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Ask the Mayor

Muriel Bowser
Mayor

Mayor Bowser Announces Federal Approval of DC's Application for Additional Unemployment Compensation

Tuesday, September 8, 2020

(Washington, DC) – Today, Mayor Muriel Bowser and the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services (DOES) announced approval of the District's application to participate in the Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) Program, which was created in response to the expiration of the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) $600 weekly benefit in July.

The funds will allow the District to offer an additional unemployment compensation benefit of $300 per week to eligible unemployment insurance recipients. To be eligible for this benefit, individuals must have a weekly benefit amount of at least $100 per week from an approved unemployment compensation program and must certify that they are unemployed or partially unemployed due to disruptions caused by COVID-19. Payments would be retroactive to August 1, 2020 and the District expects recipients will start receiving payments by the first week of October.

"We know workers continue to struggle during this pandemic, and we are committed to providing them with the maximum benefit they deserve so they can care for themselves and their families," said Mayor Bowser. "We appreciate the swift approval of the District's application for additional federal funding, but also urge our federal partners to restore the $600 per week unemployment benefit as we continue to combat the economic hardships caused by this pandemic."

Currently, the District has been approved for three weeks. While the District initially applied for benefits payments for the total grant period (August 1,2020 – December 27, 2020), FEMA requested the District only submit an application for an initial three weeks and one additional week of benefit payments. Funding for this program comes from FEMA disaster relief funds and guidance from FEMA and USDOL indicates states should be able to receive approximately three weeks' worth of benefits upon approval, with additional weekly approval being granted on a weekly basis, depending on the remaining balance of the fund. However, funding could end at any time; if FEMA funding is exhausted or the federal government enacts new law, or by December 27, 2020, whichever comes first.

To be eligible, individuals will need to certify that they were/are at a loss or lack of work due to COVID-19. More information is to come on how to certify. DOES will send out more notification on actions required of claimants. Claimants should continue to certify for each claim week they are unemployed. LWA payments will be automatically

added to existing benefits in the manner in which the recipient is currently receiving them.

For more information on unemployment compensation in the District of Columbia, visit coronavirus.dc.gov.