

The WorkShare Program

What is WorkShare?

WorkShare is a layoff aversion program administered by the Maine Department of Labor to help businesses retain or bring back their trained workforce and keep workers connected to employment during temporary economic downturns.

Businesses can voluntarily reduce the hours of staff instead of laying them off and employees can collect a partial unemployment benefit to help offset the loss of income due to reduced workhours.

For more information go to maine.gov/unemployment/workshare

What do I do if I have issues or questions?

If you or your employees have issues or questions related to the WorkShare program, please have your company's WorkShare representative reach out to the MDOL WorkShare team.

UCbenefitsWorkShare@maine.gov

207- 623-6783

How WorkShare works

For your company/business (example)

With layoffs, a 25% reduction in business would result in a 25% reduction of workforce



With WorkShare, you would retain 100% of your workforce, but they work 75% of their normal hours.



This avoids the costs of recruiting, hiring, and training new employees when business picks up. It also keeps your employees tied to the workforce.

On WorkShare, you will assign employees to 'units' which represent segments of your workforce and then reduce hours consistently across each segment or reduce hours across all employees.

For your employees (example)

Benefits are paid on a percentage equal to the hour reduction. If you have had your hours reduced by 25% that week, you will receive 25% of your normal weekly unemployment benefit.

Example below:

If you earn \$600 dollars a week, then lose your job, you might receive a \$354 weekly benefit.



On WorkShare, you will work 75% of your hours, earning \$450 plus 25% of your weekly benefit ($\$354 \times 25\% = \88).

$$\$450 + \$88 = \$538$$



WorkShare charges/costs

1. WorkShare benefits are charged to the experience rating of the WorkShare employer (lower than charges for full layoff).
2. Direct reimbursement employers, those employers liable for payments in lieu of contributions, must reimburse the Unemployment Compensation Fund for the full amount of WorkShare benefits paid to their employees under an approved WorkShare plan (generally much lower cost than full layoff).

FOR EMPLOYERS – THE WORKSHARE PROGRAM

Is my business / company eligible?

In order to participate in the WorkShare program, you must meet all of the eligibility requirements:

1. Reduction must impact all employees in the same “affected unit” equally during each eligible week.
2. The alternative layoff would have impacted at least 10% of the affected unit.
3. The reduction in hours is between 10% and 50% of usual weekly hours, based on maximum 40 hours per week.
4. Cannot be used to subsidize seasonal or intermittent employment.
5. Fringe benefits for WorkShare employees must be maintained at the same level as for employees not on Workshare. Any impact must be the same whether in WorkShare or not and disclosed to employees.
6. Must obtain approval from collective bargaining agent, if applicable.
7. Must be current on wage reports and tax payments.

Differences from Regular Unemployment

For your employees, there are some key differences between filing for WorkShare benefits and regular unemployment insurance benefits.

1. WorkShare enrolled employees will not have to complete work search activities to receive weekly benefits.
2. Wages earned in a week through employment with the WorkShare employer, or any other employer, do not reduce the unemployment weekly benefit amount that the employee will receive.
3. The employee must be Able and Available to work their normally scheduled hours for the WorkShare employer.
4. Vacations or other approved time off: Must work some during the week (combined with paid approved time off or holiday pay) to still be eligible under WorkShare for that week.

How to enroll in WorkShare

1 Complete WorkShare application

Visit www.maine.gov/reemployme to begin the online application. You will need to confirm eligibility, create units, and get approval from the collective bargaining agent, if applicable. Affected employees must have received a summary or copy of the proposed WorkShare plan.

2 Submit your application

Once complete, submit your online application. We will review your WorkShare application for eligibility. Typically, this takes 2-4 business days.



MDOL will review your application

You will receive correspondence letting you know if your application has been approved or not.

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If you or your employees have issues or questions related to the WorkShare program, please reach out to the WorkShare team at:

UCbenefitsWorkShare@maine.gov

Your responsibilities as an employer under the WorkShare program:

- You must notify employees.
- You must file weekly certifications to ensure that your employees receive their benefit payments.
- You must follow all of the eligibility requirements you agreed to when you submitted your application, including, but not limited to, consistently reducing hours for each unit.
- Your company/business must have a representative/point of contact your employees can go to with WorkShare issues or questions. This representative will act as a liaison for your workforce and MDOL.