



Joint Plumbing Industry Board Plumbers Local Union No.1 Trust Funds



Welfare Fund • Trade Education Fund • Additional Security Benefit Fund • 401(k) Savings Plan

Michael Apuzzo, Co-Chairman - Labor

Walter Saraceni, Administrator

Eugene S. Bocchieri Co-Chairman - Management

April 6, 2020

Re: Fund Office Remote Operations Due to Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

As you were previously informed, due to the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) throughout the United States, and particularly New York City, the Plumbers Local Union No. 1 Fund Office temporarily suspended normal operations at 50-02 5th Street, Long Island City, NY on Friday, March 20, 2020.

Since the closure, with your cooperation and patience, the Fund Office was able to quickly go back on line with remote technology. While the physical office remains closed, to ensure that the Funds continue to deliver vital services you depend on, staff was reassigned to work safely from their homes. This transition required a new main phone number (718) 223-4313, an alternative Member Services Call Center, along with laptop computers that are being used remotely by staff through a secure connection to access their Office desktop computers and take and return your telephone calls.

Please note the following.

- **Website:** The Fund Office website www.ualocal1funds.org remains your go to place for important updates and Claim Forms. **MyBenefits Portal** can provide you with eligibility, HRA and Welfare-ASB Balances, work hours, dependents, beneficiary and other information 24x7. Step-by-step instructions regarding accessing MyBenefits.nypl1f.org can be found on the Fund Office website, news section.
- **Contacting the Fund Office:** With Social Distancing mandates, disruptions with the US Postal Services and limited access to the Fund Office, all correspondence, claim forms and other documents should be sent via email or text at info@ualocal1funds.org or by FAX at (718) 641-8155. Please include the last 4 of your SSN along with your telephone number. You can also call the Fund Office at the new number (718) 223-4313. Please limit telephone calls to urgent and time-sensitive matters.
- **Benefit Payments:** HRA; Welfare ASB; Weekly Unemployment & Disability Benefits will continue to be processed towards the 3rd week of each month. With the Fund Office temporarily closed and staff working remotely from home, processing a regular Benefit Payment check will be significantly delayed. **You will now have an option to select Direct Deposit for your Benefit payments.** The new Direct Deposit form can be found on the Fund Office Website, news section. A copy has also been added to each application for benefit form that's available to you on the website under Welfare Section, forms. If you have already submitted a claim for April Benefit payments and prefer a Direct Deposit, you should complete a Direct Deposit Enrollment Form and send it to the Fund Office. As mentioned above, all applications and related documents should be sent by e-mail or text to info@ualocal1funds.org or by fax to 718-641-8155. If you do use mail service, there will likely be a long delay in processing your claim or otherwise responding to your request. For questions: Please e-mail or text to info@ualocal1funds.org or by fax to 718-641-8155.
- **Payments to the Fund Office:** Starting later this month you will be able to make COBRA, Retiree Coverage, Surviving Spouse Coverage payments to the Fund Office electronically. Please check the website in the coming weeks for additional information.

- **Weekly Unemployment Benefit (PLEASE READ CAREFULLY):** The Trustees have temporarily suspended the requirement for in-person applications along with Local 1's "Section D" certification. As a reminder, in addition to the Weekly Unemployment Benefit Form, **Statements stating that your unemployment claim is being reviewed/processed are insufficient when applying for this benefit. You must submit proof for each week that you have collected/received State Unemployment Benefits. This benefit is paid by the Fund monthly, we encourage you to combine multiple weeks in a single claim.** A copy of the claim form with instructions and Direct Deposit form can be downloaded from the Fund Office website.
- **Medical Benefits:** Welfare coverage eligibility will continue to be processed. Empire BCBS, CVS Caremark, Optum, Cigna and the other providers will continue to process your claims and/or take your calls.
- **LiveHealth Online:** Sign up for LiveHealth Online so you can visit with a board-certified doctor from the comfort of home, minimizing the risk of exposure to yourself and others. Doctors are available 24/7 to evaluate your symptoms, help you understand whether you're at risk for COVID-19, and let you know whether you need to visit a local health care provider in person for COVID-19 testing. You can access this service at www.livehealthonline.com free of charge through June 14, 2020.
- **Accessing Behavioral Health Treatment:** During this challenging time, it may be difficult to leave your home for therapy appointments due to social distancing or quarantine. You can schedule a virtual visit with a psychiatrist or therapist from the comfort and convenience of your home or wherever you have an internet connection. Optum virtual visits use secure video conferencing technology to connect you with behavioral health providers in real time. Use access code **plumbers** to enter the Optum site at www.liveandworkwell.com.
- **401k Plan and Recent Market Volatility:** Don't let emotional investing derail you. Do ask for help when you need it. Visit ua1.retirepru.com or contact a participant service representative at Prudential Retirement by calling 877-778-2100. Please check the website in the coming weeks for information on upcoming special rules for Coronavirus-related 401(k) distributions.
- **The Fund Office is Here for You! Let's Continue to Work Together:** We urge you to limit your inquiries to urgent and time-sensitive matters.

This continues to be an extraordinary occurrence and it is crucial that we all work together to help each other and achieve the common good. We are dedicated to serving you and continuing to administer your benefits no matter the conditions we face. However, we are still functioning at a reduced capacity and it will be difficult to match our normal service levels. We ask for your continued patience as we endeavor to work through this situation safely. We wish you and your families all the best as we get through this together.

For more information about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and how to keep yourself and your family safe from infection, you can get the latest from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

We will contact you as soon as we know when the Fund Office will reopen.

Sincerely,

Plumbers Local Union No. 1 Trust Funds