

September 6, 2017

Unemployment Bulletin

Disaster Unemployment Assistance additional coverage in Texas

SITUATION: In a press release dated September 5, 2017, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) announced Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) has been **expanded again** to include the following additional 10 counties: Austin, Bastrop, DeWitt, Gonzales, Karnes, Lavaca, Lee, Polk, Tyler, and Walker. These 10 counties are in addition to the original 18 and 11 counties communicated respectively in the August 29, 2017 and August 31, 2017 editions of this publication.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: Hurricane Harvey began affecting the above counties on August 25, 2017. A Presidential declaration of disaster was put into effect making DUA funding available. The deadline for filing a DUA claim for these latest additional 10 counties is October 5, 2017. After this date, the claim will not be considered timely and will not be honored. Claims are being taken by the TWC at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/jobseekers/unemployment-benefits-contact-information-claimants> or by calling 800/939-6631.

More information on this most recent additional DUA declaration can be found on the TWC website at:

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/news/disaster-unemployment-aid-available-ten-additional-counties>

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is a partnering program between the USDOL and FEMA to provide funds to state UI agencies for the payment of UI benefits under certain circumstances. It provides disaster unemployment assistance to individuals who have lost employment as the result of a major disaster and are NOT otherwise eligible for regular UI benefits.

Individuals are eligible if they lived, worked, or were scheduled to work in the affected areas and:

- No longer have a job or place to work; or
- Cannot reach the place of work; or
- Cannot work as the result of damage to the place of work; or
- Cannot work due to injury sustained in the disaster
- Became the breadwinner or major supporter of a household due to the death of head of household resulting from the disaster

DUA benefits are only payable during the Disaster Assistance Period (DAP) not to exceed 26 weeks. The weekly benefit amount for which the person may be eligible is determined by the governing laws in the state in which the claim was filed. Any benefits claimed under the DUA program are 100% federally funded which means employers' UI accounts will not be charged. While employer chargeability for regular UI that is related to a disaster varies from state to state, Texas statute provides for relief of charges to affected merit rated employers. **This relief of charges provision does not apply to reimbursing employers. As with all UI claims in Texas, regular UI claims filed as a result of this disaster will be subject to a 1-week waiting period (if not already served in his/her current benefit year).**

ACTION STEPS: More information on the DUA program can be found at:

<http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/disaster.asp>

It bears repeating that the deadline for filing DUA claims related to storms in the above listed counties is October 5, 2017.