

UIA, Michigan Works! Urge Residents to Avoid Offices and Use Online Resources

3/17/20 - LANSING, MICH. To mitigate the COVID-19 outbreak, the Unemployment Insurance Agency and Michigan Works! Agencies are strongly urging workers to avoid visiting their statewide offices and utilize user-friendly online resources for unemployment assistance. Eligible employees should apply for unemployment benefits at [Michigan.gov/UIA](https://www.michigan.gov/UIA) or by calling 1-866-500-0017. A factsheet on how to apply for benefits can also be found [here](#). Michigan Works! resources can be found at [MichiganWorks.org](https://www.MichiganWorks.org) or by calling 1-800-285-WORKS.

UIA and Michigan Works! statewide offices will remain open, but the agencies will be limiting the amount of people within the offices at one time.

“In an effort to protect the health and safety of our residents and promote social distancing, Michigan workers needing assistance from the UIA are strongly urged to avoid visiting our offices. The fastest and best method is online at [Michigan.gov/UIA](https://www.michigan.gov/UIA). You can also connect with our agency by calling 1-866-500-0017,” said UIA Director Steve Gray.

UIA online resources include:

- File a claim for unemployment benefits
- Chat with a customer service agent (M-F, 8am to 5pm)
- Send a message to a customer service agent (weekdays after 5pm and before 8am and weekends)
- Manage your account 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Michigan Works! Agencies are also encouraging people to avoid public spaces and will be limiting in-person visits. Impacted workers were formerly required to appear in-person at a Michigan Works! service center but that requirement has been waived because of the public health emergency. The agencies are encouraging all individuals to connect with their local Michigan Works! office by call 1-800-285-WORKS or visiting [MichiganWorks.org](https://www.MichiganWorks.org) to set up an appointment. Virtual and phone appointments will be prioritized.

Yesterday, Governor Whitmer signed Executive Order [2020-10](#) to temporarily expand eligibility for unemployment benefits.

Under the governor’s order, unemployment 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.

Under the order, an employer or employing unit must not be charged for unemployment benefits if their employees become unemployed because of an executive order requiring them to close or limit operations.

The order also expands the State's Work Share program. Employers are encouraged to implement the program that permits employers to maintain operational productivity during declines in regular business activity instead of laying off workers. More information about Work Share can be found [here](#).

Additional unemployment resources for employees can be found [here](#) and for employers [here](#).

Updates will be posted to Michigan.gov/Coronavirus and CDC.gov/Coronavirus.