

Dept. of Workforce Development: New emergency rule waives work search requirement for unemployment benefits

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MADISON – Today the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) published a new Emergency Rule that will allow DWD to continue to waive work searches for people who apply for Unemployment Insurance benefits.

State law requires someone applying for unemployment benefits to look for a suitable job and provide information about four work search actions they have taken each week. This emergency rule allows DWD to respond to the spread of COVID-19 by waiving those work searches for thousands of people. The Department recognizes that the work search requirement carries a significant burden on claimants when many businesses remain closed and job opportunities in certain sectors are still limited in response to the ongoing health and safety impacts of the global pandemic.

For the week ending January 2, 2021, the Department received 25,005 weekly claims for federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, 31,936 weekly claims for federal Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, and 117,123 claims for regular state unemployment insurance. Without a waiver in place, all of those claimants would have been required to provide information about four work searches each week. The rule also continues to ease eligibility for people who would work but cannot for COVID-related reasons, such as being quarantined or subject to subsequent stay-at-home orders.