

PUTTING MONTANANS BACK TO WORK

The Return-to-Work Bonus Initiative



Employers across Montana are struggling to fill job openings, and nearly every sector in our economy faces a labor shortage. Despite our unemployment rate returning to near pre-pandemic lows, there are 10,000 fewer Montanans in our workforce today than there were at the start of last year.

With pandemic-related unemployment benefits set to end soon and businesses in every Montana industry urgently seeking talent to hire, Governor Gianforte has announced the launch of the Montana Return-to-Work Bonus initiative.

Using federal COVID-19 stimulus funds designated for Montana, the Return-to-Work Bonus initiative will help remedy Montana's immediate need for workers by incentivizing workers to rejoin the labor force, accept employment and remain employed.

Who Will Be Eligible?

Individuals with an active unemployment claim as of May 4, 2021 who subsequently accepts an offer of employment in any industry in the State of Montana. The bonus payments will be made upon completion of the worker's fourth full week of employment.

How Will I Know If I'm Eligible?

The Montana Department of Labor & Industry (DLI) will contact you with an offer informing you that you will be considered eligible to receive a bonus **if you meet ALL of the following criteria:**

- You discontinue receiving unemployment insurance benefits.
- You accept an offer of employment in any industry.
- You complete at least FOUR full weeks of paid employment.

You'll receive a communication from DLI with more instruction on how to apply. Continue to watch MontanaWorks.Gov for more information, or you can contact DLIRTW@mt.gov.

What will I get?

Individuals who are eligible, accept employment and complete four full weeks of paid work will receive a one-time, **\$1,200 bonus payment.**



Why a Return-to-Work Bonus?

Montana needs workers, and we need them fast. Restaurants and retailers are short-staffed, manufacturers have had to curtail shifts and slow production lines, and small businesses have had to shut their doors one or more days a week to compensate for job openings they can't fill.

We have a world-class talent pool right here in Montana, but due to the vast expansion in unemployment benefits due to the pandemic, many Montanans have been able to make as much or more by staying home and collecting benefits as they could by returning to work.

Those benefits are ending, and with the return-to-work bonus program, Montana is making it even more rewarding to find and keep employment.

The end result will be a more robust workforce and a stronger, more prosperous economy that works better for all Montanans.

