

Trade Act Program Benefits and Services



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Table of Contents

What is the Trade Act Program?	1
Trade Act Petition Certification Information	1
Definitions	2
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	2
Reemployment Services	3
Initial Assessment	4
Job Search Allowance	4
Relocation Allowance	5
Training	7
Classroom Training	8
Six Criteria for Training Approval	10
Transportation and Subsistence	11
On-the-Job Training	12
Customized Training	12
Apprenticeship Training	13
Pre-separation Training	13
Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA)	14
Basic TRA	15
Additional TRA	16
Completion TRA	16
Training Waivers	16
Wage Subsidy (RTAA)	18
Health Coverage Tax Credit	18
Next Steps	19
Office/Phone Directory	20

What is the Trade Act Program?

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is a federal program that assists U.S. workers whose jobs are lost or threatened, or work hours and wages are reduced as a result of foreign trade. Under the Trade Act of 1974, workers whose employment is adversely affected by increased imports or exports may be eligible for TAA services and benefits. Governing rules vary based on the Trade Act year. The TAA program provides reemployment services and allowances for adversely affected workers to prepare for and obtain suitable reemployment.

Trade Act Petition Certification Information

A petition is filed with U.S. Department of Labor for Trade Act service on behalf of the trade-affected workers of the company, division and location identified within the petition application. The U.S. Department of Labor certifies the affected workers of the Trade Act petitioning company. This makes the workers eligible to apply for Trade Act services. The U.S. Department of Labor administers the Trade Act at the federal level. The Idaho Department of Labor administers Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) in Idaho.

Certified individuals may be eligible to receive one or more program benefits and services depending on what is needed to return them to employment.

All workers under the petition who were laid off on or after the impact date and on or before the expiration date are eligible to apply for assistance. Your TAA representative will review these dates with you.

Definitions

In this pamphlet, you will see references to the terms TAA, TRA, RTAA and “suitable employment.”

TAA – Trade Adjustment Assistance

TRA – Trade Readjustment Allowance

RTAA – Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance

The definition of “suitable employment” is work of an equal or higher skill level to your trade-affected employment at wages not less than 80 percent of your average weekly wage from this employment.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

The TAA program provides benefits and services to help eligible workers return to work. The following services may be available based on the availability of federal funds and individual eligibility:

- Reemployment services.
- Job search allowance.
- Relocation allowance.
- A wage subsidy for reemployed workers aged 50 or older (RTAA).
- Training.
- Additional unemployment insurance in the form of Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA).
- Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC).

The success of your TAA program depends on you. You must actively work with your TAA representative to get the most out of the program.

Basic Approval Criteria for Job Search, Relocation and Training Services:

- No suitable work is available in your labor market.
- You must apply in advance.
- You must be approved in advance by your TAA representative.

Reemployment Services

Reemployment services help workers look for work. We will work with you to set goals and create steps to achieve those goals by referring you to the services that are best for you.

The Idaho Department of Labor, in partnership with local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) providers, community colleges and local Department of Human Services representatives, offers a variety of reemployment services to assist you in reaching your employment goals.

These services include:

- IdahoWorks registration for jobs and computer-aided job match.
- Local and statewide job listings.
- Services for veterans.
- Career exploration tools.
- Community resource information.
- Reemployment counseling and case management.
- Job development.
- Job search workshops.
- Labor market information.
- Resume writing tools.

- Supportive services.
- Vocational testing.

Check out our website for more information about jobs, careers, training facilities or services for dislocated workers at **labor.idaho.gov**

Initial Assessment

Approval of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) services and benefits are based on the outcome of an initial assessment. This first step starts the conversation between you and your TAA representative. Your representative will review any barriers you may have to employment, skills gained during your work history, your goals, education, questions and concerns. Your representative will determine whether or not suitable employment is available and if training is needed and suitable.

Job Search Allowance

A job search allowance helps cover expenses for a job search outside of your local labor market if you are unable to find suitable employment locally. If your job skills and education meet the demands of job openings in your local labor market area, then you are not eligible for the allowance.

If you have a verifiable job interview or work search plans for another area outside of your local labor market, within the United States, you may be eligible for job search allowance. When you have **applied in advance and are approved**, you may be reimbursed for:

- *Transportation* - The lesser of: 90 percent the actual cost of public transportation or; 90 percent of the cost per mile at the prevailing federal mileage rate.

- *Lodging and Meals* - the lesser of: not more than 90 percent of the actual cost for lodging and meals or; 50 percent of the prevailing federal rate for lodging and meals.

You may be reimbursed for more than one job search. However, there is a **cumulative maximum reimbursement based on your petition number**. Your TAA representative will review your job search limits upon application.

Job Search Allowance DEADLINE

You have 365 days from the petition certification date or your most recent qualifying trade-affected employment separation date, whichever is later, to apply. If you are in an approved TAA training that takes you past this deadline, you have 182 days from the date you complete training to apply.

You must submit original, itemized receipts for meals, lodging and any other allowable expenses in order to be reimbursed for your job search. The program cannot pay for expenses without receipts.

Relocation Allowance

A relocation allowance provides assistance with moving expenses if you are required to relocate to accept work outside of your local labor market. If you have job skills that are in demand in your local area, you are not eligible for the allowance. You are allowed one relocation allowance under a certification, and it must be within the United States.

You must have a bona fide job offer for long-term employment outside your local labor

market. If you have **applied in advance and are approved**, you may be reimbursed a percentage for the cost of your reasonable and necessary moving expenses based on petition number. This applies to moving you, your immediate family and your household goods only. The amount will be reduced if you are entitled to reimbursement from other sources. The weight limit for use of a commercial carrier is 18,000 pounds. A participant must pay 100 percent of the associated costs for the weight of household goods in excess of the 18,000 pound allowance.

Commercial movers are not typically approved due to the higher cost. However, if you hire a commercial mover, you must submit two bids using the low cost provider. You should also look at alternative options such as portable storage units.

A lump sum payment equal to three times your average weekly wage from your trade-affected employment, not to exceed the maximum based on petition number, is available to help you with additional moving costs and getting settled. Your TAA representative will review your relocation limit upon application.

Relocation Allowance DEADLINE

You have 425 days from the petition certification date or your most recent qualifying trade-affected employment separation date, whichever is later, to apply.

If you are enrolled in a TAA-approved training program, you have 182 days from the day you complete training to request relocation benefits, and you must relocate within 182 days of applying for the relocation allowance.

You must submit original, itemized receipts for the commercial mover/rental truck, meals, lodging and any other allowable expenses to be reimbursed for your relocation. The program cannot pay for expenses without receipts.

Training

You may be eligible for training if you do not have the skills or education to secure suitable work in the existing labor market. The training you request must be in demand and targeted to a specific occupation that will help you get a job at a skill level similar to, or higher than, your trade-affected employment.

Training is based on your skills and employment demand in your labor market, and will be the shortest time frame possible to get you back to work quickly.

The maximum allowable length of training is 130 weeks. A training program may include remedial education. Remedial education includes General Education Diploma (GED), English as a Second Language (ESL) or Adult Basic Education (ABE). One occupational training program could contain several training components; all training components must be included in the one allowed training program.

If you are claiming unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, you will not have to seek work or accept work while you are attending a TAA approved training program or during breaks in training that are 30 days or less.

There is no deadline to apply for TAA training as long as the program is still in existence and funds are available.

Classroom Training

Classroom training must lead to a certificate, degree or higher level of education. The training must be through an accredited Institution or have acceptable oversight. To find a training institution visit <https://boardofed.idaho.gov/>

If you do not have internet access, you can visit your local Idaho Department of Labor office or your TAA representative can assist you. You can take required classes online if they are not available in a physical location.

- You are allowed one training program under a single Trade Act certification. It is very important to thoroughly research all aspects of the occupation and training you are considering prior to requesting your training plan by talking to employers that hire workers for this occupation and reviewing labor market information. Once you start the occupational training, you cannot quit and be approved for a different occupational training.
- You may request training through your TAA representative, who will conduct a thorough assessment to ensure the proposed training is appropriate and reasonable. If you are approved for training according to the retraining conditions listed on page 10, the training provided must be of the shortest duration necessary to return you to employment.
- The maximum duration for classroom training is 130 weeks for petitions 80,000 and above. The break weeks between terms are not counted toward the maximum weeks allowed. Even though you are allowed up to 130 weeks, you will only be approved for the number of

weeks it takes to reasonably complete such training. For example, if truck driving school is a five-week program, you will be approved for only five weeks of training.

- We cannot approve training more than **30 days** in advance of the start date of your program. If you are claiming unemployment insurance (UI) benefits you are required to comply with UI law until a TAA training plan is approved.
- Training can be full-time or part-time. You will be expected to take 12-18 credits while attending full-time training. Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) is payable during full-time training only. See page 14. Full-time status is based upon the training facility and your program requirements. Part-time training is allowed if you are working full time. Contact your TAA representative for more information.
- TAA will pay for tuition, books, tools and supplies required to complete the training. TAA cannot pay for items that are recommended or suggested by an instructor. Any unauthorized purchases will be the responsibility of the student.
- Tools will be provided if they are required for your training, but they are the property of the TAA program during your training. You can keep them **ONLY** if you successfully complete the training.
- TAA will approve the training provider with the lowest cost. If you choose to go with a higher cost training provider you have the option to pay the difference through Pell Grants or scholarships.

You Must Meet ALL the Following SIX CRITERIA to be Approved for a TAA Training Plan:

For retraining benefits, you must apply through your TAA representative, who will assess your skills, education and abilities to complete your proposed training program. However, all of the following conditions must be met before training can be approved, and there must be available federal Trade Act funds to pay for training.

1. There must be **no suitable work available** for you in your labor market. This means work of an equal or higher skill level than your trade affected employment at wages of not less than 80 percent of your average weekly wage from that employer.
2. You **must benefit** from the training and **be job ready** for the occupational goal when completed. If you are interested in a training program, make sure that it will prepare you to accept employment for your occupational goal when you have completed TAA approved training.
3. There must be a **reasonable expectation of employment** following the completion of training. Check labor market information resources, including job listings, to know if there will be a reasonable chance of finding a job using the skills and education from your training. Find out if the job will be in demand when you complete training. Online resources for labor market information are: **www.acinet.org** or **<https://labor.idaho.gov/JobScape/>**
4. There must be training available. You must first consider **training available within your labor market area**. If there isn't training available within your labor

market area, training in other areas may be considered.

5. You must be **qualified to undertake and complete training and able to support yourself while in training**. This means you must have the skills and qualifications needed to be accepted for, and complete, the training program. You must also demonstrate that you have the financial resources to make it through the entire training program.
6. Training must be suitable and available at a **reasonable cost**. This means the training is appropriate given your abilities, skills and experience. Consideration is given to the type of training, the skill level, length of training, average cost of training and whether support or mileage is necessary to determine the allowable amount for training.

Transportation and Subsistence

Transportation Allowance: You may be reimbursed for daily travel expenses to and from the training facility if the facility is 25 miles or more from your residence. Reimbursement is based on the federal mileage rate.

Subsistence Allowance: If it is necessary for you to take care of two households, your main residence and a temporary secondary residence near the training site, you may qualify for support for the secondary residence determined at 50 percent of the federal rate for lodging and meals in the area your school is located or actual costs, whichever is less.

You may not receive transportation and subsistence at the same time. If your transportation costs exceed the amount

allowable for subsistence, you will be paid at the subsistence rate.

In addition to classroom training, TAA also offers three types of employer based training.

1. On-the-job training
2. Customized training
3. Apprenticeship training

On-the-Job Training

Due to high training costs to an employer, TAA will pay a portion of these costs providing an incentive for employers to hire and train you when you wouldn't normally be qualified for the position. On-the-job training may be combined with some classroom training to help you acquire the necessary skills your employer requires.

To qualify for on-the-job training, there must be a signed training agreement in place before you start work, and the following conditions must be met.

- The employer must provide occupational skill training and full-time, long-term, self-sufficient employment.
- You do not already possess the skills needed to perform the job.
- The employer has not laid off any employees performing similar job functions in order to take advantage of the training program.

Customized Training

Customized training is designed to train individuals for specific occupations in a new or expanding business or industry. Customized training is conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ

an individual upon successful completion of training. In addition, the employer is required to pay for not less than 50 percent of the cost of training.

Your TAA Representative can provide further details concerning on-the-job or customized training.

Apprenticeship Training

Registered Apprenticeship programs offer employment and a combination of on-the-job training and classroom training. TAA funds will pay for related classroom training, books, tools, uniforms and equipment necessary to participate in the apprenticeship program. The apprenticeship training must meet the six criteria for the approval of training. TAA will support the worker until reaching “suitable employment” or 130 weeks, whichever comes first, while participating in the registered apprenticeship program.

Pre-Separation Training

Training is allowed for those workers who are employed by a Trade certified employer and are not yet separated, but who have been individually notified of an impending layoff. This allows a worker to begin a training program while still working. Training requests must meet the six criteria for the approval of training. Workers must provide a letter documenting the impending layoff. If the threat of separation is removed, TAA funding will discontinue until the threat of separation has returned.

Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA)

This allowance is a weekly cash benefit equal to your unemployment insurance claim that you may qualify for as a result of your job loss with your Trade Act certified employer.

It is important you understand the deadlines associated with TRA benefits. To maximize your opportunities to receive TRA benefits and services, work with your TAA representative to know your TRA individual deadlines.

To qualify for TRA benefits (extra unemployment/income support), you must;

- Be covered by a certification.
- Have a qualifying separation - total or partial separation occurred during the period covered by the certification.
- Have qualifying wages and employment of 26 weeks at \$30 or more per week in the 52-week period ending with the total or partial separation from adversely affected employment.
- File a claim and be entitled to unemployment insurance for a week within the benefit period.
- Exhaust all regular and extended unemployment insurance benefits. Benefits from other types of extensions replace any benefits under TRA.

The amount and duration of TRA benefits are based on weekly unemployment insurance benefits from a claim filed immediately after your separation from trade eligible employment. Therefore, you must have been entitled to receive unemployment insurance benefits in order to be eligible for TRA benefits.

TRA Benefits

There are three tiers to TRA benefits: Basic, Additional and Completion. The maximum number of weeks you may be eligible to receive regular unemployment insurance plus Basic, Additional and Completion TRA is 130 weeks.

Basic TRA

Basic TRA benefits provide you with income during your training period or, if a training waiver is in place, during an extended job search. You can receive a combination of unemployment insurance and Basic TRA for up to 52 weeks.

You have 104 weeks after your most recent qualifying layoff to collect Basic TRA, which may be collected in one of the following ways.

You must:

1. Be enrolled in TAA approved training;
2. Be attending full-time in TAA approved training;
3. Have completed TAA approved training;
or
4. Have Received a waiver of the requirement to participate in training and conducting a work search.

Deadline to apply for TRA benefits is within **26 weeks** of your most recent qualifying layoff or the date of the certification, whichever is later. Your TAA representative will help you with deadline dates and application information.

If you do not meet your deadline for a reason that is beyond your control, contact your TAA representative right away to discuss what options may be available to you.

Additional TRA

Additional TRA is a period that starts right after you are paid the last week of Basic TRA or when the 104-week deadline to use Basic TRA has expired, whichever occurs first. Additional TRA is payable for a maximum of 65 weeks.

To qualify for Additional TRA a worker must be in full-time TAA approved training.

Completion TRA

Completion TRA is for workers who have exhausted Additional TRA but not yet completed approved training.

To qualify for Completion TRA a worker must:

1. Be participating in full-time training for each week Completion TRA is requested;
2. Meet performance benchmarks;
3. Continue making satisfactory progress; and
4. Complete training during the approved time frame, which is 20 weeks unless there is a justifiable cause for extension.

Completion TRA is payable for up to 13 weeks after exhaustion of Additional TRA. Completion TRA is only available to workers whose training program will be completed within the 130-week eligibility period.

Training Waivers

A training waiver means that a TAA eligible worker can still receive a weekly cash allowance under Basic TRA even when not enrolled or participating in training **as long as one of the following conditions exist:**

- The worker is unable to participate in training due to the health of the worker.
- Immediate enrollment is not available. The first available enrollment date for the start date of the approved training plan is more than 60 days away or, if later, there are extenuating circumstances for the delay in enrollment. ***In order for a participant to be eligible under this criterion, they must be working with a TAA representative and have submitted a training plan for approval.***
- No training program is available due to unreasonable cost, no training funds available or no training facility, usually due to living in a rural area.

Important:

Waivers are reviewed every 30 days up to a maximum of six months but may be revoked at any time if the condition of the waiver no longer exists. When the waiver is revoked you will have 30 days to enter approved TAA training in order to remain eligible for TRA benefits.

WAIVER DEADLINE: The waiver of the training enrollment requirement MUST be signed within 26 weeks of separation from the adversely affected employer or from the date of the petition certification, whichever is later. Otherwise, all TRA benefits are lost.

Your TAA representative can provide further details concerning training waivers.

Wage Subsidy for Those 50 or Over - RTAA

Deadlines and conditions apply to this program. If you choose this program, you may not be eligible to receive other TRA benefits. Your representative can give you more information on how this program will affect other benefits.

This program pays 50 percent of the difference between your new wage and your previous wage with the certified employer. The supplement is available for up to two years from date of eligibility or \$10,000, whichever comes first. To qualify, you must:

- Be 50 years old at time of reemployment.
- Earn less than \$50,000 gross annual wage excluding overtime pay.
- Be reemployed with an employer other than the Trade Act certified employer from which you separated.
- Be either employed full-time or working at least 20 hours per week while enrolled in full-time TAA approved training.

Participants receiving TRA or RTAA are eligible for the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC). The program is administered by the Internal Revenue Service and provides a tax credit of 72.5 percent of premium costs for qualified health care plans.

Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC)

HCTC is a federal income tax credit that assists eligible participants in paying health insurance premiums. If you qualify, you can claim a credit equal to 72.5 percent of the premiums you pay.

To be eligible for this credit you must meet one of the following qualifications:

- You are receiving TRA or are eligible for TRA once your unemployment insurance benefits have been exhausted.

OR

- You are receiving RTAA benefits.

HCTC Contact Information

HCTC is managed by the IRS. For questions about benefits contact the IRS at:

<http://www.irs.gov/hctc>

(IRS keyword: HCTC).

The U.S. Department of Labor has more information at:

<http://www.doleta.gov/tradeact/>

Next Steps

Go to **<https://labor.idaho.gov/jobseeker>** and create a job seeker account. If you already have a job seeker account, be sure to update your account and include your trade-affected employer work history and your most recent employment work history.

Contact a TAA representative at your local Idaho Department of Labor office to verify the petition number pertaining to your trade-affected employment and to verify your employer name. Leased workers may have a different employer name than the company named in the petition.

After speaking with a representative, complete the Trade Request for Determination of Entitlement, form TRA-855. Forms are available at your local Idaho Department of Labor office or found online at:

**[https://labor.idaho.gov/dnn/idl/
EducationTraining/TradeActAssistance.aspx](https://labor.idaho.gov/dnn/idl/EducationTraining/TradeActAssistance.aspx)**

Providing the correct petition number and name of your employer is important for your determination to be processed.

Return the completed form to your local Idaho Department of Labor office and request to speak to a TAA representative. Do not send personal identification information through email. Either mail, fax or take the form to your local office.

Local Office Address and Phone Number Directory:

**[https://labor.idaho.gov/dnn/idl/AboutUs/
LocalOfficeDirectory.aspx](https://labor.idaho.gov/dnn/idl/AboutUs/LocalOfficeDirectory.aspx)**

Living or moving out of Idaho?

If you will be relocating to another state, contact the Idaho State Trade Act Coordinator for assistance in locating a TAA representative in that state. Email: trade@labor.idaho.gov

Employer:
Petition number:
Impact date:
Certification date:
Expiration date:
Most recent qualifying layoff:
Receipt of pamphlet date:
Your Trade Act career planner is: Name: _____ Phone: _____



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