



## Quarterly News

### 2021 Contribution Rates

**Expect a short delay in receiving 2021 Rate Notice(s).**

Unprecedented 2020 claim volumes have led to an extensive backlog. To ensure employers receive accurate rates, with the benefit of any pending charge relief decisions, we are postponing the calculation of rates until the last week of December.

Tax rates will be available on [UI eServices for Employers \(uieservices.mt.gov\)](http://uieservices.mt.gov) January 1, 2021. Notices will be mailed the week of January 4, 2021.

The infusion of Coronavirus Relief Funds from Governor Bullock into the UI Trust Fund, will allow Contribution rates for 2021 to remain on rate Schedule I. The lowest tax rate schedule allowed.

If you are not already, we strongly encourage all third-party payroll providers to participate in our Fiscal Rate Exchange to electronically request and receive the UI rates for your clients as often as needed. Our exchange file also includes credit balance information. Refer to our [Fiscal Rate Exchange Handbook](#) on eServices for more information or call (406) 444-3834, option 2.

**Note:** 2021 rates cannot be requested through the rate exchange until January 1.

### Taxable Wage Base

The taxable wage base for 2021 is \$35,300, an increase from \$34,100 in 2020. The taxable wage base is 80% of Montana's 2019 average annual wage (\$44,135) rounded to the nearest \$100.

If you use payroll software, be sure to update the taxable wage base, as well as your new rate, to prevent errors when calculating tax due next year.

### Watch Out for Scams

The Montana Department of Labor & Industry (DLI) has been alerted to several scams involving Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims. Criminals are using both SMS text messages and phone calls to falsely lure individuals into providing detailed personal information under the ruse that it is to resolve an issue or problem on their UI benefit claim. Please spread the word:

- Legitimate calls from UI claims should reflect one of the numbers below in the Caller ID:
  - (406) 444-2545 Regular UI
  - (406) 444-3382 Pandemic UI
- We do not send text messages of any kind to regular UI benefit claimants.
- For Pandemic Unemployment Assistant (PUA) claimants, we may send a text message IF the claimants opted-in/agreed to receive text messages AND it should include a link back to our PUA site [mtpua.mt.gov](http://mtpua.mt.gov). Check all URLs carefully!
- For employers, we only send text messages to authenticate access into eServices, if you are not trying to access eServices, it is a scam.

If you receive a text message or call you think is suspicious:

- ✓ Don't give out any personal information.
- ✓ Don't click the link or call the number.
- ✓ Don't respond to the text, delete it. If it's a call, hang up.
- ✓ Block the number on your phone,
- ✓ File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/#/>.



**Almost 40% of Montana employers are using SIDES. Are you?**

Calls come in daily from employers wanting to know the quickest and best route for getting benefit claim information and responses timely. The answer, hands down, is SIDES.

SIDES E-Response is a convenient and secure way for employers (or their agents) to electronically receive and respond to requests for information regarding unemployment insurance (UI) benefit claims.

SIDES participants receive an email when information is needed or available and can log into our employer portal, UI eServices for Employers, to review/respond. It cuts out the mail time and improves the integrity of the information.

Get signed up today at [uieservices.mt.gov](http://uieservices.mt.gov) or call (406) 444-3834 option 2 for more information.

**Confidential Information**

The Montana Unemployment Insurance Division must notify employers that wage information and other confidential unemployment insurance information may be requested and used for governmental purposes other than unemployment compensation. For example, federal and state law allows use of confidential UI information to verify an individual's eligibility for other government programs.

We take our responsibility to protect the confidentiality of employer and claimant information very seriously. Confidential UI information, including your name, address, FEIN, UI account number, wage information, and social security numbers of individuals, is released only after careful verification of the requesting authority.

**Amending Reports**

It's time for annual payroll reconciliations! If you find mistakes, there are three ways to amend your quarterly unemployment insurance reports.

- **Note:** Regardless of which method you choose, please submit any applicable tax due with the amended report. And, if you are removing wages which should have been reported to another state, please identify the state where the wages should have been reported.

**#1 UI eServices for Employers ([uieservices.mt.gov](http://uieservices.mt.gov))**

Log into eServices and under the File & Pay tab and All Quarters sub-tab, click the View/Amend link next to the quarter you wish to update. Once the report is open, click the Change button in the upper righthand corner to:

- Add or remove employees
- Update social security numbers
- Correct wage amounts and/or excess
- Add or update employee counts

Include a detailed explanation of the changes you are making in the space provided.

To ensure your 4th quarter excess is correct, submit amended reports BEFORE filing the 4th quarter report. Begin with the oldest quarter first.

**#2 FSET/ICESA formats**

Payroll services can use FSET or ICESA file formats to amend reports. However, an explanation of the changes is needed to help us process the amendment. Please log into [eServices](http://eServices) and submit a secure web message that includes the following:

- Employer name and account number,
- Name(s) of employee(s) whose wages and/or SSN you are correcting,
- Reason for the amendment, and
- Contact name and phone number to call if we have questions.

**#3 Amended Paper Report**

Please write "AMENDED" at the top of the report and check the Amended Report box in Step 1. Attach an explanation which identifies the employees whose SSN's or wages are changed and provide the reason for the change.

If you have questions or need help amending your quarterly report, please call (406) 444-3834, option 4.