

NYS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR LAUNCHES NEW STREAMLINED APPLICATION FOR NEW YORKERS TO APPLY FOR PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE WITHOUT HAVING TO FIRST APPLY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Cumbersome federal policy that slowed New York from distributing benefits lifted

In conjunction with this morning's rollout of improved application, over 3,100 DOL representatives solely dedicated to answering unemployment benefit needs in improved process

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Application call backlog prior to 4/8 reduced to 4,305 from 275,000

The New York State Department of Labor today announced the launch of a new application for New Yorkers to apply for traditional Unemployment Insurance or the new COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. This one-stop-shop for unemployment benefits will connect New Yorkers with the benefits they deserve faster, without requiring them to call the Department of Labor.

Prior to today, due to cumbersome federal guidelines, New Yorkers were required to apply for regular Unemployment Insurance and be rejected before applying for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. With this new application, which aligns with updated federal policy, New Yorkers will be able to simply fill out one form to get the correct benefits.

In conjunction with this morning's rollout of the improved application, DOL has been deploying over 3,100 representatives solely dedicated to answering unemployment benefit needs seven

days a week. This is up from 400 who previously manned the DOL call center prior to the pandemic.

Since the COVID-19 crisis began, DOL has paid approximately \$2.2 billion in Unemployment Insurance benefits to 1.1 million New Yorkers. The application call backlog prior to April 8 has been reduced to 4,305 from 275,000.

"I have been unemployed before myself, and I understand the pain, fear and anxiety New Yorkers are facing. The DOL's mission is to help our neighbors through some of their toughest days, and in the last week we have made great strides in updating our systems," **NYS Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon** said. "While it appears the coronavirus pandemic is beginning to stabilize — at least from the public health perspective — we know that many New Yorkers are still facing an uncertain economic future, and the Department of Labor will continue to dedicate every resource available to helping New Yorkers weather this storm."

The updated unemployment benefits application system, available [here](#), will determine which unemployment program — unemployment insurance or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance — New Yorkers should apply for and then prompt them to answer a specific set of questions. The application builds on the new online system the department rolled out on Friday, April 10th, in partnership with the State Office of Information Technology Services and Google Cloud, to help manage the exponential and unprecedented increase in new claims resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program, which was included in the Federal CARES Act, provides unemployment benefits for individuals who are ineligible for traditional unemployment insurance. Examples of those covered by PUA include:

- Self-employed New Yorkers;
- Independent contractors;
- New Yorkers who worked for an app-based company (i.e. "gig workers")
- Farmers;
- Those diagnosed with COVID-19 or who have COVID-19 symptoms and are seeking a diagnosis;

- *Those living with a household member who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;*
- *Those providing care for a family or household member diagnosed with COVID-19;*
- *A primary caregiver for a child unable to attend school or another facility due to COVID-19;*
- *Those unable to reach their place of employment due to an imposed quarantine or because they have been advised by a medical provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19;*
- *Those scheduled to commence new employment that cannot reach their workplace as a direct result of COVID-19;*
- *Those who became a major breadwinner because the head of their household died from COVID-19;*
- *Those who quit their job as a direct result of COVID-19;*
- *Those whose place of employment closed as a direct result of COVID-19;*
- *Those with insufficient work history and affected by COVID-19; and*
- *New Yorkers otherwise not qualified for regular or extended UI benefits and affected by COVID-19*

In addition, New Yorkers concerned about food insecurity are reminded that resources are available across the state. Anyone looking for assistance can find a local food bank, including those supported by New York State, by visiting Feeding America's website [here](#).

The New York State Department of Labor is dedicated to ensuring that every New Yorker who is entitled to unemployment insurance benefits will receive all benefits due. New Yorkers seeking to file an unemployment insurance claim should visit labor.ny.gov or call the Telephone Claim Center at (888) 209-8124. Below are some resources that will assist New Yorkers in filing their claims:

[Fact sheet on Pandemic Unemployment Assistance](#)