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Updated: 9:43 PM Jun 25, 2010

DHS Braces For New Demand

As unemployment benefits are set to expire for thousands of Michigan residents, the state Department of Human Services is bracing for a tidal wave new people looking for help.

Posted: 6:59 PM Jun 25, 2010

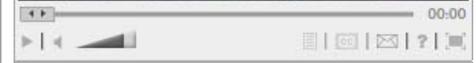
Reporter: Jessica Harbin

Email Address: jessica.harbin@wilx.com

- No More Unemployment
- Unemployment Impact



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After congress failed to pass an unemployment benefit extension, Michigan is bracing for the impact.

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Susan Corbin of the Michigan department of Energy Labor and Economic Growth said Friday, "By July 4th week 87 thousand people will expire their benefits, by the week after that i think that number will double."

And as unemployment benefits expire for thousands of Michigan residents, it's expected that many of them will come to need other state services; state services that have already been under pressure for the last year.

"Right now we have 1.8 million people receiveing food assistance, 1.8 million," said Department of Human Services representative Edward Woods III. "That is a record high for Michigan, we have been setting records for the last year, every month, because there has been an increase."

With its current budget structure, each caseworker is expected to handle almost 700 cases. Woods worries that the without additional funding, his offices will not be able to handle the increase in caseloads.

Woods told WILX: "The issue here with regards to this number of people coming off of unemployment is we need the legislature to pass the governor's budget so that we can get those additional bodies in our offices to cope with the increased demand."

But there is hope in Governor Jennifer Granholm's proposed budget.

"It extends the limited term positions that we have for the assistance site, for an addition year, but it also restores 197 people to the budget through assist with assistance," Woods explained.

No matter the budget situation in the next few months, Woods says DHS will be there to help the unemployed in Michigan.

Wwe have a responsibility. We are the safety net. We need to ensure the safety net because this is a temporary transistion."

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WILX Poll

Should Federal Unemployment Benefits Be Extended?

- Yes
- No

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