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NJ Unemployment Payouts Approach \$2B

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2020

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor has distributed \$1.9 billion in income-supplementing benefits since the COVID-19 pandemic began in mid-March, and this week saw new unemployment claims for the period surpass 1 million, an all-time high.

In the seven weeks since COVID-19 hit New Jersey in mid-March, 1,018,785 unemployment claims have been filed, by far the most ever recorded for a similar period.

With more than 642,000 now receiving unemployment in the Garden State – and an additional 72,000 federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims processed last week – the Department has created online guides to walk people through the weekly certification process. Certifying for benefits each week is required by federal law. But the certification questions have been an obstacle for tens of thousands of claimants who have answered a question incorrectly and had their payments delayed.

The certification tips can be found [here](#).

“As we pass the milestone of 1 million claims filed – a number so staggering, we never thought we would come close to reaching it in such a compressed period of time – I’m incredibly proud of the tireless work of our staff to get nearly \$2 billion into the bank accounts of so many New Jersey workers, to support their families,” said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo.

“Our process is one we are required to follow to protect claimants, prevent fraud, protect the trust fund’s solvency and safeguard New Jersey businesses. It’s heartbreaking to hear tens of thousands of payments held up because of an unintentional certification mistake. It’s what motivates us to put the most useful information out there for our customers, and to make sure every eligible claimant collects their benefits as quickly as possible.”

For the week ending May 2, initial unemployment claims were 88,326*. The weekly totals of new unemployment claims since the virus hit are as follows:

March 15 - 21	155,815
March 22 - 28	206,253
March 29 - April 4	214,836
April 5 - 11	141,420
April 12 - 18	140,139
April 19 - 25	71,996
April 26 - May 2	83,326*

Those claimants have received \$1.9 billion in benefits, including \$900 million in state unemployment payments since mid-March and \$989 million in supplemental payments distributed over the past four weeks.

The breakdown of weekly state payments is as follows:

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



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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.



April 27 - May 1	\$171.7 million
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Last week also marked the start of processing payments for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), a new federal program authorized by Congress as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. These benefits are for self-employed, independent contractors or those who do not have enough recent earnings to qualify for regular unemployment benefits.

The CARES Act also authorized a [13-week extension of unemployment benefits](#) to workers who have exhausted their 26 weeks of New Jersey unemployment. Those benefits are expected to start being offered May 18 for those who exhausted their benefits since last July.

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](#).

Information on certifying for unemployment can be found [here](#).

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. A separate application is not required

Roughly 91 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 – 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 May 2. The number listed for NJ by US Department of Labor – 87,540 – is based on advanced reporting.*

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Department of Labor

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