Governor Abbott Announces New TWC Guidance For Unemployment Claimants

April 30, 2020 | Austin, Texas | Press Release

Governor Greg Abbott today announced that the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has issued new guidance to unemployment claimants concerning their eligibility for unemployment benefits should they choose not to return to work at this time due to COVID-19. Under this guidance, Texans can continue to receive unemployment benefits throughout the COVID-19 response if they choose not to return to work for certain reasons as specified by TWC.

"As the Lone Star State begins the process of safely and strategically opening the economy, our top priority is protecting the health and safety of all Texans—especially those who are most vulnerable to COVID-19," said Governor Abbott. "This flexibility in the unemployment benefit process will help ensure that Texans with certain health and safety concerns will not be penalized for choosing not to return to work."

Each unemployment insurance claim is currently evaluated on an individual basis. However, because of the COVID-19 emergency, the following are reasons benefits would be granted if the individual refused suitable work.

Reason for refusal:

- At High Risk: People 65 years or older are at a higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.

- Household member at high risk: People 65 years or older are at a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.
- Diagnosed with COVID: The individual has tested positive for COVID-19 by a source authorized by the State of Texas and is not recovered.
- Family member with COVID: Anybody in the household has tested positive for COVID-19 by a source authorized by the State of Texas and is not recovered and 14 days have not yet passed.
- Quarantined: Individual is currently in 14-day quarantine due to close contact exposure to COVID-19.
- Child care: Child's school or daycare closed and no alternatives are available.

Any other situation will be subject to a case by case review by TWC based on individual circumstances.

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