



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DES Partners with ID.me to Further Prevent Unemployment Fraud through Advanced Identity Verification System

PHOENIX – (October 12, 2020) The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) announced today a partnership with [ID.me](#) to allow unemployment claimants to securely verify their identities online. ID.me is a federally-certified identity verification provider specializing in digital identity protection, and is utilized by several states to address the high volume of unemployment fraud across the nation. In an effort to protect taxpayer dollars from criminals while ensuring Arizonans in need can access benefits in a timely manner, beginning this week, claimants filing initial claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) will verify their identities using ID.me's safe and secure online portal before they receive PUA benefits. Additionally, individuals whose claims have been flagged as needing identity verification may also be able to verify their identities using ID.me.

Since March, DES has issued over \$11.6 billion in assistance to 1.68 million people. At the same time the Department has worked to safeguard taxpayer dollars and ensure only eligible claimants receive assistance. In the last three weeks alone, DES has received over one million PUA applications, the vast majority of which is suspected fraud. Identity verification is the latest step in DES's aggressive approach to prevent unemployment fraud in Arizona. On October 2, 2020, [DES issued a fraud alert](#) detailing a new fraud scheme targeting unemployment benefits as well as a new law enforcement task force to combat criminal activity.

PUA claimants whose identities must be verified will receive notice through their selected method of communication with a unique link and instructions on how to utilize ID.me. Beginning this week, every new claimant applying for PUA must verify their identity using ID.me as one part of the eligibility determination process. This new security measure will help us ferret out fraudulent claims and get benefits to eligible recipients more quickly. If a claimant is unable to utilize the ID.me service, they can verify their identity by calling the unemployment call center. Claimants who do not receive a request to verify their identity directly from DES should not attempt to use the ID.me service for unemployment benefits.

Prior to the launch of this partnership, the Department piloted the ID.me verification process with claimants whose PUA accounts were placed on hold based on a report of potentially fraudulent activity. Around 30,000 claimants whose applications had been flagged as a high-risk for fraud were sent instructions on how to verify their identities using ID.me. To date, 18 percent of those potentially fraudulent claims have completed the ID.me verification process or contacted the Department to verify their identities, showing the significant amount of fraud being attempted. Within 5 business days after their identity verification was completed, DES

processed their claims and lifted the hold on their accounts, released payment, or assigned the claim out for expedited adjudication of any non-fraud issues.

More information regarding unemployment fraud can be found [here](#). To report fraud, file a report [online](#) or call the DES Fraud Hotline at 1 (800) 251-2436. The webform is available in English and Spanish. After reporting fraud to DES, file a report with local law enforcement.

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