

Online Claim Filing Kit

Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency



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**UNEMPLOYMENT
INSURANCE
AGENCY**

RICK SNYDER, Governor
State of Michigan

STEVEN H. HILFINGER, Director
Department of Licensing and
Regulatory Affairs

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Unemployment Insurance Agency

Claiming Unemployment Benefits in Michigan

If you become unemployed, you may qualify for unemployment insurance benefits. These benefits are intended to provide temporary income as you seek new employment. The following is basic information about Michigan's unemployment insurance program, which is administered by the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA).

How to file a claim for unemployment benefits

A claim for unemployment benefits begins the week it is filed. Therefore, you should file your claim for benefits during your first week of unemployment. There are two ways in which to file a claim. You can file a new unemployment claim or reopen an existing claim by:

1. Internet -- visit UIA's website -- www.michigan.gov/uia. The website is available from 7:00 a.m. Monday through 7:00 p.m. Saturday (*Eastern Time*). If you need a computer with Internet access, visit your local public library. Most have computers with Internet connections available for public use.

2. Telephone -- call UIA's telephone filed claims (TFC) number at **1-866-500-0017**. When to call: Call the toll-free TFC number to file your unemployment claim according to the schedule shown to the right.

Schedule for filing by phone Based on last 2 digits of Social Security number

	8:00 AM to 12:30 PM (Agents available)	12:30 PM to 6:00 PM (Agents available)	6:00 PM to 8:00 AM (No agents available)
Mon	00-15	16-33	Open call-in
Tues	34-48	49-66	Open call in
Wed	67-81	82-99	Open call in
Thur Fri	Open call in		Open call in

Eastern Time

Once you file your new claim, you will be mailed:

- A determination showing if you qualify based on the wages you have earned, the amount of weekly benefits and the number of weeks you **may receive**.
- If there is an eligibility issue with your claim, you will receive a separate notice.
- A booklet with detailed information about your rights and responsibilities for unemployment benefits, unless you have chosen to view the booklet online. **Please read this material carefully.**

Qualifying requirements – The UIA will look at your **standard base period** to determine if your wages qualify you for unemployment benefits. The standard base period includes the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters prior to when you filed your claim. The four calendar quarters in a year are: January – March, April – June, July – September and October – December.

If you cannot qualify based on your standard base period, the UIA will consider your wages in the **“alternate” base period**, which is the four most recently completed calendar quarters.

There are two ways in which your wages may qualify you for unemployment benefits:

- **“Regular” qualifying method:** (a) For benefit years beginning January 4, 2009, and after, you must have wages in at least two quarters in your base period. In one quarter, your wages must be at least **\$2,871**; and (b) total wages for all four quarters must equal at least one and a half times the highest amount of wages paid in any quarter of the base period. ($\$2,871 \times 1.5 = \$4,306.50$)

OR

- **Alternate Earnings Qualifier (AEQ):** (a) You must have wages in at least two quarters; and (b) total wages for all four quarters must equal at least 20 times the state average weekly wage (SAWW). For 2012, the AEQ amount is **\$17,206.80** [$20 \times \860.34 (SAWW) = \$17206.80].

Eligibility requirements – To be eligible for unemployment benefits, you must be unemployed and able to, available for, and actively seeking suitable full-time work. Unless instructed otherwise by UIA staff, you must also register for work two to three business days before your first call to MARVIN by filing your resume with the Michigan Talent Bank and by reporting to your local *Michigan Works!* Agency service center.

Receiving your benefits – You report to the UIA by telephone or through the Internet to certify concerning your eligibility for benefits, using Michigan's Automated Response Voice Interactive Network (MARVIN). You must certify through MARVIN every other week in order to receive your unemployment benefits. Your MARVIN appointment time is based on your Social Security number. To call MARVIN, dial its toll-free telephone number **1-866-638-3993**. To use MARVIN online, visit UIA's website (www.michigan.gov/uia) and click on the "UIA Online Services for Unemployed Workers" link. You will need to create a free online web account with UIA.

When you apply for benefits, you can choose to receive your benefits through either a debit card or by direct deposit into your bank account.

Amount of unemployment benefits – UIA staff calculates how much you receive in unemployment benefits by multiplying the highest amount of wages paid to you in any base period quarter by 4.1%. The UIA adds \$6 for each dependent you claim, up to five dependents. The weekly benefit amount is capped at \$362.

To determine how many weeks of benefits you may receive, UIA multiplies your total base period wages by 43%, and then divides that answer by your weekly benefit amount. The claim, however, cannot be less than 14 weeks or more than 20.

Receiving unemployment benefits while working – In some cases, you can accept part-time work while receiving unemployment benefits. However, your work must be less than full-time, and your benefits will be reduced according to *how much you earn in the week for which you are claiming benefits*.

There are three basic principles that affect how much you can earn while receiving unemployment benefits: **(1)** if your wages are equal to or less than your weekly benefit amount, then your benefits are reduced by 50¢ for every dollar you earn; **(2)** if your wages exceed your weekly benefit amount but are less than 1½ times your benefit amount, then your total wages are subtracted from 1½ times your weekly benefit amount; and **(3)** the combination of your weekly benefits and wages cannot exceed 1½ times your weekly benefit amount.

A point to remember: The number of benefit weeks remaining on your claim will be reduced by one full week for each week you receive *any* benefit payment.

For further information -- For general information about unemployment benefits, visit our website at www.michigan.gov/uia. If you have a question or problem with your telephone or Internet-filed claim, you can inquire about the claim by calling **1-866-500-0017** and selecting Option 3. If you have an online web account with the agency, you can email questions about your unemployment claim to UIA's Virtual Problem Resolution unit. This toll-free number is open weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. We also have problem resolution offices (PRO) in Detroit, Gaylord, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Marquette and Saginaw for in-person assistance with any problem you may have with your claim. There are also temporary mini-PROs in three Dept. of Human Services offices – Kalamazoo, Mt. Clemens and Muskegon. (See UIA website for locations)

<i>January</i>						
<i>S</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>S</i>
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

FILING EXAMPLE

If you're filing a new claim or reopening an established claim:

January 21 – last day of work

January 23-29 – week claim should be filed

February 6-12 – to certify for your first two weeks of unemployment (weeks ending 1/29 and 2/5), contact MARVIN either by telephone at 1-866-638-3993 **OR** by going online to UIA's website and choosing the link, "UIA Online Services for Unemployed Workers." Contact MARVIN by phone or online at your appointed day and time on Monday through Wednesday during this week. If you are unable to contact MARVIN at your scheduled time, you can try again any time on Thursday or Friday between 8:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

Generally, UIA will issue your benefits within a day or two of your certification. There could, however, be a delay, if you were separated from your job for any reason other than lack of work.

LARA is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids, services and other reasonable accommodations are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.



Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
 Unemployment Insurance Agency
 Authority: UIA Director; Quantity: 1,000
 Cost: \$14 (1.4¢/copy). Paid for with federal funds.

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UIA offers electronic options for receiving unemployment benefits

In June 2008, the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) expanded its benefit payment options for those receiving or filing for unemployment benefits.

Unemployed workers can now select how they want to receive their benefits through:

- Michigan UI Debit Card
- Direct Deposit into their savings or checking account
- Paper unemployment checks delivered by mail

Advantages of direct deposit and debit card

These two benefit payment options are faster, more secure and a convenient alternative to paper checks. They also eliminate the worry about mail delays as the benefits are electronically deposited into the individual's bank account or added to their debit card within two or three days following their certification for benefits through the MARVIN system.

Individuals are not locked into one payment method for the duration of their claims. They can change their benefit payment method by calling UIA's toll-free claims line at **1-866-500-0017**, and selecting **Option #2**. Workers can also go online to the UIA website (www.michigan.gov/ui) and establish a web account, where they can choose or change their payment option, among other online services.

When they choose their option

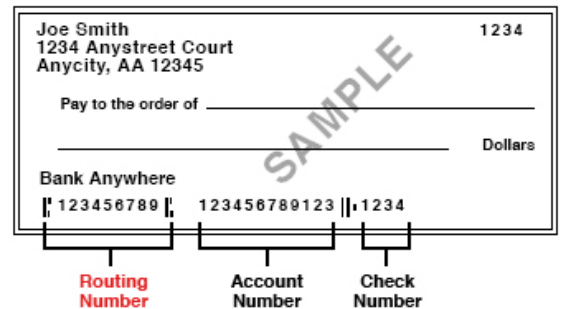
When a worker applies for unemployment benefit, whether by telephone (1-866-500-0017) or through the Internet (www.michigan.gov/ui), they will be asked to select how they wish to receive their benefit payments from among the three options.

The debit card will be issued or the direct deposit option will be established once UIA issues a monetary determination. Funds will be added to the worker's Michigan UI Debit Card or deposited in the individual's bank or credit union account within two or three days after they have made their biweekly eligibility certification through UIA's MARVIN system, if they have been determined to be eligible.

Direct Deposit

In order to use the direct deposit option, individuals must have an existing account with a U.S. financial institution. Through direct deposit, the individual can have his or her unemployment benefits deposited into either a checking or savings account.

When selecting direct deposit as their payment option, individuals will need their bank's or credit union's nine-digit routing number and their account number. The sample check points out where these numbers are located on a person's personal check.

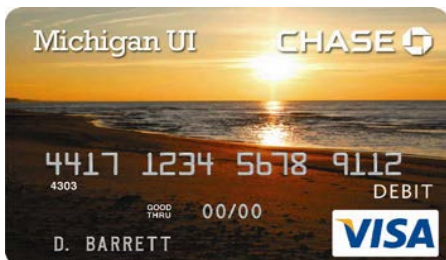


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Once the Direct Deposit option is set up, a worker's unemployment benefits will be electronically deposited into his/her checking or savings account.

Debit Card

UIA is partnering with JPMorgan Chase to provide debit card services. The debit card can be used to:



- Purchase goods and services using either a signature-based or personal identification number (PIN) based transaction with retailers that accept the Visa debit card.
- Withdraw funds through tellers at Visa participating banks and credit unions (called a “cash advance” transaction). The card may also be used to receive cash back from ATMs and at many point-of-sale transactions.
- Access their funds through some 13,100 Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) in Michigan that bear the Chase, Plus, Allpoint, Interlink or Visa logos. To locate a Chase ATM, visit <http://chase.com/atm>; to find an AllPoint ATM visit <http://www.allpointnetwork.com/>.
- **UIA Debit card withdrawals from ATMs are limited to \$800 per day in an effort to protect cardholders against fraudulent transactions.**

There may be fees and surcharges associated with the use of the debit card. Those selecting the cards will be advised of those charges when they receive their card.

Cardholders cannot make deposits or add funds to their Michigan UI Debit Card. In addition, no line of credit is attached to the UI debit card.

The Michigan UI Debit Card will be automatically issued to individuals who do not select a benefit payment option. The card does not expire for three years. Claimants should keep the card for use with possible future claims. When a card expires, Chase will send a new card, if necessary.

Customer support

Those who choose to use the Michigan UI Debit Card for their unemployment benefit payments should contact JPMorgan Chase with any questions or issues they may have with their card. Chase will provide customer support to individuals online (www.myaccount.chase.com) and through its toll-free phone system (**1-866-523-2122**) for such things as:

- Account balances
- Recent transactions
- Lost, stolen, or damaged cards
- PIN change

Those who decide to use **direct deposit** should contact their financial institution with their questions.

Unemployed workers with questions about their unemployment benefits can contact the Unemployment Insurance Agency by dialing its toll-free number **1-866-500-0017**.



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How severance pay affects unemployment benefits

What is severance pay?

Severance pay is a payment made by the employer when the employee is separated from the job. While severance pay is not considered as wages and cannot be used to determine the worker's weekly benefit amount, it will reduce the amount of unemployment benefits a worker might receive.

Severance pay can reduce a worker's unemployment benefit

The severance payment, like any other kind of "remuneration," will reduce unemployment benefits otherwise payable in the weeks to which the severance payment is allocated or distributed. If there is no allocation by contract or by the employer, then the reduction in unemployment benefits will occur only in the week in which the severance payment is actually made.

Depending on the amount of severance pay, it can reduce a worker's unemployment benefits in the following ways:

- If the severance payment attributed to a week equals or exceeds 1½ times the worker's weekly benefit amount, then the unemployed worker is entitled to **no** unemployment benefits for the week.
- If the worker's severance payment and unemployment insurance payment are less than 1½ times his/her weekly benefit amount but greater than the weekly benefit amount, then the full amount of the severance payment is subtracted from 1½ times the worker's weekly benefit amount. (The balance of weeks remaining on the unemployed worker's claim will be reduced by one week, if the worker claims benefits for that week.)
- If the severance payment is equal to, or less than, the worker's weekly benefit amount, then half the payment is subtracted from the worker's weekly benefit amount. (The balance of weeks remaining on the unemployed worker's claim will be reduced by one week if the unemployed worker claims that week.)

Lump Sum versus Continuing Payments:

In some cases, the employer may make a lump sum severance payment when the worker is separated from the job. If the employer allocates the severance payment to a week or weeks other than the week in which the payment is made, then the worker's weekly unemployment benefits will be reduced in each claimed week to which the severance payment is allocated.

If the employer makes a lump sum severance payment but does not allocate that severance payment to a week or weeks, then the severance payment will reduce the unemployment benefits only in the week in which the lump sum severance payment is made.

If the employer makes weekly or monthly severance payments (sometimes referred

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to as salary- or wage-continuation payments), then the severance payment will be used to reduce unemployment benefits in the week in which the severance is paid, unless the employer allocates the severance payments to other weeks.

Examples:

#1 – The unemployed worker becomes unemployed after working full-time during week ending September 7. The employer pays the unemployed worker a \$5,000 severance payment in that week and does not allocate the severance payment to any period. The unemployed worker files a new claim the following week. The worker's benefits are not reduced, as the severance payment was paid prior to the start of the claim and was not allocated to any period for which the unemployed worker was claiming benefits.

#2 – Same facts as in Example 1, except the employer allocates the lump sum severance payment to the six weeks following the job separation. Unless the employer specifies how much will be allocated per week, UIA will equally allocate the payment over the six weeks, reducing the unemployment benefit for each of those six weeks. The allocated payment would not be used as wages to qualify for a later claim.

#3 – If the employer makes wage continuation payments weekly for the one-year period following the job separation, benefits would be reduced accordingly in each week. These payments would not be used as "wages" for a later benefit claim.

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Filing for and Receiving Unemployment Insurance Benefits

The Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) has made the unemployment benefit process easier and faster. Now, you can file a new or reopened claim, complete reporting requirements and even change benefit payment options, all **online**.

Filing for and Receiving Benefits: Michigan's 3-Step Process

STEP 1: Filing a Claim

You can file a new claim for unemployment benefits (or reopen an established claim) by visiting the UIA's website at www.michigan.gov/uia, and click on the "File Unemployment Claims Online" link. This service is available anytime from 7:00 AM Monday through 7:00 PM Saturday. It may take about 30-45 minutes to file a claim online, depending on the Internet connection speed and your preparation. By reviewing the Internet Filed Claims tutorial on our website (on the homepage, click "Agency Webcasts" under "What's New" or <http://www.michigan.gov/uia/0,1607,7-118-53900-219607--,00.html>) and by gathering the following information, you will save even more time by filing online.

What you need to file:

The following information is needed to file a claim:

1. Your Social Security number,
2. Your Driver's License number, State Identification number or your MARVIN PIN (if you have one),
3. The names and addresses of employers you have worked for in the past 18 months along with your quarterly gross earnings, and
4. The last date of employment with each employer.
5. UIA recommends you have your most recent employer's UIA account number or Federal ID number handy (especially if you have **not** filed a claim within the last three years or have been employed for less than six months). Depending on your situation, knowing the account number may speed up the processing of your claim (*UIA Administrative Rule 421.204(3)(a) requires the employer's UIA account number be given to employees and the employer's Federal ID number is on your annual W-2 form*).
6. If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or national, you will need your Alien Registration number and the expiration date of your work authorization.

For a detailed work-sheet of what you need to file a claim, visit UIA's website, click on the "FORMS" option from the upper left menu, and select [Form 1538: What You Need To File An Unemployment Claim](#).

Once the claim is successfully entered online, a confirmation page will appear with a confirmation number. You will also be advised of your appointment date for MARVIN (Step 3).

STEP 2: Register for Work

After the claim is filed, applicants must register for work by filing a resume application at the *Michigan Works!* Agency service center, unless UIA has waived this requirement. To locate the nearest *Michigan Works!* Agency office, please go to www.michiganworks.org.

STEP 3: Report to MARVIN Online to Receive Benefits

In order to receive your benefits, you must report bi-weekly using MARVIN on your appointment date given to you when you filed your claim. MARVIN is the Agency's automated benefit payment system. You will use MARVIN to certify that you are eligible for payment by answering eligibility questions, such as if you are able, available, and looking for work and whether or not you have earnings during the two-week period for which you are reporting. To use MARVIN Online, go to www.michigan.gov/uia.

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and click on “Certify with MARVIN.” If you miss your appointment day, you can also certify with MARVIN Thursday – Saturday. MARVIN is available from 7AM - 7PM, Monday - Friday, and from 7AM - 3PM on Saturday (except the Saturday after the first Friday of each month). You will need to establish an account through the claim portal prior to your first time certifying.

The Claim Portal

- Another UIA online service, the claim portal, allows unemployed workers to:
- Email questions about or problems with your unemployment claim and receive a response in 24 to 48 hours,
- View your benefit payment history,
- Certify with Marvin,
- Change benefit payment options online,
- Select or modify income tax withholdings,
- Reset your MARVIN PIN,
- Respond to UIA questions regarding your separation or eligibility for benefits, and
- View your 1099 statement(s) for the last two calendar years.

To establish an account, go to www.michigan.gov/uia and click on “UIA Online Services for Unemployed Workers.”

Benefit Duration

State unemployment benefits are usually limited to a maximum of up to 26 weeks. In 2011, there are two basic extension programs in Michigan: Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) provides up to 53 weeks of federal benefits through four tiers. EUC Tier I provides up to 20 more weeks, Tier II provides up to another 14 weeks, Tier III provides up to 13 weeks and Tier IV provides up to six weeks. The EUC program is set to end on January 3, 2012. In addition, the Extended Benefits (EB) program offers up to another 20 additional weeks. The final week for which EB can be paid is the week ending December 31, 2011.

Benefit Amount

Your quarterly wages largely determines the amount of your unemployment benefits. State law provides that a worker can receive no more than \$362 per week.

Severance Pay: How it Affects Unemployment Benefits

Although severance pay is not used to determine your weekly unemployment benefit, it may reduce the amount of unemployment benefits you might receive.

Any reduction in unemployment benefits generally depends on the severance pay amount and the manner in which it was paid. If your employer makes a lump sum severance payment and allocates the payment(s) to specific week(s), then your weekly unemployment benefits will be reduced in each week for which the severance payment is allocated. If, however, your employer makes a lump sum severance payment but does not allocate that severance payment to a week or weeks, then the severance payment will reduce your unemployment benefits only in the week in which the lump sum severance payment is made.

The site is secure

The UIA has done everything it can do to make its claims taking site as secure as possible to ensure that all information it receives from those applying for unemployment benefits is kept confidential.

Questions about the 3-Step Process?

If you have a problem or question about your new or reopened claim or your benefit payment, call the UIA at **1-866-500-0017** (TTY customers use 1-866-366-0004). This toll-free line is available weekdays from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, except during state of Michigan holidays.

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Unemployment Benefits When a Worker Accepts a Buyout

What is a buyout?

In its simplest terms, a buy-out is an agreement between an employer and employee where the employer provides an employee an incentive (usually in the form of money) to permanently end the employer and employee relationship.

The incentive offered in the buyout may involve the payment of the worker's accrued sick pay, accrued vacation pay, and accrued company retirement benefits or the worker's company-sponsored 401(k) plan account. The buyout may also include the payment of several weeks or months of **severance pay** (see UIA Fact Sheet No. 125), based on a contract that provides for such a payment. In return for these payments, the worker agrees to give up any right they might otherwise have to re-employment with that employer, and to sever their employment relationship.

What are some reasons a worker might accept a buyout?

A worker who accepts a buyout might do so for several reasons. They might consider that the buyout provides them the opportunity to retire earlier than they anticipated and with a better retirement package than if they were to wait until their normal retirement age and years of service.

Still another reason a worker might accept a buyout is that they believed, or were actually told by the employer that, based on their seniority, it is unlikely that they would be able to continue working after the buyout period, or that it is certain they would not have the seniority to continue working, and would have none of the benefits the buyout would have provided them.

When can a worker who accepts a buyout potentially receive unemployment benefits?

Under Michigan law, a worker who leaves work voluntarily and without good cause attributable to the employer must be disqualified from receiving unemployment benefits.

If the worker could have continued to work for the employer at a suitable job, but instead chose to accept unemployment, then the worker would likely be disqualified from receiving unemployment benefits.

On the other hand, a worker who desired to continue working, but who chose to leave work based on information from the employer that there were no clear options for continued suitable employment, would likely not be disqualified from receiving unemployment benefits after accepting a buyout.



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LARA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER/PROGRAM. AUXILLARY AIDS, SERVICES AND OTHER REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

UIA 1251
(01-12)