



SC Department of Employment and Workforce

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **For Immediate Release**

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### **South Carolina Applies for Lost Wages Assistance Grant**

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Governor Henry McMaster and S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) Executive Director Dan Ellzey announced today that the state of South Carolina submitted its grant application for FEMA’s Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) program on Wednesday, August 26, 2020. The state is now waiting for federal approval of the grant application.

“Our state should be proud of the economic recovery efforts and the progress we have made to date, but we know that some of our citizens are still struggling in the wake of this pandemic,” said Gov. Henry McMaster. “We’ve chosen to participate in this program in a way that will provide additional unemployment relief from the federal government while maintaining our strong record of fiscal responsibility and protecting the interests of South Carolinians.”

[The governor authorized DEW to apply for the federal aid in a letter today, which can be found here.](#)

The LWA grant was created by President Donald Trump in response to the expiration of the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program. If the state’s application is approved, the South Carolina LWA would provide an additional \$300 in benefits on top of a claimant’s weekly benefit amount.

For each week a claimant is eligible for at least \$100 in state or federal unemployment benefits, the LWA will add \$300. In South Carolina, the average weekly benefit is approximately \$260.

“Deciding whether or not it was in the state’s best interest to apply for these funds was not an easy decision,” said DEW Executive Director Dan Ellzey. “Taking the time to weigh the options in order to best mitigate the state’s risk and ensure it wouldn’t cost South Carolina taxpayers was the right thing for the governor and legislators to do.”

“At the same time, we know there are citizens who are still in great need. DEW has been testing changes in its benefits portal based upon guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Labor. If South Carolina is approved, we will work as quickly as possible with our vendor to get the application into the system.”

Once implemented, LWA payments will be retroactive to August 1, 2020; however, unlike prior federal funding provided through the CARES Act, LWA funding comes through a grant from FEMA and has a funding cap. Should the federal program exhaust its grant funding, the LWA payments will cease. The LWA program and all LWA payments will end on December 26, 2020, if the funding is not exhausted before the sunset date.

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#### **About the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce**

*The S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce is putting South Carolinians to work. The agency has four missions: (1) workforce development; (2) free job match employment services; (3) unemployment insurance; and (4) labor market information. All four missions contribute to workforce development. The agency is dedicated to advancing South Carolina through services and programs that meet the needs of our businesses, jobseekers and those looking to advance their careers.*