

Draft Letter Advising Claimants of Pell Grants / UI Approved Training

[Claimant name and address should be printed on letter.]

I am writing to urge you to consider taking advantage of opportunities for education and training available to unemployed workers currently receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. (If you are unsure of your UI benefit status, please contact our office at [enter UI agency phone number]). Bolstered by successful vaccination efforts and economic growth following the COVID -19 pandemic, displaced and unemployed jobseekers seeking to return to the workforce can use this opportunity to grow their skills, obtain industry-recognized credentials, and obtain higher-paying jobs.

Jobseekers, such as yourself, receiving UI benefits will receive special consideration for financial aid to pay for job training or education and may also be eligible to continue receiving UI benefits while enrolled in approved training and education programs. Studies have shown that workers with more education and training have more secure jobs and earn higher wages.

The Federal Pell Grant program provides financial aid to eligible applicants for educational expenses and covers up to \$6,345 per year. These grants are provided at many institutions of higher education (IHE) including universities, community colleges, and many trade and technical schools. Please check with the financial aid office of the IHE you are interested in attending to ensure participation in the Pell Grant program. If you do not qualify for a Pell Grant, you may be eligible for other types of aid, such as Federal Direct Loans, or aid from your State or IHE.

Applying for financial aid and finding training is not difficult. To apply for Federal student aid submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) here: <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. The application is free to submit, there is no cost. Check out <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/grants>, for helpful information as well. If you are interested in pursuing these opportunities, here are the steps you should take:

- Decide what type of training best meets your needs at <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>
- For additional resources:
- You may want to visit www.MyNextMove.org, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, to explore careers.
- You can also learn about different education and training programs at <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>, www.TrainingProviderResults.gov. Staff at American Job Centers may also be able to assist you in making education, training, or career decisions. To locate the nearest American Job Center, you may call the toll free number: 1-877-US-2-JOBS (1-877-872-5627) for assistance or visit <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/service-locator.aspx>.

[States are encouraged to provide the most specific information possible, including, if possible, auto-populating this information using zip codes.]

- Colleges or American Job Centers can also help you submit the FAFSA for Pell Grants and other federal financial aid. The only application is available at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> or by calling 1-800-4FEDAID to receive a paper copy. For 2022-2023 FAFSA, you will need to report your income from 2020; you can ask your IHE to adjust your eligibility to reflect your current circumstances.
- **Finally, please contact our office at [enter UI agency phone number] in advance of enrolling to ensure that you can continue to receive unemployment benefits while enrolled in the program you have chosen.** Not every training program will excuse you from the requirement that you be seeking and available for work in order to receive unemployment benefits. Also, not every UI benefits training program will qualify for Pell Grants; please contact the IHE you would like to attend to learn more.

Be sure to take this letter with you to the school/IHE you select. For the next 90 days, it confirms that you are an unemployment insurance beneficiary. While it does not guarantee you a Pell Grant, your school can use this letter to adjust your eligibility. After 90 days, or if you no longer have this letter, you may provide alternative evidence that you are currently receiving unemployment insurance, such as **[enter state-specific example]**.

While our economy is rebounding, we have an opportunity to improve workers' skills and lay the foundation for a stronger economic future. I encourage you to carefully consider this opportunity.