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More Than \$10 Billion In Unemployment Benefits Issued During Pandemic

\$1.1 Billion in Lost Wages Assistance, Unemployment Insurance and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Issued Last Week to Arizonans in Need

PHOENIX – (August 26, 2020) The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) announced today it has distributed more than \$10 billion in state Unemployment Insurance (UI), Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) and Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) since the week ending March 7, 2020. Last week, Arizona became the first state in the nation to begin issuing LWA. Over \$252 million in LWA has been issued to approximately 400,000 claimants during the program’s first week, including the beginning of retroactive payments for the weeks ending August 1 and August 8.

“Arizona is proud to be the first state to issue Lost Wages Assistance,” said DES Director Michael Wisehart. “Understanding the tremendous need in our communities as well as the limited availability of the funding, we expedited the initial payments to close the gap for claimants who continue to experience unemployment after the expiration of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. Our dedicated staff have been able to distribute over \$10 billion across all of the unemployment insurance programs, which is a historic record and is making a real difference for so many in our communities.”

Last week, DES issued \$738 million to 90,000 claims determined eligible after review for potential fraud. With over one million Pandemic Unemployment Assistance claims flagged for fraud, the Department has been working closely with data analytics companies, financial institutions, state and federal partners to identify legitimate claims, resulting in this latest release of benefits.

“Unemployment fraud continues to be a massive challenge for states around the country,” said Director Wisehart. “We’ve been continuously improving our methods and adding resources to better understand fraud. The \$738 million we just issued is only one step, and we will continue to ensure individuals who are eligible for benefits receive the critical assistance they need.”

More information on the latest unemployment insurance data can be found on the [UI Data Dashboard](#). To learn more about the programs, visit www.azui.com.

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