

News Release



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Disaster Unemployment Assistance Available to Individuals Affected by Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line Winds and Flooding

Individuals who have become unemployed as a direct result of the severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding that began in Crawford, Garland, Howard, Jefferson, Little River, Miller, Perry, Sebastian and Sevier counties on May 7, 2015 through June 15, 2015 may be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance, according to Daryl Bassett, director of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services.

At the request of Gov. Asa Hutchinson, a federal disaster declaration was issued designating Crawford, Garland, Howard, Jefferson, Little River, Miller, Perry, Sebastian and Sevier counties as federal disaster areas. Among the different types of assistance available to individuals and households by the federal disaster declaration is DUA. Individuals who have temporarily lost jobs because of the disaster and do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits (such as self-employed individuals) may be eligible for DUA, which provides unemployment benefits up to 32 weeks. The first possible week of compensation for DUA purposes is the week ending May 16, 2015, and the last possible week of compensation is the week ending December 26, 2015.

DUA claims may be filed at the following DWS offices:

Crawford County	Fort Smith Local Office, 616 Garrison Avenue, Room 101	(479) 783-0231
Garland County	Hot Springs Local Office, 2254 Albert Pike Road, Suite A	(501) 525-3450
Howard County	Hope Local Office, 205 Smith Road, Suite A	(870) 777-3421
Jefferson County	Pine Bluff Local Office, 1001 South Tennessee Street	(870) 534-1920
Little River County	Texarkana Local Office, 1702 Hampton Road	(870) 216-4011
Miller County	Texarkana Local Office, 1702 Hampton Road	(870) 216-4011
Perry County	Conway Local Office, 1500 N. Museum Road, Suite 111 Russellville Local Office, 104 S. Rochester Avenue	(501) 730-9894 (479) 968-2784
Sebastian County	Fort Smith Local Office, 616 Garrison Avenue, Room 101	(479) 783-0231
Sevier County	Texarkana Local Office, 1702 Hampton Road	(870) 216-4011

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Claims for these nine counties must be filed between July 1, 2015 through July 30, 2015, at DWS offices from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. DWS offices also will provide re-employment assistance where appropriate. Claims filed after the deadline will be considered untimely and benefits denied, unless the individual provides good cause for filing after that date.

To be eligible for benefits, individuals must have worked or have been scheduled to work in the disaster area, but because of the disaster, they no longer have a job, a place to work in the area or could not get to their place of work because of disaster damage. They also may qualify if they have been prevented from working because of an injury or illness resulting from the disaster or if they have become the head of household and need employment because the head of the household died as a result of the disaster. This benefit also may be available to self-employed individuals who have lost all or part of their livelihood as a result of the disaster.

Each claim is considered individually; therefore, individuals who believe they may be eligible should bring their government issued photo identification, Social Security card, the name and address of their last place of employment, and documents verifying income, such as income tax statements, recent pay stubs, W-2 forms or other proof of net income for 2014.

DWS officials understand that because of property losses some claimants may not have the necessary 2014 income information. Although some delays may result without this information, DWS staff will make every effort to work with DUA claimants to confirm their income information and expedite the claims-taking procedure.

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