

Some jobless eligible for back benefits

Some unemployed workers in the state may be eligible for retroactive unemployment benefits dating back to the first of the year, according to the Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC).

A special temporary unemployment benefits program—the Transition Period Benefits Program—has started in Michigan because of a new law.

The new jobless benefits program is aimed at those who worked at jobs in 1977 that were not covered by the state's unemployment insurance laws and, consequently, left the workers ineligible for jobless benefits in early 1978 if they lost their jobs.

Benefits will be paid retroactively to workers unemployed after Jan. 1, 1978, but to be eligible they must have held the following types of jobs in 1977: agricultural or domestic jobs; jobs with local government's which had their own unemployment compensation system; or jobs with non-profit/nonpublic elementary and secondary schools.

Those who worked in any of these categories prior to Jan. 1 should report to a MESC office before Oct. 18. The office will decide if they are eligible for retroactive benefits for any weeks of unemployment beginning with the first of the year.

MESC offices started taking claims under the Transition Period Benefits

Program Aug. 7.

The MESC says claimants should bring any proof of earnings, such as pay stubs, wage statements or tax returns.

The program is intended to cover workers caught between the ending of the federal special unemployment assistance (SUA) program and law changes in the state unemployment program which took effect Jan. 1.

The SUA program gave unemployment benefit coverage to workers normally not eligible under state programs such as farm and domestic workers, local government employees, and school and community college districts workers. The SUA program began in 1974 but stopped taking new claims in January.

State law was amended allowing the state unemployment insurance program to cover many of these workers as of last January.

According to the MESC, a few jobless workers were caught short. They had not worked long enough—at least 14 weeks—to qualify for SUA in 1977 or they had not worked for at least 14 weeks in 1978 to qualify under the state program.

With the Transition Period Benefit Program, a worker's earnings and length of employment in 1977 and 1978 will be combined to see if he qualifies for the retroactive benefits.



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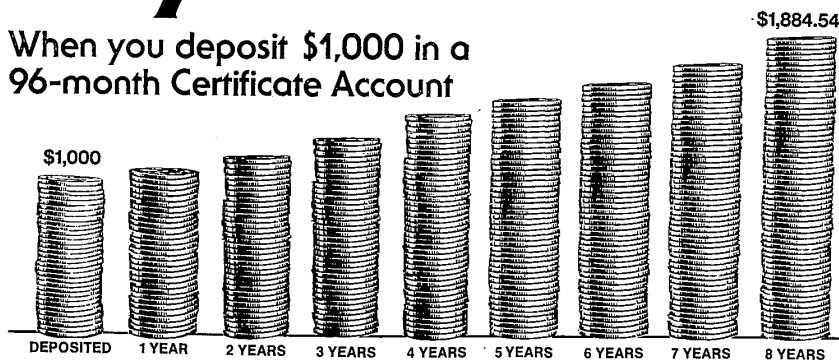
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