

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Announces Actions Taken to Make Accessing Reemployment Assistance More User Friendly

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) announced multiple actions taken to improve the ability for Floridians to access the Reemployment Assistance program. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DEO is seeing historic increases in Floridians filing for Reemployment Assistance. Last week, Governor DeSantis signed Executive Order 20-93, directing DEO and other executive agencies to take all necessary actions to improve the Reemployment Assistance program.

“I want to thank Governor DeSantis for providing my agency with the resources needed to assist Floridians as quickly as possible,” said Ken Lawson, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. “It is imperative that my team can provide multiple avenues to Floridians who have lost their jobs and been impacted by COVID-19. We are all hands-on deck throughout the state working with every state agency and resource we have, and we will not rest until the issues are resolved.”

Additional Ways to Apply for Reemployment Assistance

As many Floridians do not have access to a computer at this time, Governor DeSantis has instructed DEO to make paper Reemployment Assistance applications available for Floridians.

1. Beginning this week, CareerSource locations across the state will be providing paper applications and assisting Floridians with submitting their Reemployment Assistance applications. Visit www.CareerSourceFlorida.com for information and center locations.
2. FedEx is offering free printing and mailing of Reemployment Assistance paper applications at over 100 storefronts across the state.
3. Applications can be downloaded at www.FloridaJobs.org/COVID-19.

Once the application is complete, individuals should mail them to:

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
P.O. Box 5350
Tallahassee, FL 32314-5350

Additionally, to make it easier for Floridians to receive Reemployment Assistance, Governor DeSantis waived:

- The waiting week, so individuals can claim their very first week of Reemployment Assistance.
- The work search and work registration requirements so individuals filing for Reemployment Assistance are not required to register in Employ Florida or submit information on a biweekly basis regarding the employers that they contacted each week while the state mitigates the spread of COVID-19.

Technology

DEO has worked with the Department of Management Services to dramatically enhance the capability of the online application system for Reemployment Assistance, CONNECT.

- DEO has installed 72 new servers from the state's back up data center in Winter Haven to increase capacity. The system can now handle up to 120,000 simultaneous connections by individuals filing claims. This allows for greater capacity than the 20,000 simultaneous connections that the system has been experiencing recently.
- An additional 10 servers are being installed to assist the CONNECT system this week.

"Governor DeSantis is bringing all resources to the table to respond to an unprecedented volume of need," said Jonathan R. Satter, Secretary of the Florida Department of Management Services. "Our DMS team is committed to supporting DEO in getting Floridians the assistance they desperately need at this time. We will continue to allocate the technical and personnel resources necessary to provide Floridians the level of service they expect and deserve."

Providing Additional Customer Service Support

During these historic times, the Governor has supported DEO by making resources available to assist with helping more Floridians as quickly as

possible. Last week, DEO had nearly 200 staff working on the claims process for Reemployment Assistance.

- Beginning today, Tuesday, April 7, more than 500 individuals will be providing support for the Reemployment Assistance claims process through contracts with customer call centers, CareerSource center staff and state employees.
- By next week, that number will more than double when additional contracted staff, state employees and local workforce development boards are added to the team.

The Florida Department of Revenue has provided DEO with 579 additional employees to begin processing Reemployment Assistance applications. This week, more than 2,300 state employees have volunteered to be available to answer calls, reply to emails and process applications.

“The Department of Revenue is eager to assist the Department of Economic Opportunity in verifying the applications for Reemployment Assistance during this statewide health emergency. DOR has nearly 600 experienced employees who are ready to mobilize for this all-hands-on-deck effort,” said Dr. Jim Zingale Florida Department of Revenue.

CARES Act Update

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act, signed into law on March 27, 2020, expands Reemployment Assistance benefits. DEO is working diligently to incorporate the new provisions of the CARES Act to ensure all Floridians who are eligible get their full amount of benefits. DEO will issue additional information about Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Assistance as it becomes available. Benefits will be paid from the date they became eligible under the CARES Act. At this time, individuals who apply for Reemployment Assistance whose employment was negatively impacted as a result of COVID-19 will follow the same application, review and payment process as all applicants for Reemployment Assistance in Florida.

For more information about Reemployment Assistance benefits and how to apply, visit site www.FloridaJobs.org/COVID-19. Any Floridian whose employment has been negatively impacted as a result of COVID-19 to visit www.FloridaJobs.org/COVID-19 and watch a short video on how to apply.

