



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Richardson Announces Disaster Unemployment Assistance Available for Dona Ana County Residents

Santa Fe, NM – Governor Bill Richardson today announced that the New Mexico Department of Labor is currently accepting applications for Disaster Unemployment Assistance for eligible individuals whose employment or self-employment has been lost or interrupted as a result of the recent flooding in Dona Ana County.

“The state is committed to helping New Mexicans in whatever way we can following the recent devastating floods,” said Governor Bill Richardson. “This Disaster Unemployment Assistance is yet another way to help the people of Hatch and Dona Ana County get back on their feet and back to work.”

On August 30, 2006, President George W. Bush authorized Federal disaster assistance including Disaster Unemployment Assistance to individuals in Dona Ana County. Before an individual can be determined eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA), it must be established that the individual is not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits (under any state or federal law).

Claims may be filed at 112 Halsell, Hatch, New Mexico (or call 505-841-4000 to file a claim), Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Claims must be filed within 30 days of this announcement to be considered eligible for assistance. Claims filed after October 07, 2006, will be considered untimely and benefits denied, unless the individual provides good cause for filing after this date.

To receive DUA benefits, individuals must provide their social security number, proof of wages, and proof of employment, including the name of the last employer within 21 days of filing a claim. Self-employed individuals must provide their business and financial records, including federal income tax returns for 2005.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance is available to individuals for weeks of unemployment beginning July 30, 2006 and through March 3, 2007, as long as their unemployment continues to be a result of the major disaster. DUA benefits will not be paid for any period of unemployment before or after these dates.

DUA is available to unemployed U.S. nationals and qualified aliens who worked or were self-employed if they:

- worked or were self-employed in or were scheduled to begin work or self-employment in an area declared as a federal disaster area.

- can no longer work or perform services because of physical damage or destruction to the place of employment as a direct result of a disaster.
- establish that the work or self-employment they can no longer perform was their primary source of income.
- do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits from any state.
- can not perform work or self-employment because of an injury or because they were incapacitated as a direct result of the disaster.
- became the breadwinner or major support of a household because of the death of the head of the household.
- can not work or perform self-employment due to closure of a facility by the federal government.

Governor Richardson has declared nineteen counties in New Mexico state disaster areas and freed up millions of dollars in state funds for emergency response and clean up. Additionally, preliminary data is being collected for Taos, Rio Arriba, and McKinley counties to determine if they will be eligible for federal funding.

Governor Bill Richardson traveled to Washington, DC last week to meet with David Paulison, Director of FEMA, to personally request federal assistance for flood damaged areas in New Mexico.

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