

Summary of Selected Unemployment Insurance Reform Highlights for Claimants

Reforms that take effect in 2014

These changes are discussed in detail in *Unemployment Insurance: A Claimant Handbook*. This new handbook will be available online at www.labor.ny.gov at the end of December 2013 or on paper by request.

I. Maximum Weekly Benefit (Effective October 6, 2014)

On October 6, 2014, the weekly maximum benefit will increase from \$405 to \$420, and the minimum weekly benefit will increase from \$64 to \$100. The maximum benefit rate is scheduled to increase each year, and will ultimately be tied to New York State's average weekly wage.

II. Work Search Requirements (Effective January 1, 2014)

The following changes apply to all claims, regardless of whether they were initially filed before the January 1, 2014 effective date or after that date.

While we encourage you to do more, you must do at least three (3) work search activities each week. These three activities must be done on different days of the week. **They must include (a) at least one activity from Work Search Activities #1-5 listed below, and (b) two additional activities from any of the nine activities listed below.**

However, you may be exempt from these work search requirements if (a) you have a Work Search Plan approved by the Department of Labor, or (b) are participating in a Department of Labor sanctioned program, such as Shared Work or Self Employment Assistance Program. If you are exempt from engaging in work search activities, you will be so notified by the Department of Labor.

Work search activities may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Using employment resources available at the local Career Center, such as:
 - Meeting with Career Center advisors;
 - Getting information from Career Center staff about jobs that may be available in a particular industry or region (obtaining job market information);
 - Working with Career Center staff to assess your skills and match them to possible occupations and jobs (skills assessments for occupation matching);
 - Participating in instructional workshops; and
 - Getting job referrals and job matches from the Career Center and following up with employers.
- (2) Visiting a job site and completing a job application in person with employers who may be reasonably expected to have openings.
- (3) Submitting a job application and/or resume in response to a public notice or want ad or to employers who may reasonably be expected to have openings.

- (4) Attending job search seminars, scheduled career networking meetings, job fairs or employment-related workshops that offer instruction to improve job-hunting skills.
- (5) Interviewing with possible employers.
- (6) Applying for employment with former employer(s).
- (7) Registering with and checking in with private employment agencies, placement services, unions, and placement offices of schools, colleges or universities, and/or professional organizations.
- (8) Using the telephone, business directories, internet or online job-matching systems to search for jobs, get leads, request referrals or make appointments for job interviews.
- (9) Applying and/or registering for and taking Civil Service examination(s) for government job openings.

You must keep a record of your work search activities for each week you claim benefits, either on our JobZone website or in writing. We recommend keeping your record in JobZone because that website enables you to update and store all of your work search records in a secure electronic file safe from fire, theft or accidental loss. Beginning January 1, 2014, to access your JobZone account, simply click on the "JobZone Work Search Record" button to the left of "Important Links" on your online "Account Overview" page. If you have questions about establishing your account, please contact your local Career Center or the Department of Labor Contact Center at 1-888-469-7365.

If you prefer to keep your records in writing, we recommend you use our Work Search Record form (available online at www.labor.ny.gov, in the new claimant handbook or from your local Career Center). You can also make your own record, as long as you include all the information required in the Work Search Record form. You must keep copies of your work search records for one year and be prepared to give a copy to the Department of Labor if we ask for it. We will check the information on the form with the contacts listed. It is considered fraud to knowingly provide false statements about your work search activities, and such conduct may render you ineligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits.