



PRESS RELEASE

Payment date announced for start of expanded government unemployment assistance

Further details to be released by the National Insurance Board

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The Ministry of Finance can confirm that \$48 million has been allocated to finance an expansion of the Government's unemployment assistance programs, administered by the National Insurance Board (NIB), for workers that fall under four categories:

1. Self-employed tourism workers who remain unemployed and were receiving assistance prior to July 1
2. Hurricane Dorian survivors who remain unemployed and were receiving unemployment assistance prior to July 1
3. NIB contributors who are under 35 years old, who were unemployed during the COVID-19 shutdown but did not meet the contribution threshold to receive a benefit
4. For individuals who have maxed out their 13-weeks of eligibility under the ordinary National Insurance unemployment benefit scheme

In the coming weeks, the National Insurance Board will release additional details about the process to apply for self-employed tourism workers, Hurricane Dorian survivors and unemployed young people who are NIB contributors.

However, today the Ministry can announce that the first payments for NIB Beneficiaries that are eligible for the 13-week extension are scheduled to be issued on July 17 under the new initiative. Eligible applicants will be required to declare their employment status using an online portal prior to receiving payment. The portal will be available in approximately two weeks.

"In keeping with the Prime Minister's mandate, the Ministry of Finance has allocated resources for the National Insurance Board (NIB) to administer a new unemployment assistance program on behalf of the Government. Unemployment levels are not expected to stabilize for some time, and the various forms of assistance in the new budget will assist employers and employees during this time to crisis," said Marlon Johnson, Acting Financial Secretary.

Dr Nicola Virgil-Rolle, NIB Director said: "We had approximately 35,000 beneficiaries receiving unemployment benefit payments due to COVID-19. These individuals will be eligible for the new form of assistance if they exhaust their 13-weeks of benefit payments within a 52-week period. These beneficiaries are already in the system, so we are using an online portal to reduce the amount of paperwork required to administer the government assistance to those who are eligible. Applicants will only be required to complete a simple declaration to verify if their status remains unemployed.

9 Things to Know About the 13-Week NIB Extension

1. The 13-Week Extension is a form of Government unemployment assistance that is being administered by NIB. It is not an extension of a NIB insurable benefit.
2. The new government assistance programme covers NIB beneficiaries who were unemployed between March 23 and June 30 and were previously receiving NIB unemployment benefit payments.
3. The extension is valid for 13 additional weeks for individuals who have maxed out their initial 13-week NIB benefit
4. NIB beneficiaries will be eligible to receive \$150 per week in government assistance for a maximum of 13-weeks of unemployment up and until March 23, 2021.
5. Applications will only be valid if an individual's unemployment is directly because of COVID-19 and there is no change of employer.
6. Payments will be issued on the 14th and 28th of every month (except the first payment which will be issued on Friday, July 17)
7. Applicants will have to declare employment status using an online validation form. Payments will be held until declarations are submitted prior to each pay cycle.
8. The online declaration form will be available by July 13.
9. No cheque payments will be made through this programme: Only direct bank deposits or deposits into an Island Pay digital wallet.