

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Individuals Impacted by Recent Flooding May Be Eligible for Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance

MONTPELIER, Vt. – On July 14, 2023, President Biden approved Vermont’s Major Disaster Declaration request. This Declaration authorized Vermont to receive “individual assistance,” which includes Disaster Unemployment Assistance.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is a federally funded program that provides temporary unemployment insurance benefits to individuals whose employment or self-employment has been lost or interrupted as a direct result of a major disaster. This program is specifically tailored to individuals who are not eligible for traditional unemployment insurance benefits.

With the President’s approval of the Governor’s request, the Vermont Department of Labor must submit an application to the U.S. Department of Labor for DUA authorization. The Department is working on the application for DUA as of today’s date; however, even before Vermont’s disaster declaration request, the Department of Labor began working to stand up a Disaster Unemployment Assistance program in anticipation of the President’s approval. Information about DUA for Vermont can be found online at <https://labor.vermont.gov/disaster-unemployment-assistance>, which will be updated as more information becomes available.

“During times of crisis, we stand together to support those affected by the challenges that disasters bring. Disaster Unemployment Assistance will ensure that individuals who have suffered employment loss or interruption due to the flooding will receive the support they need during this time of crisis,” said Labor Commissioner Michael Harrington.

The Department of Labor will be issuing a formal DUA announcement next week, as required by the U.S. Department of Labor. This announcement will mark the official start of the program and will outline the various requirements for eligibility.

Before an individual can apply for DUA, they must first apply for regular unemployment insurance benefits and be denied. Beginning Wednesday, July 19th, the Department intends to release a public facing online unemployment insurance initial claims application, so that the public can open new unemployment claims via the web.

Individuals will have 30-days to apply for DUA, so claimants should not worry about missing the window to apply for DUA benefits. The Department will also allow DUA claimants to backdate claims to the week of July 9, 2023 – July 15, 2023, which is the first week of eligibility.

The Department is working to coordinate efforts in the field to use its Job Centers as DUA hubs and staff will be out in the field assisting impacted individuals. Additionally, the Department is authorizing overtime for staff and will be reassigning personnel from other functional areas to the UI call center in anticipation of a high call volume.

IMPORANT: In an effort to avoid overloading the Department's call center, the Department is asking individuals who believe they may be eligible for DUA to avoid calling the Unemployment Insurance Claimant Assistance Center at this time. Additional information about the DUA program will be made available on the Department's DUA webpage when the program is officially announced.

For a general overview of the DUA program, see the [FEMA Disaster Unemployment Insurance FAQ Sheet](#).

For more information, visit our website www.labor.vermont.gov.

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