

Governor Hutchinson's Directives Regarding the Unemployment Insurance Program

Waive One Week Waiting Period

As Governor, I am directing the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS) to **waive the one week waiting period** in order to receive benefits.

Note: Ark. Code Ann. §11-10-507(4) provides that a claimant must serve a waiting period of one week which shall not be counted as a week of unemployment for the purpose of this subdivision. However, the first week is generally used as the waiting period in order to allow ADWS time to verify the reason for a claimant's unemployment to prevent overpayments and deter fraud. Ark. Code Ann. §12-75- 114 authorizes the Governor to waive any regulatory statute during an emergency, including the waiting period requirement. However, most claimants will be receiving their "final" paycheck from their employer around the time of their separation or shortly thereafter, thus there is a lessened need to provide an immediate cash infusion.

Waive Work Search Requirement

As Governor, I'm Directing ADWS to **waive the work-search requirements for 30 days**. This will allow unemployed individuals to receive benefits while not having to go through a job-search requirement process.

Note- This pertains to those individuals employed by businesses that are temporarily closed with plans to reopen and have employees return to work.

Waive In-Person Application Requirements

As Governor, I'm Directing ADWS to implement changes to its customer service delivery model to ensure that it can provide timely and responsive delivery of services by eliminating the risk of COVID-19 to our employees and customers.

I'm waiving the in-person application filing requirements. This will allow applicants to complete the application process in one step, as opposed to the standard process which allowed applicants to begin the process online or via phone but then were required to come in face to face to complete the process.

On Tuesday-Thursday of this week (March 17-19), ADWS offices will continue to accept applications in person at any ADWS location. On Friday, we are standing up a call center and all applications may be processed via the hotline or online at www.ezarc.adws.arkansas.gov. It is important to note that during Tuesday - Thursday, an individual may also call any local ADWS location to file an application by phone while the hotline is being set up by DIS.

Note: These changes will enable Arkansans to file unemployment insurance claims, register for work, and seek job placement assistance in a timely manner while dispensing with the need for those customers to physically report to an Arkansas Workforce Center to file or manage their unemployment insurance claims.

Other info:

- The Unemployment Trust Fund is in excellent financial condition and is well prepared to respond to situations such as this. Assuming the fund would not receive anything further from employers, the current fund could last 1.3 years based on statistical data from the USDOL.

