SC Department of Employment and Workforce

NEWS RELEASE

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S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce pays millions in unemployment insurance and encourages individuals to file in anticipation of the additional $600 weekly payment to be made available under the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act

"I am happy to report that our agency has paid out approximately **$10 million** in unemployment benefits from Sunday, March 29 through Thursday, April 2. We know this is much needed financial support for South Carolinians, and this is just the beginning of the benefits that will continue to flow into the state's economy," said Dan Ellzey, executive director of the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce. "We have been getting thousands of questions about the recently passed legislation, and I want to assure you that on Saturday, March 28, Gov. McMaster and I signed documentation to accept federal funds on behalf of South Carolina.

"While we do not yet have all of the guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor to implement these funds, I feel confident enough to advise individuals who have lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19 – APPLY! We have listed the expanded eligibility details below, but I want to clarify that if you are already receiving benefits – you will not lose your $600 weekly addition – when we receive the federal funding, it will be applied to your account retroactively beginning with claims filed for the week ending April 4,2020."

The S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce encourages employees who believe they may qualify for the **additional $600 weekly benefit,** available under the CARES Act, to file a claim. These individuals will also need to login into their account each week to confirm that they are still unemployed. This is known as Weekly Certification.

Although S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce does not yet have technical guidance or a start date for the CARES Act provisions, there are many types of individuals who would not normally qualify for unemployment insurance benefits, such self employed workers, that could be eligible under a program called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA).

Individuals who may be eligible include:

- Individuals who file a 1099
- Self employed
- Church employees
- Non-profit and governmental employees
- Indpendent contractors
- Gig economy workers
- Those who have exhausted their regular UI benefits

Subject to guidance from U.S. DOL for PUA, benefits may be paid retroactively from the time the employee separated from his or her job or otherwise became eligible under the federal CARES Act, not from the time the application was submitted or approved.

If you are one of these individuals, have applied for unemployment insurance benefits, and were not found eligible, you may be eligible for weekly benefits provided for under the CARES Act. We anticipate the system will recognize the date of your filing and determine your eligibility and whether additional information will be needed from you prior to retroactive payments being made.

These individuals must also meet one of these conditions:

- The individual has been diagnosed; or
- A member of the individual's household has been diagnosed; or
- The individual is providing care to a household or family member; or a child or other person for which the individual has primary caregiving responsibility and is unable to attend school or another facility as a result of COVID-19; or
- The individual is unable to reach the place of employment because of a quarantine imposed as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency; or
- The individual is unable to reach the place of employment because the individual has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine; or
- The individual was scheduled to start work and does not have a job as a result of COVID-19; or
- The individual has become "the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19"; or
- The individual has to quit their job because of COVID-19; or
- The individual's place of employment is closed because of COVID-19.

This list is not exhaustive.

Claims can be filed online by clicking the MyBenefits Portal on the top right side of the agency's website: dew.sc.gov or by calling 1-866-831-1724. Patience is encouraged filing a claim.

For step-by-step instructions on how to file, visit dew.sc.gov/covid-hub and click on the jobseeker page. There you will find links to video and PDF tutorials as well as FAQs to answer common questions.

Further details regarding the CARES Act programs will be forthcoming, including information regarding Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, which provides the additional $600 a week in unemployment compensation benefits. The additional $600 weekly benefit will only be available for weeks beginning March 29, 2020. Other programs included in the act are Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC).

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