



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment Insurance Claims Computer Crashes

CRANSTON – The Department of Labor and Training (DLT) experienced a computer system failure yesterday that temporarily restricted on-line filings for Unemployment Insurance claims. Although the cause is still unknown, the most immediate impact was felt by the Unemployment Insurance claims system. Many individuals trying to file Unemployment Insurance claims by phone experienced delays when calling the DLT Call Center. Others had trouble accessing the on-line filing system.

Staff at the Department responded immediately and began taking claims by hand. “This couldn’t have come at a worse time for us,” noted Adelita S. Orefice, Director of Labor and Training. “December is one of our busiest times of the year.” The Department does not have an estimate for how many people may have been impacted by system problems on Wednesday morning. For the week ending December 25th, some 3,100 new unemployment insurance claims were filed, many of which represented mass filings which would not have been impacted by yesterday’s system failure. The Director believes this week’s numbers would be similar.

Although the computers have now been repaired, staff members will be working additional hours over the weekend and holiday to process claims and make payments. The Department believes most people will receive their unemployment checks in a timely way. Individuals who filed claims with the Department while the system was down may experience a one- or two-day delay in receiving their checks.

“Our primary concern is for our customers,” Orefice explained. “We’re making every effort to ensure that people can file their claims in timely fashion and that we can get unemployment checks out as quickly as possible.” She added that she is very proud of the way the staff has pulled together. “Many people have signed up to work on the holiday so we can minimize any delays in getting out benefit checks. Others have come in from their scheduled vacations to help with the backlog,” she said.

The Department reported that the phone lines continue to be busy with a high volume of calls as people who unsuccessfully tried to file claims Wednesday call again. The Department urges people who need to file a new or additional claim for Unemployment Insurance to use the on-line filing system on the DLT web site at www.uiclaims.state.ri.us. This will produce a valid and timely claim and will help to reduce the already high volume of calls received at this time of year. The Department encourages individuals who do not have computers to visit one of Department’s netWORKri career centers, located throughout the state.

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The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training offers a wide array of employment and training services to both the general public and to individuals with unusual barriers to employment. DLT is ready to assist any job seeker, whether the goal is a first job, a better job, or a career change. Rhode Island's work force is protected through the enforcement of labor laws, prevailing wage rates, and work place health and safety standards. Temporary income support is available to unemployed, sick, or injured workers and a comprehensive rehabilitation program is available to those injured on the job.

DLT is dedicated to the growth and competitiveness of Rhode Island industry, administering a variety of training grants, tax credits, and apprenticeship programs to help employers. Economic indicators and labor market information are available for long-range planning. The Agency engages in active outreach, helping large and small employers retain their best workers or retrain their existing work force. At no cost to the employer, DLT will also screen job applicants, post job vacancies, and help businesses institute cost-sharing programs that can avert layoffs.

For more information on the innovative programs and services available to all Rhode Islanders at the Department of Labor and Training, please call (401) 462-8000 or visit the web site at www.dlt.ri.gov.

Equal Opportunity Employer

Auxiliary aids and services are available up on request to individuals with disabilities

TDD (401) 462-8006

