STATE OF NEW YORK

5470

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

February 14, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. FORREST -- read once and referred to the Committee on Labor

AN ACT to amend the labor law, in relation to establishing the rapid employment assistance and counseling hub program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The labor law is amended by adding a new section 541 to read as follows:

§ 541. Rapid employment assistance and counseling hub (REACH) program. 1. As used in this section, the term "mobile unit" means a motorized vehicle outfitted to operate as a traveling unemployment service center to provide in-person assistance.

2. By January first, two thousand twenty-seven, the department shall establish a rapid employment assistance and counseling hub (REACH) program. The program shall dispatch a mobile unit to provide information, assistance, and other services concerning unemployment compensation insurance upon the request of a state legislator or an official of a municipality or other political subdivision in the legislator's legislative district or the official's municipality or political subdivision from nine a.m. to five p.m. for one to four calendar days.

3. A mobile unit shall provide residents of the respective localities with an opportunity to meet with an employee of the department of labor concerning unemployment insurance who can:

a. address general questions regarding the unemployment program and benefits; and

b. assist with specific claim questions, issues, concerns, and troubleshooting, including but not limited to:

(i) assessing whether an individual is likely to qualify for unemployment compensation;

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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(ii) providing instructions on how to file an unemployment compensation claim and assistance in obtaining and interpreting information on the federal 1099-G tax form; and

(iii) information on an individual's existing unemployment claim, including but not limited to, the status of the claim, potential solutions and troubleshooting of any issues regarding an individual's eligibility or other barriers to the individual collecting unemployment compensation benefits.

4. Any resident of the legislative district, municipality, or political subdivision, as appropriate, may access the services of the mobile unit. The department may permit individuals to pre-register for assistance, but shall not require pre-registration as a condition of assistance.

5. A legislator or other official seeking mobile unit services shall submit a request for such services, in writing or email, to the department at least two weeks prior to the requested service date. Unless the mobile unit has already been scheduled to service a different location in response to a prior request from another legislator or other official, the department shall dispatch the mobile unit to service the location on the requested date. Each legislator or other official shall be limited to twelve requests for the mobile unit in a calendar year, except that if legislators or officials from the same legislative district or municipality request the unit within the same month, the first request in that month shall count toward each requestor's total number of requests.

6. No later than January first, two thousand twenty-eight, the commissioner shall submit to the governor and the legislature a report that evaluates the results of the program and its effectiveness in assisting residents with unemployment benefit claims and other unemployment concerns. The report shall include a recommendation regarding whether to make changes to the program, and if changes are recommended, if the program should be expanded or otherwise enhanced.

7. The commissioner shall adopt rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this act.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.