

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DES Distributes \$225M to Arizona Unemployment Insurance Beneficiaries

*Additional \$600 in Federal Assistance, Including
Retroactive Payments, Reach Claimants*

PHOENIX — The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) announced today that unemployed Arizonans received \$150.9 million in Unemployment compensation last week, and an additional \$74 million distributed today, which includes the \$600 in additional weekly compensation provided by the CARES Act. Retroactive \$600 per week payments were also issued to eligible claimants who filed weekly certifications back to March 29, 2020.

Claims for unemployment benefits due to COVID-19 continue to increase, with a record number of applications, benefits paid and calls received.

“These payments are higher than DES has ever made before,” said Tom Betlach, from the Office of the Director. “We continue to enhance our staffing and systems to get Arizonans the benefits they need.”

By the Numbers (week ending April 18):

- 72,103 Initial Claims
- 226,793 Continued Weekly Claims
- 23,700 Calls Answered

In Comparison: (week ending March 14):

- 3,844 Initial Claims
- 17,595 Continued Weekly Claims
- 3,400 Calls Answered

*Weekly Claims report can be found at www.azui.com

On March 20, Governor Ducey issued an Executive Order, later followed by the signing of legislation, ensuring those who are out of work or facing a loss of hours because of COVID-19 have access to unemployment benefits. The order:

- Waived the one-week waiting period after an employee loses a job before they apply for unemployment benefits; and
- Temporarily suspended work search requirements for those receiving unemployment benefits.

The order also expanded who is eligible to receive unemployment benefits to include:

- Individuals whose employer has permanently or temporarily ceased or drastically reduced operations due to COVID-19 resulting in a reduction of wages;

- Individuals who, due to requirements that the individual be quarantined, are separated from employment and do not have any available paid leave even if the individual has an expectation of returning to work after the quarantine is over;
- Individuals who leave employment due to a risk of exposure or infection and are a member of a population that is particularly susceptible to COVID-19;
- Individuals who leave employment to care for a family member who has been infected with COVID-19; and
- Individuals who for any other scenario are separated from work for reasons related to COVID-19.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, as of April 14, Arizona was one of 29 states to issue the additional \$600 in benefits to claimants, and one of 48 states continuing to develop the brand-new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program, which will extend benefits to groups previously ineligible for unemployment insurance.

Enhancing Program Integrity and Fraud Detection Efforts

In addition to increasing staff and system capabilities to ensure Arizonans are able to access unemployment compensation, DES is strengthening its Unemployment Insurance program integrity and fraud detection efforts to preserve benefits for those who are entitled to them. DES is doubling staff dedicated to program integrity activities and developing new partnerships to leverage additional data sources and analytic capabilities. By this end of this week, DES will be issuing a Request for Information to engage private sector data analytic partners to enhance our efforts in accessing and using additional data sources to identify potential fraudulent claims and activity. Individuals may report suspected Unemployment Insurance Fraud to DES online at: <https://fraudreferralexternal.azdes.gov/>.

Weekly Claims Reminder

Unemployment Insurance claimants **must file weekly claims** to continue to receive benefits (even if the initial claim is still pending, individuals must file a weekly claim to receive benefits for that week). UI claimants can file weekly claims at www.azui.com. The online Weekly Claims System is available from 12:01 a.m. Sunday to 6 p.m. Friday. More information about filing weekly claims can be found [HERE](#).

Where to Find Information On Job Openings

ARIZONA@WORK staff can provide people with no-cost job assistance to help them get back to work. More information about the services available and a list of jobs with immediate openings can be found at: www.ArizonaAtWork.com.

For more information about Unemployment Insurance, or to apply, please visit www.azui.com.

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