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NJ Labor Department: New Unemployment Claims Surpass 500K for Three Weeks Since Pandemic Gripped NJ

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 9, 2020

TRENTON – Nearly 215,000 workers applied for unemployment during the week that ended Saturday, raising the number of new jobless claims to 576,904 for three weeks starting March 15. The weekly totals of new unemployment claims for each of the past five weeks are as follows:

March 1 - 7	7,996
March 8 - 14	9,467
March 15 - 21	155,815
March 22 - 28	206,253
March 29 - April 4	214,836*

More than 90 percent of new unemployment applications are being filed online at myunemployment.nj.gov, which the Labor Department recommends for fastest, most efficient service. Also recommended is that applicants read the department's [FAQs](#) before filing a claim, to help ensure the application is filed correctly, which speeds processing time. The department is also backdating claims to ensure that no one loses a week of benefits, even if they can't get through right away. More employees are being brought online to help triage the volume of claims.

The state paid \$283.9 million in unemployment benefits for the five-week period from March 2 through April 3. The breakdown of weekly payouts is as follows:

March 2 - 6	\$42.9 million
March 9 - 13	\$45.9 million
March 16 - 20	\$47.4 million
March 23 - 27	\$57.9 million
March 30 - April 3	\$89.8 million

"The number of new claims the Labor Department is receiving and the amount of benefits being paid to hundreds of thousands of New Jerseyans shows the system is working, but we understand that's of little consolation if you're out of work and waiting for your benefits," said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo.

A breakdown of the claims that were processed from March 15 through April 4 shows the hardest-hit sectors have been food/accommodation services, ambulatory health care (doctors' and dentists' offices) personal services (hair and nail salons) and temporary employment agencies.

Residents already collecting unemployment will begin to see their \$600 supplemental unemployment benefit arrive April 14 (for the week of March 30th). It will be a separate payment and will continue to be paid for eligible weeks through July 25.

Other workers eligible for special unemployment compensation known as Pandemic Unemployment Assistance are urged to begin the process. Freelancers, independent contractors and gig workers should apply for unemployment now. Their standard unemployment claim will likely be denied, but being ineligible for regular unemployment is a



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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 for updates and available resources.



federal prerequisite to being eligible for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. These workers should also gather two years of income records, which will be used to calculate the amount of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance they are entitled to receive.

Meanwhile, New Jersey has stepped up its efforts to serve the unemployed by temporarily suspending the “work search requirement” for laid off workers and creating a jobs portal -- jobs.covid19.nj.gov -- to match those who are looking for work with nearly 50,000 openings in industries on the frontlines of the pandemic. Thousands of positions are available immediately throughout the state. The data released Thursday by the US Department of Labor also indicates that more than 276,000 residents are currently collecting unemployment, about 120,000 more than the prior week.

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 4. The number listed for NJ by US Department of Labor – 213,897 – is based on advanced reporting.*

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