



WE ARE YOUR DOL



Department
of Labor

SELF-EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Participant Questions and Answers

WHERE DO I FIND A BUSINESS COUNSELOR?

You can contact local organizations such as the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) to find a business counselor. These organizations provide free, one-on-one counseling to people who are interested in starting a business. You can also use a qualified expert in the type of business you intend to start. The Department of Labor does not provide business counselors.

HOW MANY TIMES MUST I MEET WITH MY BUSINESS COUNSELOR?

The Self-Employment Assistance Program (SEAP) requires a minimum of two face-to-face meetings with your business counselor prior to submitting your business strategy. However, you are encouraged to meet more frequently, if necessary.

WHERE CAN I FIND 20 HOURS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING?

You can find entrepreneurial training from:

- Small Business Administration
- SCORE
- Small Business Development Center
- Veteran's Business Outreach Centers
- The Women's Business Centers

Other sources of training are:

- New York City Business Solutions
- The Office of Entrepreneurial Education
- Local chambers of commerce
- Libraries
- Community colleges
- Your local SEAP coordinator

Consider training topics related to:

- Business planning and operations
- Marketing

- Accounting and finance
- Business licensing

You may use any provider that offers entrepreneurial training.

CAN I TAKE ONLINE CLASSES?

Yes, you can take online classes. However, the in-person classes or workshops also offer you networking opportunities. While we recommend in-person classes or workshops for this reason, it may not be feasible in all situations.

Before you choose a class, you should check to make sure that the course offers a certificate of completion, or that someone can sign your Individual Services Verification form.

DO I NEED AN INSTRUCTOR'S SIGNATURE ON THE INDIVIDUAL SERVICES VERIFICATION FORMS?

No, you may submit a certificate of completion. This certificate must include the school or agency, the class title, the date you took the class and the number of hours it took you to complete the class. If you cannot get a certificate of completion, and your business counselor can verify you took the class, your business counselor can sign the form.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I SUBMIT MY BENCHMARK FORMS LATE OR THE FORMS ARE INCOMPLETE?

If the form is late, the SEAP benefits will not be paid from the date the form was due through the date it is received and accepted as complete. This means late forms will result in a suspension of your weekly benefits. You will not receive suspended weeks in a lump-sum payment. You will only receive benefits from the date the form is received and accepted as complete.

CAN I SUBMIT MY BENCHMARK FORMS ON-LINE?

Yes. It is easy to submit your benchmark forms online. Log in to your NY.gov account, click on “Messages,” and then “Compose New.” Use “SEAP” as the first subject line and “Submit SEAP Benchmark Forms” as the second subject line of your message. Then attach your forms to your message.

HOW MANY WEEKS OF BENEFITS CAN I GET WHILE I AM IN THE SEAP?

You are only entitled to a maximum of 26 weeks of benefits. This includes any weeks you collected before you were accepted into the SEAP. For example, if you start the SEAP in the fourth week of your Unemployment Insurance claim, then you will have 22 weeks of the SEAP benefits remaining.

CAN I ACCEPT OTHER EMPLOYMENT WHILE IN THE PROGRAM?

Yes. However, your SEAP benefits may be affected by other employment.

If you work part-time for another employer, you may receive partial benefits when you work less than four days in a week and earn less than the maximum benefit rate. Your weekly SEAP benefits will be reduced by one-quarter for each day you work, up to three days.

If you work full-time for another employer, you will no longer be eligible for SEAP benefits. If your work for another employer ends during your benefit year, you may resume your SEAP benefits by contacting the Department of Labor Special Programs Unit at **518-485-1597**. Or, you may resume your Unemployment Insurance benefits by submitting a Withdrawal Form to end your participation in the SEAP.

HOW DO I CERTIFY FOR MY WEEKLY BENEFITS?

You can claim weekly benefits:

- On the web with an NY.gov ID from 7:30 am to midnight Monday through Friday (Eastern Standard Time), all day Saturday and all day Sunday; directions for creating an NY.gov ID are on our website at www.labor.ny.gov/signin
- By mail using a SEAP certification form, available on the Forms and Publications page for Unemployment Insurance (if you don't fill out the forms completely and sign them, they won't be accepted); the forms can be mailed to: **New York State Department of Labor, PO Box 1979, Albany, NY 12201**

As a participant in the SEAP, you can no longer claim weekly benefits by telephone. When you claim benefits, you must answer questions to certify you were ready, willing and able to work on the business you indicated on your SEAP application.

We recommend that you claim benefits online. It is convenient and secure, and it also results in faster benefit payments!

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO CONTINUE WITH MY BUSINESS?

You may withdraw from the SEAP at anytime during your Unemployment Insurance claim. You must submit a Withdrawal Form. You can get the form on the forms and publications page for Unemployment Insurance claimants at www.labor.ny.gov. On the main menu, click on “Other Information,” then click “Forms & Publications,” and you will find the link to “Unemployment Insurance (Claimants).”

If you have any questions regarding the SEAP, contact the Department of Labor Special Programs Unit at **518-485-1597**.