

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Improve the Integrity of Maine's Welfare Programs

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3763, sub-§11 is enacted to read:

11. Restrictions on use of electronic benefits transfer system. A recipient of benefits under this chapter may not use the electronic benefits transfer system established in section 22:

A. Outside of the State, except in the State of New Hampshire;

B. In a calendar month to withdraw as cash an amount over 25% of the recipient's monthly benefits under this chapter received in the recipient's electronic benefits transfer system account; or

C. To expend benefits on the following:

(1) Tobacco products, as defined in Title 22, section 1551, subsection 3;

(2) Imitation liquor or liquor, as defined in Title 28-A, section 2, subsections 13 and 16, respectively;

(3) Gambling activity, as defined in Title 8, section 1001, subsection 15;

(4) Lotteries conducted by the State pursuant to Title 8, chapter 14-A or the Tri-State Lotto Commission pursuant to Title 8, chapter 16;

(5) Bail, as defined by Title 15, section 1003, subsection 1;

(6) Firearms or ammunition;

(7) Vacation or travel services;

(8) Publications, services or entertainment that contain or promote obscene matter. For purposes of this paragraph, "obscene matter" has the same meaning as Title 17, section 2911, subsection 1, paragraph D; or

(9) Tattoos, as defined by Title 32, section 4201, or body art.

Sec. 2. Department of Health and Human Services to hire fraud investigators.

By January 1, 2016, the Department of Health and Human Services shall hire an additional 5 fraud investigators for the Human Services Fraud Investigation Unit under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section 13.

SUMMARY

This bill restricts the use of benefits for recipients of temporary assistance for needy families under the electronic benefits transfer system by prohibiting use of the electronic benefits transfer system outside of the State, except for in New Hampshire, withdrawals of cash per month in an amount over 25% of a recipient's monthly benefits and expenditures on items such as tobacco products, liquor and lottery tickets and several other similar items. This bill also directs the Department of Health and Human Services to hire 5 additional fraud investigators.