

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 17, 2021

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## **ODJFS Clears Unemployment Appeals Backlog**

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Director Matt Damschroder today announced the department has essentially cleared the backlog of appeals, also known as redeterminations, associated with its traditional and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) programs. Appeals associated with PUA have been made current and approximately 40 appeals in the traditional system involving interstate or fact-finding issues remain.

“The historic number of claims throughout the pandemic brought about unprecedented appeals,” said Damschroder. “This summer we put together an aggressive plan to address these appeals, and thanks to the efforts of our staff, we’ve been able to do just that.”

Claimants or employers who disagree with an initial JFS decision about an unemployment claim have the right to appeal and request a redetermination decision. The agency may either issue a redetermination decision, which is further appealable, or certify the matter directly to the Unemployment Compensation Review Commission, an independent administrative agency that holds hearings on disputed unemployment compensation issues. Like other states, the drastic increase in unemployment claims and appeals led to a backlog in issuing redetermination decisions, which is the subject of ongoing litigation in Ohio.

In July, there were 177,500 outstanding appeals, 146,000 of which were older than 21 days, the target for addressing appeals. To address the backlog, the department began tracking progress and conducting bi-weekly forecasting that took into consideration factors such as the current volume of appeals and rate of processing. This allowed the department to better project staffing and overtime needs, and apply appropriate resources such as assigning and cross-training additional staff.

Since the start of the pandemic, ODJFS has issued more than 558,000 redeterminations. A typical annual volume pre-pandemic was approximately 45,000 redeterminations.

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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.*

