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DES Working to Implement Federal Unemployment Assistance Programs

Additional \$600 payments expected to start by the end of next week

RALEIGH — The Division of Employment Security is moving quickly to bring additional unemployment insurance benefits to North Carolinians impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. DES has received official guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor on how to implement the three federal unemployment programs included in the CARES Act.

DES is working as quickly as possible to modify its technology systems to make sure people can apply for these benefits and receive timely, accurate payments. Individuals due any benefits prior to the full implementation of these programs will be paid retroactively.

DES intends to implement the federal programs in this order:

1. **Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC).** This program provides an additional \$600 in weekly unemployment insurance benefits to eligible claimants. DES is currently testing the payment system and anticipates making the first payments by April 17, 2020.
2. **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA).** This program provides unemployment compensation for individuals not eligible for regular unemployment insurance, such as independent contractors and self-employed workers, and those who have exhausted any extensions to unemployment insurance.

DES estimates online filing system will be ready to accept claims for this assistance program around April 25, 2020

3. **Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC).** This program provides up to 13 additional weeks of benefits for those who have exhausted their state unemployment benefits. As a timeline for this program is available, DES will update the public on when online claims will be accepted.

Updates about eligibility and how to apply for these benefits will be provided on des.nc.gov.

Since March 16, 2020, the Division of Employment Security has received nearly 500,000 claims for unemployment benefits, with most of them related to COVID-19. Prior to March 16, 2020, DES received approximately 3,000 claims a week.

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