

RCW 50.22.155 Training benefits—Claims effective on or after April 5, 2009—Eligibility—Definitions—Role of local workforce development councils—Rules.

(1) With respect to claims with an effective date on or after April 5, 2009, and before July 1, 2012:

(a) Subject to availability of funds, training benefits are available for an individual who is eligible for or has exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation benefits when:

(i) The individual is a dislocated worker as defined in RCW 50.04.075 and, after assessment of the individual's labor market, occupation, or skills, is determined to need job-related training to find suitable employment in the individual's labor market. The assessment of demand for the individual's occupation or skill sets must be substantially based on declining occupation or skill sets and high-demand occupations identified in local labor market areas by the local workforce development councils in cooperation with the employment security department and its labor market information division; or

(ii) For claims with an effective date on or after September 7, 2009, the individual:

(A) Earned an average hourly wage in the individual's base year that is less than one hundred thirty percent of the state minimum wage and, after assessment, it is determined that the individual's earning potential will be enhanced through vocational training. The individual's average hourly wage is calculated by dividing the total wages paid by the total hours worked in the individual's base year;

(B) Served in the United States military or the Washington national guard during the twelve-month period prior to the application date, was honorably discharged from military service or the Washington national guard and, after assessment, is determined to need job-related training to find suitable employment in the individual's labor market;

(C) Is currently serving in the Washington national guard and, after assessment, is determined to need job-related training to find suitable employment in the individual's labor market; or

(D) Is disabled due to an injury or illness and, after assessment, is determined to be unable to return to his or her previous occupation and to need job-related training to find suitable employment in the individual's labor market.

(b) (i) The individual must develop an individual training program that is submitted to the commissioner for approval within ninety days after the individual is notified by the employment security department of the requirements of this section;

(ii) The individual must enter the approved training program by one hundred twenty days after the date of the notification, unless the employment security department determines that the training is not available during the one hundred twenty days, in which case the individual enters training as soon as it is available;

(iii) The department may waive the deadlines established under this subsection for reasons deemed by the commissioner to be good cause.

(c) The individual must be enrolled in training approved under this section on a full-time basis as determined by the educational institution, except that less than full-time training may be approved when the individual has a physical, mental, or emotional disability that precludes enrollment on a full-time basis.

(d) The individual must make satisfactory progress in the training as defined by the commissioner and certified by the educational institution.

(e) An individual is not eligible for training benefits under this section if he or she:

(i) Is a standby claimant who expects recall to his or her regular employer; or

(ii) Has a definite recall date that is within six months of the date he or she is laid off.

(f) The following definitions apply throughout this subsection (1) unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(i) "Educational institution" means an institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016 or an educational institution as defined in RCW 28C.04.410, including equivalent educational institutions in other states.

(ii) "High-demand occupation" means an occupation with a substantial number of current or projected employment opportunities.

(iii) "Training benefits" means additional benefits paid under this section.

(iv) "Training program" means:

(A) An education program determined to be necessary as a prerequisite to vocational training after counseling at the educational institution in which the individual enrolls under his or her approved training program; or

(B) A vocational training program at an educational institution that:

(I) Is targeted to training for a high-demand occupation;

(II) Is likely to enhance the individual's marketable skills and earning power; and

(III) Meets the criteria for performance developed by the workforce training and education coordinating board for the purpose of determining those training programs eligible for funding under Title I of P.L. 113-128.

"Training program" does not include any course of education primarily intended to meet the requirements of a baccalaureate or higher degree, unless the training meets specific requirements for certification, licensing, or for specific skills necessary for the occupation.

(g) Benefits shall be paid as follows:

(i) The total training benefit amount shall be fifty-two times the individual's weekly benefit amount, reduced by the total amount of regular benefits and extended benefits paid, or deemed paid, with respect to the benefit year.

(ii) The weekly benefit amount shall be the same as the regular weekly amount payable during the applicable benefit year and shall be paid under the same terms and conditions as regular benefits.

(iii) Training benefits shall be paid before any extended benefits but not before any similar federally funded program. Effective July 3, 2011, training benefits shall be paid after any federally funded program.

(iv) Training benefits are not payable for weeks more than two years beyond the end of the benefit year of the regular claim. However, training benefits are not payable for weeks more than three years beyond the end of the benefit year of the regular claim when individuals are eligible for benefits in accordance with RCW 50.22.010 (2) (b) or (3) (b).

(h) The requirement under RCW 50.22.010(10) relating to exhausting regular benefits does not apply to an individual otherwise eligible for training benefits under this section when the individual's benefit year ends before his or her training benefits are exhausted and the individual is eligible for a new benefit year. These individuals will have the option of remaining on the original claim or filing a new claim.

(i) Individuals who receive training benefits under RCW 50.22.150 or this section are not eligible for training benefits under this section for five years from the last receipt of training benefits.

(j) An individual eligible to receive a trade readjustment allowance under chapter 2, Title II of the trade act of 1974, as amended, shall not be eligible to receive benefits under this section for each week the individual receives such trade readjustment allowance.

(k) An individual eligible to receive emergency unemployment compensation under any federal law shall not be eligible to receive benefits under this section for each week the individual receives such compensation.

(l) All base year employers are interested parties to the approval of training and the granting of training benefits.

(m) Each local workforce development council, in cooperation with the employment security department and its labor market information division, must identify occupations and skill sets that are declining and high-demand occupations and skill sets. Each local workforce development council shall update this information annually or more frequently if needed.

(2) With respect to claims with an effective date on or after July 1, 2012:

(a) Training benefits are available for an individual who is eligible for or has exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation benefits when:

(i) The individual is a dislocated worker as defined in RCW 50.04.075 and, after assessment of the individual's labor market, occupation, or skills, is determined to need job-related training to find suitable employment in the individual's labor market. The assessment of demand for the individual's occupation or skill sets must be substantially based on declining occupation or skill sets and high-demand occupations identified in local labor market areas by the local workforce development councils in cooperation with the employment security department and its labor market information division; or

(ii) Subject to the availability of funds as specified in RCW 50.22.140, the individual:

(A) Earned an average hourly wage in the individual's base year that is less than one hundred thirty percent of the state minimum wage and, after assessment, it is determined that the individual's earning potential will be enhanced through vocational training. The individual's average hourly wage is calculated by dividing the total wages paid by the total hours worked in the individual's base year;

(B) Served in the United States military or the Washington national guard during the twelve-month period prior to the application date, was honorably discharged from military service or the Washington national guard and, after assessment, is determined to need job-related training to find suitable employment in the individual's labor market;

(C) Is currently serving in the Washington national guard and, after assessment, is determined to need job-related training to find suitable employment in the individual's labor market; or

(D) Is disabled due to an injury or illness and, after assessment, is determined to be unable to return to his or her previous occupation and to need job-related training to find suitable employment in the individual's labor market.

(b) (i) Except for an individual eligible under (a) (i) of this subsection, the individual must develop an individual training plan that is submitted to the commissioner for approval within ninety days after the individual is notified by the employment security department of the requirements of this section;

(ii) Except for an individual eligible under (a) (i) of this subsection, the individual must enroll in the approved training program by one hundred twenty days after the date of the notification, unless the employment security department determines that the training is not available during the one hundred twenty days, in which case the individual enters training as soon as it is available;

(iii) An individual eligible under (a) (i) of this subsection must submit an individual training plan and enroll in the approved training program prior to the end of the individual's benefit year;

(iv) The department may waive the deadlines established under (b) (i) and (ii) of this subsection for reasons deemed by the commissioner to be good cause.

(c) Except for an individual eligible under (a) (i) of this subsection, the individual must be enrolled in training approved under this section on a full-time basis as determined by the educational institution, except that less than full-time training may be approved when the individual has a physical, mental, or emotional disability that precludes enrollment on a full-time basis.

(d) The individual must make satisfactory progress in the training as defined by the commissioner and certified by the educational institution.

(e) An individual is not eligible for training benefits under this section if he or she:

(i) Is a standby claimant who expects recall to his or her regular employer; or

(ii) Has a definite recall date that is within six months of the date he or she is laid off.

(f) The following definitions apply throughout this subsection (2) unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

(i) "Educational institution" means an institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016 or an educational institution as defined in RCW 28C.04.410, including equivalent educational institutions in other states.

(ii) "High-demand occupation" means an occupation with a substantial number of current or projected employment opportunities.

(iii) "Training benefits" means additional benefits paid under this section.

(iv) "Training program" means:

(A) An education program determined to be necessary as a prerequisite to vocational training after counseling at the educational institution in which the individual enrolls under his or her approved training program; or

(B) A vocational training program at an educational institution that:

(I) Is targeted to training for a high-demand occupation;

(II) Is likely to enhance the individual's marketable skills and earning power; and

(III) Meets the criteria for performance developed by the workforce training and education coordinating board for the purpose of determining those training programs eligible for funding under Title I of P.L. 113-128.

"Training program" does not include any course of education primarily intended to meet the requirements of a baccalaureate or higher degree, unless the training meets specific requirements for certification, licensing, or for specific skills necessary for the occupation.

(g) Available benefits shall be paid as follows:

(i) The total training benefit amount shall be fifty-two times the individual's weekly benefit amount, reduced by the total amount of regular benefits paid, or deemed paid, with respect to the benefit year.

(ii) The weekly benefit amount shall be the same as the regular weekly amount payable during the applicable benefit year and shall be paid under the same terms and conditions as regular benefits.

(iii) Training benefits shall be paid after any federally funded program.

(iv) Training benefits are not payable for weeks more than two years beyond the end of the benefit year of the regular claim. However, training benefits are not payable for weeks more than three years beyond the end of the benefit year of the regular claim when individuals are eligible for benefits in accordance with RCW 50.22.010 (2) (b) or (3) (b).

(h) The requirement under RCW 50.22.010(10) relating to exhausting regular benefits does not apply to an individual otherwise eligible for training benefits under this section when the individual's benefit year ends before his or her training benefits are exhausted and the individual is eligible for a new benefit year. These individuals will have the option of remaining on the original claim or filing a new claim.

(i) Except for individuals eligible under (a) (i) of this subsection, individuals who receive training benefits under RCW 50.22.150 or this section are not eligible for training benefits under this section for five years from the last receipt of training benefits.

(j) An individual eligible to receive a trade readjustment allowance under chapter 2, Title II of the trade act of 1974, as amended, shall not be eligible to receive benefits under this section for each week the individual receives such trade readjustment allowance.

(k) An individual eligible to receive emergency unemployment compensation under any federal law shall not be eligible to receive benefits under this section for each week the individual receives such compensation.

(l) All base year employers are interested parties to the approval of training and the granting of training benefits.

(m) Each local workforce development council, in cooperation with the employment security department and its labor market information division, must identify occupations and skill sets that are declining and high-demand occupations and skill sets. Each local workforce development council shall update this information annually or more frequently if needed.

(3) The commissioner shall adopt rules as necessary to implement this section. [2017 c 39 s 9. Prior: 2011 c 4 s 9; (2011 c 4 s 6 expired July 1, 2012); 2011 c 3 s 2; 2009 c 3 s 4.]

Contingent effective date—2011 c 4 ss 7-15: See note following RCW 50.20.099.

Contingent expiration date—2011 c 4 ss 3 and 6: See note following RCW 50.29.021.

Effective date—2011 c 4 ss 1-6 and 16-21: See note following RCW 50.20.120.

Conflict with federal requirements—2011 c 4: See note following RCW 50.29.021.

Conflict with federal requirements—Effective date—2011 c 3: See notes following RCW 50.22.010.

Short title—Effective date—Conflict with federal requirements—2009 c 3: See notes following RCW 50.20.120.