

BULLETIN

Issue 39 01.19.09

United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 876

The *UFCW 876 Bulletin* is a bi-monthly publication of UFCW Local 876 designed to give members a quick update of union news and notice of upcoming events. The flyer is distributed at the workplace by union representatives and is also available on-line at www.ufcw876.org. If you would like to receive an email copy of future *Bulletins* during the first week of publication, call the Local 876 Public Relations Department at 1-800-321-6406.

HOURS REDUCED? CONSIDER FILING FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Local 876 members who experience a reduction in hours may be eligible to receive unemployment benefits as an “underemployed” worker, provided they do not work a full-time schedule as defined by their employer.

The benefit payment for “underemployed” workers is re-calculated each week based on the worker’s earning for the week. Workers can decide whether or not to claim a benefit each week, considering how much their earnings impact their unemployment benefit for that week.

There are three basic principles affecting how workers’ earnings impact their unemployment benefits:

- (1) if their earnings are equal to or less than their weekly benefit amount, their benefits are reduced by 50¢ for every dollar earned;
- (2) if their earnings exceed their weekly benefit amount, but are less than 1½ times their weekly benefit amount, their total earnings are subtracted from 1½ times their weekly benefit amount;
- (3) the combination of their weekly benefits and earnings cannot exceed 1½ times their weekly benefit amount.

The Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) calculates an individual’s weekly benefit amount by multiplying the highest amount of wages paid to them in any base period quarter (13 weeks) by 4.1%. The UIA adds \$6 for each dependent, up to five dependents. The weekly benefit amount is capped at \$362.

The UIA determines the number of weeks workers may receive benefits, by multiplying their total base period wages by 43%, and dividing that amount by their weekly benefit amount. Currently, claims cannot be less than 14 weeks or more than 33 weeks. It is important to remember the number of weekly benefit payments remaining in their claim will be reduced by one week for any week a worker receives a benefit payment, regardless of the benefit amount. Workers who file a claim based on being underemployed cannot start a new claim should they (OVER)

become unemployed with the same benefit year (typically 52 weeks).

Members considering filing an unemployment insurance claim because they are underemployed should call the UIA at 1-866-500-0017 or visit their area Michigan Works! Center for information regarding their individual circumstances. The following examples provide a general idea of underemployment benefit amounts.

Example: Lulu earns \$10 an hour, worked 40 hours a week during 2008, and has two dependents.

- Weekly benefit amount if unemployed = \$225.20
- Weekly benefit amount if reduced to 30 hours per week = \$37.50
- Weekly benefit amount if reduced to 25 hours per week = \$87.80
- Weekly benefit amount if reduced to 20 hours per week = \$125.20

Example: Willie earns \$8.25 an hour, worked 32 hours a week during 2008, and has no dependents.

- Weekly benefit amount if unemployed = \$140.71
- Weekly benefit amount if reduced to 25 hours per week = \$4.81
- Weekly benefit amount if reduced to 20 hours per week = \$46.06
- Weekly benefit amount if reduced to 15 hours per week = \$78.83

CONTRACT BARGAINING UPDATE

Winter Sausage: Negotiations began January 6 on a new contract covering the Local 876 members working at this food processing plant. The current agreement expires February 1.

Polly’s Food Service: Negotiations are scheduled to begin February 2 on a new contract for the members working at the company’s grocery store in Chelsea. The current agreement expires March 1.

Pat’s Food Center: Members working at Pat’s Food Center can take an active role in establishing bargaining goals for their upcoming contract negotiations by completing the contract bargaining questionnaire recently mailed to their homes.

Koegel Meats: Koegel members are encouraged to have a voice in their contract negotiations by completing the contract bargaining questionnaire which will be mailed to their homes later this month.

UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

General Membership meetings are open to all Local 876 members. At these meetings, union representatives review the actions of the Local 876 Executive Board, present updates, and address members’ questions. Meetings begin at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, February 10
Local 876 Union Hall
876 Horace Brown Dr., Madison Heights

 **1-800-321-6406**
Roger Robinson
President
Rick Blocker Secretary-Treasurer
George Misko Recorder