

Disaster Unemployment Assistance Available to Iowans

Residents and workers in twenty-four counties are now eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) through Iowa Workforce Development. The counties eligible for DUA are: Adams, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cedar, Cerro Gordo, Delaware, Fayette, Floyd, Hardin, Johnson, Jones, Linn, Louisa, Marion, Muscatine, Page, Polk, Story, Tama, Taylor, and Winneshiek.

The benefits cover self-employed workers not usually entitled to unemployment insurance, including Iowa farmers. People applying for Assistance need to provide proof of past earnings, such as business records or bank statements and their most recent income tax form, at the time they file their claim. Any Iowa Workforce Development Center can accept DUA claims or individuals can file on the Workforce website – www.iowaworkforce.org - at “file an unemployment claim”.

Claims for benefits need to be filed by July 17, 2008. For Black Hawk, Buchanan, and Butler counties, the deadline is July 7.

Iowans eligible for benefits include those individuals who lost their jobs directly due to the severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes. Also eligible for assistance are:

- (1) Individuals who are unable to reach their job or self-employment location because they must travel through the affected area and are prevented from doing so by the disaster;
- (2) Individuals who were to commence employment or self-employment but were prevented by the disaster;
- (3) Individuals who became the breadwinner or major support for a household because of the death of the head of household due to the disaster; or
- (4) Individuals who cannot work or perform services in self-employment because of an injury caused as a direct result of the disaster.

Unemployment is a direct result of the major disaster if it resulted from:

- (1) The physical damage or destruction of the place of employment;
- (2) The physical inaccessibility of the place of employment due to its closure by the federal, state, or local government in immediate response to the disaster; or
- (3) Lack of work, or loss of revenues, if, prior to the disaster, the employer or self-employed business received at least a majority of its revenue or income from an entity in the major disaster area that was damaged or destroyed in the disaster or an entity in the major disaster area closed by the federal, state, or local government.

Information and forms for filing a disaster unemployment claim are available at Workforce Development centers or at <http://www.iowaworkforce.org/ui/dua.htm>. Information is also available by calling 1-800-562-4692.

What Does the Program Provide?

DUA benefits are payable from the start of the disaster. Benefit payments are calculated by using your gross wages in the most recently completed tax year. If you were self-employed, the computation would use your wage income, if any, plus your net income shown on your income tax forms.

The minimum DUA weekly payment for self-employed workers is 50 percent of the average weekly payment of regular unemployment insurance in Iowa. For instance, if you are an unemployed self-employed worker who had low net income on your income tax forms for the most recently completed tax year, you would receive the minimum DUA weekly payment. A higher weekly payment may occur depending on your net business income. Iowa's formula for regular unemployment insurance determines the weekly benefit amount. You must submit proof to substantiate your self-employed status, such as business records, bank statements, etc. A copy of the income tax form is required to issue a final DUA determination of the weekly benefit amount.

Who Is Eligible to Apply?

If you are unemployed as a direct result of the disaster, or if you were going to be employed in the disaster area at the time the disaster began, and your principal source of income and livelihood is dependent upon work that was affected by the disaster, then you may be eligible.

If you are eligible for or are currently receiving regular unemployment insurance benefit payments, then you are not also eligible for a DUA claim.

If you have been injured as a direct result of the disaster and cannot work, or if you have become the major support of your household because the head of the household died as a direct result of the disaster, then you may be eligible for benefits.

How Do I Claim Benefits?

Once your DUA claim is established, it is very easy to claim a week of benefits. Each week complete and submit one of the Weekly Request for Disaster Unemployment Assistance forms, Form ETA 83.

What Are the Restrictions?

Benefits will end if you return to suitable work, or if you refuse a bona fide offer of suitable work, or refuse to accept a referral to suitable employment without good cause.

Since your eligibility is determined on a week-to-week basis, your unemployed status must continue to be a direct result of the disaster in order to continue to receive DUA benefits. If you are only partially employed and work for wages, you must report your gross wages. This is the same as individuals receiving regular unemployment insurance. Once your unemployment is no longer attributable to the disaster, your DUA entitlement ends.

If you are self-employed, you are no longer eligible for DUA as soon as you are able to resume your normal self-employment work activities. However, if your self-employment activity is still substantially reduced, you may continue to receive DUA benefits. You must report your gross earnings from self-employment when actually paid. For example, you report you performed self-employment work during the week you perform the work, but report zero earnings unless you are actually paid during that week.

For some occupations there are seasonal limitations to the periods for which DUA is paid. DUA may only be paid to seasonal workers for those weeks they would have been employed in the season.

Questions?

Contact your local [Workforce Development Center](#) if you have any questions about the DUA program, or check out the Department's website at <http://www.iowaworkforce.org/ui/dua.htm>. Information is also available by calling 1-800-562-4692. Don't hesitate to call if you have any problems completing the forms or providing needed information and records.