

APPLYING FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS THROUGH TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (TWC) DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

All the information provided is updated as of April 6th 2020 and is subject to change.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

- ▶ TWC Website: <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/>
- ▶ TWC UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS HANDBOOK - on TWC website.

COVID-19 TWC UPDATES

- ▶ At present, the U.S. government and Texas legislature have not changed any laws or rules concerning unemployment benefits during the pandemic. However, Department of Labor guidance provides that federal law permits significant flexibility for states to provide Unemployment Insurance (UI) services related to COVID-19. Based on this, TWC will be waiving work search requirements for all claimants and the waiting week for those claimants affected by COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ All information regarding Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) is subject to change at any time due to the changing nature of the pandemic. Please revisit TWC web page regularly for updates.

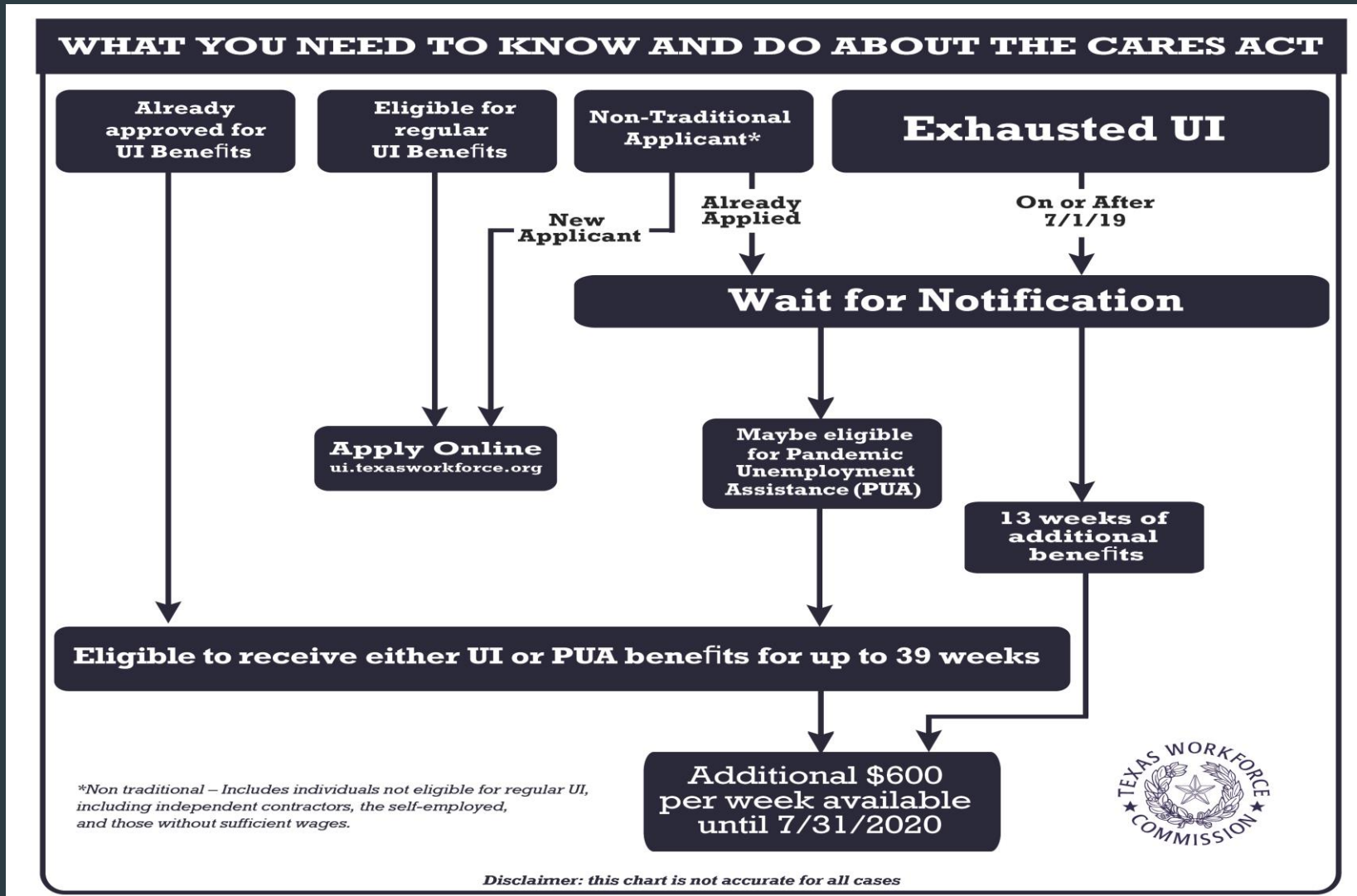
There were more than 63,000 application on Wednesday April 1st and more than 73,000 applications on Thursday April 2nd.

TWC had recruited 400 additional staff to cover the demand.

COVID-19 Unemployment Claims Filed

Week Ending	Total	Internet	Telephone	Other
2/22**	7,053	***	***	***
2/29**	7,393	***	***	***
3/7**	6,368	***	***	***
3/14**	6,042	2,731	1,380	1,931
3/21**	158,364	141,632	13,678	3,054
3/28**	292,522	256,214	20,642	15,696
4/4*	361,000	321,000	20,000	20,000
4/11*	34,240	33,000	40	1,200

COVID-19 TWC UDPATES



BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR FILING A CLAIM FOR BENEFITS

- ▶ Base-period wages
 - ▶ If you applied for unemployment benefits but lacked the necessary wages to qualify, no action is needed. TWC will determine if you qualify under the new stimulus bill and notify you by mail or electronic correspondence of your eligibility.
- ▶ Work search requirements (currently waived by TWC because of the pandemic)
- ▶ Job separations
 - ▶ Employees can apply if their hours are reduced.
- ▶ Able and available requirements

BASE-PERIOD WAGES

Worker must have worked for a sufficient period of time to qualify for benefits - technical computation

- ▶ If you applied for unemployment benefits but lacked the necessary wages to qualify, no action is needed. TWC will determine if you qualify under the new stimulus bill and notify you by mail or electronic correspondence of your eligibility.

WORK SEARCH REQUIREMENTS

TWC will be waiving work search requirements for all claimants and the waiting week for those claimants affected by COVID-19.

- ▶ Normally within 3 days of applying for benefits

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

- ▶ The workers can apply for benefits either online at anytime using Unemployment Benefit Services at <https://www.twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/unemployment-benefits-services>, in person, or by calling TWC's Tele-Center at 800-939-6631 during normal business hours.
- ▶ There is a 7-day waiting period that currently under Covid-19 pandemic has been waived.
- ▶ The unemployment benefits payments normally begin from the day you applied but now can be retroactively paid from March 8th 2020.
- ▶ TWC will contact employer who may contest claim.
- ▶ TWC may call worker for more information.

APPEALING DENIAL OF BENEFITS

- ▶ TWC will send a letter to worker stating that claim is denied; letter will explain how to appeal.
- ▶ 14 calendar days to appeal; letter states deadline for appeal.
- ▶ Cases where worker receives letter after deadline; appeal and state why worker is filing late: good cause.

When TWC receives an appeal, it compiles and mails a hearing notice packet to worker and employer. Packet has all information submitted by parties during application process. **It will include dumb things the worker said when a TWC investigator called him about his claim.**

- ▶ Employer can appeal award of benefits and request hearing.

TEMPORARY CHANGES IN THE TWC UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS PROGRAM DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1. 7 day waiting period to apply is waived.
2. Eligibility based on Base-period wages is expanded.
3. Benefit date can be retroactive from March 8th, 2020.
4. Work search requirement is waived.
5. Unemployment benefits are received for 39 weeks.
6. Additional \$600 per week.