FEMA

Fact Sheet

Disaster Unemployment Assistance

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program is available to states, local, tribal, and territories to provide unemployment benefits and reemployment services to individuals who have become unemployed as a result of a Presidential disaster declaration and who are not eligible for regular state unemployment insurance (UI). FEMA has delegated to the Secretary of Labor the responsibility of administering the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974, which pertains to the DUA program and payment of DUA benefit assistance.

When a Presidential disaster is declared, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) oversees the DUA program in coordination with FEMA, which provides the funds for payment of benefits and reimburses the state for its administrative costs. DUA is administered by the State UI agency which issues a press release throughout the declared disaster area announcing DUA availability.

The purpose of DUA is to provide unemployment benefits and reemployment services to individuals who have become unemployed as a result of a Presidential disaster declaration and who are not eligible for regular State UI.

This fact sheet outlines general information pertaining to the requirements and conditions under which an individual may be eligible for DUA. For additional information concerning the DUA program, individuals may contact the U.S. Department of Labor at **1-866-487-2365**, or the local State UI agency.

General Requirements

To be eligible for DUA, individuals must:

- Not be eligible for regular UI;
- Be unemployed as a direct result of the disaster;
- Be able and available for work, unless injured as a direct result of the disaster (see conditions below);
- File an application for DUA within 30 days of the date of the announcement of availability of DUA; and,
- Have not refused an offer of employment in a suitable position.

Conditions of Unemployment

One of the following conditions of unemployment or inability to perform services in self-employment must have occurred as a direct result of the disaster:

- The individual has had a week of unemployment following the date the major disaster began;
- The individual is unable to reach his/her place of employment;
- The individual was scheduled to start work and the job no longer exists or the individual was unable to reach the job;

- The individual became the major support of the household because the head of the household died as a direct result of the disaster;
- The individual cannot work because of an injury caused as a direct result of the major disaster; or
- The individual lost a majority of income or revenue because the employer or self-employed business was damaged, destroyed, or closed by the federal government.

Note: Suffering a monetary loss due to damage of property or crops does not automatically entitle an individual to DUA. Applicants must follow the instructions in the announcement and file for DUA based on the filing method used by the state (i.e., in-person, mail, telephone, or internet).

For additional *information on how to file a DUA claim, contact the State Unemployment Insurance agency.*

Rules and Responsibilities

Non-discrimination

All forms of FEMA disaster assistance are available to any affected household that meets the eligibility requirements. No Federal entity or official (or their agent) may discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, or economic status.

Residency status in the United States and its territories

To be considered for DUA, individuals must provide proof of identity and citizenship (U.S. citizen, U.S. national or qualified alien). DUA shall not be paid to an individual, who receives regular UI.

Documentation

Individuals are required to substantiate employment or self-employment or to substantiate work that was to begin on or after the date of the disaster. If proof of employment cannot be provided at the time the claim is filed, individuals have 21 calendar days from that time to meet this requirement. Failure to submit this documentation within the 21 days will result in a denial of DUA, and any benefits already paid will be considered overpaid. Individuals are required to repay any benefits overpaid.

Duration of Assistance

DUA benefits are generally paid for up to 26 weeks beginning with the first week following the date the major disaster began, and ending with the 26th week following the date the major disaster is declared by the President, as long as the individual's unemployment continues to be a direct result of the disaster.