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# NJDOL Releases New, Plain-Language, Mobile-Friendly Unemployment Application

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 29, 2022

**TRENTON** – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) today released significant updates to its Unemployment Insurance application, the first of many improvements designed to make it easier for New Jerseyans to apply for unemployment benefits.

The updates released today were designed and developed in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), U.S. Digital Service (USDS), NJDOL's Division of Information Technology, and the New Jersey Office of Innovation to modernize the online application by allowing workers to apply easily from a mobile phone, and increase accessibility for those using screen readers or other assistive technologies.

"I'm thrilled to release these changes that make it easier for users to access and interact with the application, and help New Jersey workers feel more confident they understood the questions being asked," said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo.

To inform the changes, the state and federal government teams worked alongside New Jerseyans each step of the way, observing in real-time where the application questions were often misunderstood. These misunderstandings eventually caused applicants to have to wait to find out if they were eligible for benefits; New Jersey could not release payments until the worker clarified their answer. Multiple versions of changes, which ultimately included simplified questions, bigger text and answer buttons, and the introduction of helper text, were informed by user-testing with New Jersey workers and Unemployment Insurance applicants.

Additional re-wording of questions and answers will occur in the days and weeks ahead, reflecting a change in approach toward the widely proven method of agile software development, which introduces improvements continually. NJDOL will be learning and adjusting the experience for UI applicants over the next month. These changes represent a commitment to a new way of working, including the unique partnership with the federal government and the involvement of New Jerseyans in the process.

"We are putting New Jerseyans at the center of every decision that goes into building an improved Unemployment Insurance experience. This is the only way we can ensure that we design a system that delivers support to New Jerseyans when they most expect it and provides confidence that their government is working for them," added New Jersey State Chief Innovation Officer Beth Simone Noveck. "This new approach is made possible through a first-of-its-kind collaborative effort by the United States Digital Service, the U.S. Department of Labor, NJDOL, NJOIT and the Office of Innovation - I am deeply thankful for their partnership and dedication to delivering a quality digital service that New Jerseyans deserve."

The updated application represents a first but important step in the ongoing collaboration between New Jersey and its federal partners to improve the experience of New Jersey workers during the process of applying for and receiving unemployment benefits. Ultimately, claimants across the country will benefit from the improvements being designed and developed in New Jersey.

New Jersey was chosen to lead this national effort for several reasons: The state consistently leads the nation in the percentage of unemployed workers who successfully receive benefits; NJDOL has a successful working relationship with USDOL and USDS; it received an extraordinary number of unemployment applications (roughly 2.5 million) since March of 2020; and it found innovative solutions to paying benefits during a time of unprecedented demand.



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**Tammy Murphy**  
@FirstLadyNJ

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Through Connecting NJ, we'll make certain that no family, mother, or child is left without the resources they need.

Learn more: [nj.gov/ConnectingNJ](https://nj.gov/ConnectingNJ)

**Connecting NJ**

May 26, 2022

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“I’m deeply grateful that Secretary Walsh and USDOL have the faith in New Jersey to partner with us on this remarkable modernization project,” said Asaro-Angelo. “This was made possible by American Rescue Plan funds and the advocacy of New Jersey’s Congressional delegation. We look forward to continuing to work with our federal partners to bring about true Unemployment Insurance reform for claimants across the country.”

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