

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)?

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is a federal program to assist individuals who lost or may lose their jobs due to a **lack of work** either directly or indirectly because of foreign trade. A petition is filed with the US Department of Labor and must be certified before TAA benefits can be accessed to adversely affected workers.

How do I qualify for TAA?

- Be a worker who lost his/her job at a company and location which has been certified by the US Department of Labor as a trade-affected employer.
- After a worker is laid off, complete the **Request for Determination of Entitlement To TAA/TRA Benefits (855) application**. This application is provided by the State Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) Unit. **Note: This application cannot be completed until the lay-off from the petitioned employer has occurred.**
- Once a worker receives, completes, and submits the **855 Application**, the individual will receive a **TAA/TRA Entitlement Determination (857) letter** stating his/her eligibility for benefits.

What are my TAA Benefits?

- **Employment and Case Management Services**- individuals are provided services to assist in job search activities, individual counseling, comprehensive assessments, identifying transferrable skills, and labor market information.
- **Job Search and Job Relocation Allowances** - assists an individual in job search and job relocation expenses. Individuals can be reimbursed 90% of total costs if approved through the TAA State Office. Job Search reimbursements cannot exceed \$1290.
- **Travel Reimbursement**- a individual can receive mileage reimbursement for travel to and from a training facility outside the normal commuting area (20 miles round trip).
- **Transportation and Subsistence Reimbursements**- payments for lodging and travel to a training facility outside the individual's normal commuting distance.
- **Training** – an individual may be eligible for up to 130 weeks of classroom training. On-the-Job training and Apprenticeship training are also options under the TAA program.

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- **Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA)** - A individual who is 50+ years may be eligible for a wage subsidy program to assist when new employment is secured. The wage subsidy is to bridge the salary gap between the trade-affected position and the new position.
- **Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA)** - a individual may qualify for additional unemployment payments once regular unemployment benefits are exhausted.

What is the process once an individual receives the TAA/TRA Entitlement Determination Letter?

Once an individual receives the **TAA/TRA Entitlement Letter**, the following process should occur:

- Register with WorkForce WV at www.macc.workforcewv.org (if not already registered).
- Schedule a **Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA)** appointment to become eligible for the WIOA Program. Individuals will be given the name and contact information of the WIOA career planner in the location of the petitioned employer.
- Contact the Trade Adjustment Assistance case manager to begin the TAA process and to set up an Individual Employment/Training plan. Individuals will be given the name and contact information for the TAA case manager in the location of the petitioned employer.
- Provide an updated resume highlighting current skills and educational history to the TAA case manager.

What is Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA) and am I eligible?

- TRA benefits are weekly monetary payments through the Unemployment system. TRA benefits are available once regular Unemployment benefits have been exhausted. To qualify for these benefits, you must receive a positive **Entitlement Determination (857) Letter** from the State TRA Unit.
- An individual must be in an approved training program or have a waiver in place to protect these additional TRA benefits.

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To be eligible for TRA Benefits, an individual must have:

- Worked for the petitioned employer for a minimum of 26 weeks during the 52-week period prior to the lay-off.
- Earned more than \$30 in each of those 26 weeks.
- Separated (laid-off) from the trade-affected employer due to a lack of work; and
- Enrolled in TAA approved training or issued a waiver from training on or before a training enrollment date.
- TRA benefits may include Basic, Additional, and Completion TRA payments.

What are Basic TRA benefits?

- Basic TRA benefits are weekly benefits payable for up to 26 weeks after regular unemployment benefits are exhausted.
- To receive Basic TRA benefits an individual must be enrolled in full-time TAA approved training or waived from training on or before the training enrollment date on the **Entitlement Determination (857) Letter**.
- Basic TRA is only payable during the two-year period following the individual's most recent qualifying separation from the trade-affected employer.

What are Additional TRA benefits?

- Additional TRA benefits are weekly payments payable for 52 weeks within a 78- week period after an individual has exhausted Basic TRA benefits.
- The number of payable weeks will be calculated based on the number of approved training weeks on the individual's training contract.
- An individual must be enrolled in full-time training to access Additional TRA benefits.
- Once an individual completes a training program, and is receiving Additional TRA benefits, those benefits will end regardless of an Additional TRA balance.

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What is Completion TRA benefits?

- Completion TRA benefits are weekly payments payable for up to 13 weeks within a 20-week period.
- An individual must have exhausted Additional TRA benefits.
- An individual must meet training benchmarks: maintaining satisfactory progress and scheduled to complete training within the scheduled training timeframes.
- Completion TRA benefits must be approved by the individual's TAA case manager and the State TAA Office.
- Verification of grades must be provided.

What are the criteria for approved training under the TAA program?

To receive training under the Trade Program an individual will meet with a TAA case manager, complete a comprehensive assessment to identify skills, and meet the following **Six Criteria for Training**:

- No suitable employment is available to the individual.
- The individual would benefit from appropriate training.
- There is a reasonable expectation of employment following completion of training.
- Approved training is reasonably available from either governmental agencies or private sources.
- Qualified to undertake and complete the training.
- Training is suitable and available at a reasonable cost.

What does “enrolled in TAA-approved training “mean?

- An individual has been accepted into a training program by the training facility.
- A training contract has been completed and signed by the individual and TAA case manager with a specific start date.
- A training application is approved by the local TAA case manager and then approved by the State TAA Unit.

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Is training available for individuals from a Petitioned Employer?

Yes. Training is an option under the TAA Program. Individuals will meet with a TAA case manager to assess current skills, develop an Individual Employment/Training Plan, and determine if training is needed to obtain suitable employment.

- An individual can receive up to 130 weeks of classroom training. Length of training is determined by training program and curriculum.
- An individual cannot have more than a 30-day scheduled break in training.
- One training program per certification, but a training program can have more than one course component.
- Components must relate to the specific occupational goal listed on the Individual Employment/Training Plan.
- Training courses cannot be added to the initial training plan.
- An individual must maintain full-time status if receiving TRA benefits.
- Training must lead to a Degree, Credential, Certificate, or License.
- Training must be an “In Demand” Occupation and should lead to full time employment in the field of training.
- An individual can access Labor Market Information at <http://workforcewv.org/lmi>
- An individual can access Career Information at <http://onetonline.org>

Does an individual need to be enrolled in full-time training to be eligible for TRA benefits?

Yes. An individual cannot collect TRA benefits while in part-time training unless an individual is completing a final semester, quarter, session, or term.

- If an individual attends training part-time, the number of available weeks cannot exceed 130 weeks.
- Part-time training must lead to a Degree, Credential, Certificate, or License.

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What is considered full-time training?

- Full-time training is determined at the training facility.
- Once enrolled in training, and receiving TRA Benefits, an individual will be responsible for getting an authorized signature from the designated staff at the training facility. This information will be provided to the individual when TAA training has been approved.
- Once enrolled in training, and not receiving TRA benefits, the individual will be provided a bi-weekly attendance form by the TAA case manager.
- Verification of full-time status will be monitored by the TAA case manager and individuals will submit a **Monthly TAA Attendance Verification Form**.

What types of training are available under the TAA Program?

Training available at TAA approved schools include the following, but are not limited to:

- Vocational training.
- Technical training.
- Remedial training (as part of the entire training program).
- Community and Technical College. Two (2) year programs.
- University training.
- On -the-Job training.
- Customized training.
- Apprenticeship training.

How many training weeks can I access under the TAA Program?

- If an individual selects classroom training, the length of training is up to 130 weeks.
- If an On -the Job training contract is developed, the training can be up to 104 weeks, but the training program outline must justify the weeks needed to successfully complete the training. If an On-the-Job training contract is developed, the individual is no longer eligible to receive TRA benefits.
- If an Apprenticeship training program is developed, the training hours could include classroom instruction and On-the -Job training. **NOTE:** All training options will be approved based on the **Six Criteria for Training**.

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Can an individual take on-line classes if approved for TAA training?

Yes. An individual can take on-line classes but must follow the same requirements for In-Person classroom training.

- Training must be full-time to receive TRA benefits and verification of full-time attendance is mandatory.
- An individual is responsible for getting an authorized signature from the training facility to verify attendance.
- Training must lead to a Degree, Credential, Certificate, or License.

Where can an individual find available training options?

Individuals can access the following websites for training information:

- <https://workforcewv.org/job-seekers>
- <https://macc.workforcewv.org/>

If an individual decides to access training benefits, and receives training approval, what costs are covered under the TAA program?

- Tuition and fees.
- Equipment (must be mandatory training costs).
- Books.
- Examinations.
- Certification and Licenses.
- Other training related costs.

NOTE: All training costs must be included in the initial training plan and required by all students!

Can an individual access TAA training prior to an actual lay off date?

Yes. A trade-affected individual may apply for training and may be approved for training at any time after the certification date of the petition. An individual must have notification of a lay-off, or a threat of a lay-off to qualify under the certified petition. However, the TAA process must be followed based on the **Six Criteria for Training**.

- If an individual starts training prior to a TAA training contract being approved, the individual will be responsible for all training costs unless training is covered under another source of funding.

NOTE: A trade-affected individual must be dislocated from the petitioned employer to receive unemployment benefits.

Can I work part-time while enrolled in training?

Yes, but an individual must maintain full-time status while enrolled in training.

Individuals can contact TRA@wv.gov for additional information on how employment affects unemployment benefits while enrolled in training.

Will an individual be eligible for TRA benefits while on a school break?

A scheduled school break includes all calendar days, beginning with the first day of the break and ending with the last day of the break, as detailed in the school schedule and academic calendar.

- If a school break during approved training is less than 30 days, not counting weekends and holidays when training is not normally in session, an individual is still eligible for TRA benefits.
- An individual must indicate on the TRA claim form there is a school break and provide the start and end date of the break.
- If the school break is longer than the 30-day scheduled break, not counting weekends and holidays, you will not be eligible for TRA benefits for the duration of the school break.
- When developing an Employment/Training Plan, an individual will provide a school schedule and academic calendar prior to a training contract being completed. If there is more than a 30-day break in scheduled training, the individual must be made aware TRA benefits are not available during that period.

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What is a training Waiver?

Under certain circumstance, an individual may be waived from the training deadline date located on the **TAA/TRA Entitlement Determination (857) letter** and still be eligible to receive TRA benefits. Currently there are three waivers which can be used under TAA.

- **Enrollment Unavailable, Health, and Training not Available.**
- The waiver approval deadline date is 26 weeks from the individual's lay off date, or the date the petition was certified, whichever is later.
- The individual must continue job search and employment activities.
- A waiver will not be issued to an individual who is not interested in pursuing training.
- A training plan must be completed and approved before a waiver can be issued.

Where can I get additional information about the TAA Program?

Please contact the State TAA Office at TAACoordinator@wv.gov or 1-877-967-5498

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