed persons in the tourism trade receiving assistance payments under the Gov-UEA programme prior to July 1.

#### Who does not qualify for the COVID-19-related Unemployment Benefit extension programme?

- Persons who were not eligible for, or in receipt of, the ordinary NIB unemployment benefit during the period July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 (past one-year period) EXCEPT for the persons under the age of 35 mentioned above.
- Self-employed persons not in the tourism trade.
- Unemployed persons still receiving the standard unemployment benefit payments who have not exhausted their 13-week period of eligibility. These persons may only apply AFTER their 13-week period of eligibility has expired.

#### I am a self-employed (sole proprietor). Do I qualify for this extension programme?

- No. The Government Unemployment Assistance Programme for self-employed persons (non-tourism trade) ceased on June 30, 2020. This extension programme is for persons who would have received the ordinary NIB unemployment benefit and self-employed persons in the tourism sector.

#### I am a self-employed in the tourism trade and remain unemployed, do I qualify for an extension?

- Yes. This extension programme includes self-employed persons in the tourism sector already receiving an assistance payment as of June 30. You are to register on the new portal and verify

your employment status. Payments will begin on July 23, 2020 and will be paid every two weeks at a rate of \$150 per week up to 13 weeks.

### Do I have to register with NIB to receive payments?

- Yes. All eligible persons must register on the portal found on NIB's website to receive payments. The link to the portal is found at: <https://govUEBex.nib-bahamas.com>.

### How much income support will I receive?

- \$150 per week which will be paid every two weeks beginning July 23, 2020. Unlike the NIB unemployment programme, you will still be eligible for partial assistance even if you work for part of the week. This approach ensures that employees who are called back to work for part of a week are not disadvantaged.
- If you are only working part-time and work any day during the period, an amount of \$30 per day worked will be deducted from the weekly payment. This information is to be provided by you during the verification process.
- All registrants must verify the number of days that they have been engaged in gainful employment 1-5 days before the next pay day to continue to receive payments.

### When will I begin to receive my payments?

- Payment will be on Friday, July 23, 2020 and continuing every two weeks thereafter beginning.

### How will the payment be issued?

- If you were paid your NIB Unemployment Benefit by your employer during the COVID-19 shutdown period (March 23-June 30, 2020), you will continue to receive funds by that method while on this programme. Your employer will verify your employment status on your behalf.
- If you were paid your NIB Unemployment Benefit by direct deposit to your bank account from NIB, you will continue to receive payment by bank transfer. Payments may be delayed if you provided incorrect banking information.
- If NIB paid your Unemployment Benefit by a cheque, for any reason, during the shutdown period, your payment will now be sent to an [Island Pay Digital Wallet](#). Payments in Grand Bahama and the Family Islands will be made via cheque until further notice.
- Self-employed persons in the tourism sector will continue to be paid assistances via the normal method (direct bank deposit, Suncash or cheque payment).

### Do I have to provide any documents to receive the extension payments?

- No. NIB has information on your ordinary unemployment benefit application and benefits. Your enrollment and eligibility status will appear once you register on the portal.

### What if I am working part time?

- Unlike the NIB unemployment programme, you will still be eligible for partial assistance even if you work for part of the week. This approach ensures that employees who are called back to work for part of a week are not disadvantaged.
- If you work any day during the period, an amount of \$30 per day worked will be deducted from the weekly payment. This information is to be given during the verification process.

## Why do I need to verify before every pay period?

- The extension programme is for financial assistance for persons who remain unemployed due to the COVID19 shutdown. The verification lets us know whether you were gainfully employed any day during the payment cycles.
- All registrants must verify the number of days that they have been engaged in gainful employment 1-5 days before the next pay day to continue to receive payments.

## Do I have to make any declarations?

- All registrants are required to log in to the portal to verify employment status 1-5 days before the next payment date. This verification attests to any change in your employment.
- Applicants must inform NIB if there are any changes in their circumstances which may affect their entitlement to payment.
- Acknowledge that it is an offence to provide false information or to withhold information to qualify for this payment.

## How do I register for the UEB extension programme?

- Online at <https://govUEBex.nib-bahamas.com> found on NIB's website.

## Who do I contact if I have technical problems with the portal?

- If you have any technical issues or problems receiving your payment, please send an email to: [govUEBex@nib-bahamas.com](mailto:govUEBex@nib-bahamas.com).

## What happens when I return to full time employment?

- It is important to note that if you have returned to work, kindly have your employer submit your return to work date to NIB via email to [returntowork@nib-bahamas.com](mailto:returntowork@nib-bahamas.com).
- If you return to full time employment, payments under this extension programme will cease.

## What happens if I have submitted a claim during the COVID19 shutdown period but have not heard from NIB or received payments?

- If you applied for the ordinary NIB UEB during the COVID19 period (March 23 – June 30, 2020) and have not received payments or received a disallowance letter from NIB, please send an email to [UEBresolution@nib-bahamas.com](mailto:UEBresolution@nib-bahamas.com) for an agent to address your claim.
- If your regular NIB UEB claim is approved, you will be eligible for the 13 weeks from the time that you were first unemployed and also for the Government extension programme if you remain unemployed after you have exhausted NIB's 13 weeks.
- If you have been receiving NIB's regular UEB payments and these payments suddenly stopped, your claim may have been suspended due to non-verification of continued unemployment through the Department of Labour. Given the unusual circumstances, NIB is taking steps to remove the suspension to enable payments to proceed.

## What are the consequences for making a false statement to NIB?

- Fine not exceeding two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months or both.