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Wisconsin Applies for Lost Wages Assistance Grant

MADISON — Gov. Evers today announced that the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) submitted a grant application for Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) program yesterday and is currently awaiting federal approval.

“Wisconsin workers continue to face financial burdens and stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are working hard to ensure folks across the state are able to access the support they need,” said Gov. Evers. “While I am grateful to be able to provide an additional \$300 to eligible claimants, Wisconsin needs Congress and the Trump administration to come to an agreement on a continued, robust response to the pandemic. Our unemployed workers deserve certainty regarding the support that will be available to them while our state and nation continue to weather this unprecedented crisis.”

If approved, the LWA program will allow Wisconsin to fund an additional unemployment compensation benefit of \$300 per week to eligible unemployment recipients. The state's maximum weekly unemployment benefit is \$370. When combined with the new program, the maximum possible benefit in Wisconsin will be \$670 per week, before tax withholding, and will be retroactive to the week ending August 1, 2020.

To be eligible for this benefit under the federal guidelines set forth by the Trump administration, recipients must receive at least \$100 in an Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and must certify that they are unemployed or partially unemployed due to disruptions caused by COVID-19. This new LWA payment will be in addition to Regular UI, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), or Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) payments currently available to eligible unemployed Wisconsin workers.

“There are many Wisconsinites who are still out of work and need additional financial assistance during this difficult time,” DWD Secretary Caleb Frostman said. “DWD has already begun setting up the program to ensure claimants receive these supplemental benefit payments as quickly as our technology can accommodate.”

Funding for this program comes from FEMA disaster relief funds and will end when the federal program exhausts its grant funding or Congress enacts legislation for a supplemental federal UI program. FEMA has allotted a three-week allocation per state upon approval, with additional weeks being determined on a weekly basis thereafter. Anticipating approval from FEMA, the Department's IT team is currently in the process of programming the addition of the LWA program. The program will be available following completion of this programming and receipt of federal approval.

For more information on Wisconsin's UI program, please visit <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui/>.

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