

Contact: Rachel Dumeny
Communications and Outreach Coordinator
Vermont Department of Labor
(802) 272-4509
rachel.dumeny@vermont.gov

Orleans County Added to Disaster Declaration, Becomes Eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance

Montpelier, Vt. – The Vermont Department of Labor announced today that Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits are now available to Vermonters in Orleans County, in addition to the eight counties first announced on July 20, 2023, and July 26, 2023.

Under DUA program guidance, individuals in Orleans County have until Monday, August 28, 2023, to file a DUA application. If additional counties are added to the disaster declaration, a new press release will be issued with a new deadline to file. The first payable benefit week has been identified as July 9 – 15, 2023. A full list of counties and their filing dates is located at the bottom of this press release.

Under the federal disaster declaration, individuals living, working, or scheduled to work in these counties may be eligible for DUA. This includes independent contractors, those who are self-employed, and agricultural workers.

Individuals seeking assistance through the DUA program must first file for regular unemployment insurance benefits. As part of the application process, claimants should indicate that their employment was impacted by the disaster. The Department of Labor will determine if the claimant is eligible for regular unemployment first, as required by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). If the claimant is deemed ineligible for regular unemployment insurance, the applicant will be provided with the DUA application. Eligible Vermonters can collect benefits for the weeks during which they meet the necessary program criteria.

Examples of eligible DUA claims may include:

- The claimant was injured in the disaster and is unable to work, whether they are an employee or self-employed;
- The claimant's workplace was damaged, destroyed, or not in operation as a direct result of the disaster;
- The claimant's transportation to work is not available as a direct result of the disaster;
- The claimant cannot get to their job because they must travel through an impacted area and are unable to do so as a direct result of the disaster;
- The claimant was about to begin working, but the job no longer exists as a direct result of the disaster;

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- Most of the claimant's income comes from areas affected by the disaster, whether they work for themselves or an employer, and their business is adversely impacted as a direct result of the disaster.

Individuals interested in learning more about Disaster Unemployment Assistance can find more information online at <https://labor.vermont.gov/dua> or by calling the UI Claimant Assistance Center at 1-877-214-3330. This page also includes information about language access.

Counties eligible for DUA:

Announced July 20, 2023, applications due by August 21, 2023:

- Chittenden
- Lamoille
- Rutland
- Washington
- Windham
- Windsor

Announced July 26, 2023, applications due by August 25, 2023:

- Caledonia
- Orange

Announced July 28, 2023, applications due by August 28, 2023

- Orleans

This press release was reviewed by Readable.com for plain language accessibility.

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