CHAPTER 14

JUDICIAL EMPLOYEES LABOR RELATIONS ACT

§1281. Purpose

It is declared to be the public policy of this State and it is the purpose of this chapter to promote improvement of the relationship between the Judicial Department of the State and its employees by cooperating with the Supreme Judicial Court in recognizing the right of judicial employees to join labor organizations of their own choosing and to be represented by those organizations in collective bargaining for terms and conditions of employment. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).

§1282. Definitions

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

1. Bargaining agent. "Bargaining agent" means any lawful organization, association or individual representative of such an organization or association which has as its primary purpose the representation of employees in their employment relations with employers, and which has been determined by the public employer, as defined in subsection 6, or by the executive director of the board to be the choice of the majority of the unit as their representative.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

2. Board. "Board" means the Maine Labor Relations Board, as defined in section 968.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

3. Cost items. "Cost items" means the provisions of a collective bargaining agreement which require an appropriation by the Legislature.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

4. Executive director. "Executive director" means the Executive Director of the Maine Labor Relations Board, as defined in section 968, subsection 2.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

5. Judicial employee. "Judicial employee" means any employee of the Judicial Department, except any person:

A. Who is appointed by the Governor; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

B. Who serves as the State Court Administrator; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

C. Whose duties necessarily imply a confidential relationship to the Judicial Department's bargaining representative with respect to matters subject to collective bargaining; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

D. Who is a department or division head; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

E. Who is appointed to serve as a law clerk to a judge or a justice; or [PL 2021, c. 601, §6 (AMD).]

F. Who is a temporary, seasonal or on-call employee, including interns. [PL 2021, c. 601, §7 (AMD).]

G. [PL 2021, c. 601, §8 (RP).]

[PL 2021, c. 601, §§6-8 (AMD).]

6. Public employer. "Public employer" means the Judicial Department of the State. It is the responsibility of the Judicial Department to negotiate collective bargaining agreements and to administer those agreements. It is the responsibility of the Legislature to act upon those portions of tentative agreements negotiated by the Judicial Department which require legislative action. To coordinate the employer position in the negotiation of agreements, the Legislative Council or its designee shall maintain close liaison with the bargaining representative of the Judicial Department relative to negotiating cost items in any proposed agreement. The Supreme Judicial Court may designate a bargaining representative for the Judicial Department who may:

A. Develop and execute employee relations policies, objectives and strategies consistent with the overall objectives and constitutional and statutory duties of the Judicial Department; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

B. Conduct negotiations with certified and recognized bargaining agents; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

C. Administer and interpret collective bargaining agreements, and coordinate and direct Judicial Department activities as necessary to promote consistent policies and practices; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

D. Represent the Judicial Department in all bargaining unit determinations, elections, prohibited practice complaints and any other proceedings growing out of employee relations and collective bargaining activities; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

E. Coordinate the compilation of all data and information needed for the development and evaluation of employee relations programs and in the conduct of negotiations; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

F. Coordinate the Judicial Department's resources as needed to represent the department in negotiations, mediation, fact finding, arbitration, mediation-arbitration and other proceedings; and [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

G. Provide staff advice on employee relations to the courts, judges and supervisory personnel, including providing for necessary supervisory and managerial training. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

All state departments and agencies shall provide such assistance, services and information as required by the Judicial Department and shall take such administrative or other action as may be necessary to implement and administer the provisions of any binding agreement between the Judicial Department and employee organizations entered into under law.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW). PL 2021, c. 601, §§6-8 (AMD).

§1283. Right of judicial employees to join or refrain from joining labor organizations; prohibition

A person may not directly or indirectly interfere with, intimidate, restrain, coerce or discriminate against a judicial employee or a group of judicial employees in the free exercise of their rights, given by this section, to voluntarily: [PL 2007, c. 415, §15 (RPR).]

1. Join a union. Join, form and participate in the activities of organizations of their own choosing for the purposes of representation and collective bargaining or in the free exercise of any other right under this chapter; or
[PL 2007, c. 415, §15 (NEW).]

2. Not join a union. Refrain from joining or participating in the activities of organizations for the purposes of representation and collective bargaining, except that an employee may be required to pay to the organization that is the bargaining agent for the employee a service fee that represents the employee's pro rata share of those expenditures that are germane to the organization's representational activities.

[PL 2007, c. 415, §15 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 415, §15 (RPR).

§1283-A. Judicial employees; probationary period

If the public employer requires a judicial employee to complete a probationary period, that judicial employee may be dismissed, suspended or otherwise disciplined without cause during that probationary period. Dismissal, suspension or any other disciplinary action against a judicial employee during the probationary period is not subject to the grievance and arbitration provision of the collective bargaining agreement. [PL 2021, c. 601, §9 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2021, c. 601, §9 (NEW).

§1284. Prohibited acts of the public employer, judicial employers and judicial employee organizations

1. Public employer prohibitions. The public employer, its representatives and agents are prohibited from:

A. Interfering with, restraining or coercing employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed in section 1283; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

B. Encouraging or discouraging membership in any employee organization by discrimination in regard to hire or tenure of employment or any term or condition of employment; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

C. Dominating or interfering with the formation, existence or administration of any employee organization; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

D. Discharging or otherwise discriminating against an employee because the employee has signed or filed any affidavit, petition or complaint or given any information or testimony under this chapter; [RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §121 (COR).]

E. Refusing to bargain collectively with the bargaining agent of its employees, as required by section 1285; [PL 2007, c. 415, §16 (AMD).]

F. Blacklisting any employee organization or its members for the purpose of denying them employment; [PL 2007, c. 415, §17 (AMD).]

G. Requiring an employee to join a union, employee association or bargaining agent as a full member; and [PL 2007, c. 415, §18 (NEW).]

H. Terminating or disciplining an employee for not paying union dues or fees of any type. [PL 2007, c. 415, §19 (NEW).]

[RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §121 (COR).]

2. Judicial employee prohibitions. Judicial employees, judicial employee organizations, their agents, members and bargaining agents are prohibited from:

A. Interfering with, restraining or coercing employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed in section 1283 or the public employer in the selection of its representative for purposes of collective bargaining or the adjustment of grievances; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

B. Refusing to bargain collectively with the public employer, as required by section 1285; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

C. Engaging in:

(1) A work stoppage;

(2) A slowdown;

(3) A strike; or

(4) The blacklisting of the public employer for the purpose of preventing it from filling employee vacancies. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

3. Violations. Violations of this section shall be processed by the board in the manner provided in section 1289.

[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 415, §§16-19 (AMD). RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §121 (COR).

§1284-A. Continuation of grievance arbitration provisions

1. Contract signed before October 1, 2005. If a contract between a public employer and a bargaining agent signed prior to October 1, 2005 expires prior to the parties' agreement on a new contract, the grievance arbitration provisions of the expired contract pertaining to disciplinary action remain in effect until the parties execute a new contract.

[PL 2005, c. 324, §4 (NEW).]

2. Contract signed after October 1, 2005. If a contract between a public employer and a bargaining agent signed after October 1, 2005 expires prior to the parties' agreement on a new contract, the grievance arbitration provisions of the expired contract remain in effect until the parties execute a new contract. In any arbitration that is conducted pursuant to this subsection, an arbitrator shall apply only those provisions enforceable by virtue of the static status quo doctrine and may not add to, restrict or modify the applicable static status quo following the expiration of the contract, unless the parties have otherwise agreed in the collective bargaining agreement. All such grievances that are appealed to arbitration are subject exclusively to the grievance and arbitration process contained in the expired agreement, and the board does not have jurisdiction over such grievances. The arbitrator's determination is subject to appeal pursuant to the Uniform Arbitration Act. Disputes over which provisions in an expired contract are enforceable by virtue of the static status quo doctrine first must be resolved by the board, subject to appeal pursuant to applicable law. The grievance arbitration is stayed pending resolution of this issue by the board. The board may adopt rules as necessary to establish a procedure to implement the intent of this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. Nothing in this subsection expands, limits or modifies the scope of any grievance arbitration provisions, including procedural requirements.

[PL 2005, c. 324, §4 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1997, c. 773, §6 (NEW). PL 1997, c. 773, §7 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 324, §4 (RPR).

§1285. Obligation to bargain; methods of resolving disputes

1. Negotiations. On and after the effective date of this chapter, it shall be the obligation of the public employer and the bargaining agent to bargain collectively. "Collective bargaining" means, for the purpose of this chapter, their mutual obligation:

A. To meet at reasonable times; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

B. To meet within 10 days after receipt of written notice from the other party requesting a meeting for collective bargaining purposes, provided that the parties have not otherwise agreed in a prior written contract; [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

C. To execute in writing an agreement between the public employer and the bargaining agent. An agreement under this paragraph is subject to negotiation and may not exceed 2 years; [PL 2023, c. 405, Pt. A, §101 (RPR).]

D. To participate in good faith in the mediation, fact finding, arbitration and mediation-arbitration procedures required by this section; and [RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. A, §94 (COR).]

E. To confer and negotiate in good faith with respect to wages, hours, working conditions and contract grievance arbitration, except that by such obligation neither party may be compelled to agree to a proposal or be required to make a concession. All matters relating to the relationship between the employer and employees are the subject of collective bargaining, except those matters that are prescribed or controlled by law. Such matters appropriate for collective bargaining, to the extent they are not prescribed or controlled by law, include, but are not limited to:

(1) Wage and salary schedules to the extent they are inconsistent with rates prevailing in commerce and industry for comparable work within the State;

(2) Work schedules relating to assigned hours and days of the week;

(3) Use of vacation or sick leave, or both;

(4) General working conditions;

(5) Overtime practices; and

(6) Rules for personnel administration, except for rules relating to applicants for employment and employees in an initial probationary status, including any extensions thereof, as long as the rules are not discriminatory by reason of an applicant's actual or perceived race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry or national origin, age or familial status.

Cost items must be included in the Judicial Department's next operating budget in accordance with Title 4, section 24. If the Legislature rejects any of the cost items submitted to it, all cost items submitted must be returned to the parties for further bargaining. Cost items related to a collective bargaining agreement reached under this chapter and submitted to the Legislature for its approval under this subsection may not be submitted in the same legislation that contains cost items for employees exempted from the definition of "judicial employee" under section 1282, subsection 5, except that cost items for employees exempted under section 1282, subsection 5, paragraph F need not be excluded. [PL 2021, c. 553, §19 (AMD); PL 2021, c. 601, §10 (AMD).]

[PL 2023, c. 405, Pt. A, §101 (AMD).]

2. Mediation.

A. It is the declared policy of the State to provide full and adequate facilities for the settlement of disputes between the employer and employees or their representatives and other disputes subject to settlement through mediation. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

B. Mediation procedures, as provided by section 965, subsection 2, shall be followed whenever either party to a controversy requests such services prior to arbitration, or at any time on motion of the Maine Labor Relations Board or its executive director. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

C. The employer, union or employees involved in collective bargaining shall notify the Executive Director of the Maine Labor Relations Board, in writing, at least 30 days prior to the expiration of a contract, or 30 days prior to entering into negotiations for a first contract between the employer

and the employees, or whenever a dispute arises between the parties threatening interruption of work, or under both conditions. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

D. Any information disclosed by either party to a dispute to the panel or any of its members in the performance of this subsection shall be privileged. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

3. Fact-finding.

A. If the parties, either with or without the services of a mediator, are unable to effect a settlement of their controversy, they may agree either to call upon the Maine Labor Relations Board for fact-finding services with recommendations or to pursue some other mutually acceptable fact-finding procedure, including use of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service or the American Arbitration Association according to their respective procedures and rules. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

B. If so requested, the executive director shall appoint a fact-finding panel, ordinarily of 3 members, in accordance with rules and procedures prescribed by the board for making the appointment. Any person who has actively participated as the mediator in the immediate proceedings for which fact-finding has been called shall not sit on that fact-finding panel. The panel shall hear the contending parties to the controversy. It may request statistical data and reports on its own initiative in addition to the data regularly maintained by the Bureau of Labor Standards, and may administer oaths and to require by subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses, the production of books, records and other evidence relative or pertinent to the issues presented to them. The members of the fact-finding panel shall submit their findings and recommendations only to the parties and to the Executive Director of the Maine Labor Relations Board. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

C. The parties shall have a period of 30 days, after the submission of findings and recommendations from the fact finders, in which to make a good faith effort to resolve their controversy. If the parties have not resolved their controversy by the end of the period, either party or the executive director may, but not until the end of the period unless the parties otherwise agree, make the fact-finding and recommendations public. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

4. Arbitration.

A. In addition to the 30-day period referred to in subsection 3, the parties shall have 15 more days, making a total of 45 days from the submission of findings and recommendations, in which to make a good faith effort to resolve their controversy. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

B. If the parties have not resolved their controversy by the end of that 45-day period, either party may petition the board to initiate compulsory final and binding arbitration of the negotiations' impasse. On receipt of the petition, the executive director of the board shall investigate to determine if an impasse has been reached. If the executive director so determines, the executive director shall issue an order requiring arbitration and requesting the parties to select one or more arbitrators. If the parties, within 10 days after the issuance of the order, have not selected an arbitrator or an arbitration panel, the board shall order each party to select one arbitrator and, if these 2 arbitrators cannot in 5 days select a 3rd neutral arbitrator, the board shall submit a list from which the parties may alternately strike names until a single name is left, and that person must be appointed by the board as arbitrator. In reaching a decision under this paragraph, the arbitrator shall consider the following factors:

(1) The interests and welfare of the public and the financial ability of State Government to finance the cost items proposed by each party to the impasse;

(2) Comparison of the wages, hours and working conditions of the employees involved in the arbitration proceeding with the wages, hours and working conditions of other employees performing similar services in the executive and legislative branches of government and in public and private employment in other jurisdictions competing in the same labor market;

(3) The overall compensation presently received by the employees, including direct wage compensation, vacation, holidays and excused time, insurance and pensions, medical and hospitalization benefits, the continuity and stability of employment and all other benefits received;

(4) Other factors not confined to the foregoing that are normally and traditionally taken into consideration in the determination of wages, hours and working conditions through voluntary collective bargaining, mediation, fact-finding, arbitration or otherwise between the parties, in the public service or in private employment, including the average Consumer Price Index;

(5) The need of the Judicial Department for qualified employees;

(6) Conditions of employment in similar occupations outside State Government;

(7) The need to maintain appropriate relationships between different occupations in the Judicial Department; and

(8) The need to establish fair and reasonable conditions in relation to job qualifications and responsibilities. [RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §122 (COR).]

With respect to controversies over salaries, pensions and insurance, the arbitrator shall recommend terms of settlement and may make findings of fact. The recommendations and findings shall be advisory and shall not be binding upon the parties. The determination by the arbitrator on all other issues shall be final and binding on the parties.

A hearing must be informal and the rules of evidence for judicial proceedings are not binding. Any documentary evidence and other information determined relevant by the arbitrator may be received in evidence. The arbitrator may administer oaths and require by subpoena attendance and testimony of witnesses and production of books and records and other evidence relating to the issues presented. The arbitrator has a period of 30 days from the termination of the hearing in which to submit a report to the parties and to the board, unless that time limitation is extended by the executive director.
[RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §§122, 123 (COR).]

5. Mediation-arbitration.

A. The parties may agree in advance to a mediation-arbitration procedure. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

B. The parties may jointly select a mediator- arbitrator. If they are unable to agree, either party may request the Executive Director of the Maine Labor Relations Board to select a mediator-arbitrator from a panel of mediators or from the State Board of Arbitration and Conciliation. The executive director may not select a person who has served as a mediator at an earlier stage of the same proceedings. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

C. The mediator-arbitrator shall encourage the parties to reach a voluntary settlement of their dispute, but may, after a reasonable period of mediation as the mediator-arbitrator may determine, initiate an arbitration proceeding by notifying the parties of the mediator-arbitrator's intention to serve as a single arbitrator. [RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §124 (COR).]

D. Any hearing shall be informal and the rules of evidence for judicial proceedings shall not be binding. Any documentary evidence and other information deemed relevant by the mediator-arbitrator may be received in evidence. The mediator-arbitrator shall have the power to administer oaths and to require by subpoena attendance and testimony of witnesses and production of books and records and other evidence relating to the issues presented. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

E. In reaching a decision, the mediator-arbitrator shall consider the factors specified in section 1285, subsection 4. With respect to controversies over salaries, pensions and insurance, the mediator-arbitrator shall recommend terms of settlement and may make findings of fact. Such recommendations and findings shall be advisory and shall not be binding on the parties. The determination of the mediator-arbitrator on all other issues shall be final and binding on the parties. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

F. The mediator-arbitrator has a period of 30 days from the termination of the hearing in which to submit a report to the parties and to the board, unless the period is extended by the executive director. [RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §125 (COR).]

[RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §§124, 125 (COR).]

6. Reports of arbitration. The results of all arbitration and mediation-arbitration proceedings, recommendations and awards conducted under this section must be filed with the board at the offices of its executive director simultaneously with the submissions of the recommendations and award to the parties. In the event the parties settle their dispute during the arbitration or mediation-arbitration proceeding, the arbitrator, the chair of the arbitration panel or the mediator-arbitrator shall submit a report of the arbitrator's, the chair's or the mediator-arbitrator's activities to the executive director not more than 5 days after the proceeding has terminated.

[RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §126 (COR).]

7. Costs. The costs for the services of the mediator, the members of the fact-finding board, the neutral arbitrator and the mediator-arbitrator, including, if any, per diem expenses, and actual and necessary travel and subsistence expenses and the costs of hiring the premises where any mediation, fact-finding, arbitration or mediation-arbitration proceedings are conducted, must be shared equally by the parties to the proceedings. All other costs must be assumed by the party incurring them.

[PL 1991, c. 622, Pt. O, §12 (AMD).]

8. Arbitration administration. The cost of services rendered and expenses incurred by the State Board of Arbitration and Conciliation, as defined in section 931, and any applicable state cost allocation program charges must be shared equally by the parties to the proceedings and must be paid into a special fund administered by the Maine Labor Relations Board. Authorization for services rendered and expenditures incurred by members of the State Board of Arbitration and Conciliation is the responsibility of the executive director. All costs must be paid from that special fund. The executive director may estimate costs upon receipt of a request for services and collect those costs prior to providing the services. The executive director shall bill or reimburse the parties, as appropriate, for any difference between the estimated costs that were collected and the actual costs of providing the services. Once one party has paid its share of the estimated cost of providing the service, the matter is scheduled for hearing. A party who has not paid an invoice for the estimated or actual cost of providing services within 60 days of the date the invoice was issued is, in the absence of good cause shown, liable for the amount of the invoice together with a penalty in the amount of 25% of the amount of the invoice. Any penalty amount collected pursuant to this provision remains in the special fund administered by the Maine Labor Relations Board and that fund does not lapse. The executive director is authorized to collect any sums due and payable pursuant to this provision through civil action. In such an action, the court shall allow litigation costs, including court costs and reasonable attorney's fees, to be deposited in the General Fund if the executive director is the prevailing party in the action.

[PL 1991, c. 798, §8 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 502, §A111 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 596, §N6 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 622, §§O12,13 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 798, §8 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 553, §19 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 601, §10 (AMD). RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. A, §§93, 94 (COR). PL 2023, c. 405, Pt. A, §101 (AMD). RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §§122-126 (COR).

§1286. Bargaining unit; how determined

1. Unit determination. In the event of a dispute between the public employer and an employee or employees over the appropriateness of a unit for purposes of collective bargaining or between the public employer and an employee or employees over whether a supervisory or other position is included in the bargaining unit, the executive director or the executive director's designee shall make the determination, except that anyone excepted from the definition of "judicial employee" under section 1282 may not be included in a bargaining unit. The executive director or the executive director's designee conducting unit determination proceedings may administer oaths and require by subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of books, records and other evidence relative or pertinent to the issues represented to them.
[RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §127 (COR).]

2. Criteria. In determining whether a supervisory position should be excluded from the proposed bargaining unit, the executive director or the executive director's designee shall consider, among other criteria, if the principal functions of the position are characterized by performing such management control duties as scheduling, assigning, overseeing and reviewing the work of subordinate employees, or performing such duties as are distinct and dissimilar from those performed by the employees supervised, or exercising judgment in adjusting grievances, applying other established personnel policies and procedures and in enforcing a collective bargaining agreement or establishing or participating in the establishment of performance standards for subordinate employees and taking corrective measures to implement those standards.
[RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §128 (COR).]

3. Determination of unit appropriateness. In determining the unit appropriate for purposes of collective bargaining, the executive director or the executive director's designee shall seek to ensure to employees the fullest freedom in exercising the rights guaranteed by this chapter, to ensure a clear and identifiable community of interest among employees concerned and to avoid excessive fragmentation among bargaining units.
[RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §129 (COR).]

4. Unit clarification. When there is a certified or currently recognized bargaining representative and when the circumstances surrounding the formation of an existing bargaining unit are alleged to have changed sufficiently to warrant modification in the composition of that bargaining unit, the public employer or any recognized or certified bargaining agent may file with the executive director a petition for a unit clarification, provided that the parties are unable to agree on appropriate modifications and there is no question concerning representation.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW). RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §§127-129 (COR).

§1287. Determination of bargaining agent

1. Voluntary recognition. Any judicial employee organization may file a request with the public employer alleging that a majority of the judicial employees in an appropriate bargaining unit wish to be represented for the purpose of collective bargaining between the public employer and the employees' organization. The request must describe the grouping of jobs or positions that constitute the unit claimed to be appropriate and must include a demonstration of majority support. The request for recognition may be granted by the public employer.
[PL 2023, c. 541, §3 (AMD).]

1-A. Majority sign-up. If a request by a judicial employee organization for recognition pursuant to subsection 1 is not granted by the public employer, the executive director or the executive director's designee shall examine the demonstration of support. If the executive director or the executive

director's designee finds that a majority of the employees in a unit appropriate for bargaining have signed valid authorizations designating the employees' organization specified in the petition as their bargaining representative and that no other individual or labor organization is currently certified or recognized as the exclusive representative of any of the employees in the unit, the board may not direct an election but shall certify the employees' organization as the representative. However, if the majority status of the employees in the appropriate unit is in question, the executive director or the executive director's designee shall call an election to determine whether the organization represents a majority of the members in the bargaining unit.
[PL 2023, c. 541, §3 (NEW).]

2. Elections. The executive director, or the executive director's designee, pursuant to subsection 1-A, or upon signed petition of at least 30% of a bargaining unit of judicial employees that they desire to be represented by an organization, shall conduct a secret ballot election to determine whether the organization represents a majority of the members of the bargaining unit. The election may be conducted at suitable work locations or through the United States mail, and the procedures adopted and employed by the board must ensure that neither the employee organizations nor the management representatives involved in the election have access to information that would identify a voter.
[PL 2023, c. 541, §3 (AMD).]

3. Voting.

A. The ballot must contain the name of the organization and that of any other organization showing written proof of at least 10% representation of the judicial employees within the unit, together with a choice for any judicial employee to designate that the judicial employee does not desire to be represented by any bargaining agent. When more than one organization is on the ballot and no one of the 3 or more choices receives a majority vote of the judicial employees voting, a run-off election must be held. The run-off ballot must contain the 2 choices that received the largest and 2nd largest number of votes. When an organization receives the majority of votes of those voting, the executive director or the executive director's designee shall certify the organization as the bargaining agent. The bargaining agent certified as representing a bargaining unit must be recognized by the public employer as the exclusive bargaining agent for all of the employees in the bargaining unit, until a decertification election by secret ballot is held and the bargaining agent declared by the executive director as not representing a majority of the unit. [PL 2023, c. 541, §3 (AMD).]

B. Whenever 30% of the employees in a certified bargaining unit petition for a bargaining agent to be decertified, the procedures for conducting an election on the question of decertification are the same as for representation as a bargaining agent as established in this section. [PL 2023, c. 541, §3 (AMD).]

C. A question concerning representation may not be raised within one year of a certification or attempted certification. When there is a valid collective bargaining agreement in effect, a question concerning unit or representation may not be raised except during the period not more than 90 days nor less than 60 days prior to the expiration date of the agreement. Unit clarification proceedings are not subject to this time limitation and may be brought at any time consistent with section 1286, subsection 4. [PL 2023, c. 541, §3 (AMD).]

D. The bargaining agent certified by the executive director or the executive director's designee as the exclusive bargaining agent shall represent all the judicial employees within the unit without regard to membership in the organization certified as the bargaining agent, except that any judicial employee at any time may present that judicial employee's grievance to the public employer and have that grievance adjusted without the intervention of the bargaining agent if the adjustment is not inconsistent with the terms of a collective bargaining agreement then in effect and if the bargaining agent's representative has been given reasonable opportunity to be present at any meeting of the parties called for the resolution of that grievance. [PL 2023, c. 541, §3 (AMD).]

[PL 2023, c. 541, §3 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW). PL 2023, c. 541, §3 (AMD).

§1288. Maine Labor Relations Board; rule-making procedure and review of proceedings

1. Rule-making procedure. Proceedings conducted under this chapter shall be subject to the rules and procedures of the board promulgated under section 968, subsection 3.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

2. Review of representation proceedings. Any person aggrieved by any ruling or determination of the executive director under sections 1286 and 1287 may appeal, within 15 days of the announcement of the ruling or determination, except that in the instance of objections to the conduct of an election or challenged ballots the time period is 5 working days, to the Maine Labor Relations Board. Upon receipt of such an appeal, the board shall, within a reasonable time, hold a hearing, having first caused 7 days' notice in writing of the time and place of that hearing to be given to the aggrieved party, the labor organizations or bargaining agent and the public employer. The hearings and the procedures established in furtherance thereof must be in accordance with section 968. Decisions of the board made pursuant to this subsection are subject to review by the Superior Court under the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 80C, in accordance with the standards specified in section 1292, provided the complaint is filed within 15 days of the date of issuance of the decision. The complaint must be served upon the board and all parties to the board proceeding by certified mail, return receipt requested.
[PL 1993, c. 90, §8 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 143, §8 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 90, §8 (AMD).

§1289. Prevention of prohibited acts

1. Prevention of prohibited acts; board powers. The board may prevent any person, the public employer, any judicial employee, any judicial employee organization or any bargaining agent from engaging in any of the prohibited acts enumerated in section 1284. This power shall not be affected by any other means of adjustment or prevention that has been or may be established by agreement, law or otherwise.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

2. Complaints. The public employer, a judicial employee, a judicial employee organization or a bargaining agent that believes that any person, the public employer, any judicial employee, any judicial employee organization or any bargaining agent has engaged in or is engaging in such a prohibited practice may file a complaint with the executive director of the board stating the charges in that regard. A complaint may not be filed with the executive director until the complaining party has served a copy of the complaint upon the party complained of. Upon receipt of the complaint, the executive director or the executive director's designee shall review the charge to determine whether the facts as alleged constitute a prohibited act and shall forthwith cause an investigation to be conducted. The executive director shall attempt to obtain and evaluate sworn affidavits from persons having knowledge of the facts. If it is determined that the sworn facts do not, as a matter of law, constitute a violation, the charge must be dismissed by the executive director, subject to review by the board. If it is determined from the sworn facts that the complaint is meritorious, the executive director shall recommend a proposed settlement. The parties have 30 days after the recommendations are made to resolve their dispute. If the parties have not resolved their dispute by the end of the 30-day period, either party or the executive director may make the recommendations public, but not until the expiration of the 30-day period, unless the parties otherwise agree. If a formal hearing is determined necessary by the executive director or by the board, the executive director shall serve upon the parties to the complaint a notice of the prehearing conference and of the hearing before the board, and that notice must designate the time and place of the

hearing for the prehearing conference or the hearing, as appropriate, except that a hearing may not be held based upon any alleged prohibited practice occurring more than 6 months prior to the filing of the complaint with the executive director. The party complained of has the right to file a written answer to the complaint and to appear in person or otherwise and give testimony at the place and time fixed for the hearing. In the discretion of the board, any other person or organization may be allowed to intervene in that proceeding and to present testimony. This subsection does not restrict the right of the board to require the executive director or the executive director's designee to hold a prehearing conference on any prohibited practice complaint prior to the hearing before the board and to take whatever action, including dismissal, attempting to resolve disagreements between the parties or recommending an order to the board, as the executive director or the executive director's designee may determine appropriate, subject to review by the board.
[RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §130 (COR).]

3. Cease and desist order. After hearing and argument, if, upon a preponderance of the evidence received, the board is of the opinion that any party named in the complaint has engaged in or is engaging in such a prohibited practice, the board shall in writing state its findings of fact and the reasons for its conclusions and shall issue and cause to be served upon the party an order requiring the party to cease and desist from that prohibited practice and to take such affirmative action, including reinstatement of employees with or without back pay, as will effectuate the policies of this Act. An order of the board may not require the reinstatement of an individual as an employee who has been suspended or discharged, or the payment to the individual of any back pay, if that individual was suspended or discharged for cause.
[RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §131 (COR).]

4. Dismissal of complaint. After hearing and argument, if the board is not persuaded by a preponderance of the evidence received that the party named in the complaint has engaged in or is engaging in any prohibited practice, the board shall in writing state its findings of fact and the reasons for its conclusions and shall issue an order dismissing the complaint.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

5. Action to compel compliance. If, after the issuance of an order by the board requiring any party to cease and desist or to take any other affirmative action, that party fails to comply with the order of the board, the party in whose favor the order operates or the board may file a civil action in the Superior Court in Kennebec County to compel compliance with the order of the board. In such action to compel compliance, the Superior Court shall not review the action of the board other than to determine questions of law. If an action to review the decision of the board is pending at the time of the commencement of an action for enforcement pursuant to this subsection or is thereafter filed, the 2 actions shall be consolidated.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

6. Interim injunctive relief. Whenever a complaint is filed with the executive director of the board, alleging that the public employer has violated section 1284, subsection 1, paragraph F, or alleging that a judicial employee or judicial employee organization or bargaining agent has violated section 1284, subsection 2, paragraph C, the party making the complaint may simultaneously seek interim injunctive relief from the Superior Court in the county in which the prohibited practice is alleged to have occurred pending the final adjudication of the board with respect to that matter.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

7. Court review. Either party may seek a review by the Superior Court in Kennebec County of a decision or order of the Maine Labor Relations Board by filing a complaint in accordance with the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 80C, if the complaint is filed within 15 days of the date of issuance of the decision. The complaint must be served upon the board and all parties to the board proceeding by certified mail, return receipt requested. Upon the filing of the complaint, the court shall set the complaint down for hearing and shall cause all interested parties and the board to be notified.

The hearing may be advanced on the docket and receive priority over other cases when the court determines that the interests of justice so require. Pending review and upon application of any party in interest, the court may grant such temporary relief or restraining order and may impose such terms and conditions as it determines just and proper; except that the board's decision or order is not stayed except when it is clearly shown to the satisfaction of the court that substantial and irreparable injury will be sustained or that there is a substantial risk of danger to the public health, safety or welfare or interference with the exercise of the judicial power. The executive director shall forthwith file in the court the record in the proceeding certified by the executive director or a member of the board. The record must include all documents filed in the proceeding and the transcript, if any. After hearing, the court may enforce, modify, enforce as so modified or set aside in whole or in part the decision of the board, except that the finding of the board on questions of fact is final unless shown to be clearly erroneous. Any appeal to the Law Court must be the same as an appeal from an interlocutory order under section 6.
[PL 2011, c. 559, Pt. A, §29 (AMD).]

8. Privileges seeking injunctive relief. In any judicial proceeding authorized by this subsection in which injunctive relief is sought, sections 5 and 6 shall apply, except that neither an allegation nor proof of unavoidable substantial and irreparable injury to the complainant's property may be required to obtain a temporary restraining order or injunction.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

9. Interference with exercise of judicial power. The Maine Labor Relations Board shall not have power to interfere with the exercise of the judicial power.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 143, §9 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 90, §9 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 559, Pt. A, §29 (AMD). RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §§130, 131 (COR).

§1290. Hearings before the Maine Labor Relations Board

1. Hearings; rules of evidence; evidence. Hearings conducted by the board shall be informal and the rules of evidence prevailing in judicial proceedings shall not be binding. Any and all documentary evidence and other evidence deemed relevant by the board may be received.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

2. Subpoenas; evidence; witness fees. The chair may administer oaths and require by subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the presentation of books, records and other evidence relative or pertinent to the issues presented to the board for determination. Witnesses subpoenaed by the board must be allowed the same fees as are paid to witnesses in the Superior Court. These fees, together with all necessary expenses of the board, must be paid by the Treasurer of State on warrants drawn by the State Controller.
[RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §132 (COR).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW). RR 2023, c. 2, Pt. E, §132 (COR).

§1291. Scope of binding contract arbitration

A collective bargaining agreement between the public employer and a bargaining agent may provide for binding arbitration as the final step of a grievance procedure, but the only grievances which may be taken to such binding arbitration shall be disputes between the parties as to the meaning or application of the specific terms of the collective bargaining agreement. An arbitrator with the power to make binding decisions pursuant to any such provision shall have no authority to add to, subtract from or modify the collective bargaining agreement. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).

§1292. Review of arbitration awards

1. Review by Superior Court. Either party may seek a review by the Superior Court of a binding determination by an arbitration panel. For interest arbitrations, the review must be sought in accordance with the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 80B.
[PL 1993, c. 90, §10 (AMD).]

2. Questions of fact. In the absence of fraud, the binding determination of an arbitration panel, arbitrator or mediator-arbitrator shall be final upon all questions of fact.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

3. Action by court; appeal. The court may, after consideration, affirm or reverse or modify any such binding determination or decision based upon any erroneous ruling. An appeal may be taken to the Law Court as in any civil action.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 143, §10 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 90, §10 (AMD).

§1293. Separability

1. Separability. If any clause, sentence, paragraph or part of this chapter, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, shall, for any reason, be adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder of this chapter and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph or part therof, directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have been rendered and to the person or circumstances involved. It is declared to be the legislative intent that this chapter would have been adopted had such invalid provisions not been included.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

2. Eligibility under federal programs. Nothing in this chapter or any contract negotiated pursuant to this chapter may in any way be interpreted or allowed to restrict or impair the eligibility of the State or the Judicial Department in obtaining the benefits under any federal grant-in-aid or assistance programs.
[PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).

§1294. Amendment

This Act shall not be amended without first consulting the Supreme Judicial Court. [PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 702 (NEW).

§1295. Bargaining agent access

1. Bargaining agent access to employees. Public employers shall provide to a bargaining agent access to members of the bargaining unit that the bargaining agent exclusively represents. Access must include, but is not limited to, the following:

A. The right to meet with individual employees on the premises of the public employer's workplace during the work day to investigate and discuss grievances, workplace-related complaints and other workplace issues; [PL 2019, c. 389, §4 (NEW).]

B. The right to conduct workplace meetings during lunch and other breaks, and before and after the work day, on the public employer's premises to discuss workplace issues, collective bargaining negotiations, the administration of collective bargaining agreements and other matters related to the duties of a bargaining agent and internal bargaining agent matters involving the governance or the business of the bargaining agent; [PL 2019, c. 389, §4 (NEW).]

C. The right to meet with newly hired employees, without charge to the pay or leave time of the employees, for a minimum of 30 minutes or for an amount of time agreed upon by all parties, not later than 10 calendar days after receipt of the information provided pursuant to subsection 2, during new employee orientations or, if the employer does not conduct new employee orientations, at individual or group meetings; and [PL 2019, c. 389, §4 (NEW).]

D. The right to use the e-mail system of a public employer to communicate with bargaining unit members regarding official bargaining agent matters including, but not limited to, elections, meetings and social activities, as long as the use of the e-mail system does not create an unreasonable burden on the public employer's network capabilities or system administration. [PL 2019, c. 389, §4 (NEW).]

[PL 2019, c. 389, §4 (NEW).]

2. Bargaining agent access to employee information. Public employers shall provide to a bargaining agent access to information about members of the bargaining unit that the bargaining agent exclusively represents, as follows.

A. The public employer shall provide the following information regarding newly hired judicial employees and, upon request, regarding all other judicial employees to a bargaining agent in spreadsheet file format or another format agreed to by the bargaining agent:

(1) Name;

(2) Job title;

(3) Workplace location;

(4) Home address;

(5) Work telephone numbers;

(6) Home telephone and personal cellular telephone numbers, if known;

(7) Work e-mail address;

(8) Personal e-mail address, if known; and

(9) Date of hire.

For information regarding newly hired judicial employees, the public employer shall provide the information required under this paragraph not later than 30 calendar days after the date a prospective judicial employee accepts an offer of employment or not later than 30 calendar days after the date of hire for all judicial employees. At the request of the bargaining agent, but not more than quarterly, the public employer shall provide the required information for all other judicial employees in the bargaining unit within 30 calendar days. [PL 2023, c. 467, §7 (AMD).]

B. The following are not public records as defined in Title 1, section 402, subsection 3 and are confidential and may not be disclosed by the public employer, except as provided in paragraph A:

(1) Home addresses, home or personal telephone numbers, personal e-mail addresses and dates of birth of employees;

(2) Names of employees within a bargaining unit; and

(3) Communications between a bargaining agent and its members. [PL 2019, c. 389, §4 (NEW).]

This subsection is subject to the dispute resolution process specified in an applicable collective bargaining agreement for a public employee.
[PL 2023, c. 467, §§7, 8 (AMD).]

3. Bargaining agent access to government buildings and facilities. The bargaining agent has the right to use government buildings and other facilities that are owned or leased by government entities to conduct meetings with bargaining unit members regarding bargaining negotiations, the administration of collective bargaining agreements, the investigation of grievances, other workplace-related complaints and issues and internal matters involving the governance or business of the bargaining agent, as long as that use does not interfere with governmental operations. A bargaining agent conducting a meeting in a government building or facility pursuant to this section may be charged for maintenance, security and other costs related to the use of the government building or facility that would not otherwise be incurred by the government entity.
[PL 2019, c. 389, §4 (NEW).]

4. Employee may opt out. After an initial meeting pursuant to subsection 1, paragraph C, an employee may opt out of receiving any further communications from a bargaining agent or allowing a bargaining agent to have any further access to that employee's information described in subsection 2, paragraph A, except for communications related to direct representation of that employee by a bargaining agent.
[PL 2019, c. 389, §4 (NEW).]

5. Selling or sharing nonmember data prohibited. A bargaining agent may not sell or share the information provided in accordance with subsection 2, paragraph A of an employee who is not a member of an employee organization except for the purpose of fulfilling the agent's collective bargaining obligations.
[PL 2019, c. 389, §4 (NEW).]

Nothing in this section may be construed to limit the terms of a collective bargaining agreement that provide a bargaining agent with greater rights of access to employees than the rights established by this section. [PL 2019, c. 389, §4 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2019, c. 389, §4 (NEW). PL 2023, c. 467, §§7, 8 (AMD).

§1296. Obligations during interim between contracts

During the interim after the expiration of a collective bargaining agreement and before the effective date of any subsequent collective bargaining agreement, judicial employees covered by the expired collective bargaining agreement remain eligible for and must receive merit or step increases in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in the expired collective bargaining agreement. [PL 2021, c. 282, §3 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2021, c. 282, §3 (NEW).