

[Home](#) / ICYMI: Governor Murphy, Acting U.S. Labor Secretary Su, Commissioner Asaro-Angelo Highlight New Online Unemployment Application

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy, U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Acting Secretary Julie A. Su, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo, and New Jersey State Chief Innovation Officer Dave Cole today highlighted the successful launch of a new online Unemployment Insurance (UI) initial application, completely remodeled with the goal of improving user accessibility.

In 2021, USDOL selected New Jersey as one of two states, along with Arkansas, to participate in the Claimant Experience Pilot, leading a national effort to modernize the federal unemployment insurance system to improve the claimant experience and streamline the delivery of unemployment benefits. Today's announcement marks the culmination of years of rigorous review and extensive user testing at every stage.

"Unemployment insurance—like a house with a leaky roof—should be fixed during good times, when there's sunshine, because you can't replace a damaged roof in the middle of a storm," **said U.S. Department of Labor Acting Secretary Julie Su.** "For unemployment insurance systems throughout the country, the COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented storm. Subsequently, the American Rescue Plan delivered \$1 billion for the Department of Labor to help states like New Jersey modernize their unemployment insurance program. Thanks to strong and bold leadership, New Jersey is now building one of the most innovative and modern unemployment insurance systems in the country. By spearheading a more modern and reliable Unemployment Insurance program, Governor Murphy and Labor Commissioner Asaro-Angelo are setting a national example for how to make sure unemployment benefits are easily accessible for workers who have hit hard times and are looking for re-employment."

"I am proud that the USDOL trusted New Jersey to be at the forefront of efforts to modernize our unemployment insurance application, creating meaningful reform that can be replicated across the country to the benefit of countless individuals and families. New Jersey has established itself not only as a staunch supporter of our workers, but also as a budding innovation hub. It is fitting that this endeavor utilized innovative and cutting-edge strategies to ensure the timely and efficient delivery of unemployment insurance benefits to claimants," **said Governor Phil Murphy.** "Nothing should stand in the way of New Jersey residents accessing critical unemployment benefits to make difficult times more manageable. I thank Acting Secretary Su and our federal partners for their support, and I commend the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the Offices of Innovation and Information Technology for their work in modernizing this process."

NJDOL worked alongside the New Jersey Office of Innovation and the New Jersey Office of Information Technology to engage with claimants and create a new unemployment application system that meets the needs of residents and can be adapted to quickly address future challenges. The new unemployment application was rolled out incrementally over the past several months to ensure an improved experience for all applicants, and the application was fully phased in on April 11, 2024.

"Being between jobs is stressful on its own, so I'm thrilled we can provide workers with a friendlier, easier way to get the unemployment benefits they're entitled to. I'm thankful to our partners at the state and federal levels who have played an integral role in making the UI application simpler for our constituents and creating a model for other states to follow," **said Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo.** "The new application is a significant step toward our overarching goal of building an agile, modular system that allows us to easily make changes as the need arises. This isn't a one-and-done deal. We're building a system that is able to make fixes and add features to adapt to claimant needs and policy changes, because modernization should never be over."

"This update to the Unemployment Insurance application represents the culmination of a multi-year partnership between state and federal teams dedicated to improving customer experience. But it's only the latest milestone in more than a dozen improvements to the website, email notifications, and call centers to make getting unemployment benefits less stressful for New Jerseyans during a difficult time in their lives," **said Dave Cole, the State of New Jersey's Chief Innovation Officer.** "Designing iterative improvements based on research with residents allows us to deliver value quickly, measure and make changes along the way, and ensure we're building government technology that works for our state."

"With such an important and impactful modernization effort, it is an honor to support Commissioner Asaro-Angelo and his team with the technology infrastructure and IT services my team from the Office of Information Technology provides. Rob and his dedicated staff, vendors, and the Office of Innovation led by Dave Cole are truly bringing mountains of talent to this effort," **said Chris Rein, the State of New Jersey's Chief Technology Officer.**

The new application incorporates several upgraded features to streamline and enhance the user experience, including:

- The ability to save and pause the application to finish later.
- Availability in English and Spanish.
- Maximized accessibility for assistive devices. A mobile-friendly format enables the application to be completed on a phone, tablet, or computer. As many as 50 percent of people apply for benefits using a mobile device, and more than 70 percent of people who access the application in Spanish use a mobile device.
- Revised questions to make it easier for claimants to understand and answer accurately.
- Removal of 19 percent of questions to make finishing in one sitting more likely.
- A new landing page relevant to a claimant's current situation and next steps.

The new UI application will save applicants hours of time in filing their claims and receiving their benefits. Now that the pilot program is complete, the State remains focused on continuing to support UI modernization efforts.

For more information on the new application for UI benefits, click [here](#). To learn more about the benefits available to New Jersey workers, visit myunemployment.nj.gov and myleavebenefits.nj.gov.

[← Go back to all press releases](#)

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Home

File or Access Your Claim

Temporary Disability Insurance
Family Leave Insurance
Maternity Leave
Unemployment Insurance
Social Security Disability

Worker Protections

Your Rights at Work
Workers' Compensation
Safety and Health
Wage & Hour Compliance
Paid Sick Leave

Career Support

Career Services

Training Provider Information

Employer Services

Employer Accounts

Employer Self-Service (NLx)

Layoffs and Closings

Wage & Hour Compliance

Business Support

Apprenticeship

Industry Partnerships

Employer Poster Packet

Research & Information

Labor Market Information

Center for Occupational Employment

Information (COEI)

Grant Opportunities

Workforce Innovation and

Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Legal Notices

Press Releases

About Us

Statewide

Governor Phil Murphy

Lt. Governor Tahesha Way

NJ Home

Services A to Z

Departments/Agencies

Contact Us

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Legal Statement & Disclaimers

Accessibility Statement



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