



Arkansas Recovery Hotline: 1-877-682-1515

For Immediate Release:
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Additional unemployment insurance benefits available under Extended Benefit Program

LITTLE ROCK – The Extended Benefit Program, which provides additional unemployment insurance benefits to those who exhaust their previous benefits, recently went into effect in Arkansas.

The program began with the week ending April 18 and will continue for 13 weeks. The program is different from the Emergency Unemployment Compensation program that began in July 2008. Generally, individuals must exhaust all of their regular unemployment insurance benefits and then exhaust their Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits during the extended benefit period in order to be eligible for the extended benefits. Individuals who do not qualify for Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits will not qualify for extended benefits.

The Extended Benefit Program went into effect in Arkansas as a result of Arkansas' insured unemployment rate reaching 5 percent. The insured unemployment rate represents the unemployed workforce that is eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. The total state unemployment rate, currently at 6.5 percent for March, represents those who are eligible for benefits and those who are not, such as the self-employed or independent contractors.

Normally, the Extended Benefit Program is funded 50 percent from the state Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and 50 percent from the federal unemployment fund. As a result of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, however, federal funding will cover 100 percent of the costs for all claims established before Dec. 31, 2009.

The Department of Workforce Services is in the process of identifying and notifying all individuals who are potentially eligible for the new benefits. Those who are potentially eligible should wait to receive a notice via the mail before contacting a DWS office.

For general questions regarding the ARRA, the Arkansas Recovery Hotline may be called at 1-877-682-1515. Another source of information about all Arkansas ARRA monies is Chris Masingill with the Arkansas Recovery Office of the Governor (chris.masingill@governor.arkansas.gov) at 501-683-6424.