



GOVERNMENT UNEMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME FOR SELF-EMPLOYED (SOLE ENTREPRENEUR) PERSONS IMPACTED BY COVID-19 (WITHOUT EMPLOYEES)

Given the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on the Bahamian economy, the Government of the Bahamas has launched a new Unemployment Assistance Programme for Self-Employed (Sole Entrepreneur) Persons whose employment was negatively impacted by the mandated shut downs implemented by the Emergency Orders. The National Insurance Board (NIB) will administer this programme, on behalf of the Government. Applications for this programme will be accepted by NIB beginning on **Tuesday 7 April 2020**. More information will be made available to the public via the NIB website, social media platforms, and voice notes.

FACT SHEET

Who Qualifies for **COVID-19-Related** Unemployment Assistance Payment for all self-employed persons?

- ✓ Self-employed persons impacted by the government's mandated shut down Orders with **no** employees **AND** who are in possession of a **valid business license**. Jitney Drivers without a business license may apply, however a valid and current public service drivers badge is required.

Who Do Not Qualify for **COVID-19-Related** Unemployment Assistance Payment?

- ✓ Persons currently receiving, or eligible for, benefits under another NIB unemployment scheme – including the usual unemployment benefits programme and the recent programme for self-employed persons in the tourism industry.

Will NIB conduct a means test?

- ✓ There will be no means testing (ie. an examination into the financial state of persons to determine eligibility for benefits).

What options are in place for self-employed persons who are not up to date with NIB contributions?

- ✓ This requirement will be waived for this unemployment assistance programme. However, persons should be registered with NIB or become registered at the time of application, and be in possession of a valid business license (with the exception of jitney drivers without a license must provide a current and valid public service drivers badge)

Do I have to register with NIB?

- ✓ Self-employed persons must be currently registered with NIB or be register at the time of application.

How much money will I receive?

- ✓ \$200 per week, inclusive of any NIB benefit payment for the period of the government mandated emergency order restrictions, that commenced on Friday, 20th March, 2020. You will be paid every 2 weeks during this period.

How long will it take to receive unemployment assistance payments?

- ✓ NIB is striving to have this payment made in as short a time as possible. Processing time will vary depending on the completeness of the application and supporting documents.

How will the payments be issued?

- ✓ Direct payment to bank accounts (preferred)
- ✓ Cheques or Digital Wallet Payments are being considered.

All applicants must sign a Declaration Statement indicating the following:

- ✓ Applicants are not being paid by an employer at the moment.
- ✓ 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.

What are the consequences for making a false statement and falsifying documentation for the application?

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

How do I submit my application?

- ✓ Online at <https://uebreief.nib-bahamas.com/selfemployed-form> found on NIB's website.