



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 4, 2009

CONTACT INFORMATION:

**Michael Moore, Unemployment Compensation Division, 304-558-2624
Jama L. Jarrett, 304-558-2003, ext. 341**

STIMULUS BILL TO ASSIST UNEMPLOYED WEST VIRGINIANS

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - WorkForce West Virginia announced today that West Virginians receiving unemployment benefits will be assisted by the federal economic stimulus bill that was signed into law by President Obama on Feb. 17, 2009. Governor Manchin signed an agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor on behalf of the State of West Virginia to receive federal funding to aid the unemployed. There will be three main changes for unemployment compensation (UC) recipients.

The first is a \$25 weekly supplement added to the unemployment compensation of all eligible individuals receiving benefits for the week ending Feb. 28, 2009 or later. Any eligible claimant who files an initial claim effective Dec. 20, 2009, or earlier may establish entitlement for the \$25 weekly supplement to their benefits. The last week that this weekly supplement will be paid is the week ending July 3, 2010. If a claimant is currently receiving unemployment benefits, no action is required on the claimant's part.

WorkForce West Virginia is planning to establish programming to begin paying the \$25 weekly supplement as soon as possible.

The second is a tax break on the first \$2,400 of UC benefit payments received in 2009. The first \$2,400 in benefit payments is not considered taxable income. Claimants are responsible to report and adjust this change to their tax liability at the end of the 2009 income tax year.

The third change is an extension to the deadline to file for emergency unemployment compensation (EUC). The last day a claimant can establish entitlement for EUC benefits has been extended to claims effective Dec. 20, 2009. This was amended from a pre-stimulus effective date of March 22, 2009.

The last week that EUC will be paid is the week ending June 5, 2010. EUC was first approved in July to provide additional unemployment benefits for jobless workers who exhausted their regular benefits. A EUC extension in November amended filing deadlines and increased the maximum number of weeks a claimant can draw EUC in West Virginia to 20 weeks.

The federal economic stimulus bill amended the deadlines, but **did not** change the number of weeks that a person can claim EUC.

###