

Are You Unemployed?

The 2009 Federal Economic Stimulus Plan Can Help You

The federal Stimulus Plan – officially known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 – includes important benefits for unemployed New Yorkers. If you are unemployed and receiving unemployment insurance benefit payments, some or all of these benefits may help you now.

Claim Period for Extended Benefits Lengthened

Currently, New Yorkers are eligible to receive 26 weeks of regular unemployment insurance plus an additional 33 weeks of extended benefits. New claims for extended unemployment benefits can now be made through the week ending December 27, 2009, with benefits payable through the week ending May 30, 2010. Previously, the deadline to apply for extended benefits was March 31, 2009, and no payments could be made after August 2009.

If you are currently receiving unemployment benefits and are eligible for extended benefits, you do not need to submit a new claim. Simply continue to claim weekly benefits using our web site or the toll-free telephone line at 1-888-581-5812. For more information on extended unemployment benefits, please go to our web site at www.labor.ny.gov or call: 1-888-581-5812 (out of state 1-888-864-9920).

Additional \$25 per Week in Benefits

The federal Stimulus Plan provides an additional \$25 weekly payment to unemployment recipients. These payments are expected to begin in late March 2009, and will be retroactive to the week ending March 1, 2009. The last week these additional monies can be paid is July 4, 2010. This applies to those collecting both regular and extended unemployment benefits.

No Federal Tax Due on the First \$2,400 in Unemployment Insurance Benefits

You will not have to pay federal income taxes on your first \$2,400 of unemployment insurance benefits for 2009. However, any unemployment benefits over \$2,400 that you receive in 2009 will be subject to federal income tax. This provision of the federal Stimulus Plan is expected to save each person receiving unemployment insurance an estimated \$215 in federal income taxes for tax year 2009.

COBRA Health Insurance Premium Subsidy Available

If you are unemployed and looking for a job, keeping your health insurance coverage from your previous job under COBRA can be very expensive. The federal Stimulus Plan recognizes this, and will pay 65% of your health insurance premium under COBRA for up to nine months. You will only have to pay 35% of the premium. If you did not take COBRA coverage, or if you dropped it, you will have another chance to choose COBRA coverage.

If you lost your job between September 1, 2008 and December 31, 2009, your former employer or their health plan administrator will notify you of your option to purchase health insurance coverage under COBRA no later than April 18, 2009. If you are already paying for health insurance under COBRA, you should be notified of your new premium payment by April 18, 2009.

For more information about the COBRA benefit, go to the US Department of Labor's website at www.dol.gov/ebsa/cobra.html. Or, call the US Department of Labor at 1-866-444-3272 (toll free). New Yorkers can also contact the NYS Insurance Department for more information about the COBRA health insurance premium subsidy by calling (800) 342-3736 or by accessing the Department's website at www.ins.state.ny.us.

Benefits for Those Out of Work Due to Foreign Competition

If you are out of work because your job was offshored or outsourced to another country, you may be eligible for expanded training, health care and re-employment benefits under Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs. To find out more, check with your local One-Stop Career Center. A listing of One-Stop Career Centers can be found on our web site at www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/osview.asp or look in the blue pages of your telephone book under "New York State – Labor Department."

More Funds Available for Job Training

The federal Stimulus Plan provides more funds to states and local areas for job training. Career counselors at your local One-Stop Career Center can help you determine if job training can improve your skills and help you find employment. A listing of One-Stop Career Centers can be found on our web site at www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/osview.asp or look in the blue pages of your telephone book under "New York State – Labor Department."

Additional State Funding Provided for Services to Unemployed Workers

The federal Stimulus Plan will provide additional administrative funds to help New York State improve

unemployment claims processing and add staff to take calls and resolve claims. Our Tel-Claims Centers, which handle calls from unemployment insurance claimants, are open until 7 PM on Mondays and Tuesdays. Most One-Stop Career Centers have also expanded the hours they are open.

Federal Stimulus Plan funds will also be used to improve the Shared Work program, which gives employers an alternative to layoffs. For more information on the Shared Work program, see our web site at www.labor.ny.gov or call us at (518) 457-5807.

You May Now Be Eligible for Other Programs

The federal Stimulus Plan expands eligibility for other programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) and child care support. For more information on food stamps, go the web site of the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance at www.otda.state.ny.us/main/foodstamps or call 1-800-342-3009 (press "1" for food stamps). In New York City, call 1-877-472-8411. For more information about other programs go to www.mybenefits.ny.gov.

PROTECT *all Workers*

ASSIST *the Unemployed*

CONNECT *Employers and Workers*

The New York State Department of Labor is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

www.labor.ny.gov

