

AWI Unemployment Compensation Program

Program Overview:

- Call volume for Unemployment Compensation claims in 2009 remains at a historic high.
- The April 2009 total of unemployment benefits claims was 258,209. This represents a 247% increase compared to the April 2008 total of 74,306.
- The April 2009 amount of benefits paid totaled nearly \$527 million and set a new record. This total is a 269% increase compared to the \$142.6 million in benefits paid in April 2008.
- AWI currently administers \$1.4 billion in federal recovery-related UC programs, benefits and services.
- AWI is meeting the challenge through additional personnel, enhanced computer efficiencies, additional phone lines and extended hours of service.
- AWI encourages people to file unemployment claims, extensions or recertifications online at www.floridajobs.org to further expedite service.
- The Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. estimates for every dollar in unemployment compensation benefits paid by the state, there is a positive economic impact of \$1.64 to residents and businesses.

Total customers assisted July 2008 to May 2009: 1.1 million people

Additional Unemployment Compensation Programs Since July 2008:

- Extended Benefits* – anticipated implementation July 2009
- Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance – North Florida flooding event - May 2009
- Federal Additional Compensation* (\$25/weekly) – March 2009. As of May 31, 2009, the Agency will have paid out more than \$129 million in FAC to nearly 600,000 Floridians.
- Federal recovery-extended Emergency Unemployment Compensation* – March 2009
- Tier II federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation extension – December 2008
- Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance - Tropical Storm Fay – August 2008
- Tier I federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation extension – July 2008 & November 2008

*American Recovery and Reinvestment Act programs

Enhanced Customer Service:

- **Added employees** – Since 2008, AWI has increased staffing in the Unemployment Compensation division by nearly 500 people, bringing the total to 1130 employees.
- **Added phone lines** - Since 2008, AWI has added an additional 368 phone lines for a total of 1,035 lines.
- **Overflow call center** - AWI is bringing an overflow call center online in June to enhance customer service. The Orlando call center, operated by Faneuil, Inc, is expected to handle up to an additional 10,000 calls a day primarily related to the Extended Benefits program.
- **Mainframe replacement** – AWI is in the process of replacing its unemployment compensation computer application system, anticipated for completion in 2013, to streamline the processing of claims and expedite benefits payments. During the 2009 legislative session, AWI received authority to spend \$2 million in federal funds for the next phase of this project.
- **Debit Card** - AWI is in the process of implementing a debit card benefits payment system. The new debit cards are anticipated to be available in January of 2010.

Extended Benefits Program

- An estimated \$418 million will be paid under provisions of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
- An estimated 250,000 Floridians will receive payments between July 2009 and December 2009.
- Notices and applications to potentially eligible individuals will be sent in early June 2009
- Retroactive payments to eligible claimants for weeks beginning February 22, 2009 could be as much as \$5,100 for some claimants.
- As AWI works to administer Extended Benefits and the many additional unemployment compensation programs currently available, the Agency remains committed to the timely and accurate processing of benefits to assist Floridians in need and to ongoing efforts to enhance customer service.