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The New Mexico Film Office Updates on COVID-19 Response

SANTA FE, N.M. - The New Mexico State Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) has announced support for workers who have lost their jobs, or suffered a reduction in salary, due to the COVID-19 virus. This support covers eligible entertainment industry workers in New Mexico.

Last week Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham declared New Mexico a public health emergency in order to help reduce and better track the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Studios and production companies nationwide, including Netflix and NBCUniversal (NBCU), our New Mexico Film Partners, have paused the production of current and upcoming projects, causing temporary reduction of worker hours and reductions in business for related industries. As of March 16, NBCU and Netflix have postponed production for two weeks to reassess. Core crew are on payroll to receive minimum call during hiatus. All IATSE Local 480 films and TV shows in New Mexico have halted production in consideration of entertainment industry workers' safety and health.

"We know that the film industry is poised to be one of the hardest hit from the COVID-19 emergency, as their work is project-dependent. New Mexico State will continue to work toward making sure we support the workforce in New Mexico and keep everyone informed throughout this emergency. Our number one concern is the health and safety of all New Mexicans," Economic Development Department Director Alicia J. Keyes said.

Regarding entertainment industry workers who are members of IATSE Local 480, President Liz Pecos stated, "At this time we can report that all employers in our jurisdiction have made a decision to halt production in varying degrees as far time down. The decision to close shop for a few weeks, months or to stop production entirely is the decision of the employer and we are grateful for the safety measures taken by each employer to further prevent the spread of COVID-19. IATSE Local 480 is working closely with our International to advocate for federal assistance. IATSE President Matthew B. Loeb and the IATSE Political Department have been engaged in constant conversations with Congress about relief and pursuing legislation to provide economic support for members facing loss of income and benefits due to postponement or cancellation of work."

NMDWS has a process that allows for all New Mexico residents, including those losing income in relation to the film industry, to receive up to \$461 each week. Even if an entertainment industry worker continues employment, but at a rate lower than \$461 per week due to COVID-19, they may be able to receive unemployment insurance benefits to fill the gap. This particular program, as of March 16, 2020, waives the standard work search requirement.

Pecos adds, "Local 480 is working with the NM Department of Workforce solutions to distribute information to members that will streamline the process of filing claims. The Local 480 office is set up to support any issues members encounter along the way. Local

480 is also assisting members in accessing emergency hardship withdrawals from their annuity accounts.”

“We are happy to be working with IATSE 480 to make sure that the process is as smooth as possible for our film workers,” Bill McCamley, Secretary of Workforce Solutions, said. “We will use every tool at our disposal to help in the upcoming days so that we can all get through this together.”

NMDWS has put out the following resources to help entertainment industry workers in New Mexico:

1. Four minute video explains the unemployment benefit process: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDryvwFs1jg&fbclid=IwAR1AMWSP737OoeBuLEW3xjhV7MI2keUx8odoloKMModiMsIeiLNioN2m7HY>

2. One-page fact sheet: <https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/o/DM/UI/COVID-19%20UI%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

3) To file an initial Unemployment Insurance claim please visit www.jobs.state.nm.us or call TOLL-FREE: 1-877-664-6984.

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Visit the New Mexico Film Office at nmfilm.com

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