

State Extended Benefits

General information

Extended Benefits (EB) are additional weeks of unemployment insurance benefits offered during periods of high unemployment to individuals who have exhausted regular benefits. Eligible individuals will receive up to an additional 50 percent of regular benefit entitlement, including dependent allowance.

The percentage of unemployed Alaskans will determine if Alaska can pay EB. These “triggers” are formulas based on the Insured Unemployment Rate (IUR) and the Total Unemployment Rate (TUR). For more information on unemployment rates, visit <http://laborstats.alaska.gov>.

Historically, Alaska triggers on EB in January or February and off in June or July. While Alaska has historically triggered on yearly based on the IUR method, 2008 and 2009 triggers have been based off the TUR method. Alaska is required by law to pay EB for a minimum of 13 weeks once the trigger is met.

Eligibility criteria

You must apply for EB online or through a claim center. When you apply, a letter explaining the number of weeks and the amount you will be eligible for is sent to you. If you have questions regarding your entitlement, contact your nearest claim center.

You may be eligible for EB benefits if:

- You had a unemployment insurance benefit claim that ended on or after Jan. 22, 2012;
- You are not eligible for a new claim in Alaska or any other state; and
- You were not denied on your last claim for quitting your job, being discharged for misconduct in connection with work or refusing an offer of suitable work.

When you are filing for EB, you must:

- Register and create an online resume in the Alaska Labor Exchange System (ALEXSYS) at www.jobs.state.ak.us within seven (7) days from establishing your claim. If you need assistance with ALEXSYS, call (877) 724-2539 or visit your local job center during regular business hours.

- If you are living out of state, you must register with your local Employment Service Center within 7 days from establishing your claim.
- Be willing to accept suitable work. Suitable work is any work which you can physically or mentally perform.
- You must look for work each week you file for EB. You may be disqualified unless you are: serving on a state or federal jury; hospitalized for an emergency or life-threatening condition; enrolled in an agency approved training course; or working for an employer during the week. You can report the following as a work search:
 - Contact with a person who has the authority to hire;
 - Submitting an application or resume to an employer (need not be in-person); or
 - If in Alaska, applying for a job on the Alaska Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys).

A valid work search **does not include** contact with a State employment service office; private employment agency where a fee is charged; unions or hiring halls; or a call to the UI Claim Center.

State and federal law

The Alaska Extended Benefit program is established under Alaska Statutes AS 23.20.406, AS 23.20.407, AS 23.20.408, AS 23.20.409 and Federal Code 20 CFR 615. Under this law, EB recipients may not be eligible if they:

- Are disqualified for quitting, being fired, or refusing a job or job referral;
- Qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits in any state;
- Reside outside Alaska – they are limited to two weeks of Alaska extended benefits unless the state they reside in also triggered on EB; and
- Meet base period wage qualifications. Base period wages must be 40 times the weekly benefit amount including dependents allowance, or one and one-half the high quarter wages. In Alaska, claimants who do not meet this requirement receive an extension called State Supplemental Benefits (SSB) which is not reimbursed by the federal government. SSB claimants must adhere to the same rules as EB claimants. However, the funding source is supported by employer/employee UI Tax dollars, just like regular UI.

Current EB status

Alaska has triggered back on based on the IUR formula in January 2012. Currently, the first payable week of EB for eligible claimants is Jan. 28, 2012.

(NOTE: Alaska is also paying benefits under the Federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program. To ensure that you receive the most benefits possible under the two programs, EB benefits will be paid prior to EUC. If you are denied or exhaust EB, you may apply for or continue receiving EUC.)