

Delay in the processing of UMID card applications filed starting 30 July 2019

23 August 2019

Social Security System (SSS) members are advised that the processing of Unified Multi-purpose Identification (UMID) card applications received starting 30 July 2019 onwards will be delayed due to the stoppage of the Central Verification System (CVS).

CVS operation stopped due to its hard disk failure. The CVS is being administered by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) to perform biometric uniqueness check of UMID applicants. The PSA is already working to restore the CVS back into operation at the soonest possible date.

With guidance from the PSA, SSS will issue another advisory once the CVS processing is restored.

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SSS members may now avail of unemployment benefit

18 August 2019

The state-run Social Security System (SSS) announced Monday that its members who were involuntarily separated from employment may now avail of the unemployment or involuntary separation benefit.

The unemployment benefit, one of the landmark provisions of Republic Act 11199 or the Social Security Act of 2018, is the seventh benefit program of the SSS. Member-applicants may be granted a cash benefit equivalent to half of their average monthly salary credit (AMSC) for a maximum of two months.

SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Aurora C. Ignacio said that through the new benefit program, SSS covered employees which include kasambahay and overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are given additional social security protection.

“The unemployment insurance or involuntary separation benefit intends to provide SSS members who are involuntarily separated from employment with a temporary source of income to support themselves and their families while they are on the process of finding a new job,” Ignacio said.

“For example, a member who’s earning P10,000 per month was involuntarily separated from employment. The member may be granted cash assistance for a maximum period of two months. The cash assistance is equivalent to one half of the member’s AMSC which in this case is P5,000 per month or a total of P10,000 for the two-month period of the member’s unemployment,” Ignacio explained.

As stated in the SSS Circular No. 2019-011 issued earlier this month, qualified covered employees must not be more than 60 years old at the time of involuntary separation. Underground and surface mineworker, and racehorse jockey members, on the other hand, must not be more than 50 and 55 years old, respectively.

Likewise, the member must have paid at least 36 monthly contributions with 12 months of these should have been paid within the 18-month period before the month of involuntary separation.

Avalees must also, have no settled unemployment benefit within the last three years prior to the date of involuntary separation.

Further, the reason for such separation must not be the fault of the employee or a result of the employee’s negligence which may be caused by the following but not limited to installation of labor-saving devices, redundancy, retrenchment, closure or cessation of operation, and disease or illness.

“A covered employee who is involuntarily separated can only claim unemployment insurance or involuntary separation benefit once every three years starting from the date of involuntary separation. In the case of concurrence of two or more compensable contingencies within the same compensable period, only the highest benefit shall be paid,” the circular read.

Applicants will be required to present and submit documentary requirements such as an original and photocopy of one primary ID card or document or in the absence of which, any two ID cards or documents, both with signature and at least one with photo.

A certification establishing the nature and date of involuntary separation issued by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) through its regional offices or Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO) shall be submitted. The Notice of Termination from Employer or the Affidavit of Termination of Employment should also be submitted.

Applicants may file their claims at any SSS branch or foreign office. Filing for unemployment insurance or involuntary separation benefit claims must be within one year from the date of involuntary separation.

Payments of the unemployment insurance or involuntary separation benefit will be through SSS Unified Multi-Purpose ID (UMID) cards enrolled as ATM or through the Union Bank of the Philippines Quick Card account. SSS is also currently working to include banks under PESONet and non-bank cash pick-up as other modes of payment for this benefit.

Involuntary separations that occurred on March 5, 2019 onwards are covered by the unemployment insurance.

SSS urges employers to avail of the penalty condonation as deadline nears

27 August 2019

The state-run Social Security System strongly advised the more than 100,000 delinquent employers to avail of the Contribution Penalty Condonation Program (CPCP) as its September 6 deadline draws closer.

The transitory clause of the Republic Act No. 11199 or the Social Security Act of 2018 provides that a Contribution Penalty Condonation Program will be implemented for six months from its effectivity in March 2019.

"Instead of waiting for the last day, we strongly urge all delinquent employers to immediately apply for the condonation program to settle the unpaid premiums of their employees and have the incurred penalties waived. You have until September 6 to avail of the program and bring back your records to good standing," SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Aurora C. Ignacio said.

As of July, the SSS has already collected P795.97 million unpaid premiums from 31,774 employers benefiting 307,578 employees. The pension fund has also condoned P1.67 billion worth of penalties.

"Only a few weeks are left before the deadline, yet more than 70 percent of delinquent employers who have not yet availed of the CPCP. We are urging employers to take advantage of this big opportunity to avoid facing criminal liability and help their employees claim the benefits due to them without any delay. Employers have the option to pay their unpaid contributions in full amount or through installment payment with only six percent interest per year," Ignacio added.

SSS warned employers who continue to violate the SS Act of 2018 that they will be obliged to pay the corresponding penalties and will face imprisonment ranging from six to 12 years and will have to pay a fine ranging from P5,000 to P20,000.

Under the new law, the penalty imposed on unpaid contributions was reduced to 2 percent.

Those who are qualified to avail the program are employers with unpaid contributions; employers who have not yet registered with SSS, including household employers; employers who have pending or approved proposals under the installment scheme of SSS including those with pending or approved applications under the program for acceptance of properties through dacion en pago; employers with cases pending before the Social Security Commission, Courts or Office of the Prosecutor; and employers who have settled all contributions before the effectivity of RA 11199 but with unpaid penalties as well as those who were given a Warrant of Dstraint/Levy/Garnishment (WDLG) or encumbrance

"We always stress the importance of availing of the CPCP to avoid paying penalties that are sometimes higher than the actual unpaid premiums that they have to pay. When you settle your financial obligations with SSS, your employees can maximize their benefits and privileges as SSS members," Ignacio said.

SSS advised delinquent employers to go the nearest SSS branch to have their account assessed first if they are qualified under the CPCP. For those who want to pay through installment, they may submit an installment proposal to the Head of the SSS Branch/Office or Large Account Department.

"The pension fund shall only require a minimum down payment equivalent to at least 5 percent of the total contribution delinquency. The employers must also submit a promissory note indicating their intent to pay the balance of the delinquency in equal monthly installments within a maximum period of four years. The first monthly installment must be paid within 30 days after the date of approval of the proposal," Ignacio said.

SSS maternity benefit claims up by 15%, reaching over 180K in H1 2019

29 August 2019

The state-run Social Security System (SSS) granted over 180,000 maternity benefit claims in the first six months of 2019, a 15 percent increase as compared to the same period last year.

SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Aurora C. Ignacio said that the pension fund expects that this number will continue to grow through the year. "This year we are expecting around 360,000 maternity benefit claims. This is 10 percent higher than the actual claims recorded the previous year," Ignacio said.

The SSS' maternity benefit disbursements also increased by 23 percent from P3.37 billion in the first semester of 2018 to P4.13 billion in the first half of the year. The increase can be attributed to the growth in the number of beneficiaries as well as the implementation of Republic Acts No. 11199 and 11210 or the Social Security Act of 2018 and the 105-day Expanded Maternity Leave Law (EMLL), respectively.

Under the SS Act of 2018, the SSS contribution rate and monthly salary credit were increased starting in April 2019, thereby also raising the amount of benefit that a member may receive.

On the other hand, the EMLL pushed the compensable period for maternity benefit from 60 or 78 days to 105 days covering child delivery, miscarriage, and emergency termination of pregnancy starting March 11, 2019.

Pursuant to the EMLL, qualified members may receive from SSS a cash benefit equivalent to 100 percent of their average daily salary credit multiplied by 105 days for live childbirth, regardless of the mode of delivery. An additional 15 days of paid leave is given to a solo parent under the applicable provisions of Republic Act No. 8972 or Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000.

For miscarriage and emergency termination of pregnancy, the member will receive an amount equivalent to 100 percent of her average daily salary credit multiplied by 60 days.

Female members with expected delivery date on January 2020 onwards, may receive a maximum maternity benefit of P70,000, given that they are paying their contributions under the new maximum monthly salary credit of P20,000.

"The SSS is glad to assist its female members and their families during pregnancy. This benefit will provide them with the financial means to support themselves and their newborn babies before returning to work. We hope that through these enhancements, they will be able to regain their health and overall wellness," Ignacio said.

To qualify for the maternity benefit, a female member must have paid at least three monthly contributions within the 12-month period before the semester of childbirth or miscarriage. She must have notified her employer about her pregnancy and the probable date of her childbirth if she is employed, or to the SSS if she is self-employed (SE), voluntary member (VM), overseas Filipino workers (OFW), non-working spouse (NWS) or member separated from employment.

"We advise our members to religiously pay their monthly contributions to qualify for the short-term benefits, such as maternity, sickness, and disability. Their payments, using Payment Reference Number, are posted immediately in our system to avoid any delay in claiming their benefits," she said.

Members may conveniently notify SSS through our e-channels, such as My.SSS at the SSS website, via SSS Mobile App which is downloadable for free on Google Play Store and the Apple Store, and through our Self-Service Information Terminal which can be found in selected SSS branches.

Through these e-channels, members may also conveniently check their records, the status of their benefits including the maternity benefit, and the documentary requirements for its programs, and other services.

"We encourage our members to download the SSS Mobile App, especially our pregnant members. We recognize the hassle to go to our branches. Through this app, they may submit and check their maternity notifications conveniently," Ignacio said.