



Agency for Workforce Innovation

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FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT AID AVAILABLE FOR DISASTER VICTIMS

TALLAHASSEE – Monesia T. Brown, Director of Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation, announced today that individuals who have lost jobs or businesses as a result of the severe storms and tornadoes of February 1 and 2nd 2007 may be entitled to Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits. On February 3, 2007, President George W. Bush, in response to a request from Governor Charlie Crist, declared a major disaster for Lake, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia counties, clearing the way for use of federal funds to provide assistance to individuals affected by the disaster.

Although many workers will be covered by the state's regular unemployment compensation program, those not covered may apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA). This is a federally funded program, which assists individuals who become unemployed as a direct result of a declared disaster and who do not qualify for regular unemployment benefits. The program also covers self-employed individuals, owners of farms and ranches, farm and ranch workers, as well as fishers and others who are not normally covered by state unemployment compensation.

The Agency for Workforce Innovation administers the DUA program in Florida with the U.S. Department of Labor and regional workforce boards. Funding for the program is provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Applicants must file for disaster benefits within 30 days, no later than March 6, 2007. To be eligible for either the regular state unemployment compensation program or DUA, the applicant must be a legal resident. To be eligible for DUA benefits, an individual must have exhausted all entitlement to any regular state unemployment benefits and must have been working in or residing in a county for which the disaster has been officially declared. DUA benefits are available to unemployed individuals for up to 26 weeks from the date of the disaster declaration. The 26-week assistance period for victims of the storm ends August 4, 2007.

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Federal regulations provide that the unemployment of an individual is caused by a disaster if the individual: (1) becomes unemployed as a direct result of the disaster; or (2) is unable to reach the place of employment as a direct result of the disaster; or (3) was scheduled to begin work and does not have a job or is unable to reach the job as a direct result of the disaster; or (4) has become the major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of the disaster; or (5) cannot work because of an injury caused directly by the disaster.

Individuals applying for disaster related unemployment assistance will need to have the following information available:

- Social Security number
- Alien registration number and expiration date (if a non-U.S. citizen)
- Name and address of most recent employer(s)
- If self-employed, have proof of self-employment for the past two years
- (State or Federal tax returns, financial statements, bank records of accounts, or 1099 Forms. Documentation necessary to support a claim may be faxed to 850-921-3938. Applicant's Social Security number should appear on all documents submitted)
- If scheduled to begin work but could not work due to the disaster, have name and address of employer and the date work was scheduled to begin

Beginning **Monday, February 5, 2007**, applications for DUA may be filed by Internet at the following web site address: www.fluidnow.com (indicate on the application that it is a disaster related unemployment claim). Telephone applications may be filed by calling 1-800-204-2418. Hours of operation are 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM EST, Monday through Friday.

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An equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers on this website may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.