

# COMMISSIONER APPROVED TRAINING

## OVERVIEW

**WHAT:** Commissioner Approved Training (CAT) allows you to collect regular unemployment benefits while attending an approved, full-time training program. CAT does not pay for books, tuition, or school related fees.

**HOW:** In order to receive CAT, you must carefully follow ESD's CAT application process and have your application approved by ESD. More information about eligibility is set forth below.

**WHEN:** You can apply for CAT at any time after opening a claim for unemployment benefits. CAT lasts only as long as regular unemployment benefits last. If your unemployment benefits will run out before your approved training/school program is completed, you must provide ESD with assurance that you have the independent resources to complete your training.

**WHY:** Unemployment claimants who are approved for CAT do not need to do a Job Search WHILE they are actually in training/school. During summer vacation, claimants do need to do a Job Search.

## ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible for CAT, your application to ESD must show that:

- you are a dislocated worker;
- your previous occupation is in "decline", **OR** that there is a surplus of workers with the same skills in the local labor market, **OR** that you have been laid off due to technological advances, **OR** that you are unlikely to return to work because of illness, injury or other unique circumstances;
- the occupation you wish to receive training for is in demand;
- the training you wish to receive is primarily a short-term, skills based program as opposed to a degree type program ( i.e., a vocational program instead of a college degree.)

## **HOW WILL ESD DECIDE WHETHER TO APPROVE MY APPLICATION?**

In deciding whether to appeal your training program, ESD considers six factors which are set forth in WAC 192-200-020 :

1) **Your plan for completion of the training.** You need to be able to show that you have the financial resources to complete your training when your unemployment benefits run out and that you can cover the cost of books, tuition, etc.;

2) **The nature of the training facility and the quality of the training.** You must attend a reputable facility, qualified to provide you with the training you seek. ESD has a list of approved facilities.

3) **Whether the training relates to an occupation or skill for which there are, or are expected to be, reasonable employment opportunities in the labor markets in which you intend to seek work.** Worksource and most training facilities have counselors available to help you determine whether the training you seek will reasonably lead to employment in your labor market. One source for information about Washington's labor market is [www.wilma.org](http://www.wilma.org).

4) **Whether an oversupply of qualified workers exists.** See #3.

5) **Whether you have the qualifications and aptitudes to successfully complete such training.** You will need to show that your proposed training is a good fit for your abilities. Evidence of this may include prior academic success, prior successful work experience using related skills, results of vocational assessment testing, etc.

6) **Whether your employment prospects in occupations in which you have training or experience do not exist or have substantially diminished in the labor market to the extent that the department determines you will probably be unemployed for a lengthy period.** These diminished prospects could be the result of business or economic conditions in the area, or due to personal reasons such as your health, physical fitness, criminal background, or other circumstances of a similar nature.

Again, [www.wilma.org](http://www.wilma.org) is a useful resource for information on Washington's labor market. You can also include evidence such as classified ads in your labor market, the duration and unsuccessful results of your own job search, articles about the lack of jobs in your specific field or your specific labor market, etc.

### **WHAT PROBLEMS COULD COME UP WITH MY CAT APPLICATION?**

- 1) You need to be able to establish all six of the above factors. If you have problems showing any of them, your CAT application may be denied.
- 2) Unless you are approved for CAT, you must be able, available and actively seeking work. If you start a school or training program and **HAVE NOT BEEN APPROVED FOR CAT**, you will likely run in to a problem with your eligibility for regular unemployment benefits. This primarily occurs if your school or training program interferes or restricts your availability for work. To avoid such eligibility problems, you must be willing and able to change or drop your classes, as needed, to accept a suitable job offer. For example, you will likely have problems with your unemployment if you say "I am going to school during the day so I can work swing and graveyard shifts or weekends." If day shifts are also available for the work that you are qualified to perform, then you will need to be able to accept a day shift--even if this means you would need to change your class schedule or discontinue your training.
- 3) Be sure to meet any deadlines for providing information to ESD.

**Additional information about your rights in the unemployment benefits process may be found at our website: [www.unemploymentlawproject.org](http://www.unemploymentlawproject.org) .**

