



Lake County, Ohio

Board of Commissioners

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Fraudulent Unemployment Claims Affect Citizens in Lake County

Many individuals throughout the State of Ohio have been victims of unemployment fraud throughout the past few months. Lake County Department of Job and Family Services Director Matthew Battiato shared that “this is a problem statewide and is affecting many individuals in Lake County. While the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services cannot assist with fraudulent unemployment claims, we are providing members of the public with information on how they can report these concerns to the State.” One way victims have been discovering identity theft is by receiving an IRS 1099-G form for unemployment benefits that were never received.

“The Commissioners Office understands the frustration of our residents. We have been in contact with our colleagues in Columbus to ensure protective measures are being taken to prevent future fraudulent activities,” said Commissioner John Hamercheck.

Unemployment benefits are issued by the State and the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services does not have jurisdiction to assist with fraudulent unemployment claims. Fraudulent unemployment claims must be reported directly to the State by contacting the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has established a toll-free number for **individuals** to notify the agency if they believe their personal information was compromised and used to file a fraudulent unemployment claim: (833) 658-0394. This number is staffed by 50 dedicated, cross-trained customer service representatives, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

“Residents are encouraged to call the State of Ohio hotline to ensure their issues are being handled by the appropriate party,” said Commissioner Ron Young.



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The phone number complements a secure online portal ODJFS established in January 2021 to provide a direct way for victims to report identity theft. Individuals who believe their identity was stolen and used to file a fraudulent unemployment claim can visit unemployment.ohio.gov, click on the “Report Identity Theft” button and follow the guidance for individuals.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has also created an online portal that provides a direct way for **employers** to notify the agency if they believe their employee’s personal information was compromised and used to file fraudulent unemployment claims.

“This recent wave of fraudulent claims has also put an undue hardship on our local employers. I encourage our business community to utilize the tools established by the State of Ohio to report additional claims,” noted Commissioner John Plecnik.

Employers can visit unemployment.ohio.gov and click on the “Report Identity Theft” button. They will then be directed to both the portal and additional resources. The portal includes a template that employers can download, complete and then upload to provide the names of multiple employees whose personal information may have been compromised.

Many employers are alerted to the issue when they receive a “Request For Separation Information” from ODJFS regarding an individual who is currently employed. This portal provides a secure way to expedite the reporting of this information to the agency.