

# Get Training and up to 26 extra weeks of Unemployment Insurance (UI)

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DUA could pay you up to **26 extra weeks** of unemployment insurance (UI) while you get training from a program approved by DUA's Training Opportunities Program (TOP).

## Why would I be interested in TOP?

1. Training may help you get a better job.
2. While you in a period of approved training:
  - You do not have to do DUA's work search or look for a new job.
  - If you are getting regular UI benefits, you keep getting them.
  - After your regular UI benefits or COVID UI extensions run out you may be able to get extended UI benefits for up to 26 weeks.

## What kind of training does TOP approve?

TOP approves vocational, college education, apprenticeship, or basic skills training. Basic skills can be English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), High School Equivalency Test (HiSet) also called the General Equivalency Diploma (GED), or Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs. The training program must:

1. Provide vocational or basic skills training.
2. Be full-time.
3. Have a 70% job placement rate so that you are likely to find a job.
4. Be a program that:
  - \* Runs 2 years, or, if you already started it, you can finish in 2 years, including a stand-alone ESOL program, **or**
  - \* Runs 3 years, or, if you already started it, you can finish in 3 years, **if** you are combining ESOL, HiSet, or ABE with vocational training.

⇒ If your program has not been approved by DUA but it meets these 4 requirements, ask the TOP Unit to approve your program.

⇒ If you cannot pay for the training program, you can apply for funding. See below for information about funding for training programs.

## *What if I need more than 2 years to finish training?*

You can take 3 years to finish training if:

- ⇒ The course combines ESOL, HiSet (GED), or ABE with vocational training.

⇒ You need to take more time to finish the program due to a disability that prevents you from finishing the program more quickly.

### What does full time mean?

Full-time means at least:

- 20 hours of weekly classroom training, or
- 12 credits per semester of college.

You may be able to do *less than* full-time, if:

- The class has lots of out-of-class work, or
- You have a disability that makes full-time training difficult, or
- There is no ESOL course within a reasonable distance that provides 20 hours of class.

### Can I get more weeks of Unemployment money?

- |  |       |      |
|--|-------|------|
| 1. Are you collecting, or have you stopped getting regular Unemployment or Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Comp or federal Extended Benefits that you got during the pandemic? | Yes 🍏 | No 🍏 |
| 2. Have you left your job permanently?<br>If you are on any temporary or short-term leave, answer 'No.'  | Yes 🍏 | No 🍏 |
| 3. Is it hard to find another job because you need to improve or update your skills?   | Yes 🍏 | No 🍏 |
| 4. Are you planning to start a training program or have you already started a training program the meets the TOP approval requirements?  | Yes 🍏 | No 🍏 |

**If you answered 'Yes' to all 4 questions**, you may be able to get up to 26 extra weeks of Unemployment while in training. You **cannot** get these Unemployment benefits if you were not eligible for regular unemployment and got Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA).

### How do I get approved for extended benefits?

*Follow these 6 steps:*

#### Step #1 - Apply:

- You can apply now OR

- You can apply within 20 weeks from the date on the notice you get from DUA that will tell you the deadline **AND**
- At least 3 weeks before the training program starts.

**Step #2 – Find a training program that:**

- DUA has approved, or
- Is a full-time vocational program with a 70% placement rate that DUA can approve.

Any MassHIRE Career Center can help:

- See [mass.gov/careercenters](https://mass.gov/careercenters)
- If you speak English, call the TOP Unit: 617-626-5521 and press “2”.
- If you speak Spanish, Portuguese or Cantonese or need an interpreter, call 877-626-6800.

**Step #3 - Complete Form 1622 Training Opportunities Program (TOP) Application.**

Get the TOP application:

- Through your UI Online Account, or
- Call the TOP Unit: 617-626-5221 (English only), or call the general line: 877-626-6800
- Make an appointment at any MassHIRE Career Center. (You need an appointment due to COVID.)

**Note:** Your training provider must complete part of the form.

**Step #4 - Submit your completed TOP application.**

- Scan and upload your application through your UI Online account,
- Fax to: (617) 727-1797, or
- Mail to: DUA, Centralized TOP Unit  
19 Staniford Street  
Boston, MA 02114

**Step #5 - Wait for DUA to approve the program before you start training.**

If you are still getting UI, while you wait to hear from DUA you must continue:

- full-time work search, and
- certifying every week.

**Step #6 – Protect Your Extended Benefits**

While you are in training:

- attend all your classes
- certify weekly that you are in school.

### **How can I pay for my training?**

If you can't afford training, you can apply for 2 kinds of government funding.

#### *Individual Training Account (ITA)*

Apply at a local MassHIRE Career Center.

- See [mass.gov/careercenters](http://mass.gov/careercenters), or
- Call 1-877-US2JOBS.

When you apply for funding, the Career Center looks at your

- income,
- training you have had already, and
- where you live.

Your program must be on the career center's list of ITA approved programs.

#### *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.

- Use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) [fafsa.ed.gov/](http://fafsa.ed.gov/), or
- Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center for a paper application 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.

**Important!** You may need to submit 2 applications: 1. TOP application.  
2. Funding application to pay for your training.

### **After I apply, when should I hear that about my application?**

You should hear from DUA within 3 weeks after you applied. If you don't, call the TOP Unit at 617-626-5521 or the general number at 877-626-6800.

### **What if I was denied regular unemployment and then won my case?**

You still get 20 weeks to apply starting with the week after you got your winning decision. This is true even if you won your case more than one year after you first applied for unemployment.

### **Can I get extended benefits during a vacation break?**

Yes, if the break is **3 weeks or less** and you return to class after the break. You will keep getting extended benefits.

If the break is **more than 3 weeks** you will not get TOP extended benefits. If you still have regular benefits left, you may be able to get them but you must do work search and certify during the break.

### **Can I quit a job to go to training?**

You can quit your job to go to training only if the job is part time and you started the job with a new employer after you applied for regular Unemployment. If you quit a full-time job to enter a training program, and you do not have a history of full time employment combined with training, you will not be eligible for UI benefits or TOP extended benefits.

### **Where can I get more help?**

For more information about MassHIRE career information services (CIS), go to <https://masscis.intocareers.org/materials/portal/home.html>

For information about where to get legal help, go to the Massachusetts Legal Resource Finder at [www.masslrf.org](http://www.masslrf.org)

This is general information from Greater Boston Legal Services. It is not legal advice. Updated December 15, 2021.