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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 3, 2022

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) today announced plans to offer limited, in-person unemployment assistance at designated One-Stop Career Centers for claimants who may have difficulty using mobile or online technology. Appointments and pre-screening will be required; no walk-ins will be served.

This in-person offering adds a new layer of communication to the department's online services and call center. The call center takes calls seven days a week, has a call-back feature, and is currently serving claimants with average wait times of only 3 to 5 minutes. Since the contract call center was opened in June 2020, it has fielded 3.5 million calls. NJDOL has delivered more than \$37 billion in benefits since the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the state's economy in March 2020.

"We have always been committed to serving the greatest number of claimants in the shortest time possible, and there is no question accessing benefits online is easiest, quickest, and most efficient for most claimants. However, we recognize the desire of some claimants to communicate face-to-face when discussing the complexities of their unemployment claim," said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. "Since March 2020, we've promised claimants they would receive every penny they're eligible for, and we continue to keep that promise by including yet another way for claimants to interact with our staff."

The dozen One-Stop Career Centers that offered limited unemployment assistance before the pandemic will reinstate the service. All of the One-Stops remain open by appointment to help residents return to the workforce, whether in the field where they previously worked or in a new line of work. To that end, all One-Stops offer resume writing, job leads, interview coaching, and virtual training classes to sharpen skills. Pre-screening is required to ensure every resident gets the precise help they need.

Appointments for in-person unemployment assistance will work the same way. Claimants with outstanding issues may be called by NJDOL staff; their claim will be assessed, and they may be offered an appointment starting March 28th, depending on the issue with their claim. At the time of appointment, the claimant will be directed to the closest One-Stop to help address their needs. Depending on the complexity of the issue, claimants receiving in-person support may be referred to other unemployment staff with specialized training in addressing their particular issue.

The federal unemployment system has been accessed primarily online and by telephone for the past 20 years. Upwards of 90 percent of our claimants successfully apply for benefits online, and the remainder do so by phone.

Commissioner Asaro-Angelo has long called for a national modernization effort to address the dated and overly complex process of applying for and receiving unemployment benefits. In mid-December, the US Department of Labor and US Digital Service announced [New Jersey had been chosen](#) as one of two states for a pilot project designed to make the unemployment system easier and more accessible to use.



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The goal of the Claimant Experience Pilot is to design an unemployment application system that provides equitable and timely access to unemployment benefits for eligible workers, while rooting out identity theft and sophisticated fraud rings that have bogged down state systems throughout the pandemic.

For more information, visit myunemployment.nj.gov.

For more information about getting back into the workforce, visit careerservices.nj.gov.

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