Unemployment Insurance (UI), Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) & Childcare

To be eligible for Unemployment Insurance a claimant must be available for "suitable work" and have "good cause" to refuse work.

Under COVID-19 rules, work is not suitable and the worker has good cause for refusal if:

- The claimant needs to care for an individual full-time due to their age (young or old) or medical condition, and no other care, including in-person school, is available.

- If in-person school is available but circumstances prevent a child from attending, including the child's mental/physical health, inability to wear PPE, etc., that may expose the claimant, or a household or family member to COVID-19.

Apply for Unemployment Insurance here.

If you have been denied Unemployment Insurance benefits for any reason that is inconsistent with the above-stated guidelines, you should seek a redetermination by calling the UI claimant assistance line at: (877) 626-6800.

*[**NOTE**: If you are denied Unemployment Insurance due to monetary ineligibility, because you are self-employed or an independent contractor, or if your UI benefits have been exhausted, you may qualify for PUA for the above-stated reasons related to childcare.]*

Apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance here.

The Workshare Program

- Workshare is a voluntary UI program for employers to prevent layoffs

- Instead of laying off workers, employers can reduce hours of all or some workers – reduction can be between 10% and 60%

- Employees may then receive pro-rated UI to supplement lost wages in formula not available under regular UI (wages don't count against UI as in regular UI)

- Massachusetts has a federally-approved work-share program and the federal government will pay 100% of the UI benefits (until 12/26/2020 unless extended)

If your workplace may benefit from the implementation of a Workshare plan, you or your union should contact your employer to develop a plan and an application.

For more information: *https://www.mass.gov/topics/workshare-program*