

---

# SERVICE BULLETIN

---

## COVID-19 and Michigan Updates



By: Mike Parker  
Vice President of Regulatory Affairs  
March 23, 2020

### Informational Webinars

The Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) will be hosting several hour-long informational webinars for Michigan employers regarding unemployment insurance and the recent Executive Orders 2020-09 and 2020-10. All webinars will be conducted using Microsoft Skype for Business. Below are the webinar dates and times. Please visit [https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178\\_98179---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_98179---,00.html) for links to these webinars.

#### **Monday, March 23, 2 - 3 p.m.**

Dial-in Number: (248) 509-0316

Conference ID: 473769071

#### **Tuesday, March 24, 10 - 11 a.m.**

Dial-in Number: (248) 509-0316

Conference ID: 616070893

#### **Tuesday, March 24, 2 - 3 p.m.**

Dial-in Number: (248) 509-0316

Conference ID: 794829308

### Unemployment Resources

The Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) and Michigan Works! strongly encourage individuals to use online resources for unemployment assistance. State offices will remain open, but they will limit the amount of people within the offices at one time.

Individuals should apply for unemployment benefits at [www.michigan.gov/UIA](http://www.michigan.gov/UIA) or by calling 1-866-500-0017. A factsheet on how to apply for benefits can also be found at the following website:

THOMAS & COMPANY  
More profit. Less stress. Better business.

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/uia/160 - Claiming UI Benefit In Michigan - Jan2014 444213 7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/uia/160_-_Claiming_UI_Benefit_In_Michigan_-_Jan2014_444213_7.pdf). Michigan Works! resources can be found at [www.michiganworks.com](http://www.michiganworks.com) or by calling 1-800-285-WORKS.

Also, the state's Governor signed Executive Order 2020-10 to temporarily expand eligibility for unemployment benefits. Under the order, an employer or employing unit will not be charged for benefits if their employees become unemployed because of an executive order requiring them to close or limit operations.

Under the governor's order, benefits would be extended to:

- Workers who have an unanticipated family care responsibility, including those who have childcare responsibilities due to school closures, or those who are forced to care for loved ones who become ill.
- Workers who are sick, quarantined, or immunocompromised and who do not have access to paid family and medical leave or are laid off.
- First responders in the public health community who become ill or are quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19.

Access to benefits for unemployed workers will also be extended:

- Benefits will be increased from 20 to 26 weeks.
- The application eligibility period will be increased from 14 to 28 days.
- The normal in-person registration and work search requirements are suspended.

### **State Guidance for Layoffs**

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity provided guidance to Michigan employers on how to avoid potential layoffs related to COVID-19. The state strongly urges job employers facing work shortages to place their employees on temporary leave, as opposed to termination, so that the employees may remain eligible for potential federal assistance.

- Elimination of Certain Unemployment Costs to Employers: Under the governor's order, an employer or employing unit will not be charged for unemployment benefits if their employees become unemployed because of an executive order requiring them to close or limit operations.
- Work Share: If employers are financially distressed but hope to continue operations by cutting back hours, they are encouraged to use the UIA's Work Share program that allows employers to maintain employment levels and business operations during declines in regular business activity rather than laying off workers. More information about the program can be found at [www.michigan.gov/workshare](http://www.michigan.gov/workshare).
- Temporary Leave vs. Termination: The state also strongly urges employers to place employees on temporary leave and advise the employee that they expect to have work available within 120-days

THOMAS & COMPANY  
More profit. Less stress. Better business.

as opposed to termination due to the uncertainty surrounding potential congressional action on whether, and how, furloughed workers will be able to access federal paid sick, family, and medical leave resources. There is no additional cost to employers, employees remain eligible for benefits through the state, and employees may remain eligible for potential federal assistance.

Steps for employers placing employees on temporary unpaid leave:

- Do not terminate the employee. Specify a temporary/indefinite leave with return to work expected that is within 120 days.
- Do not create a contractual obligation to bring the employee back to work. Let the employee know that the situation is fluid and subject to change.
- Provide the employee with a formal Unemployment Compensation Notice. Employers will need to provide their Employer Account Number and Federal Identification Number.
- Communicate to the employee about their rights. Under Governor Whitmer's recent Executive Order, workers are placed on leave, or are unable to work because they are sick, quarantined, immunocompromised, or have an unanticipated family care responsibility, are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits.
- Ensure employees are provided information on how to obtain unemployment insurance benefits. A factsheet can be found [here](#).
- Get each employee's up-to-date contact information.
- Let employees know if you will be putting updated information on the entity's website or intranet, if applicable.
- Appoint a single, or limited number of individuals who will field questions, and communicate that information to employees.
- Keep a tally of all questions and answers. Periodically share with employees.
- The state is monitoring issues related to continued medical insurance coverage and will update accordingly.

### Other Resources

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation's call center is ready to support businesses looking for assistance through other available state programs. For more information, visit the MEDC's website: [www.michiganbusiness.org](http://www.michiganbusiness.org) or call (888) 522-0103. The Michigan Small Business Development Center can also provide resources for small businesses impacted by COVID-19. Visit their website <https://sbdcmichigan.org/small-business-covid19/> for additional information.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly and the latest information is available at [www.Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](http://www.Michigan.gov/Coronavirus) or [www.CDC.gov/Coronavirus](http://www.CDC.gov/Coronavirus).

THOMAS & COMPANY  
More profit. Less stress. Better business.