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Gov. Beshear: Kentucky's Application for Federal Unemployment Assistance Approved

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 21, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear announced Friday that the state's application to bring in additional federal money to aid unemployed Kentuckians has been accepted.

The Governor said Kentucky is the first state in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Region 4 to be approved through the agency's Lost Wages Program to give \$400 to unemployment insurance claimants.

"This program will allow about 80,000 Kentuckians receiving at least \$100 a week unemployment benefits for the weeks of July 26-Aug. 15 to receive an additional payment of \$400, if they are unemployed or partially unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," Gov. Beshear said. "The \$400 will apply to all programs: traditional UI, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program and the extended benefits programs."

The Governor noted the federal government originally provided an additional \$600 to those facing job loss. That program ended without a replacement by the U.S. Congress. Then on Aug. 8, President Donald Trump signed a memorandum seeking to extend some additional benefits to Americans whose jobs have been harmed or eliminated by the global pandemic.

Gov. Beshear noted that most of the states approved for the program – including Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico and Utah – have chosen to fund the program solely with federal dollars, meaning recipients will receive \$300.

"We have decided to provide an extra \$100 using CARES Act money. Kentucky's portion will be approximately \$8 million per week, for a total of \$24 million over the three-week initial grant period," Gov. Beshear said.

While the application is approved, reconfiguring the computer systems to pay the \$400 is likely to take about two weeks. Therefore, benefits recipients should not expect the payments until sometime in early September.

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Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Releases July 2020 Unemployment Report

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 20, 2020) — Kentucky's seasonally adjusted preliminary July 2020 unemployment rate was 5.7 percent, according to the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), an agency within the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet (EWDC).

The preliminary July 2020 jobless rate was up 1.3 percentage points from June 2020 and up 1.4 percentage points from the 4.3 percent recorded for the state one year ago.

The U.S. seasonally adjusted jobless rate for July 2020 was 10.2 percent, down from 11.1 percent in June 2020, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Labor force statistics, including the unemployment rate, are based upon estimates from the Current Population Survey of households. The survey is designed to measure trends in the number of people working, and includes jobs in agriculture and individuals who are self-employed.

Kentucky's civilian labor force was 1,861,723 in July 2020, a decrease of 58,934 individuals from June 2020. The number of people employed in July decreased by 80,243, while the number unemployed increased by 21,309.

"Estimates of the number of people working in Kentucky have varied more than normal over the past few months. For July, the estimates indicate that fewer Kentucky residents were employed," said University of Kentucky's Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) Director Mike Clark, Ph.D. "Workers who lost their jobs are considered unemployed only if they are looking for work. Otherwise, they are classified as not in the labor force. As workers lost jobs, both the number of unemployed workers and people who are not in the labor force increased. Kentucky's official unemployment rate of 5.7 percent only counts unemployed workers who are looking for work. It does not reflect those who have left the labor force."

In a separate federal survey of business establishments that excludes jobs in agriculture and people who are self-employed, Kentucky's seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment increased by 26,400 jobs, or 1.5 percent, in July 2020 compared to June 2020. Kentucky's employment was down 150,700 jobs or 7.8 percent compared to July 2019.

"While the number of employed workers was down in July, businesses reported an increase in nonfarm jobs," said Clark. "This suggests that businesses continued to recover in July, but at a much slower pace than in June. Kentucky has now recovered 52 percent of total nonfarm employment losses that occurred from February to April."

Nonfarm data is provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Employment Statistics program. According to the survey, employment increased for eight of Kentucky's 11 major nonfarm North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) job sectors in July while three declined.

Kentucky's leisure and hospitality sector recovered 13,300 positions from June 2020 to July 2020. This represents an increase of 7.9 percent from June. This sector was down 20,800 jobs since July 2019. The accommodations and food services subsector added 10,600 jobs from June to July. Employment in the arts, entertainment and recreation subsector increased by 2,700 jobs.

"Leisure and hospitality firms have recovered 72 percent of the jobs losses that occurred from February to April 2020," said Clark.

Employment in Kentucky's educational and health services sector jumped by 8,400 jobs in July 2020. The educational services subsector gained 1,000 jobs in July. Health care and social assistance subsector increased by 7,400 jobs from June to July. Since last July, the sector is down 11,100 jobs or 3.9 percent.

The trade, transportation and utilities sector added 2,100 jobs in July 2020, a growth of 0.6 percent. Retail trade subsector rose by 1,800 jobs in July. Wholesale trade added 100 jobs and transportation, warehousing, and utilities gained 200 jobs. Since July 2019, employment in this sector has decreased by 28,200 positions or 7 percent.

Kentucky's manufacturing employment increased 2,000 jobs from June 2020 to July 2020, or 0.8 percent. Employment in durable goods manufacturing gained 1,500 jobs, while non-durable manufacturers added 500 jobs in July. Kentucky's manufacturing employment has dropped by 13,800 jobs since July 2019.

The professional and business services sector gained 1,300 jobs or 0.7 percent in July 2020. The administration and support and waste management subsector added 100 positions; the professional, scientific and technical services subsector gained 900 jobs; and the management of companies subsector added 300 positions. Jobs in this sector have fallen by 31,600 since July 2019.

Employment in the other services sector increased by 700 jobs from June 2020 to July 2020. This sector was down by 2,200 positions since July 2019. The other services sector includes repairs and maintenance, personal care services and religious organizations.

Kentucky's mining and logging sector rose by 300 jobs from June 2020 to July 2020, and was down 2,600 jobs or 26.3 percent from a year ago.

The government sector increased employment by 200 jobs from June 2020 to July 2020. Federal government employment rose by 300 jobs; state government employment increased by 700 jobs; and local government employment decreased by 800 jobs. Total government employment has declined by 29,300 jobs since July 2019.

Employment in the information services sector fell by 100 jobs in July 2020. This sector was down 3,400 jobs from a year ago. The industries in this sector include traditional publishing as well as software publishing; motion pictures and broadcasting; and telecommunications.

The financial activities sector declined by 500 jobs in July 2020. The finance and insurance subsector lost 700 jobs while the real estate, rental and leasing subsector was up 200 jobs from June 2020 to July 2020. The sector was down 6,700 jobs compared to last July.

Employment in Kentucky's construction sector fell by 1,300 jobs in July 2020. This represents a decrease of 1.6 percent from June. The construction sector was down 1,000 jobs or 1.2 percent from one year ago.

"An increase in residential remodeling and a backlog of construction projects have helped maintain Kentucky's construction employment over the past few months," said Clark. "Reduced construction employment in July may indicate that firms are working through much of their backlog of projects."