



FEMA

Recovery News

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DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED

HONOLULU, Hawaii — Big Island residents unemployed as a result of the October 15 Kiholo Earthquake may be eligible to file for federal disaster unemployment assistance, state and federal disaster recovery officials said today.

"This program extends coverage only to people who would otherwise be ineligible for unemployment compensation under the regular state program," said Ed Teixeira, state coordinating officer.

The special assistance program was triggered by President Bush's declaration of Hawaii County as a disaster area. Those eligible include people who are:

- Out of work as a result of the disaster.
- Self-employed or a migrant/seasonal worker with income affected by the disaster.
- Not covered by any other unemployment insurance.

The federally funded, disaster assistance program is administered by the state in the same way as the Hawaii unemployment program. Individuals who want to file for benefits can apply by telephone by calling Hawaii Tele-Claim at 643-5555 or by visiting the nearest Unemployment Claims Office:

- **Hilo** --1990 Kinoole St, Suite 101, Hilo . Telephone 974-4086.
- **Kona** -- Ashikawa Bldg, 81-990 Halekii St, Suite 2090, Kealahou. Telephone 322-4822.

DUA applications must be filed no later than December 29, 2006.

Individuals who are not affected now but may become unemployed later (for example, due to the water shortage caused by the earthquake damage) should file and establish their DUA claims immediately, according to officials of the State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR).

Applicants need to bring a picture identification card and/or any document showing their Social Security number, pay stubs or tax returns, financial statements or profit and loss statements showing net earnings for calendar year 2005.

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Additional information regarding eligibility for DUA benefits is available from DLIR's website, <http://hawaii.gov/labor/ui/guidelines.shtml> or the nearest Unemployment Claims Office:

Information about this and other disaster recovery programs also is available by calling the toll-free Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Information Helpline at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). Persons with speech or hearing impairment can call TTY 1-800-462-7585. The Helpline operates daily from 3 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, economic status or retaliation. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, you should call FEMA toll-free at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or contact your State Office of Equal Rights. If suspicious of any abuse of FEMA programs, please contact the fraud hotline at 1-800-323-8603.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations.

State Civil Defense coordinates state-wide emergency preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation programs for a wide range of natural and human-caused threats and disasters including terrorism. As part of its responsibilities, State Civil Defense manages state and federal grants provided to local communities for disaster recovery and mitigation.

FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident, initiates mitigation activities and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA works closely with state and local emergency managers, law enforcement personnel, firefighters and other first responders. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.