

PRESS RELEASE

# Statutory Change in Unemployment Insurance Maximum Benefit Week Allotment

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Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

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**BOSTON** — Recent data from the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the 12-month average unemployment rate in each of the Commonwealth's designated Metropolitan Areas is now at or below 5.1%.

The Massachusetts Unemployment Insurance statute, G. L. c. 151A, provides for automatic adjustment of the maximum unemployment benefit period when employment statistics reflect this exceptionally strong condition. Specifically, section 30 of Chapter 151A provides that if the twelve-month average unemployment rate for each of the Commonwealth's designated Metropolitan Areas is equal to or below 5.1%, the maximum allowable benefit period for newly filed unemployment claims will adjust from 30 weeks to 26 weeks. As a result, the maximum allowable benefit period for new unemployment claims filed on or after March 31, 2019, will now be adjusted from 30 to 26 weeks.

The adjusted benefit period will apply only to new unemployment claims filed on or after March 31, 2019. Claimants who have filed claims for unemployment benefits prior to March 31 will remain eligible for the 30-week maximum benefit that was in effect at the time they filed their claim.

The statute requires continuing measurement of average local unemployment rates and an upward re-adjustment of the maximum benefit period if the condition of the labor market declines. As a result, if during any month of a claimant's 26-week maximum benefit period the twelve-month average monthly unemployment rate in any one of the Commonwealth's measured metropolitan statistical areas rises above the 5.1% threshold, the maximum benefit period for that claimant and all other claimants would go back up to 30 weeks.

If the unemployment rate in all of the Commonwealth's measured metropolitan areas remains at or below 5.1%, the potential cost savings to the UI program in the first year of the reduction in benefits is estimated to be around \$40 million. Cost savings for a second year would be around is \$84 million.

The full text of statute G.L. c. 151A, §30(a) can be viewed [here](#).

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXXI/Chapter151A/Section30>

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THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

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