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**SENATE BILL 5398**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Keiser, King, Van De Wege, and Conway

AN ACT Relating to unemployment benefit eligibility for apprentices; amending RCW 50.20.010, 50.20.230, and 50.20.240; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 50.20.010 and 2006 c 13 s 10 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive waiting period credits or benefits with respect to any week in his or her eligibility period only if the commissioner finds that:

(a) He or she has registered for work at, and thereafter has continued to report at, an employment office in accordance with such regulation as the commissioner may prescribe, except that the commissioner may by regulation waive or alter either or both of the requirements of this subdivision as to individuals attached to regular jobs and as to such other types of cases or situations with respect to which the commissioner finds that the compliance with such requirements would be oppressive, or would be inconsistent with the purposes of this title;

(b) He or she has filed an application for an initial determination and made a claim for waiting period credit or for benefits in accordance with the provisions of this title;

(c) He or she is able to work, and is available for work in any trade, occupation, profession, or business for which he or she is reasonably fitted.

(i) ((~~With respect to claims that have an effective date before January 4, 2004, to be available for work an individual must be ready, able, and willing, immediately to accept any suitable work which may be offered to him or her and must be actively seeking work pursuant to customary trade practices and through other methods when so directed by the commissioner or the commissioner's agents.~~

~~(ii) With respect to claims that have an effective date on or after January 4, 2004,~~)) To be available for work, an individual must be ready, able, and willing, immediately to accept any suitable work which may be offered to him or her and must be actively seeking work pursuant to customary trade practices and through other methods when so directed by the commissioner or the commissioner's agents. If a labor agreement or dispatch rules apply, customary trade practices must be in accordance with the applicable agreement or rules.

(ii) For the purposes of this subsection, "customary trade practices" includes compliance with an electrical apprenticeship training program that includes a recognized referral system under apprenticeship program standards approved by the Washington state apprenticeship and training council;

(d) He or she has been unemployed for a waiting period of one week;

(e) He or she participates in reemployment services if the individual has been referred to reemployment services pursuant to the profiling system established by the commissioner under RCW 50.20.011, unless the commissioner determines that:

(i) The individual has completed such services; or

(ii) There is justifiable cause for the claimant's failure to participate in such services; and

(f) As to weeks beginning after March 31, 1981, which fall within an extended benefit period as defined in RCW 50.22.010, the individual meets the terms and conditions of RCW 50.22.020 with respect to benefits claimed in excess of twenty-six times the individual's weekly benefit amount.

(2) An individual's eligibility period for regular benefits shall be coincident to his or her established benefit year. An individual's eligibility period for additional or extended benefits shall be the periods prescribed elsewhere in this title for such benefits.

**Sec.**  RCW 50.20.230 and 1998 c 161 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

The employment security department will ensure that within a reasonably short period of time after the initiation of benefits, all unemployment insurance claimants, except those with employer attachment, union referral, individuals complying with an electrical apprenticeship training program that includes a recognized referral system under apprenticeship program standards approved by the Washington state apprenticeship and training council, in commissioner-approved training, or the subject of antiharassment orders, register for job search in an electronic labor exchange system that supports direct employer access for the purpose of selecting job applicants.

**Sec.**  RCW 50.20.240 and 2006 c 13 s 16 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) To ensure that following the initial application for benefits, an individual is actively engaged in searching for work, the employment security department shall implement a job search monitoring program. ((~~Effective January 4, 2004,~~)) The department shall contract with employment security agencies in other states to ensure that individuals residing in those states and receiving benefits under this title are actively engaged in searching for work in accordance with the requirements of this section. The department may use interactive voice technology and other electronic means to ensure that individuals are subject to comparable job search monitoring, regardless of whether they reside in Washington or elsewhere.

(b) Except for those individuals with employer attachment or union referral, individuals complying with an electrical apprenticeship training program that includes a recognized referral system under apprenticeship program standards approved by the Washington state apprenticeship and training council, individuals who qualify for unemployment compensation under RCW 50.20.050 (1)(b)(iv) or (2)(b)(iv), as applicable, and individuals in commissioner-approved training, an individual who has received five or more weeks of benefits under this title, regardless of whether the individual resides in Washington or elsewhere, must provide evidence of seeking work, as directed by the commissioner or the commissioner's agents, for each week beyond five in which a claim is filed. ((~~With regard to claims with an effective date before January 4, 2004, the evidence must demonstrate contacts with at least three employers per week or documented in-person job search activity at the local reemployment center. With regard to claims with an effective date on or after January 4, 2004,~~)) The evidence must demonstrate contacts with at least three employers per week or documented in-person job search activities at the local reemployment center at least three times per week.

(c) In developing the requirements for the job search monitoring program, the commissioner or the commissioner's agents shall utilize an existing advisory committee having equal representation of employers and workers.

(2) ((~~Effective January 4, 2004,~~)) An individual who fails to comply fully with the requirements for actively seeking work under RCW 50.20.010 shall lose all benefits for all weeks during which the individual was not in compliance, and the individual shall be liable for repayment of all such benefits under RCW 50.20.190.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 3 of this act apply to claimed weeks of unemployment on or after July 5, 2020.

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