Extended Training and Education Opportunities for Unemployment Compensation Claimants

As a claimant receiving unemployment benefits, you can now go to school or get job training and still receive unemployment insurance benefits!

You are eligible to:

- Participate in job training program (up to 26 weeks). Training must be in a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) approved training program.
- Apply for financial aid to pay for a post-secondary educational opportunity through Federal Pell Grant or other scholarship programs.

JOB TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED WORKERS

Recently, legislation was passed to allow unemployment insurance claimants to also participate in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) approved training programs.

- Training must be for an occupation that is considered to be High Demand Occupations - <u>http://www.does.dc.gov/does/cwp/view,a,1233,q,538247.asp</u>), or
- A high-tech occupation or training approved under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), or
- You must be working towards a GED in an approved program

Job Training Frequently Asked Questions

Where are the Workforce Investment Act approved job training vendors and which ones am I eligible to take?

There are several WIA approved training vendors. Training must be in a high tech or high demand occupation. Please visit

http://www.dcnetworks.org/vosnet/drills/provider/provdrill.aspx?tab=provlist&session=provdetail&geo=1121047900 for more information. And visit a One Stop Career Center: http://does.dc.gov/does/cwp/view,a,1233,q,538261.asp

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FOR UNEMPLOYED WORKERS

1. What federal financial aid is available to the unemployed for training purposes? The U.S. Department of Education has a variety of grants, loans and work-study programs to help you pay for continuing education and training.

Recently, President Obama announced that he encourages unemployed Americans to consider education and training opportunities during this period of economic hardship. In particular, the President highlighted the availability of federal student aid, including the Federal Pell Grant. If you are currently unemployed, you may be eligible for federal financial aid, including a Federal Pell Grant.

2. What is a Federal Pell Grant?

A Federal Pell Grant is a direct grant, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, awarded to individuals based on financial need, to consider education and training opportunities. Recent legislative changes allow those collecting unemployment benefits to become eligible for these educational grants and loans.

To be eligible, you must:

- Have not received your first undergraduate degree
- Be enrolled in post-graduate programs leading to certification or licensure regardless of full-time or part-time status

3. I am currently unemployed. Am I eligible for federal financial aid?

If you are currently unemployed, you may be eligible for federal financial aid. Eligibility for federal grant aid, such as Pell Grants, is need-based and depends on the total income of your family. Federal student loans are available regardless of your income level. Financial aid administrators at participating institutions have been urged to take an unemployed person's current economic circumstance into account when determining a student's eligibility for Pell Grants and other student assistance.

A student must also meet certain other eligibility requirements including (1) not being in default on a federal student loan, (2) having a high school diploma, General Education Development (GED) equivalency or otherwise demonstrate his/her ability to benefit from the education or training offered, (3) being a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen, (4) Pell Grants are <u>not</u> available to students who have already received a bachelor's degree, <u>(e. g. cannot be used for post bachelor/graduate degrees)</u> and (5) cannot have been convicted for possession or sale of an illegal drug while receiving Federal Financial Aid. However, individuals who already have an undergraduate may apply for other financial aid such as student loans.

3. I received a letter from the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services while receiving unemployment benefits encouraging me to consider seeking additional education and training. Does this mean I will receive federal financial aid?

A letter of notice from the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services agency does not guarantee you federal financial aid. However, you should bring that letter (or, if you no longer have the letter, other evidence you are currently receiving unemployment benefits) to a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training vendor. The U.S. Department of Education is working with community colleges, colleges and universities to help them meet your financial needs.

4. I am currently unemployed and am in need of benefits and/or reemployment services. Where can I get more information?

Check our website <u>www.does.dc.gov</u> for available benefits and services. Assistance is available at a Career Center or on the Virtual One Stop at <u>www.dcnetworks.org</u>.

5. What other forms of financial aid are available?

In addition to the federal financial aid offered by the U.S. Department of Education (see Question 1), there are other opportunities available from the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) <u>http://osse.dc.gov/seo/site/default.asp</u> or the school that you are interested in may offer scholarships or other institutional aid. For example, some institutions have established special financial aid programs to address the needs of those who have recently lost a job or otherwise have become unemployed. Your local Career Center will also have information on training funds available from the U.S. Department of Labor. Visit your local Career Center.

6. What costs does a Federal Pell Grant cover?

Federal Pell Grants are available if you are taking classes as part of a program that leads to an undergraduate degree or certificate. Federal student aid, including Pell Grants, can be used to cover a variety of costs, generally including:

- Tuition and fees normally assessed;
- Books, supplies, transportation, and miscellaneous personal expenses;
- Living expenses such as room and board; and
- An allowance for costs expected to be incurred for dependent care for a student with dependents.

7. How much can I receive from a Federal Pell Grant?

The Federal Pell Grant Program is a need-based program and the amount a student is eligible for is determined when you complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

8. Where should I go to answer my specific questions about how my unemployment claim will impact my eligibility for job training and education?

The District's Unemployment Compensation staff will make a determination of your eligibility. They will evaluate your circumstances, whether the training would impact your availability for work, whether the training would result in lack of availability for work, and whether the training is "approved training" under the District's UI law.

9. Is there a form to fill out? Where can I get more information on federal financial aid?

Yes, please complete the Federal Student Aid Form: http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/

10. How can I get more information?

Visit the U.S. Department of Education's Financial Aid Resource Publications <u>http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student_guide/index.html</u> for a free publication that explains the federal financial aid process.

11. I have additional questions, who may I contact?

http://federalstudentaid.ed.gov/ or call 1-800-4-FED-AID. You may also call (202) 478-1445 Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM