



SC Department of Employment and Workforce

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:
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Immediate Release

May 22, 2020

Employment and Workforce Executive Director Dan Ellzey's Statement April 2020 Employment Situation

“While South Carolina’s high unemployment rate is shocking compared to the record lows we recently enjoyed, I am sure that this news isn’t a surprise to anyone. As the unemployment rate has increased dramatically to 12.1%, it is significantly less than the U.S. rate of 14.7%. This unemployment level reflects our state’s careful, planned response to the COVID-19 pandemic in April.

You will notice that the number of unemployed people estimated in this release, 288,022, are far lower than the number of individuals who have filed initial claims with our agency over the past 10 weeks, a number topping 500,000. The disparity in the numbers is due to several factors, including:

- The survey of the employment situation is taken in the week of the 12th of each month while the initial claims numbers are updated weekly.
- There are tens of thousands of individuals whose business may have a furlough schedule, meaning they have filed a claim and will collect unemployment benefits for a week and then go back to work for a week. Depending on their schedule, the survey may not count them as unemployed even though they have an open claim with our agency.
- There are individuals who are working, but their hours are reduced making them eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, but also employed.

As the governor and AccelerateSC plan the reengagement of our workplaces, the Department of Employment and Workforce – which has more than doubled its effort to serve South Carolinians during this crisis – will be focused on four things:

1. Making sure all claims are processed and individuals are paid the critical benefits needed.
2. Implementing the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation for those whose benefits have or will expire.
3. Helping people navigate the path back to work by understanding all of the eligibility scenarios offered for potential employment barriers lingering from the influences of the Coronavirus.
4. Assisting employers with their workforce questions as they begin to reopen and help them find workers to support their business needs.

Our agency has a dual role under the umbrella of managing and supporting both employment and workforce through good times and bad, and we will continue to intensify our efforts to support the state.”

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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.