

TEMPORARY LIFELINE SUPPORT CONTINUES THROUGH EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT

The Cook Islands Government is extending temporary financial support for those out of work as a result of COVID-19

The Cook Islands Government is extending temporary financial support for those out of work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Individuals who have involuntarily lost their jobs can apply for the unemployment benefit, which can be claimed for one month, with the possibility of extension for up to 3 months until 31 December 2020.

The benefit is a short-term measure only, providing assistance to support individuals through the adverse economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. With expectations of a gradual removal of travel restrictions through to the end of 2020, this measure is designed to support individuals moving forward as the job outlook begins to improve and economic recovery gets underway.

To be eligible for the unemployment benefit, individuals must meet all of the following criteria:

- Aged 16 years or older (excluding students and self-employed)

- As of 1 March 2020, applicants must have lost employment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic through termination, constructive dismissal, or emergency health orders which have restricted their workplace from continuing operations
- Ineligible for the wage subsidy and business grant

Eligible recipients will be paid \$266 per week for a period of 4 weeks.

Benefit recipients are required to work with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (INTAFF) to find new employment opportunities. Those who succeed in finding new employment will no longer be eligible for further benefits.

Recipients that have made a genuine effort to secure employment, but have been unsuccessful within the 4 week period while receiving the benefit, can apply with INTAFF for an extension. Upon approval, recipients can be eligible for an additional 4 weeks of the benefit at a reduced rate.



Individuals who have involuntarily lost their jobs can apply for the unemployment benefit, which can be claimed for **one month**, with the possibility of extension for up to **3 months until 31 December 2020**.

