



Arkansas House Newsletter

April 10, 2020

Update on State Budget and Unemployment Claims in Arkansas

ONLINE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPLICATIONS:

EZARC SITE:
WWW.EZARC.ADWS.ARKANSAS.GOV/
HOURS: SUNDAY-SATURDAY, 6AM-6PM

HOTLINE APPLICATIONS:

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE HOTLINE:
1-844-908-2178 OR 501-534-6304
HOURS: MONDAY - FRIDAY, 8AM-3:30PM

GENERAL UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE INQUIRIES:

UI.GENERAL.QUESTIONS@ARKANSAS.GOV
(THIS EMAIL ADDRESS SHOULD NOT BE USED TO FILE A CLAIM)
ADWS INFORMATION DESK: 1-855-225-4440 OR 501-682-2121
HOURS: MONDAY - FRIDAY, 8AM - 3:30PM

The 2020 Fiscal Session is now underway.

As we did in the recent special session, the House met at the Jack Stephens Arena at UALR to provide enough space for social distancing. We will continue to meet at that venue next week.

On the opening day of the session, the Governor told the General Assembly our state's economy is not slowing down, but rather is on pause out of necessity.

The Governor is asking the General Assembly to cut \$205 million from the previous balanced budget proposal presented before the pandemic. We intend to accomplish this while still fulfilling our obligations to education, public safety, and Medicaid.

While the legislature works on the state budget, we recognize many of you are struggling with your personal budget.

More than 132,000 unemployment claims have been processed in Arkansas. Arkansans who filed unemployment claims before March 28 should have received compensation by now. Those who filed before April 4 should receive payment this Monday.

Regular unemployment benefits now include an additional \$600 weekly benefit payment for any workers eligible for state or federal unemployment insurance. There is no need to apply for this, these payments will automatically be issued, along with your regular UI benefit.

However, we know many other Arkansans are experiencing difficulty in processing claims and getting through the hotline. On Friday, the Joint Budget Committee passed an amendment for additional funding for extra help and overtime for the agency overseeing the unemployment hotline.

If you are experiencing delays in filing your claim online or by phone, please understand that your claim will be processed and backdated. If eligible, you will receive your benefits based on your date of separation from your employment.

To assist the local Department of Workforce offices around the state with the massive volume of claims and questions, the Department of Commerce is utilizing almost 80 staff from the DWS central office and other Commerce staff and volunteers to answer the hotline calls and to file claims. They will continue to train available state employees. They are also evaluating the availability of an external call center. The external call center could provide a way for hours to be extended.

Currently, the website, www.ezarc.adws.arkansas.gov is available to process applications Sunday-Saturday from 6 am to 6 pm.

The hotline numbers 1-844-908-2178 or 501-534-6304 accept calls Monday – Friday, 8 am-3:30 pm.

We have posted a link to frequently asked questions about unemployment on our website www.arkansashouse.org.

The House will convene again on Wednesday at 11 am. [Schedules and live stream information can also be found on our website.](#)