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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 22, 2020

TRENTON – Additional economic relief will make its way to hundreds of thousands of unemployed New Jersey workers whose jobs have been impacted by COVID-19 in the months ahead, once the President signs the new federal pandemic relief bill approved by Congress, as expected.

The agreed-upon package will bring a much-needed 11-week unemployment extension to those who run out of benefits, and will restart a supplemental benefit program that expired in July, though at \$300/week – half the level of the prior program – through March 14.

“We are grateful for any additional help that is on the way for our workforce, who are in such dire economic straights due to the pandemic, but we must caution New Jerseyans these benefits won't be seen immediately,” said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. “The bill will take time to implement once the states receive the rules from the federal government.”

Once the bill becomes law, the state Labor Department will then be required to wait for directions on how and in what order to distribute these new funds. Only then can it implement the programming for these benefits.

It's uncertain how quickly the federal government will issue the rules to the states.

“Millions of Americans are in desperate need of immediate assistance due to the pandemic and we strongly encourage the USDOL to provide states the information and guidelines needed as soon as possible. Once provided, states will be working night and day to ensure these new benefits are available in an expedient manner. States will be communicating with claimants as funds become available,” the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) said in a statement.

Among the recipients of the extended benefits in the new bill are regular unemployment claimants as well as those receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), such as self-employed, gig and part-time workers, who are typically not eligible for unemployment.

The bill would also restart the FPUC program for all claimants, but at a level of \$300, rather than the original \$600, per week through March 14.

Federal pandemic benefits were due to end on Dec. 26 for about 500,000 New Jerseyans. All eligible weeks prior to Dec. 26 will continue to be paid, even after the benefits expire.

The state Labor Department stands ready to administer these new benefits to our workforce as quickly as possible.

As of mid-December, the state Labor Department has distributed \$20 billion in benefits to underemployed and unemployed residents. Approximately 1.85 million unemployment applications have been filed since mid-March, when COVID-19 forced schools and businesses to shut or greatly reduce their hours or capacity.

Please visit myunemployment.nj.gov for updates.

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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.



Department of Labor and Workforce Development

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