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# NJ Labor Dept.: Unemployment Claims Top 900K Since Pandemic Began

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 30, 2020

**TRENTON** – More than 930,000 new unemployment claims have been filed since COVID-19 hit New Jersey in mid-March, and the Labor Department announced that it would begin processing claims from self-employed workers, independent contractors and others not eligible for regular unemployment.

For the week ending April 25, initial unemployment claims were 71,966\*, the lowest weekly total since the pandemic started. Nonetheless, nearly 622,000 people who have been laid off, furloughed or had their hours cut are now collecting unemployment.

The number of weekly initial claims for the year now tops 1 million, a 524 percent jump from a year ago.

Roughly 200,000 applicants who have not yet received benefits are self-employed, independent contractors or those who do not have enough recent earnings to qualify for regular unemployment benefits. However, those workers likely are eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, a new program authorized by Congress as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The Labor Department announced Wednesday that it is beginning to make payments to these workers on Friday.

“The Department has worked hard over the past month to put the infrastructure in place to get this program up and running, despite the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19,” said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. “We know that people are anxious to receive these benefits – and we want to get benefits out the door as quickly as possible – but we had to build from scratch a process to determine eligibility, protect claimants’ personal information, prevent fraud and distribute these new benefits.”

The weekly totals of new unemployment claims for each week since the virus hit are as follows:

<b>March 15 - 21</b>	155,815
<b>March 22 - 28</b>	206,253
<b>March 29 - April 4</b>	214,836
<b>April 5 - 11</b>	141,420
<b>April 12 - 18</b>	140,139
<b>April 19 - 25</b>	71,996*

Approximately \$1.4 billion in unemployment benefits have reached unemployed and furloughed New Jersey workers since the pandemic began. That figure includes \$727 million in state unemployment benefits since mid-March and \$690 million in supplemental payments distributed over the past three weeks.

The breakdown of weekly state payments is as follows:

<b>March 16 - 20</b>	\$47.4 million
<b>March 23 - 27</b>	\$57.9 million
<b>March 30 - April 3</b>	\$89.8 million
<b>April 6 - 10</b>	\$140.7 million
<b>April 13 - 17</b>	\$179.7 million
<b>April 20 - 24</b>	\$211.1 million



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Aug 19, 2021



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As of the latest reporting, more than \$33 billion in unemployment benefits have been sent to Garden State workers. With federal benefits set to expire on September 4, we encourage everyone to check your email and visit [MyUnemployment.nj.gov](https://myunemployment.nj.gov) for updates and available resources.



The CARES Act also authorized a 13-week extension of unemployment benefits to workers who have exhausted their 26 weeks of New Jersey unemployment. For more information on eligibility, visit: <https://myunemployment.nj.gov/labor/myunemployment/apply/extensions/>.

The Labor Department has posted guides for self-employed, independent contractors and others who might be eligible for PUA that explain the benefits and walk them through the application process. Those guides can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2VRSZUK>.

Information on certifying for unemployment can be found here:  
<https://myunemployment.nj.gov/labor/myunemployment/schedule.shtml>

People collecting unemployment are also receiving a \$600 supplemental weekly benefit through the end of July. Those payments arrive separately, after the regular unemployment payment.

Upwards of 92 percent of new unemployment applications are being filed online at myunemployment.nj.gov. Claims continue to be backdated to ensure that no one loses a week of benefits, even if they have difficulty getting through.

Anyone who refuses work or voluntarily quits a job is ineligible for unemployment.

Anyone looking for work is encouraged to visit New Jersey's jobs portal – [jobs.covid19.nj.gov](https://jobs.covid19.nj.gov) – which matches jobseekers with tens of thousands of immediate openings in industries on the frontlines of the pandemic, such as food distribution, warehousing and health care.

For national unemployment data, visit <https://www.dol.gov/ui/data.pdf>. For archived NJ claims data, visit <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/DataDashboard.asp>.

*\*This represents the final number for the week ended April 18. The number listed for NJ by US Department of Labor – 71,017 – is based on advanced reporting.*

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