New Jersey residents in all 21 counties will have until Feb. 4, 2013 to apply for coverage under the federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program as a result of damages caused by Hurricane Sandy.

The order establishes one deadline date and extends the timeline within which people may file a claim, according to an announcement by Gov. Chris Christie and the U. S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The program covers people in all 21 New Jersey counties, especially self-employed individuals who were left unemployed as a direct result of the storm and who may not be covered by regular unemployment insurance.

Most impacted workers may already qualify for regular unemployment insurance, which is why anyone who plans to file a DUA claim should first file a regular claim for unemployment insurance. The federal DUA is a special program that covers people who otherwise may not be eligible for regular unemployment.

If you are unemployed or were left temporarily unemployed because of the disaster that began on Oct. 28, you should first file for unemployment insurance benefits online at www.njuifile.net. Note that due to higher than normal volume as a result of Hurricane Sandy, the system is experiencing some delays. As a result, individuals are encouraged to file via the Internet between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m.

The Internet processes claims faster. However, if needed, people may also file a claim by telephone by contacting the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development's re-employment call centers at:

- South Jersey (856) 507-2340
- Central Jersey (732) 761-2020
- North Jersey (201) 601-4100
- Out of State (888) 795-6672

For additional information see lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/ui/aftrfile/dua.html.

For more information on FEMA services call the FEMA emergency number at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or (800) 462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. Information is also available at disasterassistance.gov and fema.gov .

For information on all state Department of Labor and Workforce Development programs and services see lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/index.html and Jobs4Jersey.com .