

Program Letter

United States Railroad Retirement Board Office of Programs



Quality Reporting Service Center

Phone: (312) 751-4992

E-mail: qrsc@rrb.gov

Fax: (312) 751-7123

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Date: January 22, 2013

TO: Certification, Registration, Retirement and Unemployment Contact Officials

SUBJECT: Benefits Provided Under American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012

Please distribute this notice to all individuals within your organization who may need the information in connection with their work.

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (ATRA) provides for up to 13 weeks of additional temporary extended unemployment benefits payable by the US Railroad Retirement Board (RRB). The benefits may be paid to certain railroad workers who received normal unemployment benefits for any days between **July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013**, and who have exhausted their rights to additional benefits payable under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA).

The ATRA provides for the use of the funds previously apportioned under the Worker, Homeownership and Business Assistance Act (WHBAA) of 2009 for these temporary extended unemployment benefits. The additional benefits will stop at the end of a person's extended unemployment benefit period **OR** when the total funding has been spent – whichever comes first. The latest date that an extended benefit period may begin under the ATRA is ***December 31, 2013***.

In summary, in order for a claimant to qualify for extended unemployment benefits under the ATRA, a claimant must have:

- Exhausted normal unemployment benefits in Benefit Year (BY) 2012 or BY 2013, either based on earnings or on collecting the maximum 130 days, before December 31, 2013 **or**
- Claimed unemployment benefits during ***BY 2012 but never received extended benefits for BY 2012 and is not qualified for BY20 13. Those individuals can now receive special extended benefits starting as late as December 31, 2013.*** The new law does not lengthen extended benefit periods established under prior laws.

In addition, the same rules apply to the ATRA funded benefits as to normally paid extended benefits as it relates to the duration of payments:

- Railroad workers with less than 10 years of service may now be eligible for extended benefits up to 65 days within a period consisting of 7 consecutive 2-week registration periods.
- Railroad workers with 10 or more years of service may now be eligible for extended benefits up to 130 days within at period consisting of 13 consecutive 2-week registration periods.

Any ATRA extended unemployment benefits paid will be charged to the \$175 million appropriation. These benefits will not be charged to the claimant's base year employer's benefit account balance and consequently will not be used when calculating the base year employer's experience rated RUIA contribution rate for any future years.

The RRB will notify eligible individuals of their new rights to extended benefits and provide additional information about those benefits as soon as possible.

If you have any questions regarding the benefits paid based on the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, please contact the RRB's Quality Reporting Service Center at (312) 751-4992.