

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Disaster Unemployment Assistance Administered by the Louisiana Workforce Commission

What is Disaster Unemployment Assistance?

The Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program provides assistance to individuals whose employment has been either lost or interrupted as a direct result of a major disaster, as declared by the President of the United States. 25 Louisiana parishes qualify for DUA assistance as a result of Hurricane Ida which occurred August 26, 2021 and continues.

Who is eligible for DUA?

DUA is available to unemployed workers or self-employed individuals who became unemployed as a direct result of the disaster that are otherwise ineligible to receive state unemployment insurance benefits.

If you are already receiving state unemployment insurance benefits due to COVID-19, there is no need for you to apply for DUA and you should continue filing your weekly certifications.

If you were already unemployed and did not lose your job as a result of the disaster, please do not apply for DUA. DUA is also available to those individuals who became the breadwinner, or major support provider, due to the death of the head of household and as a direct result of the disaster.

When can I file a claim?

The deadline to file a DUA claim as a result of Hurricane Ida is October 4, 2021: Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana.

How do I file a claim?

At this time claims can ONLY be filled online at www.laworks.net. Proof of employment at the time of the disaster is required within 21 days of filing the DUA application. Instructions will be provided for submitting this required documentation. Your personal income tax return (Federal Form 1040 and attachments) or other proof of employment (e.g., 1099) and wages you earned in calendar year 2020 is also requested.

How much assistance can I expect to receive?

Individuals eligible for DUA will be paid weekly benefits in accordance with federal and state regulations. The DUA benefit duration is determined weekly up to 27 weeks. Currently, the maximum weekly assistance amount in Louisiana is \$247 and is based on the individual's gross earnings or net income if self-employed for the most recent tax year. The minimum DUA benefit amount is \$93 weekly based on full-time employment.

How long will it take before I receive my benefits?

DUA benefits will be paid as soon as administratively possible. Generally, benefits are held until such time that sufficient evidence of employment is provided, and it is determined that the unemployment was a direct result of the disaster. Each claim must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Continue to file your weekly continued claims as long as you are unemployed as a direct result of the disaster. Our goal is to ensure a determination is made as quickly as possible.

Typically, in Louisiana unemployment claims come with what's called a "week of waiting." This means no benefits are paid for the first week that you file for unemployment. When people file these disaster claims and get approved for DUA there will be no "week of waiting." We want people to get their benefits as soon as possible.

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Things to keep in mind when filing a DUA claim

Regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits supersede DUA – Any person determined eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits, even in the case of a disaster, would not be eligible for DUA.

Fraudulent claims will be prosecuted, including jail time – You are required to report all earnings when worked, not when received. Intentional false reporting of the reason for separation or last employer information may also be considered fraudulent.

You must report all earnings weekly – If you are paid by your employer during your absence from work or if you return to work, you must report these earnings on your weekly request for payment. Vacation pay must also be reported on your weekly request for payment.