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NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 15, 2020

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Missouri Releases Latest Unemployment Numbers; Offers Guidance for Those Returning to Work

Jefferson City, MO — The Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' (DOLIR's) Division of Employment Security (DES) reported that a total of 30,702 initial claims were filed for the week ending May 9, 2020, the most recent week for which claims information is available. That is a decrease of 41 percent in initial claims compared to the week ending May 2, 2020. Of the 30,702 new initial claims, 25,440 were self-reported as being COVID-19 related.

There were a total of 263,822 individuals filing weekly requests for payment for the week ending May 9, 2020, up 7.7 percent compared to the previous week, with a total of \$75,841,704 in regular unemployment benefits being paid for the week ending May 9, 2020. Over \$800 million has been paid to Missouri workers under the new federal CARES Act programs, which does not decrease the State's UI Trust Fund.

Outstanding Unemployment Payments and How to Avoid Being Overpaid When Returning to Work

As unemployed individuals return to work, the DES explains that it will pay any outstanding unemployment benefit payments for weeks for which claimants are eligible, have requested payment, and are still owed payment. Individuals returning to work full-time do not need to notify the DES of their return to work but should stop requesting payment to avoid being overpaid. Claims will automatically close after 28 days of inactivity.

Claimants are reminded to answer the question about working during each week truthfully, whether they are working full-time, part-time, or in temporary employment. If an individual worked during the week, they should respond "yes" regardless if they have received payment for their work. For information on how to report earnings and eligibility for partial unemployment benefits, visit labor.mo.gov/coronavirus (see questions 4 and 5).

Refusing to Return to Work

As Missouri re-opens, workers can expect to be recalled to work by their employers in the coming weeks. Missourians who have been placed on a temporary layoff related to COVID-19 but refuse to return to work when recalled by their employer will lose unemployment benefits and have to repay any benefits received after the work refusal. Information about returning to work (including some exemptions) under the law can be found on DOLIR's website at labor.mo.gov/coronavirus under question number 2. Employees recalled to work are strongly encouraged to work with their employer to make the process as smooth as possible.

Employers may submit information to the DES about employees who have been offered their jobs back, refuse work, or quit their jobs through an online portal found at labor.mo.gov. Employers are strongly encouraged to report quits or work refusals as soon as possible.

For more information, visit labor.mo.gov/coronavirus.

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