

Updates to the WorkShare Program



WorkShare, a program offered by the Unemployment Insurance Division in the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT), allows qualified employers to reduce the hours of work for employees rather than lay them off completely during a time of economic hardship.

This critical program saved more than 6,000 jobs during the height of the recession in 2009. DLT recently convened a focus group made up of employers, labor leadership and DLT to discuss ways to improve the WorkShare program and to make it accessible to more Rhode Island employers.

One of the most common concerns employers expressed was the lack of flexibility to both change hours between employees in a unit and to make adjustments to weekly hours of work quickly.

As a result, the focus group drafted amendments to the WorkShare statute to allow for this flexibility. Members of the group testified and submitted letters to our legislators in support of these amendments.

Director Scott Jensen is pleased to announce the amendments have been enacted, and the WorkShare program is now an even more flexible and comprehensive job retention tool in Rhode Island's employment toolbox. Hours must still be reduced between 10% and 50% of the normal working hours, but the reductions no longer need to be distributed evenly among all employees in a unit.

If your company is experiencing a temporary, non-seasonal downturn in business, we can help. Please refer to our website at www.dlt.ri.gov/ui/ws.htm for more information about the WorkShare program.