



Workforce Issuance

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☐ Policy ☒ Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
Workforce Board Chairs
Workforce Board Directors
Title I Administrators
Career Center Directors
Title I Fiscal Officers
DCS Operations Managers

cc: WIOA State Partners

From: Alice Sweeney, Director
Department of Career Services

Rick Jeffers, Director
Department of Unemployment Assistance

Date: September 27, 2018

Subject: **Columbia Gas Explosions UI Claims for Affected Individuals**

Purpose: To notify Local Workforce Boards, Career Center Operators and other local workforce partners of guidance because of the recent Columbia Gas explosions in the Lawrence, Andover and North Andover areas. Many workers are unable to return to their workplace, causing a lack of work that may create eligibility for unemployment benefits.

Workers do not need a formal layoff notice from their employer to file a claim for unemployment benefits. If they are available and willing to work but their place of employment is closed due to the catastrophe, they are encouraged to file a claim for unemployment benefits.

The Department of Unemployment Assistance has set up a designated phone line for individuals who live or work in the affected areas to provide information, answer questions and assist with unemployment claim filings. The dedicated

phone line for these claims is 877-355-1135. Individuals may also file their unemployment claims using the self-service UI Online system at:

www.mass.gov/unemployment-benefits-for-claimants.

The Department of Unemployment Assistance also has staff on site at the ValleyWorks Career Center of Lawrence who are ready to provide information, answer questions, and assist with unemployment claim filings for anyone affected by the Columbia Gas situation.

The ValleyWorks Career Center is located at 255 Essex Street, Lawrence, Massachusetts, 01840. Their telephone number is 978-722-7000.

Spanish Notice:

Cualquier persona que trabajó o vivió en el área afectada por las recientes explosiones de Columbia Gas y que ahora no puede regresar al trabajo como resultado de este desastre, puede presentar una reclamación de beneficios de desempleo. Los trabajadores no necesitan un aviso de despido formal de parte de su empleador para presentar una reclamación de beneficios de desempleo. Si están disponibles y dispuestos a trabajar, pero su lugar de trabajo está cerrado debido a la catástrofe, están experimentando una "falta de trabajo" que puede crear elegibilidad para los beneficios de desempleo. El Departamento de Asistencia al Desempleado tiene personal en el Centro de Recursos Profesionales ValleyWorks de Lawrence que están listos para proporcionar información, responder preguntas y ayudar con las reclamaciones de desempleo para cualquier persona afectada por la situación de Columbia Gas. Las personas que tengan preguntas sobre la asistencia por desempleo o que deseen asistencia para presentar una reclamación de desempleo pueden llamar al 877-355-1135. Las personas también pueden presentar sus reclamaciones de desempleo utilizando el sistema de autoservicio UI Online en: www.mass.gov/unemployment-benefits-for-claimants. El Centro de Recursos Profesionales ValleyWorks se encuentra en 255 Essex Street, Lawrence, Massachusetts, 01840. Su número de teléfono es 978-722-7000.

Action

Requested: Please disseminate this information and assure that all appropriate staff are aware of these resources for customers/claimants.