

**Get extra weeks of Unemployment Benefits while you are getting trained**

**Can I get extra weeks of Unemployment Insurance (UI) while I am in training?**

You MAY be able to get up to 26 **extra** weeks UI benefits. First, can you answer "yes" to these 5 questions:

1. Are you collecting or eligible for UI?
2. Are you currently unemployed through no fault of your own (that is, you were not fired for misconduct and you did not quit without a good reason)?
3. Have you left your job permanently? The Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) calls this "permanently separated" from your job. If you are on any temporary or short-term leave, you would not qualify.
4. Will it be hard to find another job if you do not improve or update your skills?
5. Are you getting training or planning to get training from a DUA **Training Opportunities Program**?

**What is a DUA Training Opportunities Program (TOP)?**

DUA's TOP describes training programs that the DUA has approved. If you get DUA approved training, you can get UI benefits while you are in training.

**What kind of training program can you take?**

Training can be vocational, college education, or basic skills courses. Basic skills courses can be English for Speakers of Other Languages (E.S.O.L.), G.E.D., or A.B.E. programs.

**Approved training programs:**

1. provide vocational or basic skills training;
2. are full-time (generally at least 20 hours per week of classroom training or 12 credits per semester of college). You may be able to take less than 20 hours/12 credits, if the class requires a lot of out-of-class work, or

you have a disability that makes this difficult;

3. has good job placement rates so that you are likely to find a job;
4. you can finish in two years or 3 years if the course combines E.S.O.L., GED, or adult basic education with vocational training.

**Why would I be interested in a TOP?**

1. Training may help you get another job.
2. If you take an approved training course you will not need to meet the DUA's "able and available" requirement. You will not have to look for a new job while you are in training, and you can keep collecting UI benefits. You **still** have to certify online or by phone every week to keep getting your benefit checks.
3. You may be able to get up to 26 **extra** weeks of UI payments while you are in training.

**To get into a TOP, 3 things must be true:**

1. You need to be eligible for regular UI; and
2. You need to be "permanently separated" from your job. If you are on any temporary or short-term leave, you can not get into a program; and
3. You need to improve or update your skills so that you can find another job.

You may also be able to enroll in training if:

1. you were laid off or fired because your plant closed, or
2. your employer permanently stopped doing as much business, or
3. you quit, were fired, or laid off from a job in a "declining occupation" -- a job that has no use for employees with your skill set.

## How can I pay for my training?

If you cannot afford to pay for your training, you can apply for government funding:

You may be able to get **Individual Training Account** funding. Apply at a local One-Stop Career Center. There are 37 One-Stop Career Centers across Massachusetts. You can find a list of One-Stop Career Center locations on the Massachusetts state website ([www.mass.gov/dwd](http://www.mass.gov/dwd)). When you apply, the Career Center will look at your income, training you already have had, and where you live. The Career Center must approve your training course. They have a list of programs they approve. Even if you are employed, you may still be able to get an Individual Training Account to pay for training.

You may also be able to get a federal **Pell Grant**. Pell grants can pay for up to \$5,350 for education or training at most universities, community colleges, and many vocational schools. [www.opportunity.gov](http://www.opportunity.gov) To apply for a Pell Grant, fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). You can get a paper copy of the application from the Federal Student Aid Information Center by calling 1-800 4-Fed-Aid (433-3243). Your school or training program will have a deadline for applying for financial aid. Check the FAFSA deadline for your school or training provider.

Do not confuse applying for extra weeks of UI benefits with applying for funding to pay for your training. You may be submitting 2 applications. One application is for a training program that will give you extra weeks of UI benefits. The other application is to pay for your training.

## How do I get an extra 26 weeks of UI benefits while I am getting training?

Generally speaking, you must apply for training within **15 weeks of a new or approved claim for UI**.

1. Find an approved course that will prepare you for the job market. Any One-Stop Career Center can help you do this. Online resources include: Massachusetts JobQuest (<https://www.web.detma.org/JobQuest/Default.aspx>) and the Massachusetts Department of Education's website (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ops/>).
2. Complete Form 1622 Training Opportunities Program (TOP) Application. You can get the TOP application at any One-Stop Career Center or online at the DUA website (<http://www.mass.gov/dua/training>). The training provider must complete part of the form.
3. Fax your TOP application to (617) 727-1797 (preferred), or mail it to:  
*Department of Unemployment Assistance - Centralized TOP Unit*  
*19 Staniford Street*  
*Boston, MA 02114*  
*Fax: 617-727-1797*  
*Phone: 617 626-5375*
4. Apply at least 3 weeks before training starts. It often takes DUA over 3 weeks to make a decision. Do not start training before you get approval from DUA. You will not get UI benefits until DUA approves your application.

*This information is general in nature and not intended as legal advice as the law may change. Legal aid can assist individuals whose income is 125% of the federal poverty line (or \$566 for a family of four). Revised 1-27-14.*