



RRB News

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board

844 North Rush Street Chicago, Illinois 60611-1275

www.rrb.gov
877-772-5772 general information

Public Affairs
312-751-4777
opa@rrb.gov media inquiries

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RRB Pays Extended Unemployment Benefits under CARES Act

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, recently signed into law by President Trump, authorized extended unemployment insurance (UI) benefits for railroad workers sidelined during the COVID-19 pandemic. After making necessary programming changes to agency systems, the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) began processing and paying extended benefits on May 11.

The CARES Act authorized payment of extended UI benefits to rail workers who received UI benefits from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020. Under the legislation, railroad workers with less than 10 years of service may be eligible for up to 65 days of extended benefits within 7 consecutive 2-week registration periods. Workers with 10 or more years of railroad service, who were previously eligible for up to 65 days in extended benefits, may now receive benefits for up to 130 days within 13 consecutive 2-week registration periods. No extended benefit period under this provision can begin after December 31, 2020.

The RRB will identify any employees who exhausted their regular UI benefits during the benefit year that began July 1, 2019, and send them a letter and claim forms to receive the extended benefits. The agency will also load appropriate claim forms to online accounts so that individuals can file them online through **myRRB** on the agency website, **RRB.gov**.

Since RRB offices are currently closed to the public due to the pandemic, railroad employees are encouraged to file for UI benefits by setting up an online **myRRB** account if they have not already done so.

The extended benefits are being paid from a previous appropriation under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, of which \$140 million remains. As a result, these benefits will not be charged to rail employers in calculating their contribution rates to fund the railroad unemployment system. Extended benefits will be payable until a claimant's eligibility is exhausted or the appropriation is depleted, whichever comes first.

While the extended benefits will not be subject to reduction due to budget sequestration, the RRB does remind recipients that the payments are subject to income taxation and garnishment for tax or other legally established debts.

(More)

The team responsible for programming adjustments continues to work diligently to update systems to allow for the payment of the additional CARES Act benefits. When that processing is completed, payment will be made to cover retroactive periods. Meanwhile, employees who met eligibility requirements for UI at the beginning of the benefit year but had exhausted those benefits will now be able to file for and again receive UI benefits.

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