



New Guidelines Expand Trade Act Program

Change Allows Service Sector Workers that Lost Jobs to Foreign Competition To Apply for Federal Reemployment Training Funds

August 6, 2015 – The Connecticut Department of Labor announced today that a change in eligibility guidelines for a federal training and reemployment program expands the types and number of workers that may be able to participate in the program.

According to State Labor Commissioner Sharon M. Palmer, the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, which pays for reemployment services to employees who lose their job due to foreign competition, now includes service sector employees, such as those working in customer service, data processing and financial services. Prior to the change, only workers that had held manufacturing jobs were eligible to receive the funding.

The federal TAA program, administered by the Connecticut Department of Labor, helps support U.S. workers who lost their jobs due to increased imports or production shifts to a foreign country. The program allows for job training support, career counseling, wage supplements for older workers, job search and reallocation allowances, and income support for workers in training programs.

“Expanding these federal benefits to more sectors in the workplace will assist additional workers who have lost their jobs due to foreign competition,” said Palmer. “These benefits will help ensure these workers have opportunities to learn new skills and the support system they need while preparing for new jobs.”

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2015, signed into law by President Obama on June 29, 2015, changes the group eligibility requirements to include the additional workers, but also reauthorizes the TAA program for the next six years.

TAA allows a group of employees losing jobs to foreign competition to file a request, known as a petition, with the U.S. Department of Labor asking that the affected workers be considered for receiving the re-employment benefits. When USDOL approves a petition, the Connecticut Department of Labor provides assistance with re-employment services to these individuals, including training, job search assistance and income support.

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As a result of the expansion of the program, the USDOL has announced it will reconsider denied petitions that were filed on or after January 1, 2014, and before June 29, 2015. Using the new criteria, USDOL will determine if employees from those companies are now eligible to be approved for benefits. Petitions currently under review, and any new petitions filed on or after June 29 will also be considered under the 2015 program guidelines.

Worker groups that did not submit petitions between January 1, 2014 and June 29, 2015, but wish to be considered for group eligibility based on the 2015 program criteria can also file a new petition. These requests must be submitted to USDOL by midnight, September 27.

Those Interested in obtaining Information on how to file a petition can visit <http://www.doleta.gov/tradeact/petitions.cfm> while questions can be directed to Joe Criscuolo at joseph.criscuolo@ct.gov (860) 263-6625 or Susan Fracasso at susan.fracasso@ct.gov (860) 263-6589.

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