



NON-CITIZENS ELIGIBILITY FOR MICHIGAN UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

As of April 9, 2020



There are several “immigration benefits” or statuses that may qualify someone for unemployment insurance, such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Temporary Protected Status (TPS), asylees, refugees, parolees, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), withholding of removal, VAWA self-petitioners. Contact MIRC’s employment hotline at 800-968-4046, if you are an immigrant and unsure about your eligibility for unemployment insurance.

I have TPS, DACA, SIJS, can I apply for unemployment in Michigan?

Yes, however you will need to show proof of your employment authorization when you apply and meet the other eligibility requirements, such as showing proof of your wages during the work periods under review (the “base period”) and showing that you lost your job for COVID-19 related reasons or through no fault of your own.

If you have lost your job due to the COVID-19 pandemic, you may be eligible for extended unemployment insurance benefits. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act expands Michigan’s benefits to self-employed, 1099-independent contractors, and low wage workers as well as an increase in weekly pay to all who receive benefits. If you have already filed for unemployment benefits, you DO NOT need to reapply at this time to access those additional benefits.

What if my employment authorization document has expired or is about to expire?

If your status or work authorization expired during the time you were working or is currently expired or about to expire, call MIRC at 800-968-4046 as you may still be eligible. Despite closures related to COVID-19, USCIS continues to process Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization extensions.

Does getting unemployment insurance make me a public charge?

No. Receiving unemployment insurance payments **is not** a factor in a public charge determination.

If I am undocumented or don’t have work authorization, can I get unemployment in Michigan?

No. Michigan law requires an individual applying for unemployment to be either: a US citizen; a legal permanent resident; or have valid immigration benefit (for example DACA) or status. Applying for unemployment with another person’s identity, including social security number, is considered fraud or identity theft and can have serious civil and criminal consequences.

How do I apply for unemployment insurance?

You may apply online at michigan.gov/uia (at this time the online application is only available in English and applicants need to have an email address) or by phone 866-500-0017 (Spanish-speaking staff or interpreters available for most other languages) by the established last name schedule. Due to the high number of applicants, it may take a long time to complete an application. Online applications are strongly recommended. You must apply within 28 days of becoming unemployed. More detailed information on how to apply can be found [here](#).

I applied but was denied, what do should I do?

If you receive a denial letter from the UIA and believe that you are eligible, make sure to respond within the time period on the letter (usually 30 days). Talk to an attorney if you have questions on how to respond or the time period for responding has passed.

The following organizations provide free consultations regarding unemployment insurance issues:

- University of Michigan Workers’ Rights Clinic: 734.936.2000 or email: law-uic-info@umich.edu.
- Michigan Immigrant Rights Center/Farmworker Legal Services employment hotline: 800-968-4046
- Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice: (313) 993-4505

