

## **Unemployment Compensation Benefits Extension 2008 Frequently Asked Questions**

Governor Ted Strickland has signed an agreement to provide up to 13 weeks of additional unemployment compensation benefits to as many as 280,000 eligible Ohioans. The extension was made possible as a result of the president's signing of the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008, passed by Congress on June 26.

### **Who is eligible to receive this extension?**

Currently unemployed individuals who satisfy all of the following criteria could qualify:

- had an unemployment application in effect as of May 5, 2007, or later;
- have exhausted all regular state UC benefits;
- have no rights to regular UC or extended benefits under any other state unemployment compensation law or federal law or in Canada.

### **What are individuals eligible for?**

Individuals are eligible to receive up to 13 weeks of additional benefits. The extended benefit amounts will be the same as claimants' previous UC benefit amounts, unless there is some other change in circumstances (such as an adjustment in deductible income, like child support). Individuals will be expected to continue their work search efforts.

### **I think I am eligible for extended benefits. What do I do?**

Within the next several weeks, potentially eligible workers will receive a letter in the mail from the ODJFS Office of Unemployment Compensation advising them how to file for benefits. Claimants are asked to wait for the letter before attempting to file for the extended benefits. The letter will signify when the system is ready to begin processing extended benefits claims.

It is helpful to think of this process as similar to getting income tax rebate checks from the IRS. Because of the administrative steps that the agency has to take to "ramp up" the program, it can take anywhere from a couple weeks to about a month or more to begin issuing payments.

### **How long will it take to process my application and start benefit payments?**

Applications will be processed as quickly as possible. Because this legislation was only recently enacted—and because such a heavy volume of applications is expected—allow at least four weeks for an application to be processed. Once claimants are determined to be eligible for extended benefits, payments will be issued on a routine, biweekly basis, with their preferred payment method (debit card or electronic funds transfer).

### **How can I find out if my payment has been issued?**

By visiting <http://unemployment.ohio.gov> or by calling 1-877-OHIO JOB (644-6562) and selecting the option to obtain information about your unemployment compensation claim. Both options require a personal identification number (PIN). If you have not received a letter notifying you about the new phone system and your new 8-digit PIN, please contact a [local ODJFS office](#) to request one.

### **May I file continued claims of extended benefits by telephone?**

Yes. Once a favorable determination has been made, continued weeks may be claimed by calling 1-877-OHIO JOB (644-6562) and following the recorded instructions. This option also requires a personal identification number (PIN).

**How does this program affect my current benefits?**

If you are receiving regular unemployment compensation benefits, you must exhaust those benefits before you can receive extended unemployment benefits. You will receive a notification from the Office of Unemployment Compensation alerting you when your benefits are about to expire. If you are still unemployed, you can apply for the extended benefits by following the instructions on the notification.

If you are receiving other federal benefits—such as Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) or Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)—the federal extended unemployment compensation benefits must be paid before benefits from any other programs. You will receive notification to file an extended unemployment benefits application, and you must comply in order to receive future benefits. Once you have exhausted the extended unemployment benefits, your claim will automatically be converted to the other appropriate program type. Please note that the extended unemployment compensation program does not extend the time period for which you may receive total federal benefits. For instance, the maximum eligibility for basic TRA is 26 weeks. An individual eligible for the maximum benefit may receive up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment compensation, followed by a maximum of 13 weeks for basic TRA—for a total of 26 weeks of federal benefits.

**How long does this program last?**

The final date to apply for extended benefits through this program is March 31, 2009. Claimants with a balance remaining could continue to receive benefits through June 30, 2009. No federal extended benefits will be paid after that time.