



TRAIN FOR A NEW CAREER

While collecting unemployment benefits



- Commissioner Approved Training
- Training Benefits
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Self-Employment Assistance Program

The Washington state Employment Security Department (ESD) has produced this handbook to assist customers interested in enrolling in approved job training.

This handbook is based on current UI legislation; statements are intended for general information and do not have the effect of law. This handbook is not designed to cover all phases of the law or to answer all questions; it is designed as an overview of training programs for ESD customers.

The Employment Security Department is an equal opportunity employer/programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Language assistance services for limited English proficient individuals are available free of charge. Washington Relay Service: 711

Training programs for unemployed workers

By law, most people must be able to, available for and actively seeking work every week in order to receive unemployment benefits. One of the few exceptions is if you're enrolled in approved job training.

We have four programs that may allow you to collect unemployment benefits while in job training. These programs are:

- Commissioner Approved Training (CAT)
- Training Benefits (TB)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Self-Employment Assistance Program (SEAP)

This handout will provide basic information on these valuable programs, help you identify training options, and how you may apply.

Staff at your local WorkSource center can help you learn about training options and authorized training providers. WorkSource locations can be found at WorkSourceWA.com.

Are you already in training that hasn't been pre-approved?

If you are claiming unemployment benefits, contact the Unemployment Claims Center at 800-318-6022 right away if you plan to start school or are currently in school, but have not been approved for TB, CAT or SEAP. If you believe you may be eligible for TAA, please see a TAA case manager at the nearest WorkSource center.

Please mention if you plan to apply for one of these programs so staff can advise you how to proceed and the requirements to follow until you're approved for training.

Attending unapproved training raises a question about your eligibility for unemployment benefits because of the time spent in classes and studying. If you have not been approved for TB, CAT, TRA or SEAP, then you must clearly show that attending school does not interfere with your availability for work.

We will review your student status and decide if you are eligible to receive benefits. We will consider the customary hours in your occupation, your class schedule, the number of credit hours you are taking, and other factors when we decide your eligibility for benefits.

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COMMISSIONER APPROVED TRAINING (CAT)

What is CAT?

CAT allows you to collect regular unemployment benefits while attending an approved, full-time vocational training program. If approved for CAT, you will not have to look for work while receiving unemployment.

CAT does not pay for books, tuition or school-related fees and it does not extend your unemployment benefits.

We cannot approve you for CAT if you are pursuing an academic education, unless the classes are needed:

- Before you can start a vocational training program, or
- For certification or licensing, or
- For specific skills that are required for an occupation.

CAT usually is not approved if your immediate goal is a bachelor's degree or higher. If you have a disability or other exceptional circumstances, we may waive this requirement.

If you are approved for CAT, we will mail progress reports periodically for you and your school to complete. Satisfactory progress must be made and documented in order to continue to be eligible for benefits.

Eligibility for CAT

To be approved for CAT, you must:

- Be otherwise eligible for unemployment benefits.
- Be a dislocated worker who:
 - Was laid off because your employer permanently reduced operations; or
 - Is unlikely to get the same type of work again because there are few employment opportunities in your type of work; or
 - Was separated from employment as a result of the lease and permit restrictions relating to reducing escape of non-native finfish.
- Your training must be with an eligible training provider (ETP) and for an approved program (see the eligible Training Providers list at www.careerbridge.wa.gov).
- Develop a sound financial plan to complete training, especially if you will run out of benefits before the training is completed.

To learn more about CAT, visit our website at esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/commissioner-approved-training.

How to apply

To apply for CAT, request a *Commissioner Approved Training Application* in any of the following ways:

- Go to your local WorkSource center. WorkSource locations can be found at WorkSourceWA.com.
- Download and print the application at esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/commissioner-approved-training.
- Call the claims center at 800-318-6022.

Staff at your local WorkSource center can review your application to make sure it's complete and help you submit it for processing. Submit your completed application to the address listed on the CAT application before starting school so we can determine your eligibility. We will send you a written decision about your eligibility for CAT. Until you receive CAT approval, you are not excused from work-search requirements if you continue to claim benefits.

“If you are applying for both CAT and TB, complete only the Training Benefits Application.”

Important note: If you are applying for both CAT and TB, complete only the Training Benefits Application. If we deny TB, we automatically consider eligibility for CAT. We will send you a written decision about your eligibility for CAT.



TRAINING BENEFITS (TB)

What is TB?

TB extends the number of weeks that you may receive unemployment benefits while attending full-time training in an approved training program. If you are approved for TB, you will not have to look for work.

The TB program does not pay for tuition, books or training-related fees. You can receive TB only while enrolled in approved training and making satisfactory progress, as certified by the school.

We cannot approve you for TB if you are pursuing a bachelor's degree or higher, or a purely academic education. We might be able to approve academic classes if the classes are necessary to start a vocational training program (otherwise known as prerequisite classes), or are for required certification or licensing, or if specific skills are required for an occupation. Your start date for training cannot be more than one school quarter or term away for us to consider your application.

Training benefits can pay you 52 times your weekly benefit amount, minus any regular benefits you have received. You may claim up to a maximum of 52 weeks of unemployment benefits (regular benefits and training benefits combined). For example, if you received 20 weeks of regular unemployment benefits, you can receive up to 32 times your weekly benefit amount in training benefits. You are not eligible if you received TB within the past five years, unless you qualify as a dislocated worker.

If you apply and are approved, we will pay TB after all state and federal extensions have run out. In addition, we will mail a progress report periodically for you **and** your school to complete.

Requirements and deadlines

To be potentially eligible for training benefits, you must need job-related training, be otherwise eligible for unemployment benefits or have exhausted your benefits.

If your eligibility is based on National Guard or military service, disability or low-income guidelines, or if you are a dislocated worker:

- You have **90 calendar days** after filing a new claim or after reopening a claim to *turn in a Training Benefits Application*.
- You have **120 calendar days** after filing a new claim or after reopening a claim to enroll in an approved training program, or as soon as possible if we determine the training was not available within 120 days.

- We will deny training benefits if you do not meet these deadlines unless you show good cause.
- National Guard, military service, disability or low-income groups must meet the deadlines as described above.
- Dislocated workers have until their benefit year ends to enroll in approved training.

“Enroll in approved training” means:

- You are pre-registered for classes or are on a waiting list.
- You have a definite start date for training.

If you return to work after opening your unemployment claim and are laid off again, the deadlines to apply and enroll start over on the date you reopen your unemployment claim.

Eligibility for the Training Benefits Program

To be potentially eligible for TB you must need job-related training, and be otherwise eligible for unemployment benefits or have exhausted your benefits, and either:

- Have served in the U.S. military or Washington National Guard in the last year or be currently serving in the National Guard;
- Be disabled due to an injury or illness and can establish that you are unable to return to your normal type of work due to that injury or illness;
- Be considered a low-income worker (to be considered a low-income worker for training benefit purposes, your total base-year wages divided by your total hours worked, as reported on your claim, equal less than 130 percent of the state minimum wage;) or
- Be a dislocated worker who:
 - Was laid off because your employer permanently reduced operations; or
 - Lost your job for a reason for which we allow benefits, and you are unlikely to get the same type of work again because there are few employment opportunities in your type of work; or
 - Was separated from employment as a result of the lease and permit restrictions relating to reducing escape of nonnative finfish.

Other requirements to qualify:

- You must enroll in training that will prepare you for a high-demand occupation.
- Your training must be with an eligible training provider (ETP) and for an approved program (see the Eligible Training Providers List at www.careerbridge.wa.gov).
- Training for most claimants is required to be full-time training.
 - Dislocated workers and certain disabled individuals may qualify to attend part-time training.
- Your approved training cannot be primarily intended to meet the requirements of a bachelor's degree or higher.

How to apply

To apply for TB, request a Training Benefits Application in any of the following ways:

- Go to your local WorkSource center. WorkSource locations can be found at WorkSourceWA.com.
- Download and print the application at esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/training-benefits-application.
- Call the claims center at 800-318-6022.
- Call the Training Benefits Unit at 877-600-7701.
- On your UI claim in eServices, click Register for training benefits under "I want to."

Worker retraining advisors at your school and staff at your local WorkSource center can review your application to make sure it is complete, answer general questions, and help you submit it for processing. Submit your completed application to the address listed on the application before starting school so we can determine your eligibility. We will send you a written decision about your eligibility for training benefits.

Important note: If you are applying for both CAT and TB, complete only the Training Benefits Application. If we deny TB, we automatically consider eligibility for CAT. We will send you a written decision about your eligibility.

“If you are applying for both CAT and TB, complete only the Training Benefits Application.”



What is TAA?

TAA is federal program that seeks to provide workers, who become unemployed because of increased imports from foreign countries, with opportunities to obtain the skills, credentials, resources, and support necessary to rebuild skills for future jobs. The U.S. Department of Labor must certify that the lost job meets certain eligibility requirements.

TAA benefits include:

- Reemployment services
- Job search allowance
- Relocation allowance
- Training assistance (schooling, on-the-job training, etc.)
- Income support in the form of Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA)
- Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (workers age 50 or older)

Coverage has varied under different federal reauthorizations of the TAA Act. Generally, eligibility has included:

- Primary workers producing a product who are directly affected by increased imports of competitive products.
- Secondary workers of an upstream (supplier) or downstream (finisher) company producing parts for or finishing a product, and this product is the basis of certification for a group of primary workers.
- Workers of a firm that has shifted production to a country that has been designated as a trade beneficiary or is party to a free-trade agreement with the United States.

Once certified for TAA, you will work with a TAA case manager to determine your needs for return to full-time suitable employment. If it is determined that training is needed, you work with the TAA case manager to develop a training program. If approved for TAA training, you will not have to look for work while receiving unemployment.

Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA)

TRA (additional unemployment) is federal financial support paid to qualified individuals who are enrolled in the TAA program. A limited amount of TRA, called Basic TRA, may be used while either looking for work or while attending TAA training. Additional TRA benefits are available only while attending TAA approved training.

TRA benefits pays the same weekly amount as regular unemployment benefits.

Basic TRA can pay you up to 52 times your weekly benefit amount, minus any regular benefits and federal extensions to which you are entitled. You may claim up to a maximum of 52 weeks of unemployment benefits (regular benefits, federal extensions and Basic TRA combined). For example, if you are entitled to 20 weeks of regular unemployment benefits, you can receive up to 32 times your weekly benefit amount in Basic TRA. Basic TRA can only be received during the 104-week period following your most recent Trade layoff.

Additional TRA can only pay while attending TAA approved training. It pays up to 65 weeks of benefits over a 78-week period, beginning with the later of exhausting your Basic TRA or approval of your TAA training. Up to an additional 13 weeks of benefits, only payable during the last 20 weeks of TAA training, may be available if needed for the completion of training.

No TRA benefits may be paid during a break in TAA training of more than 30 days, excluding weekends and holidays.

Important note: Not everyone who qualifies for TAA will qualify to receive TRA.

Eligibility for TRA

To be eligible for TRA, you must:

- Become unemployed because of increased imports from, or shifts in production to, foreign countries.
- Become unemployed due to a lack of work from an employer certified by the U.S. Department of Labor under the provisions of the Trade Act Program.
- Have worked for that employer at least 26 of the 52 consecutive weeks prior to layoff and have earned at least \$30 in each of these weeks.
- Be entitled to regular unemployment compensation.
- Have exhausted all rights to regular unemployment compensation and any available federal extensions.
- Be enrolled in an approved training program or have an approved waiver of the training requirement before the enrollment deadline.
- Be enrolled in the TAA program and be receiving ongoing case management services from a TAA case manager.

“We will automatically mail applications to employees who have worked for a certified employer after they are laid off from that employer.”

How to apply

We automatically mail applications to employees who have worked for a certified employer after they are laid off from that employer. If you feel that you may be eligible for TAA and did not receive a TAA application, please see a TAA case manager at your nearest WorkSource center. WorkSource locations can be found at WorkSourceWA.com.



SELF-EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SEAP)

What is SEAP?

SEAP is an opportunity for you to receive entrepreneurial training and counseling while you collect unemployment benefits. If you qualify and enroll in an approved training program, you do not have to look for other work while in training.

All approved self-employment training programs include:

- Entrepreneurial training.
- Business counseling.
- Technical assistance.
- Requirements to participate in activities related to setting up a business and becoming self-employed.

SEAP does not pay for books, tuition or training-related fees, and it does not extend the number of weeks that you can collect unemployment benefits. You are responsible for any financial planning needed to complete the training program. Some training providers may offer financial aid, grants or business start-up funds to assist you.

Eligibility for SEAP

To be eligible for SEAP, you must:

- Qualify for regular unemployment benefits from ESD.
- Receive an eligibility letter that identifies you as likely to run out of regular unemployment benefits before you find a new job or be otherwise eligible for Commissioner-Approved Training (CAT).
- Enroll in an approved training program. You can find SEAP approved providers at esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/SEAP-approved-providers.

To maintain your eligibility for unemployment benefits while in training, you must:

- Be enrolled in an approved full-time training program.
- Make satisfactory progress in the program.
- Notify the claims center at 800-318-6022, if you modify your approved training, suspend training, quit training, or reduce enrollment to less than full-time.

How to apply

To apply for SEAP after receiving an eligibility letter, you must:

- Complete a SEAP Application. Applications are available at your local WorkSource center, or you can download an application from our website at esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/self-employment-assistance-program
- Contact an eligible training provider to see if you are eligible for their program. Some providers have income or other requirements that you must meet to participate in their training programs. You can review specific program requirements at esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/SEAP-approved-providers.
- Have the training provider complete and sign the Program Provider Certification section on the application.

*“We will
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