

# News Release



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## **Disaster Unemployment Assistance Available to Individuals Affected by Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line Winds and Flooding**

Individuals who have become unemployed as a direct result of the severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding that began in Benton, Carroll, Crawford, Faulkner, Jackson, Lee, Jefferson, Little River, Perry, Sebastian and Sevier counties on December 26, 2015 through January 22, 2016 may be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance, according to Daryl Bassett, director of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services.

At the request of Gov. Asa Hutchinson, a federal disaster declaration was issued designating Benton, Carroll, Crawford, Faulkner, Jackson, Lee, Jefferson, Little River, Perry, Sebastian and Sevier counties as federal disaster areas. Among the different types of assistance available to individuals and households by the federal disaster declaration is DUA. Individuals who have temporarily lost jobs because of the disaster and do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits (such as self-employed individuals) may be eligible for DUA, which provides unemployment benefits up to 32 weeks. The first possible week of compensation for DUA purposes is the week ending January 2, 2016, and the last possible week of compensation is the week ending August 6, 2016.

DUA claims may be filed at the following DWS offices:

Benton County	Rogers Local Office, 100 North Dixieland Road	(479) 636-4755
Carroll County	Harrison Local Office, 818 North Hwy 62-65	(870) 741-8236
Crawford County	Fort Smith Local Office, 616 Garrison Avenue, Room 101	(479) 783-0231
Faulkner County	Conway Local Office, 1500 N. Museum Road, Suite 111	(501) 730-9897
Jackson County	Newport Local Office, 7648 Victory Blvd., Suite B	(870) 523-3641
Jefferson County	Pine Bluff Local Office, 1001 South Tennessee Street	(870) 534-1920
Lee County	Helena Local Office, 819 Newman Drive	(870) 338-7415
Little River County	Texarkana Local Office, 1702 Hampton Road	(870) 216-4011
Perry County	Conway Local Office, 1500 N. Museum Road, Suite 111 Russellville Local Office, 104 S. Rochester Avenue	(501) 730-9894 (479) 968-2784
Sebastian County	Fort Smith Local Office, 616 Garrison Avenue, Room 101	(479) 783-0231

Claims for these eleven counties must be filed between February 10, 2016 through March 11, 2016, at DWS offices from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. DWS offices also will provide re-employment assistance where appropriate. Claims filed after the deadline will be considered untimely and benefits denied, unless the individual provides good cause for filing after that date.

To be eligible for benefits, individuals must have worked or have been scheduled to work in the disaster area, but because of the disaster, they no longer have a job, a place to work in the area or could not get to their place of work because of disaster damage. They also may qualify if they have been prevented from working because of an injury or illness resulting from the disaster or if they have become the head of household and need employment because the head of the household died as a result of the disaster. This benefit also may be available to self-employed individuals who have lost all or part of their livelihood as a result of the disaster.

Each claim is considered individually; therefore, individuals who believe they may be eligible should bring a copy of their government issued photo identification, Social Security card, the name and address of their last place of employment, and documents verifying income, such as income tax statements, recent pay stubs, W-2 forms or other proof of net income for 2015.

DWS officials understand that because of property losses some claimants may not have the necessary 2015 income information. Although some delays may result without this information, DWS staff will make every effort to work with DUA claimants to confirm their income information and expedite the claims-taking procedure.