

FROM THE OFFICE OF
**GOVERNOR
RON DESANTIS**

@GOVRONDESANTIS | WWW.FLGOV.COM | 850-717-9282 | MEDIA@EOG.MYFLORIDA.COM

For Immediate Release
April 6, 2020

Contact: Governor's Press Office
(850) 717-9282
Media@eog.myflorida.com

Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Improvements to State Reemployment Assistance Program

Tallahassee, Fla. – Today, during a COVID-19 response roundtable at the Florida State Capitol in Tallahassee, Governor Ron DeSantis announced actions the state is taking to improve Florida's reemployment assistance program. The Governor was joined at the roundtable by Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) Executive Director Ken Lawson, Department of Management Services (DMS) Secretary Jonathan Satter and Department of Revenue (DOR) Executive Director Dr. Jim Zingale.

"A lot of people are hurting right now through no fault of their own," **said Governor DeSantis.** "A flawed and bureaucratic reemployment system should be the last thing that prevents them from getting assistance. Last week, I directed DEO to take whatever means necessary to fix the system and since then they have made significant progress. I appreciate the many state employees that have been working around the clock to help their fellow Floridians."

Last week, Governor DeSantis signed Executive Order [20-93](#), directing DEO and other executive agencies to take necessary actions to improve DEO's Reemployment Assistance Program.

The following agencies have taken the actions outlined below:

Department of Economic Opportunity

- DEO installed 72 new servers.
 - The system can now handle up to 120,000 simultaneous connections by individuals filing claims. This allows for far greater capacity than the 20,000 connections the system was having difficulty with one week ago.
- DEO published a paper application over the weekend that people can complete and mail in. Before creating the paper application, people could only fill out an application over the phone or online.
 - The paper application and important information about Reemployment Assistance is available at www.FloridaJobs.org/COVID-19.
- DEO hired a call center, streamlined the training process, and trained more than 200 people so that they can start answering calls today.

- DEO will continue to train more than 700 more individuals throughout the week, so that by next week more than 1,000 individuals will be answering calls for Reemployment Assistance.

“I want to thank Governor DeSantis for taking extraordinary efforts to ensure that our agency can better serve Floridians during this global pandemic,” **said DEO Executive Director Ken Lawson.** “With additional customer call center support and critical technology improvements, DEO can assist more individuals and businesses during this unsettling time.”

Department of Management Services

- DMS Secretary Jonathan Satter coordinated the Governor’s call-to-action for state employees to assist DEO with calls, data entry and citizen services.
 - More than 2,300 state employees have volunteered to help. DEO will determine the number and extent to which the employees will be utilized.
- DMS is coordinating technology support and telecommunications capacity to handle a surge in calls and applications for reemployment assistance.
- DMS is now working with DEO to establish virtual desktop support and workflow processes to serve an estimated one million Floridians impacted by COVID-19.

“Governor DeSantis is committed to promptly connecting Floridians with the benefits they need to get through this unprecedented time,” **said DMS Secretary Jonathan R. Satter.** “The personal commitment from state employees to help their neighbors get the assistance they need is remarkable. We will continue to allocate the technical and personnel resources necessary to provide Floridians the level of service they expect and deserve.”

Department of Revenue

- In response to the Governor’s directive, DOR is mobilizing 579 employees to support DEO.
 - These employees have the work experience to assist with the verification of applications.
 - The employer identification process DOR will be assisting with is one of the final steps before payment is sent to the individual who has applied for reemployment assistance.
 - These 579 employees work in the Child Support and General Tax programs within the agency and will still be able to handle their normal responsibilities.

“The Department of Revenue is eager to assist the Department of Economic Opportunity in verifying the applications for reemployment benefits during this statewide health emergency,” **said DOR Executive Director Jim Zingale.** “DOR has nearly 600 experienced employees who are ready to mobilize for this all-hands-on-deck effort.”

###