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ODJFS Adds Fraud Detection Tool for Unemployment Claims

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has partnered with a national data hub to detect fraudulent unemployment claims.

Operated by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies' Unemployment Insurance Integrity Center, the Integrity Data Hub helps states identify fictitious claims by searching for and matching data used in fraud schemes in other states. The Data Hub also identifies unemployment claims filed outside the United States and claims filed in multiple states.

“Part of being a good steward of taxpayer money is ensuring that those who are eligible for help receive it,” said ODJFS Director Kimberly Hall. “This additional fraud detection tool will help keep benefits with Ohioans that are truly in need.”

ODJFS is currently using the Data Hub for individual investigations but expects to routinely run its weekly claims through the Data Hub by the end of the year. If they identify a potentially fraudulent claim that also was filed in another state, staff members will contact that state to share information and investigate.

ODJFS uses a variety of tools to detect fraud, including new hire reports from employers, cross-matches with quarterly unemployment insurance tax reports, cross-matches with local/state/national incarceration records, cross-matches with government records, performance audits and public tips.

Individuals who commit fraud must repay the benefit and a 25% penalty. They may have federal and state income tax returns intercepted, wages garnished and court-ordered restitution imposed. They also will be prohibited from collecting future unemployment benefits until serving two penalty weeks for each week fraud was committed, and they may face criminal prosecution.

More than 200,000 Ohioans apply for unemployment benefits annually. Benefits are intended to provide short-term income to unemployed workers who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. To receive unemployment benefits, Ohioans must be able to work, available for work and actively seeking work.

Ohioans can report fraud tips online at unemployment.ohio.gov/fraud, by calling 1-800-686-1555, or by emailing ucbenprotest@jfs.ohio.gov.

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The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.

