



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Michael Rodrigues, Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Representative Aaron Michlewitz, House Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Patricia D. Jehlen, Chair, Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development
Representative Stephen Hay, Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development
Michael D. Hurley, Senate Clerk
Steven T. James, House Clerk

FROM: Richard A. Jeffers

DATE: July 10, 2020

SUBJECT: **JUNE 2020 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE TRUST FUND REPORT**

The attached June 2020 Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Report provides information on the trust fund status through the end of May. Projections for the private contributory account for 2020 through 2024 remain as published in the May 2020 Outlook Report.

The report highlights include:

The May 2020 year-end private contributory account balance was \$586 million, \$103 million more than projected caused by higher than expected benefit payments and lower employer contributions. Through May, employer contributions of \$1.090 billion were \$41 million less than projected and benefit payments of \$2.323 billion were \$63 million more.

Tax rate schedule E triggered for 2020 employer contributions and the taxable wage base remained at \$15,000.

The 2020 outlook for benefit payments is \$6.392 billion; employer contributions are estimated at \$1.585 billion and an insolvent year-end private contributory account balance expected to be -\$3.194 billion. Massachusetts needed to borrow from the federal unemployment account around the end of June. The loans will be interest-free through December 2020.

cc: Distribution List



Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Report

Outlook Report June 2020

THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE TRUST FUND BALANCE

As of May 31, 2020, the preliminary Massachusetts Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund ending balance was \$733 million. This balance is the sum of the preliminary private contributory account balance of \$586 million and the governmental contributory account balance of \$147 million.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE TRUST FUND OUTLOOK FOR 2020

The private contributory account projections for 2020 are based on the following: (1) the 2020 distribution of employer experience rates; (2) the April 2020 Moody's Analytics Data Services economic forecasts; and (3) unemployment insurance claims and payments activities through first quarter 2020. The projections remain as published in the May 2020 Outlook Report.

Employer contributions on tax rate schedule E, as triggered, and a \$15,000 taxable wage base are estimated to be \$1.585 billion in 2020. As a result of the significant increases in unemployment due to the Covid-19 pandemic, benefit payments are projected to be \$6.392 billion. The 2020 private contributory year-end balance is estimated to be insolvent at -\$3.194 billion. Massachusetts needed to borrow from the federal unemployment account around the end of June. The loans will be interest-free through December 2020.

2020 ACTIVITY TO DATE

May's preliminary employer contributions of \$70.3 million generated a year to date total of \$1.090 billion, \$38 million less than the January through May 2019 collections and \$41 million lower than expected. The difference may be caused by the 60-day deferral of employer contributions due in the second quarter.

Year to date preliminary benefit payments of \$2.323 billion through May 2020 were \$1.696 billion higher than those paid in the same time span in 2019 and \$63 million more than the latest projection. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic year-to-date initial claims and total weeks compensated were 736 percent and 255 percent higher as compared to last year's same months totals, respectively.

As a result of the differences between employer contributions and benefit payments, the May 31, 2020 private contributory account balance of \$586 million was \$103 million more than the projection of \$483 million at the end of May. The 2020 year-end balance projection remains at -\$3.194 billion.

2021 – 2024 PROJECTIONS

Projections for the private contributory account for the years 2021 to 2024 remain as published in the May 2020 Outlook Report. The taxable wage base remains at \$15,000. The increase in unemployment due to the Covid-19 pandemic results in an insolvent unemployment insurance private contributory account throughout the outlook period. As a result, Massachusetts will need to rely on interest bearing advances from the federal unemployment insurance.

For 2021, tax rate schedule G is projected to trigger for employer contributions. Employer contributions are estimated to be \$2.151 billion and benefit payments projected at \$5.127 billion. By the end of 2021, the private contributory account balance is expected to be insolvent at -\$6.170 billion. Private contributory employer's federal unemployment taxes will increase \$21 per employee due to outstanding advances at the end of 2020 and 2021 and not paid back by November 10, 2020.

Tax rate schedule G is again projected to trigger for employer contributions on 2022 payrolls. Employer contributions are projected to be \$2.407 billion and benefit payments estimated at \$2.849 billion. The year-end private contributory balance will continue to be insolvent at -\$6.613 billion.

For 2023, employer contributions are expected to remain on tax rate schedule G. Contributions are estimated to be \$2.499 billion with benefit payments projected at \$1.746 billion. Year-end private contributory balance still insolvent at - \$5.860 billion.

In 2024 employer payrolls will remain on tax rate schedule G and generate \$2.420 billion in contributions. Benefit payments are expected to be \$1.826 billion and a year-end private contributory fund balance at -\$5.266 billion.