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NJ Labor Department Sees Dip in Weekly Unemployment Applications as Pandemic-Related Claims Surpass 718K

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2020

TRENTON – New Jersey saw a noticeable decline in the number of new unemployment claims filed for the week ending Saturday, while the number of workers who have sought jobless benefits since mid-March surpassed 718,000.

For the week ending April 11, 141,420* new unemployment applications were received, or about 73,000 fewer than the week before. A record 429,388 residents are now receiving unemployment benefits, a number that is certain to rise considerably as more claims are processed. It typically takes two to three weeks to receive an eligibility determination, once all the required information has been submitted.

The weekly totals of new unemployment claims for each of the past six 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
April 5 - 11	141,420

Flooded with applications like most other states, New Jersey's Labor Department has implemented a series of improvements to serve more customers quicker. Among the most significant steps was reprogramming computers to accept about 60 percent of the claims that were being kicked back for an agent to review. Phone lines were added and hundreds of laptops were distributed so more staff could process claims and lend support from home.

"We have a lot of helpful information available online at nj.gov/labor, including new guidelines for independent contractors and updated FAQs, and we added an intelligent automated reply for applicants emailing with a specific question or topic of concern," said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. "I feel confident because of these upgrades many more of our customers can self-serve, and our staff can get to more of those who are unable to resolve their issue with the resources we've added."

New Jersey workers collecting unemployment also saw their first \$600 supplemental weekly benefit deposited in their accounts this week. The first supplemental payment was for the week starting March 29; payments will continue weekly through the end of July.

Upwards of 92 percent of new unemployment applications are being filed online at myunemployment.nj.gov, which the Labor Department recommends for fastest, most efficient service. The department also continues to backdate claims to ensure that no one loses a week of benefits, even if they can't get through right away.

It's important to note that anyone who refuses work or voluntarily quits a job is ineligible for unemployment.

The state paid \$424.6 million in unemployment benefits for the six-week period from March 2 through April 10.

The breakdown of weekly payouts is as follows:

March 2 - 6	\$42.9 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 for updates and available resources.



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
April 6 - 10	\$140.7 million

Among the claims processed from March 15 through April 11, the hardest-hit sectors have been food/accommodation services, ambulatory health care (doctors' and dentists' offices) personal services (hair and nail salons) and employment agencies.

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 April 11. The number listed for NJ by US Department of Labor – 140,600 – is based on advanced reporting.*

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Department of Labor

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