



June 23, 2011

For Immediate Release

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Individuals in Some Vermont Counties May be Eligible for Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance Benefits

Montpelier – Governor Peter Shumlin announced today that Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits are available to help those Vermonters left jobless as a result of the severe flooding damage caused by the record rainfall this spring.

The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) has declared Addison, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, and Orleans Counties as official disaster areas. Under that declaration, individuals living, working, or scheduled to work in those counties may be eligible for disaster unemployment assistance benefits. Other counties are still under review by FEMA for disaster assistance.

"We are grateful that the Obama Administration and Vermont's congressional delegation have helped Vermonters impacted by the recent flooding," said Governor Shumlin. "I have visited many of our state's hardest hit communities, and I am pleased that Vermonters may be eligible for this unemployment assistance."

"The flooding has resulted in some temporary and permanent job losses in Vermont" said Labor Commissioner Anne Noonan. "We urge Vermonters who have experienced job loss relating to the flooding to explore their eligibility for this benefit. The parameters for eligibility address many factors, including, but not limited to damage or destruction of a workplace, a personal injury or transportation problems relating to the disaster, or business downturn because of the disaster. It's important to explore your eligibility and file before the July 25, 2011 deadline to take advantage of this benefit".

The disaster assistance period began April 24, 2011 and ends December 17, 2011. The filing deadline for individuals deemed eligible for assistance is July 25, 2011. The first payable week will be the week ending April 30, 2011. An individual must be continuously unemployed as a direct result of the disaster in order to continue receiving Disaster Unemployment Assistance and, if eligible, he or she can collect benefits for the weeks which they meet the necessary criteria. Workers who experienced temporary job loss as a direct result of the disaster and who do not qualify for State Unemployment Insurance Benefits, such as self-employed individuals, may also be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance.

VDOL cites examples of reasons for unemployment that may make a person eligible to receive Disaster Unemployment Assistance:

- You were injured in the disaster and are unable to work, whether you are an employee or self-employed.
- Your workplace was damaged, destroyed, or you can't work because of the disaster.
- Your transportation to work is not available.
- You cannot get to your job because you must travel through the affected area, and you cannot do that because of the disaster.
- You were about to begin working, but could not because of the disaster.
- You derived most of your income from areas affected by the disaster, whether you worked for yourself or for an employer, and your business is down as a direct result of the disaster.

Please call the Department of Labor's Unemployment Claims Assistance Line at 1-877-214-3330 if you are an unemployed worker or self-employed individual who lived, worked, or was scheduled to work in a county which has been declared a disaster area by the federal government.

For more information, please visit www.labor.vermont.gov.