



Fact Sheet: Helping the 99-weekers in Michigan

The 99ers are jobless workers who have exhausted the full 99 weeks of unemployment available. This includes 26 weeks of basic unemployment, 53 weeks of emergency benefits and 20 weeks of extended benefits. On Dec. 17, President Obama signed legislation to continue the emergency and extended benefits through 2011, but that will not help those who have exhausted the 99 weeks.

How many are there in Michigan?

According to the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency, between Jan. 1, 2010 and Nov. 30, 2010, 162,000 exhausted their benefits.

Why so many?

As you can see from the chart below, job losses in Michigan really accelerated in late 2008—about two years ago. With continued high unemployment, many workers did not find new jobs.

What can be done?

U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., has introduced legislation (S. 3706) to add 20 weeks to the emergency benefits. That bill, however, seems unlikely to be taken up at this time.

What's available for those exhausting benefits?

Depending on other income in the household, families may qualify for Food Assistance Program, Medicaid or MICHild. The Family Independence Program is available for those with extremely low incomes and few assets.

Check www.michigan.gov/helpinghand for program eligibility.

The 2-1-1 system can also help connect households with basic needs to private and public resources in their areas. The state Talent Bank and Michigan Works! offices continue to be available to those seeking work, even if they have exhausted their benefits.

