

518A.32 POTENTIAL INCOME.

Subdivision 1. **General.** This section applies to child support orders, including orders for past support or reimbursement of public assistance, issued under this chapter, chapter 256, 257, 518B, or 518C. If a parent is voluntarily unemployed, underemployed, or employed on a less than full-time basis, or there is no direct evidence of any income, child support must be calculated based on a determination of potential income. For purposes of this determination, it is rebuttably presumed that a parent can be gainfully employed on a full-time basis. As used in this section, "full time" means 40 hours of work in a week except in those industries, trades, or professions in which most employers, due to custom, practice, or agreement, use a normal work week of more or less than 40 hours in a week.

Subd. 2. **Methods.** Determination of potential income must be made according to one of three methods, as appropriate:

(1) the parent's probable earnings level based on employment potential, recent work history, and occupational qualifications in light of prevailing job opportunities and earnings levels in the community;

(2) if a parent is receiving unemployment compensation or workers' compensation, that parent's income may be calculated using the actual amount of the unemployment compensation or workers' compensation benefit received; or

(3) the amount of income a parent could earn working 30 hours per week at 100 percent of the current federal or state minimum wage, whichever is higher.

Subd. 3. **Parent not considered voluntarily unemployed, underemployed, or employed on a less than full-time basis.** A parent is not considered voluntarily unemployed, underemployed, or employed on a less than full-time basis upon a showing by the parent that:

(1) the unemployment, underemployment, or employment on a less than full-time basis is temporary and will ultimately lead to an increase in income;

(2) the unemployment, underemployment, or employment on a less than full-time basis represents a bona fide career change that outweighs the adverse effect of that parent's diminished income on the child; or

(3) the unemployment, underemployment, or employment on a less than full-time basis is because a parent is physically or mentally incapacitated or due to incarceration, except where the reason for incarceration is the parent's nonpayment of support.

Subd. 4. **TANF recipient.** If the parent of a joint child is a recipient of a temporary assistance to a needy family (TANF) cash grant, no potential income is to be imputed to that parent.

Subd. 5. **Caretaker.** If a parent stays at home to care for a child who is subject to the child support order, the court may consider the following factors when determining whether the parent is voluntarily unemployed, underemployed, or employed on a less than full-time basis:

(1) the parties' parenting and child care arrangements before the child support action;

(2) the stay-at-home parent's employment history, recency of employment, earnings, and the availability of jobs within the community for an individual with the parent's qualifications;

(3) the relationship between the employment-related expenses, including, but not limited to, child care and transportation costs required for the parent to be employed, and the income the stay-at-home parent could receive from available jobs within the community for an individual with the parent's qualifications;

(4) the child's age and health, including whether the child is physically or mentally disabled; and

(5) the availability of child care providers.

This subdivision does not apply if the parent stays at home only to care for other nonjoint children.

Subd. 6. **Economic conditions.** A self-employed parent is not considered to be voluntarily unemployed, underemployed, or employed on a less than full-time basis if that parent can show that the parent's net self-employment income is lower because of economic conditions that are directly related to the source or sources of that parent's income.

History: 2005 c 164 s 29; 1Sp2005 c 7 s 28; 2006 c 280 s 19; 2007 c 118 s 3-6; 2015 c 71 art 1 s 70