

PRESS RELEASE

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COLORADO NO LONGER ELIGIBLE FOR 7 WEEKS OF STATE EXTENDED BENEFITS-2

Unemployment rate not high enough to qualify for additional weeks of benefits

Colorado's three-month average unemployment rate is no longer at the mandated level to keep the state eligible for 7 weeks of state extended benefits (SEB). These weeks, referred to as SEB-2, provides additional weeks of benefits during periods of high unemployment.

"Colorado's unemployment rate went down in November and dropped again in December," explains Ellen Golombek, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. "In January, it dropped to 7.8 percent, bringing our three-month average unemployment rate down to 7.9 percent. That three-month average no longer qualifies us for 7 weeks of state extended benefit-2."

Golombek says that the U.S. Department of Labor has instructed the State Labor Department that the week ending April 7, 2012 will be the last week it may pay up to 7 weeks of SEB-2 benefits. This is true even if the last day of a person's claim is after that date. In the future, Colorado's average unemployment rate may re-qualify claimants for these weeks of benefits or remove additional weeks. Individuals receiving up to 13 weeks of State Extended Benefits (SEB) will continue to receive those benefits provided they are eligible.

"As state and federal extended benefits programs change in Colorado, we will keep claimants apprised of the situation so they will not need to contact the Unemployment Insurance Call Center," Golombek says. "We have updated our website with this latest news and are now contacting the affected claimants directly."

Colorado's total number of eligible weeks of extended unemployment benefits have been reduced because of its falling unemployment rate. While a total of 99 weeks were available to claimants in some states, Colorado no longer qualifies for Tier IV (6 weeks), and now, in triggering off SEB-2 (7 weeks), Colorado's total number of benefit weeks has dropped to 86.

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