For the latest updates and information related to COVID-19, visit the Kansas COVID-19 Response and Recovery website. covid.ks.gov.

Governor Laura Kelly Announces Intent to Apply for FEMA Unemployment Funds

Aug 27, 2020

TOPEKA – Governor Laura Kelly announced her administration's intent to apply for the Lost Wages Assistance program (LWA). The program is limited in scope and, due to federal restrictions, will only be available to those who are receiving at least $100 in unemployment benefits.

"While I had hoped that United States Senate would return early from vacation and extend federal benefits, I could not sit by idly while many Kansans are still facing unemployment," **Governor Laura Kelly said.** "This is far from a perfect solution, but we want to use every tool available to protect Kansans and our economy. I'm asking the Kansas Department of Labor to apply for the Lost Wages Assistance Program, which is the only available option for additional federal assistance at this time."

On Aug. 8, President Donald Trump issued an executive memorandum authorizing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to expend up to $44 billion from its Disaster Relief Fund to provide lost wage assistance to Americans receiving unemployment benefits. If Kansas'

application is approved, the program will provide eligible claimants with an additional $400 per week on top of their regular unemployment benefits.

“We know Kansans are hurting and we are working to launch the LWA program so that we can assist as many individuals and families as possible,” **Acting Secretary of Labor Ryan Wright said.** “However, this program is not a permanent solution, at best it can be viewed as a quick fix. During these difficult economic times, we need Congress to fund permanent unemployment solutions for families in need. We need Congress to act.”

If Kansas’ application is approved, implementation of LWA program will take several weeks to execute, and KDOL estimates that claimants will begin receiving benefits no sooner than late September. For those who are eligible, payments will be retroactive to the week ending Aug. 1, and will remain in effect until FEMA terminates the program.

Eligibility requirements differ from the FPUC program. Unlike the $600 a week program that expired in July, a claimant must self-certify her or his unemployment or partial unemployment is due to disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Since March 15, KDOL has paid out more than two million weekly claims totaling over $1.8 billion between regular unemployment and the federal pandemic programs. For more information, or to apply for unemployment benefits, go to www.GetKansasBenefits.gov.

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