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Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of Michigan's Extended Benefits Program

What are EB benefits?

During periods of high unemployment in a state, Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) and Extended Benefits (EB) may become available to workers who have exhausted their regular state unemployment benefits. The EUC program provides up to 53 weeks of UI benefits and the EB program provides up to 20 weeks of UI benefits. Both programs are funded by the federal government.

What factors trigger a state on or off EB?

Whether EB can be paid is determined by a calculation called the insured unemployment rate (IUR). The IUR is a 13-week moving average of UI weeks of benefits claimed divided by the number of people covered for UI. In order for EB to begin to be paid in a state, the state's IUR must be at least 5.0%, and the current IUR must be 20% higher than the average rate for the same period in both of the last two years.

The alternative method of triggering on is the total unemployment rate (TUR). If the state TUR is at least 6.5% and is 10% higher than the average TUR for the same period in either of the last three years, claimants may be eligible for EB. A state "triggers off" the program when the criteria for either of the above methods are no longer met.

How many claimants are currently receiving unemployment benefits through Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency?

As of January 1, 2012, approximately 268,924 claimants are currently receiving benefits in Michigan. This includes individuals receiving regular state unemployment benefits, Emergency Unemployment Compensation and Extended Benefits.

How many claimants will be affected if the state triggers off its Extended Benefits program at the end of January?

Approximately 29,504 claimants' EUC and EB benefits would be affected. As of January 1,

there are 23,511 collecting EB and 5,993 collecting EUC Tier IV benefits, the tier which precedes EB.

How does a claimant determine how many remaining weeks of benefits they will receive?

Claimants can access this information online through their Claimant Web Account or call MARVIN (Michigan Automated Response Voice Interactive Network) at 1-866-638-3993 and select Option 2.

How are the federal programs paid for?

The federal government funds both the EUC and EB programs. Most Michigan employers are not charged for any EUC and EB benefits paid to claimants. Government employers and Indian Tribes and Tribal units, however, will still be charged 100 percent for EB.

When is the last week payable for EB benefits?

Although current EB benefits will trigger off the week ending January 28, 2012, there is a three-week phase out period for the EB program, which would make the week ending February 18, 2012, the last week payable.

What should claimants do if they are currently receiving Extended Benefits?

Extended Benefits (EB) is the last extension program available in Michigan. Additional information about the end of EB will be posted on the UIA website (www.michigan.gov/uia). In addition, the agency has established a toll-free telephone number 1-866-MI-HELPS (1-866-644-3577) for people to call for pre-recorded information about the extension program and their remaining benefits. Additionally, claimants can call and check the unemployment update information line at 1-800-638-3995 for prerecorded information regarding the EB program that may affect them.

The Department of Human Services offers several programs to assist low-income individuals. The MiBridges program allows individuals to apply for food assistance benefits on-line without needing to visit their DHS office. Individuals can also complete a short self-screening questionnaire to determine what benefits they may be eligible to receive.

<https://www.mibridges.michigan.gov/access/>