



EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

Office of Unemployment Insurance

Self-Employment Assistance Fact Sheet

Purpose

Self-Employment Assistance offers dislocated workers the opportunity for early re-employment. The program is designed to encourage and enable unemployed workers to create their own jobs by starting their own small businesses. Under these programs, States can pay a SEA allowance, instead of regular unemployment insurance benefits, to help unemployed workers while they are establishing businesses and becoming self-employed. Participants receive weekly allowances while they are getting their businesses off the ground.

This is a voluntary program for States and, to date, Delaware, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, and Oregon have active Self-Employment Assistance programs. The State Workforce Agency websites for these states can be accessed at <http://www.servicelocator.org/OWSLinks.asp>.

Eligibility

Generally, in order to receive these benefits, an individual must first be eligible to receive regular unemployment insurance under State law. Individuals who have been permanently laid off from their previous jobs and are identified (through a State's profiling system) as likely to exhaust regular unemployment benefits are eligible to participate in the program. Individuals may be eligible even if they are engaged full-time in self-employment activities - including entrepreneurial training, business counseling, and technical assistance.

Benefits

SEA allowances are the same weekly amounts as the worker's regular unemployment insurance benefits. Participants work full-time on starting their business instead of looking for wage and salary jobs.

Self-Employment Assistance Center

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), in partnership with the Small Business Administration (SBA), created the Self-Employment Assistance Center at <https://sea.workforcegps.org/> to provide information, resources and tools to help build state entrepreneurial programs for individuals eligible for Unemployment Insurance compensation. The website provides building blocks of a state SEA program including model legislation, state examples and links to tools, and resources and training for entrepreneurs.

SEA information can also be found at <https://ows.doleta.gov/unemploy/self.asp>.

SEA Contact Information

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