



STATE OF ARKANSAS
ASA HUTCHINSON
GOVERNOR

May 7, 2021

Dr. Charisse Childers
Director
Division of Workforce Services
Department of Commerce
2 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72202

Dear Dr. Childers:

I want to thank you and your team at the Division of Workforce Services (DWS) for the significant work you have accomplished over the past fourteen months to assist Arkansans affected by the economic consequences caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through our regular unemployment insurance program and temporary federal programs, almost three million unemployment claims have been processed providing almost three billion dollars in assistance to the people of Arkansas.

We are very fortunate in Arkansas that our economy is rebounding so quickly. Our state revenue is ahead of forecast, and business is once again expanding. Our state unemployment rate of 4.4 percent is well below the national rate and only 0.6 percent above the pre-pandemic level. At this point in our economic recovery, I have confidence that the extraordinary federal unemployment measures that have been put in place for over a year have accomplished their purposes. Continuing these programs until the planned expiration date of September 4, 2021, is not necessary and actually interferes with the ability of employers to fill over 40,000 job vacancies in Arkansas. In order to safeguard the progress that we are making, we must return our state unemployment system to normal functioning.

Accordingly, I hereby direct DWS to terminate the State of Arkansas's participation in the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program, the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program, the Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) program, the Emergency Unemployment Relief for Governmental Entities and Non-Profit Organizations program, and the Temporary

Federal Funding of the First Week of Compensable Regular Unemployment for States with No Waiting Week program, effective June 26, 2021. I am also directing DWS to provide maximum job search assistance to those Arkansans still receiving unemployment benefits so that they may transition back to employment.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Asa Hutchinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Asa Hutchinson