



# BELIZE PRESS OFFICE

• Phone: 822-0094 or 0092

• Fax: 822-2671

• website: [www.belize.gov.bz](http://www.belize.gov.bz)

## Update on Unemployment Relief Program

*Belmopan. May 28, 2020. 5:30 p.m.*

On April 3, 2020, the Unemployment Relief Program opened for applications. When new applications were suspended on April 24th, a total of 81,052 applications were received.

To date, a total of 43,726 applications have been approved and passed onto Social Security Board (SSB) for payment. Of this total, 42% are for persons who were recently laid off from their jobs, 25% are for self-employed persons who lost their work and income, and 33% are for persons who applied as long-term unemployed. Applications will continue to be processed over the next several days, raising the total approved applications to about 50,000.

SSB has processed all approved payments and 40,927 persons or 94% of approved applicants have been successfully paid. Those that have not been paid are largely due to errors in banking information. Although this problem is affecting only a small percentage of approved applications, it is a critical issue to those awaiting receipt of much-needed financial support. A solution should be available by the end of today.

Of the remaining applications yet to be determined, about 16,000 persons applied as laid off due to COVID-19. Approximately 4,500 of these applicants did not provide information on their employers or jobs. Additionally, about 3,500 applicants are persons whose employers have confirmed that they did not lay off any staff or were in categories, such as grocery stores, where employment appeared to be least affected by COVID-19.

Out of 10,900 applications from self-employed persons, 9,200 applicants did not provide any information pertaining to the nature of their work. There is also approximately 8,600 applications remaining for long-term unemployment relief.

The public is advised that the hotlines/help numbers listed on the Unemployment Relief Portal have been inactive due to public officers returning to their substantive posts. Replacement officers are being identified to answer phone calls and the public will be notified when the phone numbers are reactivated. When this happens, members of the public should refrain from cursing, threatening or otherwise abusing the officers answering calls as there have been many reports of abusive behaviour directed at the officers.

In the meantime, kindly send information and queries via email to [unemployment@covid19.bz](mailto:unemployment@covid19.bz).

**Ends**