

Membership Matters

Quarterly News from The 501 Alliance

September 2008

Emergency Unemployment Compensation

On June 30, 2008, President Bush signed Public Law 110-252, the Supplemental Appropriations Act, which provides up to 13 weeks of Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) in all states. In Michigan, qualifying individuals may receive up to \$362 a week in EUC benefits.

EUC payments can be obtained by individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own and meet regular unemployment eligibility requirements. Individuals who had a claim for regular benefits with a benefit year ending May 1, 2007 or later, which has been exhausted or has expired, may be eligible for up to 13 weeks of benefits. EUC benefits will be available to individuals who have exhausted regular unemployment compensation for half the number of weeks of regular compensation payable to the individual during their most recent benefit year. To be eligible for EUC, individuals must be unemployed or underemployed and able, available and actively seeking suitable full-time work. Individuals also must register for work with the Michigan Works! Agency office.

The EUC program is federally funded; therefore, employers will not be charged for benefits nor receive a claim form.

The Check Isn't in the Mail

Unemployed workers in Michigan can stop looking for their unemployment checks to be in the mail. On June 2, the state's Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) began offering unemployed workers a choice between two new electronic options for receiving their unemployment benefits; either direct deposit into their bank or credit union account or by debit card.

The debit card and direct deposit options will be offered to newly unemployed workers as they apply for unemployment benefits. The UIA expects that most workers will opt for either a debit card or direct deposit, since they will eliminate mail delays and costs associated with cashing and/or depositing a paper check. However, the UIA will still mail checks if requested.

Unemployment benefits will be added to an individual's debit card or bank account within two to three days following the worker's certification of his/her continuing eligibility for benefits through UIA's automated MARVIN system. The debit cards can be used for purchases at any merchant that accepts Visa. Claimants can also receive cash back from automated teller machines and at Visa-member banks and credit unions.

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Documenting a Voluntary Resignation

We all know the importance of documentation when an employee is discharged and a claim for unemployment benefits is filed. However, documentation is also important when an employee resigns. Below are some tips to help you when an employee decides to leave your agency.

1. It is best for company policy to require a two-week notice.
2. If an employee gives verbal notice of quitting, always request that they put it in writing and conduct an exit interview if possible. If the employee refuses to give any written notice, have the person who received the verbal notice give a signed, written statement detailing what the employee said.
3. Written notices should be signed and dated and note the employee's intended last day of work.
4. Find out exactly why an employee is quitting. Is it for another job? Personal reasons? Job dissatisfaction? Harassment? Medical reasons? Terms of employment changes? The more information you have the more credible you are in the event of an unemployment claim or hearing.
5. If an employee gives two weeks notice of intent to resign and you accept it immediately, the employee will be eligible to collect unemployment for at least the time frame of the notice period. The only way to accept a resignation of this nature immediately -- without affecting an unemployment claim -- is to pay the claimant the scheduled (or expected hours) for the remainder of the notice period.
6. If an employee is given the option of voluntarily resigning or being discharged, the state will still view this as a discharge. The state will say this type of separation was initiated by the employer.

If you would like to schedule a workshop to review this and other topics related to unemployment, contact the Administrator at 800-968-9675, ext. 2950.

New Board Member Elected

The Nominating Committee recently reviewed all of the nominations submitted for the vacancy on the Board of Directors. The committee presented their recommendation to the full board for approval at the August meeting. It's my pleasure to report that the directors voted unanimously to elect Ms. Jan Mack, HR Director, Alternative Services, Inc. in Livonia to fill the vacancy. The board and staff are both looking forward to working with her. For a list of all of the individuals on the board, please visit our web site at: 501alliance.org.