

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 new opportunities for education and training available now to unemployed workers.

On May 8, President Obama announced that workers like you who are getting unemployment insurance (UI) benefits will receive special consideration for financial aid to pay for job training or education. You may also be able to keep your UI benefits while enrolled. Studies have shown that workers with more education and training have more secure jobs and higher wages.

Federal Pell Grant scholarships cover up to \$5,350 in education and training expenses. They are accepted at nearly all universities and community colleges and many trade and technical schools. Even if you do not qualify for a Pell Grant, you may be eligible for other aid.

Applying for financial aid and finding training are not difficult. The Departments of Education and Labor have created a single web site, www.opportunity.gov, where you can find helpful information. If you are interested in pursuing these opportunities, here are the steps you should take:

- Decide what type of training best meets your needs. You may want to visit www.careeronestop.org or visit your local community college or One-Stop Career Center for help in identifying potential education and training opportunities. To locate the nearest One-Stop Career Center, you may call the toll free number: 1-877-US-2-JOBS (1-877-872-5627) for assistance or visit www.servicelocator.org. **[States are encouraged to provide the most specific information possible, including, if possible, auto-populating this information using zip-codes.]**
- Colleges or One-Stop Career Centers can also help you apply for Pell Grant scholarships and other federal financial aid. An application is also available at www.fafsa.gov or by calling 1-800-4FEDAID. While you will need to report last year's income when applying, your school can 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 excuses you from the requirement that you be seeking and available for work in order to receive unemployment benefits.

Be sure to take this letter with you to the school 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 will use this letter to adjust your eligibility. After 90 days, or if you lose this letter, you may provide alternative evidence that you are currently receiving unemployment insurance, such as **[enter state-specific example]**.

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