

Executive Order Creates Technology/eDiscovery Vendor Opportunity with Florida Unemployment Office

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With 9.9 million Americans filing for unemployment in the past two weeks, on Thursday, April 2, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-93. The order directs that all Florida agency heads work in consultation with the Florida Department of Management Services to identify personnel in each of the agencies to provide assistance to the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), the state's unemployment office, to process applications for reemployment assistance. While this is a bad sign of things to come, it does perhaps give rise to a business opportunity.

Among other things, the order directed DEO to "pursue...new or alternative forms and methods for receiving applications, including paper applications...." Notably, the order directs DEO immediately to procure additional capacity via software and technology to process application. The order also directed DEO to pursue a relationship with a third-

party company to assist in the collection and delivery of paper applications to DEO.

In light of the likely volume of claims, a high-speed scanning and data capture company could surely fit the bill. While not purpose-made to achieve the stated goal, given the increase in capability and capacity for optical character recognition-including handwriting-this may be an opportunity. Likewise, a company with high-speed scanning and data-processing capabilities, not necessarily related to eDiscovery, would seem to be a fit. Further, the order provides that the directive to purchase new technology is an emergency, so it is likely to side-step many of the normal government procurement processes.

Notably, the maximum benefit for unemployment payment in Florida is \$275 per week, for a maximum of 12 weeks and a maximum benefit amount of \$3,300. Under new federal legislation, this benefit may increase by up to \$600 per week for up to 4 months.

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