

## **L&I Secretary: Governor Wolf's Disaster Declaration Needed to Help People Out of Work, Reduce Employer Costs**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Secretary Jerry Oleksiak today highlighted the importance of Governor Tom Wolf's disaster declaration to help Pennsylvanians who are out of work get the unemployment compensation benefits they deserve and reduce costs for employers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prematurely ending the disaster declaration will increase the burden on workers and the employers who depend on them.

"Many Pennsylvanians are out of work because of the pandemic and the governor's disaster declaration is helping them to more quickly and easily get unemployment benefits," said Secretary Oleksiak. "These benefits are a lifeline to many families at a time of great need in their lives. The disaster declaration is also helping to lower costs for employers across the state who don't have to pay for COVID-related claims by their employees."

The disaster declaration enables L&I to waive the one-week waiting period and job search and work registration requirements for claimants and provide many contributory and reimbursable employers with automatic relief from benefit charges. Those advantages will be lost when the disaster declaration ends.

Without the disaster declaration the following would occur:

### **Employers**

- Costs would increase for employers that contribute to the unemployment fund with the end of automatic relief from charges for COVID-19 related claims. Many employers will pay the full cost of their employee's UC benefits.
- Costs would increase for employers who did not pay the solvency fee for 2020 with the end of the opportunity for more time to pay their COVID-19 related charges or the option to pay without interest until January 1, 2020.

### **Workers**

- Workers would not receive any benefits for the first week they are out of work because a waiver in Act 9 ends. L&I would also lose the federal funding for the waiting week.
- The temporary suspension of work search and work regulation requirements would end.

### **UC Payments**

Since March 15, Pennsylvanians have received more than \$16.7 billion in UC benefits, including:

- \$8.4 billion from regular UC
- \$7 billion from the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program (extra \$600 per week)
- \$1.2 billion from the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program
- \$96 million in extended benefits through Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)

## UC Claim Statistics

Since March 15, more than 2.7 million total claims have been filed for unemployment compensation benefits:

- 2.1 million for regular UC
- 628,000 for PUA

Additional unemployment benefits information is available on L&I's [website](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).