



## WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

**2005 Wisconsin Act 142**  
[2005 Senate Bill 577]

### **Volunteer Firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician Service Award Program**

2005 Wisconsin Act 142 amends the law relating to length of service awards and exclusion of wages from partial unemployment benefit determinations with respect to volunteer firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and first responders.

Under prior law, a city, village, or town could participate in a program that provides local and state funds for length of service awards to volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians. In the program, a municipality could purchase additional years of service for individuals who had served for at least five years, but the number of additional years could not exceed the number of years of volunteer firefighting or emergency medical technical service performed by the volunteer. Also under prior law, the unemployment compensation benefits received by a volunteer could be reduced by a specified amount of volunteer earnings received by the individual in a given week.

Wisconsin Act 142 amends the length of service award program by:

1. Extending the benefits of the program to first responders.
2. Providing that a county may participate in the program as well as a city, village, or town.
3. Removing the requirement that a volunteer must have served for at least five years before a local governmental body may purchase additional years of service.

Finally, Wisconsin Act 142 provides that a person receiving unemployment compensation benefits will not have those benefits reduced because of earnings awarded for services performed as a volunteer firefighter, volunteer emergency medical technician, or volunteer first responder.

**Effective Date:** The Act takes effect on April 1, 2006, except that the provision relating to unemployment compensation takes effect on April 2, 2006.

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This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature's Web site at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/>.