

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Amend the Unemployment Compensation Laws

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 26 MRSA §1191, sub-§11 is enacted to read:

11. Bonus for quickly finding work. An individual who is receiving benefits pursuant to this section and who finds work no later than 3 weeks after making an initial claim for benefits must receive a bonus equal to 2 weeks of benefits, payable as a lump sum. An individual who is receiving benefits pursuant to this section and who finds work no later than 6 weeks after making an initial claim for benefits must receive a bonus equal to one week of benefits. A bonus paid pursuant to this subsection counts toward the limit on the maximum amount of benefits established in subsection 4.

Sec. 2. 26 MRSA §1192, sub-§3, as amended by PL 2005, c. 454, §1, is further amended to read:

3. Is able and available for work. The individual is able to work and is available for full-time work at the individual's usual or customary trade, occupation, profession or business or in such other trade, occupation, profession or business for which the individual's prior training or experience shows the individual to be fitted or qualified; and in addition to having complied with subsection 2 is actively seeking work in accordance with the regulations of the commission and has provided proof of having contacted a minimum of 5 employers in that week; provided that no ineligibility may be found solely because the claimant is unable to accept employment on a shift, the greater part of which falls between the hours of midnight to 5 a.m., and is unavailable for that employment because of parental obligation, the need to care for an immediate family member, or the unavailability of a personal care attendant required to assist the unemployed individual who is a handicapped person; and provided that an unemployed individual who is neither able nor available for work due to good cause as determined by the deputy is eligible to receive prorated benefits for that portion of the week during which the individual was able and available.

A. Notwithstanding this subsection, beginning January 1, 2004, an individual who is not available for full-time work as required in this subsection is not disqualified from receiving benefits if:

(1) The individual worked less than full time for a majority of the weeks during that individual's base period and the individual is able and available for and actively seeking part-time work for at least the number of hours in a week comparable to those customarily worked in part-time employment during that individual's base period; or

(2) The individual worked full time for a majority of the weeks during that individual's base period, but is able and available for and actively seeking only part-time work because of the illness or disability of an immediate family member or because of limitations necessary for the safety or protection of the individual or individual's immediate family member.

This paragraph does not apply to a person who applies for benefits after September 30, 2008. This paragraph continues to apply to a person who applies for benefits on or before September 30, 2008 until that person has exhausted benefits payable under that application.

SUMMARY

This bill provides that an individual who is receiving unemployment benefits and who finds work no later than 3 weeks after making an initial claim for benefits must receive a bonus equal to 2 weeks of benefits, payable as a lump sum. An individual who is receiving benefits and who finds work no later than 6 weeks after making an initial claim for benefits must receive a bonus equal to one week of benefits.

The bill requires that an individual provide proof of having contacted a minimum of 5 employers in a week in order to be eligible to receive unemployment compensation for that week.