

Applying for Approved Training While You Are Collecting Unemployment Insurance

Do You Need Training?

If you need to acquire new skills in order to become re-employed, please read this information on the Training Opportunities Program to learn how to find the right training program and how attending training may affect your unemployment insurance (UI) benefits.

Section 30 of the Massachusetts Employment and Training Law allows the Division of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) to waive an active work search by claimants who meet certain eligibility requirements. This means that claimants can continue to collect their UI benefits while in agency-approved training.

Questions to Ask Yourself

If you need new job skills and want to attend a training program while you are collecting unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, there are several items for you to consider and questions for you to ask yourself.

1. What training will be right for you? How much training do you need?

- To be approved to attend training, you must choose a program no longer than one year's duration.

Will you be able to complete it before your benefits end?

- If so, you will only need to apply for a waiver of your worksearch activities while you are collecting UI benefits.

2. What if the program extends beyond the duration of your benefits?

- If it does, you can apply for an extension of your unemployment insurance benefits. The extension is a maximum of 18 weeks of benefits or until the completion of your training, whichever comes first.
- To be approved for the extension, you need to apply for Section 30 approval by the **15th paid week** of your claim.
- To qualify, your training program must be on the Section 30 list of approved training programs.

3. How will you pay for your training?

- Can you pay for the training yourself?
- Will you need funding to pay for your training? If you do want help paying for your program, will you meet the eligibility requirements for funding assistance?
- Even if you are eligible to receive financial assistance, will funding be available?



- If you are approved for financial assistance, is your school on the approved list?

For more information, and to apply for funding assistance, check with your local One-Stop Career Center. (See "If you need funding")

Eligibility Requirements

You may be eligible for approved training if you:

- are permanently separated from your previous employer;
- are unlikely to obtain suitable employment based on your current skill level; and
- need training to become re-employed.

When to Apply

If you need training, you should start to look into the availability of training programs as soon as possible.

If your approved training program is going to extend past the duration of your regular unemployment insurance benefits, you may be eligible for an extension of your benefits while you are completing your training.

The extension can be no longer than 18 weeks or through the last week of your training program.

In order to be eligible for the extension, **you must apply by the 15th paid week** of your claim. (A paid week is one in which you receive all or part of your weekly benefits.)

You must file an application with DUA for **approval** of your program **prior to starting** training. Allow at least three weeks in order to ensure that there is enough time to process your application.

If you apply **after the 15th week**, you may attend an approved training program while you are collecting benefits, but will not be eligible for an extension of those benefits.



MASSACHUSETTS
DIVISION OF
UNEMPLOYMENT
ASSISTANCE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Mitt Romney, Governor

Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor

Jane C. Edmonds, Director, Department of Workforce Development

John P. O'Leary, Commissioner, Division of Unemployment Assistance

www.mass.gov/dua

2

In addition, you must actually begin training in the first available program for which you have been approved that is located within a reasonable distance from your residence. **In all cases training must start before your benefit year ends.**

Training Program Requirements

In order for DUA to approve your training program, your selected program must provide you with skills that are in demand in your labor market area, or in any other areas to which you would either commute or relocate.

To be considered for approval, a training program must:

- be full-time—at least 20 hours per week of supervised class hours for vocational/industrial training or at least 12 credit hours per week for each semester of a college program;
- be intensive so that you are able to complete it in one calendar year, including vacations, class breaks, etc.;
- have a job placement rate of at least 70 percent for graduates of the same program for the past 12 months. If requested, you may be required to provide evidence of current labor market demand for the occupation, such as: help wanted ads from the local newspaper in your labor market area, trade magazine ads or job listings;
- provide vocational/technical or basic skills training;
- clearly identify the occupation for which you will be trained.

Basic Skills Enhancement

If it is determined that, as part of your re-employment plan, you need “basic skills enhancement”—English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE) or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) preparation—that course is usually taken as part of a vocational or industrial training program.

When basic skills enhancement is part of your vocational plan, the overall length of both programs may exceed the one year maximum. However, you will not be eligible to collect more than your maximum benefits under the regular state program plus the 18 weeks of additional benefits allowed by law.

How to Apply for Training

There are two steps needed to complete the application process, if you are applying for an extension of your benefits in addition to the waiver of the work search activities.

The first step is to find approved training that will prepare you for the job market. You can receive assistance from any One-Stop Career Center.

Once you have chosen your program, you must complete a Training Opportunities Program Application. This form asks for information on the type of training; school(s) offering the training; the start and end dates of the program; and costs of tuition and other related expenses.

You must also include a program outline or course syllabus and a school or program calendar if the course has not already been approved by DUA.

Your school must complete a section of this form, providing information on the start and completion dates of your training, class hours per week and the school's placement rate in jobs related to the training program completed.

Remember to submit all of your paperwork at least three weeks prior to the start of training. A decision will probably take at least two weeks.

If You Need Funding

You should visit a One-Stop Career Center to inquire about the possibility of receiving funding for your training program.

The Division of Unemployment Assistance does not have funds to help pay for your training. DUA's approval of your training means only that DUA will waive the requirement that you look for work while you are collecting unemployment insurance, and that you may be eligible for up to an 18-week extension of your UI benefits while you are attending training. A separate application must be made if you need financial assistance to pay for your training.

Under the Workforce Investment Act, you may be eligible to receive funding to pay for some or all of your training costs. This funding is called an Individual Training Account (ITA). Eligibility for an ITA is determined by income, residency and other criteria established by each of the state's 16 workforce areas.

In order to be eligible for an ITA, the training provider you select must also be on an approved vendor list, certified by the appropriate workforce area.

In addition, some areas may not have funding available, and most areas have a limit on the amount that may be available to each customer who is approved to receive training funds. The maximum amount of funding will vary – depending upon the funding limit set by each of the 16 areas.

Help Is Available

A One-Stop Career Center job specialist can help if you are not sure how to find appropriate training—or if you are unable to decide what training course is right for you.

You can receive assistance in evaluating your present skills and in choosing the best vocational training program. Career Center staff will provide you with information on current programs that have been pre-approved and will help you complete the training application process.

Remember these important points:

- Select the training program that is best for you and that will help you find employment in your new occupation.
- Complete your application and submit it by the end of the 15th paid week of your claim.
- If you need financial assistance to pay for your training program, check with your One-Stop Career Center. DUA does not fund your training costs.

