



Commissioner-Approved Training

July 2013
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Pays up to 26 weeks of “regular” unemployment benefits while attending approved job training

Participants responsible for training costs

Commissioner-Approved Training (CAT) allows an eligible unemployment-insurance claimant to collect regular unemployment benefits while attending a full-time vocational training program.

By law, an individual who is collecting unemployment benefits is required to search for work and must be immediately able and available for full-time employment. But the work-search requirement is waived for anyone who is approved for Commissioner-Approved Training.

CAT participants receive the same weekly unemployment benefit they would receive if they were not in the program. But unlike individuals who are admitted to the Training Benefits Program, CAT participants do not receive extended weeks of benefits (in excess of 26 weeks). (Note: The Training Benefits Program is a separate program that also allows individuals to receive unemployment benefits while enrolled in approved training, but eligibility requirements are different).

The CAT program pays weekly unemployment benefits. Participants are responsible for tuition, books, fees and other training costs – although financial aid may be available from other sources. Since CAT benefits are available for only up to 26 weeks, students *may* run out of unemployment benefits before completing their training. Students are asked to review their financial situation before enrolling in this program, since they are responsible for any costs necessary to complete their training.

Eligibility

To be eligible for Commissioner-Approved Training, individuals must be:

- Eligible for unemployment benefits.
- Unlikely to return to work due to a diminishing demand for their skills or a surplus of workers with similar skills in the labor market; laid off due to technological advances; or show that they’re unlikely to return to work in which they have experience or skills because of illness, injury or other unique individual circumstances.
- Attending a full-time program at an accredited training facility or a facility recognized by employers as having a high-quality program.
- Enrolled in a training program that provides skills in an occupation for which there are reasonable job opportunities in the individual’s community.
- Able to show the Employment Security Department that they have the financial resources to complete their training if they run out of unemployment benefits before their training is completed.

The CAT Program does **not** extend an individual’s benefits beyond 26 weeks. Generally, an approved training program has a short duration.

CAT applicants must be attending a training program that will provide skills in an occupation for which there are reasonable job opportunities in the labor market and is not primarily intended to meet the requirements of a bachelor's or higher degree.

Application process

More information and applications for Commissioner-Approved Training are available online at esd.wa.gov (search on CAT), by calling the unemployment-claims call center (800-318-6022) and at local WorkSource centers (locations are listed on go2worksource.com).

Applications can be mailed or faxed to Employment Security (see information below), dropped off at a WorkSource center or submitted to the Employment Security Department through a community or technical college.

Mail applications to:

Unemployment Insurance Imaging
P.O. Box 19019
Olympia, WA 98507-0019

Fax applications to: 800-301-1796

Contacts

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