Governor Bullock Announces Additional $200 Payment for Unemployed Montanans

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Governor Steve Bullock this week announced the launch of the Interim Pandemic Assistance program, directing the Montana Department of Labor & Industry (DLI) to issue an extra $200 weekly payment to unemployed Montanans impacted by COVID-19 using up to $25 million in Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF).

“Providing an extra $200 per week so unemployed Montanans can better care for their families in the near term is critical,” Governor Bullock said. **“If Congress cannot agree on another pandemic stimulus package as the nation heads into winter with COVID infections surging, we must do what we can to help Montanans today.”**

Montana joins only a handful of states to use CRF funding to create a new program to supplement unemployment benefits. Payments issued under the new Interim Pandemic Assistance program will be available for four benefit weeks, beginning the UI week ending November 28 through benefit week ending December 19, 2020. Claimants must submit their weekly payment requests and certify their claim for those benefit weeks by December 28. In accordance with the federal CARES Act, all possible disbursements under the program will be completed by December 30, 2020, meaning retroactive payments will not be issued after that date.

DLI has begun making the programmatic changes needed to issue payments under the new state program. The extra $200 payment will be issued to any eligible Montanan who is unemployed or partially unemployed due to COVID-19 disruptions and who is receiving unemployment benefits under the regular UI, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation programs. While claimants do not need to fill out a separate UI claim for these benefits, these additional funds will be paid in a separate direct deposit or check from their regular UI payments. DLI is in the process of issuing emails to claimants to explain the effective dates and payment changes.

Using current claim figures, the economic activity generated from these additional UI benefits is estimated to be at $30.4 million, due to claimants spending funds at local businesses, helping to further Montana’s economic recovery.

Additional information on the new state IPA stimulus program for UI claimants is available here: http://dli.mt.gov/Portals/57/Documents/covid-19/InterimPandemicAssistance.pdf. Montanans impacted by COVID-19 can file a UI claim online at MontanaWorks.gov or mtpua.mt.gov for those who fall under the PUA eligibility guidelines. A resource page for those with technical, eligibility, or benefits questions is available at dli.mt.gov/covid-19.