

# Texas Workforce Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **TWC Assisting Louisiana Workers Displaced by Disaster**

AUSTIN — The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is assisting the Louisiana Department of Labor in processing Louisiana Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) claims due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.

TWC is partnering with Louisiana to expedite the claims filing process. Louisiana workers who lost their jobs due to the disaster and have relocated to Texas can go to the nearest Texas Workforce Center and file a claim via the Internet at [www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net). Texas is working with the state of Louisiana to provide claims services for Louisiana residents who have remained in their home state. This will be done through a 1 800 number using Texas claims takers to file claims on behalf of Louisiana workers who lost their job as a result of the disaster. Details of these procedures will be disseminated as soon as they are available.

Evacuees who have relocated to Texas either temporarily or permanently, may file a claim via the Internet at [www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net) or through the Texas Telecenter Network by calling one of the following numbers:

Austin	512-340-4300
Dallas	214-252-1200
El Paso	915-832-6400
Fort Worth	817-420-1600
Houston	281-983-1100
McAllen	956-984-4700
San Antonio	210-258-6600
All other areas in Texas	800-939-6631

Call centers will be open for extended hours to handle the additional claims.

**(more)**

In addition, Texas workforce development boards across the state with large numbers of Louisiana evacuees are establishing on site workforce centers at evacuation shelters including the Houston Astrodome. Other on site workforce centers are being established in San Antonio, Dallas, Beaumont, Port Arthur and other cities in Texas with displaced Louisiana workers. Many of these boards will sponsor on site job fairs to match workers with local employers. Several workforce boards are contributing the use of their mobile workforce centers to further assist with evacuees' needs.

Because of the catastrophic nature of Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana is working around the clock to restructure the way Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) claims are accepted and how payments are delivered.

Louisiana residents who lost employment as a result of Hurricane Katrina may qualify for DUA benefits. In order to be eligible, a claimant must:

- Have worked or been scheduled to work in the disaster area, but because of the disaster no longer have a job, a place to work in the area, or you could not get to your place of work because of disaster damage;
- Have been prevented from working by an injury or illness as a direct result of the disaster; or
- Have become the head of the household and need employment because the head of the household died as a result of the disaster. Or,
- Have been self-employed, but lost all or part of your livelihood as a result of this disaster (you will need to provide proof of your selfemployment).

Existing TWC staff is working overtime and TWC will be hiring a combination of temporary workers and retired TWC employees to handle the additional volume of UI claims. Services associated with assisting Louisiana residents will be paid for through federal funds.

TWC is working in concert with Governor Rick Perry, Texas state and local agencies, and other states to provide aid and support to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The U.S. Department of Labor is supporting efforts in impacted areas in Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama in coordination with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the agency that is actively managing federal assistance to these affected communities in an effort to expedite response efforts and save lives.

*The Texas Workforce Commission is a state agency dedicated to helping Texas employers, workers and communities prosper economically. For details on TWC and the programs it offers in unison with its network of local workforce development boards, call (512) 463-8556 or visit [www.texasworkforce.org](http://www.texasworkforce.org).*