

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **STATE SHIFTS RESOURCES TO HELP PROCESS UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS** American Job Centers Statewide to Limit Access and Transition Staff to Process Claims

**NASHVILLE** – Recent events in our state have impacted the employment of many Tennesseans. Because of this, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) has seen a large increase in the number of unemployment claims. This increase, along with public health concerns, has prompted a change in strategy for the agency.

To meet the current demand for unemployment benefits and address public health concerns, the Department will limit access to American Job Centers and shift resources to triple the number of staff trained to process claim applications.

Starting Monday, March 23, each American Job Center across Tennessee will begin limiting access to facilities and conduct business through phone and internet. This change will allow state-employed staff to switch their focus from workforce development tasks to claims processing.

Nearly 200 employees work inside Tennessee's 23 comprehensive American Job Centers. This shift in job duties will bring the total number of staff focusing on unemployment to approximately 300, which is roughly one-third of the Department's employees.

"As a Department, we are shifting resources to align with our greatest need," said TDLWD Commissioner Jeff McCord. "The changes we are making will go a long way in keeping up with the demand created."

The Department will extend customer service hours to 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. CT Monday through Friday to serve additional claimants.

The majority of employees processing claims will be able to work from home.

While access is limited at American Job Centers, job search assistance is available online and help is available via telephone. The state's workforce development website provides a wide variety of virtual assistance tools, everything from tips on writing resumes, interviewing and means to view and apply for over 200,000 job vacancies.

Although we are facing challenging times in our state, the Department remains committed to providing valuable services to Tennesseans.