

FSM Information Services

Press Release

President Panuelo Distributes First Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program Checks

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On July 13th, 2020, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), hosted an opening ceremony to celebrate the distribution of the first Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Program checks. A result of the Enduring Partnership between the FSM and the United States of America, and codified through an agreement between the FSM Department of Finance & Administration and the U.S. Department of Labor, the PUA Program provides temporary financial benefits to individuals whose employment or self-employment has been lost or interrupted as a direct result of COVID-19.

In his remarks, President Panuelo thanked the Government of the United States for their generous funding of the PUA Program, emphasizing that in these challenging times of the COVID-19 Pandemic the FSM has been introducing a series of social protection programs. “No person should have to suffer the indignity of hunger, or an income insufficient to take care of their family,” the President said. “I thank the United States for their assistance in this program, and thank all of you for your patience and understanding as the FSM Government undertakes special procedures to partner with the U.S. for the purpose of the PUA Program.”

“There remains uncertainty to this Pandemic,” the President continued. “I urge citizens to spend and save their money wisely, as we don’t really know how long the economic downturn may last.”

Sixty-five (65) checks, with an average payout of \$4,615.00 amounting to a total of \$300,000, were distributed on July 13th to citizens across the FSM. More than 1,000 applications for the PUA Program have been received thus far. The FSM National Government projects 3,000+ total applications for the PUA Program, representing approximately 20% of the Nation’s formal labor force.

The PUA program provides temporary financial benefits to individuals whose employment or self-employment has been lost or interrupted as a direct result of COVID-19. Examples of individuals who may qualify for assistance are: those who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms and are seeking a medical diagnosis; individuals who reside with a household member diagnosed with COVID-19; those who are unable to reach their place of employment because of a quarantine imposed as a direct result of the COVID-19 Pandemic; those who are scheduled to commence employment but do not have a job or are unable to reach their job due as a direct result of the COVID-19 Pandemic; and those whose places of employment have closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

As of July 14th, 2020, the FSM remains COVID-19 free.

For more information on the PUA Program, email the Office of PUA at opua@gov.fm or visit the Department of Finance & Administration's dedicated website here:
<http://www.dofa.gov.fm/pandemic-unemployment-assistance-program/>



Pictured Above: President Panuelo poses with an FSM citizen



Pictured Above: President Panuelo shakes the hand of an FSM citizen financially affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic



Pictured Above: President Panuelo joyfully expresses his enthusiasm that the Nation's citizens affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic are receiving assistance



Pictured Above: President Panuelo hands an FSM citizen his Pandemic Unemployment Assistance check



Pictured Above: President Panuelo hands an FSM citizen her PUA check



Pictured Above: President Panuelo poses with Secretary Amor and the Office of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance staff