



children's defense fund southern regional

Please find attached information on emergency unemployment benefits passed by Congress, and how Mississippians can apply. Again hope this information will be helpful to your communities. Thanks for all you do!

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act,

which was signed into law by the President last week, attempts to provide emergency economic assistance to individuals, families, businesses and state governments.

It is clear that slowing the spread of COVID-19 requires extreme measures and disruptions of regular life. Mississippians are being asked to stay home as much as possible and to avoid groups greater than 10. These needed actions are causing severe economic hardships. The CARES Act is another phase in the Federal government's attempt to assist struggling families.

Direct Payments to Households

The CARES Act directs the U.S. Treasury Department to send significant direct payments ("recovery rebates") to low- and middle-income families of \$1,200 for most adults and \$500 for children under age 17. A married couple with two children is therefore eligible for \$3,400.

The Treasury Department will send automatic stimulus payments to many people who filed a 2019 or 2018 tax return using the direct deposit information from their tax returns. The Treasury Department has indicated that these payments will be issued in 3 to 4 weeks.

But many Mississippians have incomes that are too low to file a return, or they receive the bulk of their income from untaxed sources such as Social Security, veterans benefits, or disability benefits. The Treasury department is responsible for setting up a mechanism to allow individuals in this category to receive their direct payment. More guidance should be

coming from the federal government in the coming days. But we know this will be a big concern to low-income families in our state and we will track this issue.

Unfortunately, there are still many people that will not benefit from direct payments. The CARES Act:

- Denies the entire rebate to certain immigrant families, including some with children who are U.S. citizens. For a household to receive any rebate, each person in the household - including children - must have a Social Security number (SSN).
- Denies the rebate to older dependents. Filers may only claim the additional \$500 for dependents for children under age 17. This means that filers who support other dependents - including elderly dependents, adults with disabilities living with family members who help care for them, and college students - won't get extra help based on these dependents.

Enhanced Unemployment Payments

Last week over 3 million Americans filed for unemployment assistance. The CARES Act includes a robust expansion in unemployment benefits that, in the near term, will enable more jobless workers to receive benefits and provide benefits that are more robust. This is critical, given both the sharp rise in unemployment we are already seeing and the underlying weakness in the basic Unemployment Insurance system.

How does unemployment insurance work in Mississippi?

Unemployment insurance programs are administered in each state. As a result, eligibility rules and benefits differ by state. Normally, the highest benefit a Mississippi jobless worker could receive is \$235 for 20 weeks (the lowest benefits in the nation). In fact, many jobless Mississippians failed to qualify for benefits because of our state's stringent requirements. Many Mississippi applicants did not qualify because he or she lacked sufficient recent work history or left their job for a reason not covered by Mississippi's program.

How does the CARES Act expand benefits to Mississippians?

The Act creates new a Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program that provides federally funded

unemployment benefits to many Mississippi workers that don't usually qualify for our state's regular unemployment assistance.

NOTE: This program will still be administered through the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. The PUA program will extend benefits to workers lacking an extensive work history or looking for part-time work as well as those who have exhausted their regular UI benefits. It also extends coverage to contract or self-employed workers.

If you qualify for regular unemployment insurance in Mississippi, you will ALSO receive the temporary PUA benefits under the new pandemic program.

The new PUA benefit will provide an **additional \$600 per week**. It's federally funded through July 31. Congress will have to extend this program in July. Workers can receive up to 39 weeks of PUA benefits. This program is only in effect through December 31.

How does the CARES Act help Mississippians impacted by COVID-19?

Many Mississippians are unable to go to work because they or a family member are ill. Even more people are unable to work because of the social distancing or quarantine rules implement by state or local governments. The PUA benefits are available to most of these workers. Individuals may qualify for the PUA, \$600 a week, program if:

- You or a family member has COVID-19.
- You are providing care for a family member with COVID-19 or for a child whose school is closed.
- You can't get to work because of a quarantine or self-quarantine.
- You were scheduled to start work but your job was canceled or you are unable to reach the job due to COVID-19.
- Your place of employment is closed or you have to quit your job due to COVID-19.
- You are the main breadwinner for your household because your spouse died as a direct result of COVID-19.

How do Mississippians file a claim for unemployment benefits?

Applications for both regular and PUA unemployment benefits are filed with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security.

Applications can be submitted online at accessms.mdes.ms.gov, or by calling 888-844-3577. The call center hours are 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. seven days a week.

Many Mississippians are having trouble utilizing the online application and reaching a person at the call center. You can also call WIN job centers in your area by phone or email. Due to COVID-19, the WIN center lobbies are closed but you should be able to reach a staffer by phone or email.

WIN Job Center Location	Email	Phone
Amory Job Center	AmoryJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-256-2618
Attala Job Center	louisvillejobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-289-2535
Batesville Job Center	BatesvilleJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-563-7318
Brookhaven Job Center	BrookhavenJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601- 833- 3511
Calhoun Job Center	GrenadaJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-412-3170
Carthage Job Center	CarthageJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601-267-9282
Clarksdale Job Center	ClarksdaleJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-624-9001
Cleveland Job Center	ClevelandJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-843-2704

Columbia Job Center	ColumbiaJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601-736-2628
Corinth Job Center	corinthjobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-696-2336
DeSoto County Job Center	DeSotocountyjobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-280-6218
Forest Job Center	ForestJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601-469-2851
Greenville Job Center	GreenvilleJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-332-8101
Greenwood Job Center	GreenwoodJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-459-4600
Grenada Job Center	GrenadaJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-226-2911
Gulfport Job Center	GulfportJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	228-897-6900
Hancock Job Center	hancockcountyjobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	228-466-5425
Hattiesburg Job Center	HattiesburgJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601- 584 -1202
Houston Job Center	tupelojobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	662- 407-1219
Indianola Job Center	IndianolaJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662- 887-2502
Iuka Job Center	cjobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-423-9231
Jackson Job Center	JacksonJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601-321-7931
Laurel Job Center	LaurelJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601-399-4000
Lexington Job Center	LexingtonJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-834-2426
Louisville Job Center	louisvillejobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-773-5051
Madison County Job Center	madisoncountyjobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	601-859-7609
Marshall Job Center	DeSotocountyjobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-838-3805
Mayhew Job Center	AmoryJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-243 -1751
McComb Job Center	McCombJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601-684-4421
Meridian Job Center	MeridianJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601-553-9511
Natchez Job Center	NatchezJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601-442-0243
New Albany Job Center	tupelojobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	662- 407-1226
Oxford Job Center	GrenadaJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-236-7201
Pascagoula Job Center	PascagoulaJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	228-762-4713
Pearl Job Center	PearlJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601-321-5441
Picayune Job Center	PicayuneJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601-798-3472
Pontotoc Job Center	tupelojobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	662- 407-1226
Tate Job Center	DeSotocountyjobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-562-3351
Tupelo Job Center	tupelojobcenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-842-4371
Vicksburg Job Center	VicksburgJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	601- 619 -2841
West Point Job Center	AmoryJobCenter@mdes.ms.gov	662-243-2647