Vermont Department of Labor

Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) Program

For Claimants interested in starting their own business

What is the Self Employment Assistance (SEA) Program?

Designed as a fast track to entrepreneurship, the SEA program assists people receiving unemployment insurance (UI) benefits in starting their own business. If accepted into SEA, you will receive entrepreneurial training and mentoring services to help you launch your business idea.

Who can apply for the SEA program?

You can apply if you are eligible for Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) and have at least 13 weeks left in your claim (prior to December 28, 2013) when EUC ends.
Individuals who fall into this category will be notified by the Vermont Department of Labor.

What are the differences between collecting regular unemployment insurance benefits and collecting benefits under the SEA program?

Because you will be either preparing to start your own business, working at that business full time (35 hours per week) or attending training, you will not have to be available for or seek other full-time employment while participating in SEA.

What are the eligibility requirements?

- At the time you apply, you must have at least 13 EUC weeks remaining in your claim (Prior to December 28, 2013).
- SEA benefits will end when you exhaust the benefits on your current Unemployment Insurance program.
- You must have a viable business idea.
- You must be willing to participate in meetings/trainings and activities associated with the SEA program as directed. Failure to participate may result in loss of benefit payment.

What type of training and assistance will I receive?

If accepted into the SEA program, you will attend intensive training that includes the following topics:

- Personal qualities and finances required for business
- Long and short-term goals
- Various forms of business organization
- Business plan development
- Resources and information on getting started
- Marketing
- Cash flow projections and financial statements
- Financing
- Record keeping and taxes
- Legal and insurance issues

You will be assigned a business mentor to assist you and support you in your entrepreneurial efforts.

How do I apply?

If you are receiving regular Ul benefits and are eligible for EUC, the department will notify you by letter and instruct you to attend a EUC orientation. The SEA Program will be outlined at that time. If you are eligible for EUC benefits and have at last 13 weeks left in your claim, you may contact the SEA coordinator at:

- 802-828-9114 (Direct)
- 877-214-3332 (Toll-free)

Claimants who have not received a notification letter but believe they are eligible for SEA should also contact the SEA coordinator at the number noted above.

All potential applicants are required to attend an orientation, followed by a one-on-one meeting with an SEA counselor. Those still interested in SEA will attend an intensive SEA Workshop where they will receive an SEA application. Only after attending a Workshop can a candidate submit an application.

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5 Green Mountain Drive • P O Box 488 • Montpelier, VT 05601-0488

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