

## Michigan Temporarily Expands Unemployment Eligibility and Shifts Cost for Benefits

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March 17, 2020

On March 16, 2020, Governor Whitmer issued an **Executive Order** which temporarily expands unemployment eligibility for employees impacted by COVID-19 and which provides some relief from the burden of benefits for employers who have had to close or limit operations due to an Executive Order.

Employers who have been ordered to close or limit their operations due to an Executive Order will not be charged for unemployment benefits that their employees receive between March 16 and April 15, 2020.

In addition, eligibility for unemployment benefits between March 16 and April 15, 2020, is extended to any employee who leaves work or is laid off because they:

1. are self-isolating or self-quarantining as a result of:
  - an elevated risk from COVID-19 due to being immunocompromised,
  - they are personally displaying COVID-19 symptoms,
  - they have had contact in the last 14 days with someone confirmed to have COVID-19,
  - they need to care for someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, or
2. have a family care responsibility resulting from a government directive.

Employers must seek a registration and work search waiver from the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) for any employee who is laid off for one of the reasons listed above.

The time for an affected employee to file a claim for unemployment benefits is extended to 28 days from the last day worked. In addition, unemployment benefits are extended from a maximum of 20 weeks to a maximum of 26 weeks for any individual who files a claim for unemployment benefits before April 15<sup>th</sup>.

Eligibility for unemployment benefits may be impacted if individuals are already receiving sick leave or disability benefits.

The order also expands Michigan's Work Share program. More information about Work Share can be found on the **UIA's website**.

This Executive Order is effective March 16, 2020 and expires on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.

This is part of our series of COVID-19 alerts providing clients with practical advice on measures they can take to navigate through these troubled times. Future e-alerts will address what governmental funds and programs may become available to your business. If you have any questions, please contact your Miller Canfield attorney.

*This information is based on the facts and guidance available at the time of publication, and may be subject to change.*