



Keeping in Touch

Kate Young M.P.
London West

IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

May 2016

Dear Friends,

The Government is taking immediate action to improve Employment Insurance (EI) to ensure Canadians receive the help they need, when they need it. This includes making changes to the eligibility rules for new entrants and re-entrants and investing in improved service delivery. In addition, starting in 2017, the waiting period for benefits will be reduced. This means that when a worker loses their job and applies for EI, they will be without income for a shorter period of time.

Canada's EI program provides economic security to Canadians when they need it most. For some, help is needed because they have lost their job through no fault of their own. For others, extra support is required because they are out of the workforce to raise children or provide care for a loved one.

Whatever the circumstance, no Canadian should struggle to get the assistance they need.

The Government is working to make sure the EI program is:

- **Easier:** New workers, those re-entering the workforce, and regular claimants from the same region, will now have the same EI eligibility requirements.
- **Faster:** Reducing the waiting period from two weeks to one week will provide unemployed workers with hundreds of dollars more – at the time they need it most.
- **Focused on Service:** Investments in EI Call Centres and simplifying job search responsibilities for claimants will improve overall access to EI.

In today's rapidly changing economy, Canadians need to acquire the skills and training necessary to qualify for well-paying jobs, both now and in the future. Budget 2016 also includes additional investments in skills training to help Canadians succeed.

Expanding Access to Employment Insurance

Many young Canadians and newcomers find it difficult to access EI support. At present, new entrants and re-entrants to the labour market must accumulate at least 910 hours of insurable employment before being eligible for EI regular benefits. Budget 2016 amends the rules to eliminate the higher EI eligibility requirements that restrict access for new entrants and re-entrants to the labour market. With this change, new entrants and re-entrants will have the same eligibility requirements as other claimants in the region where they live. An estimated 50,000 additional claimants will become eligible for EI benefits as a result of this measure, which will take effect in July 2016.

Extending the “Working While on Claim” Pilot Project

Under the current pilot, claimants can keep 50 cents of their EI benefits for every dollar they earn, up to a maximum of 90 per cent of the weekly insurable earnings used to calculate their EI benefit amount. Budget 2016 extends the pilot to August 2018 to allow time for further assessment of the project’s benefit to Canadians.

Simplifying Job Search Responsibilities

In 2012, changes were made to the EI program to specify the type of jobs that unemployed workers are expected to search for and accept. For some claimants, this has meant having to accept work at lower rates of pay and with longer commuting times. Budget 2016 reverses those changes that strictly define the job search responsibilities of unemployed workers. The Government is also committed to ensuring that there are fair and flexible supports to assist EI claimants with training and skills required to find new employment.

Extending the Maximum Duration of “Work-Sharing” Agreements

Work-Sharing helps employers and employees avoid layoffs when there is a temporary reduction in business activity that is beyond the control of the employer. Work-Sharing provides income support to employees eligible for EI benefits who work a temporarily reduced work schedule while their employer recovers. Budget 2016 will extend the maximum duration of Work-Sharing agreements from 38 weeks to 76 weeks across Canada. This will help employers retain skilled employees and avoid the costs of recruiting and training new employees when business returns to normal levels, and enables employees to continue working and receive EI benefits to supplement reduced wages.

HOW TO CONTACT KATE YOUNG M.P.

London West Constituency Office

390 Commissioners Road West
Suite 200
London, Ontario, N6J 1Y3
Telephone: 519-473-5955
Fax: 519-473-7333

Email: Kate.Young@parl.gc.ca

Parliament Hill Office

138 East Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
Telephone: 613-996-6674
Fax: 613-996-6772

 /kateyoungmp

 @kateyoungmp