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Lost Wages Assistance program ends for New Mexico claimants

Regular weekly unemployment insurance benefits to continue

For Immediate Release
September 16, 2020

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Lost Wages Assistance program ends for New Mexico claimants
Regular weekly unemployment insurance benefits to continue

(Albuquerque, NM) – The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) was notified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that the last week for the Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) benefits program was September 5, 2020 due to the fund's depletion. As a result of this announcement, NMDWS cannot extend LWA payments beyond that date.

"Governor Lujan Grisham wants all state agencies to fight for every resource available to help New Mexicans," said Bill McCamley, NMDWS Secretary. "New Mexico was the first state to apply for these funds and one of the first to get money in to people's pockets, but the U.S. federal government has made a decision to stop the program for lack of funds. We

continue to strongly ask that Congress and the president come up with comprehensive stimulus for our communities with help for workers, schools, businesses, and state and local governments."

FEMA approved funding to NMDWS requests for the benefit weeks ending:

- August 1, 2020
- August 8, 2020
- August 15, 2020
- August 22, 2020
- August 29, 2020
- September 5, 2020

Payments for the first five weeks started going out to eligible claimants on September 3. These payments were made separately from weekly benefit amounts. The 6th and final week of LWA payments began going out this week.

NMDWS will continue to pay eligible claimants for the approved six weeks for as long as existing FEMA funds are available. Claimants will continue to receive normal weekly benefit amounts for any benefit weeks for which they are eligible.

The Lost Wages Assistance program was a temporary emergency measure to provide an additional $300 per week to those who have lost work due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are receiving unemployment benefits. This provision was established after the expiration of the $600 Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program, a part of the CARES Act.

Other provisions of the federal act do not expire until December 26, 2020. This includes Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), which provides an extra 13 weeks of benefits to persons who exhaust regular state benefits, and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), which provides up to 39 weeks of benefits to individuals who are self-employed or do not otherwise qualify for state benefits.

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