

Fraudulent Unemployment Claims Continue to Rise in Ohio

By Amanda M. Connelly

Unemployment claims throughout Ohio continue to rise, and at the same time, fraudulent employment claims have also increased at an alarming rate. At the beginning of this month, over 128,000 claims were filed with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). Of those 128,000, at least 19,000 have been flagged as possible fraud. At this point, it is very possible that either you or someone you know has received a 1099 tax form from the state of Ohio regarding an unemployment claim that has been filed using your or your friend's information. In fact, even Governor Mike DeWine and his wife, Fran, had fraudulent claims filed under their names. There also have been instances where Ohioans have received forms listing them as employers of an "employee," despite not being employers at all, forcing the individuals to return forms to ODJFS to correct the attempted fraudulent claims.

Since February of this year, fraudulent claims have increased three times more than the beginning of the pandemic. Many of these fraudulent claims are tied to relief programs established by the government, both state and federal, in response to COVID-19.

As a result, at beginning of the year, ODJFS announced an online reporting system for employers who suspect fraudulent unemployment claims made on behalf of current or former employees. Employers, or alleged employers, can report suspected fraud in response to ODJFS's initial Request for Information or by reporting suspected fraud [here](#).

Both employees and employers can file a report of a suspected fraudulent claimant at www.unemployment.ohio.gov and clicking on the "Report Identity Theft" link. For additional information, employees can be referred to the [Ohio Attorney General website](#) for information related to identify theft.

While Ohio is seeing a surge in fraudulent claims, it is not alone. Fraudulent claims have been on the rise across the country. In response, the Department of Justice has released an [Unemployment Insurance Fraud Consumer Protection Guide](#).

Roetzel will continue to monitor developments in this area. For more information and insight on this matter, please contact one of the listed Roetzel attorneys.

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