



Training Benefits Program

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Training Benefits Program created in 2000

Approved participants get up to 52 weeks of unemployment benefits, don't have to look for work while being retrained

Applicants must develop a training plan

Eligibility and participation requirements for dislocated workers changed on July 1, 2012

The Washington State Legislature created the Training Benefits Program in 2000. It provides extended unemployment benefits to eligible workers who need training to obtain a new job. Training benefits provide income support while the workers are in training; the benefits are paid from the state unemployment-benefits fund. Direct costs of training (tuition, books, fees, etc.) must be funded through other sources.

Duration of training benefits

Training-benefits participants may receive up to a full year of benefits, including the individual's regular unemployment benefits. For example, a participant who qualifies for 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits may receive up to 26 additional weeks of benefits through the Training Benefits Program. Someone who qualifies for 20 weeks of regular benefits may receive up to 32 weeks of training benefits, for a total of 52 weeks of benefits.

Approved participants are not required to look for work while they are in training and are receiving unemployment or training benefits.

Applying for training benefits

Everyone who applies for unemployment benefits receives an unemployment claims manual that includes information about the Training Benefits Program. Information also is available at WorkSource centers, at local community and technical colleges, and on Employment Security's website, esd.wa.gov.

Applicants must develop a training plan describing the proposed training, where it's offered and the occupation or skills they'll develop. Assistance is available at local WorkSource centers and worker-retraining offices at community or technical colleges.

Eligibility

Unemployed workers who qualify for regular benefits must fall into one or more of the following five eligibility categories to qualify for training benefits.

1. "Dislocated worker," defined as:
 - For claims started before July 1, 2012, someone who:
 - Was fired (not for misconduct) or laid off; and
 - Is unlikely to get the same type of work because his/her skills aren't in demand.
 - For claims starting on or after July 1, 2012, someone who:
 - Was laid off by an employer that permanently reduced operations; or
 - Lost a job for a reason for which we allow benefits **and** is unlikely to get the same type of work because there are few job opportunities in that field.
2. Disabled by an injury or illness and needs training for a new occupation.
3. Earned less than 130 percent of the state's minimum wage in the qualifying year and needs training to get a higher-paying job.
4. Honorably discharged from the military or the state's National Guard in the 12 months before applying for the program and needs training to find work locally.
5. Currently serving in the National Guard and needs training to find work locally.

Eligible participants include unemployed workers who are dislocated, disabled, low-income, National Guard, or recently discharged military

Additional eligibility requirements

A training-benefits participant cannot be on standby or have a recall date to his/her past job within the next six months.

Anyone who qualifies under criteria 2, 3, 4 or 5 (above) may participate in training benefits only once every five years. This limitation does not apply to dislocated workers for claims started on or after July 1, 2012.

With the exception of *some* people with disabilities, participants who open unemployment claims before July 2012 must enroll in full-time training. Dislocated workers with unemployment claims that begin on or after July 2012 may enroll in either part-time or full-time training.

Application deadlines and other requirements

Dislocated workers who open unemployment claims on or after July 1, 2012, may apply for training benefits and enter an approved training program at any time during their benefit year. However, they must show that they have sufficient financial resources to complete their training plan once their training benefits are exhausted.

Unemployed workers who apply for training benefits under other criteria (non-dislocated) and **dislocated workers whose unemployment claims start before July 2012** must:

- Submit a training plan within 90 days after receiving their unemployment-insurance handbook from Employment Security.
- Enroll in approved training within 120 days after receiving their unemployment-insurance handbook, or begin the training as soon as it's available.

All Training Benefits participants must submit reports to Employment Security showing that they're making satisfactory progress in their training.

Annual report available

Employment Security produces an annual report to the state Legislature that provides demographic information about participants, types of training they take, pre- and post-training wages, administrative costs and other performance results. The current and past reports can be found on the Employment Security [website](https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports-publications/special-reports/training-benefits-report) (<https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports-publications/special-reports/training-benefits-report>).

Application and enrollment deadlines

Annual report available online

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