

## TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FAQ

### **Q: Which HC&S workers are eligible for TAA benefits?**

A: Once a petition has been filed on behalf of HC&S workers and the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has verified the petition, all HC&S workers who are laid off for lack of work between November 16, 2014 and November 16, 2016 will be eligible for TAA benefits. Additionally, workers whose average weekly hours and wages are reduced by at least 80 percent for lack of work are also eligible. Workers who will be laid off after November 16, 2016 may still petition for TAA benefits, but their petition will be subject to a new USDOL investigation.

### **Q: When are the benefits available?**

A: As soon as USDOL has verified the petition for HC&S workers and has issued a certification, HC&S workers will have access to TAA benefits through the Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

### **Q: Where do workers go to access their TAA benefits?**

A: To begin accessing TAA benefits, HC&S workers should contact their local Workforce Development Division One-Stop Office, located at:  
2064 Wells Street, Suite 108  
Wailuku, HI 96793  
Ph: 808-984-2091  
Fax: 808-984-2090  
Email: [dlir.wdd.maui@hawaii.gov](mailto:dlir.wdd.maui@hawaii.gov)

Hours: 7:45am – 4:30pm Monday-Friday

### **Q: What kinds of benefits are available to workers who are eligible for TAA?**

A: There are a number of TAA benefits available to eligible workers, including:

- **Training:** Funding is provided for classroom training; on-the-job training; and customized training designed to meet the needs of a specific employer, groups of employees, apprenticeship programs, etc. The TAA program covers training expenses, including tuition, fees, books, and certain travel expenses.
- **Income Support (Trade Readjustment Allowances):** Weekly cash payments are available to workers who are enrolled in full-time training (or have a training waiver) and have exhausted their unemployment insurance.

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- ***Job Search and Relocation Allowances:*** Reimbursements for 90 percent of costs of job search activities outside the worker's normal commuting area available, up to a total of \$1,250. In addition, the TAA program will cover 90 percent of relocation costs for employment outside of the worker's commuting area. There is a separate application process for these benefits.
- ***Wage Subsidy:*** For workers over 50 years old and earning less than \$50,000 a year, a wage subsidy is available for up to two years to cover a portion of the difference between a worker's new wage and their old wage. The maximum total income support benefit is \$10,000.
- ***Employment and Case Management Services:*** Employees can receive skills assessments, individual employment plans, career counseling, , and much more, including information about other American Job Center programs. Additional supportive services may also be available through other USDOL programs.
- ***Health Coverage Tax Credit:*** Eligible workers may receive a refundable tax credit that pays 72.5% of qualified health insurance premiums for eligible individuals and their families. This is provided via the worker's filings with the IRS.

### **Q: How long do benefits last?**

A: The length of time that a worker can receive TAA benefits depends on a few factors. Those factors include the type of training in which the worker enrolls (or whether the worker receives a training waiver), the length of time the worker is eligible to receive state unemployment benefits, whether the worker finds a job, and if the worker is over 50 years old and therefore eligible for wage supplements.

As a general guideline:

- A worker must enroll in a training program (or receive a training waiver) within 26 weeks of either certification or lay-off, whichever is later;
- A worker may receive up to **130 weeks** of income support (Trade Readjustment Allowance), and may access this benefit after the worker exhausts state unemployment benefits, if the worker is enrolled in full-time training. The last 13 weeks of which are available only if needed for the completion of a training program leading to a degree or industry recognized credential. The total length of time the worker may receive

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income support is reduced by the number of weeks the worker received unemployment benefits through the state.

- Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance is available if you are over 50 years old and your new salary is less than \$50,000. Your wage subsidy ends **after 2 years** or when you receive \$10,000 in total.

### **Q: On average, what can workers expect to receive in TAA benefits?**

A: The amount a worker is eligible to receive depends on how much the worker is eligible to receive from the state in unemployment benefits. In general, income support is equivalent to the worker's final unemployment benefit. In Hawaii, the maximum weekly benefit in 2015 was \$551. Nationwide, the average weekly benefit in 2015 was \$326.

For workers eligible for the wage subsidy, the maximum amount the worker may receive is \$10,000 over the course of two years.

The value of the training benefit depends on the type and length of program in which the worker enrolls, as well as the types of training-related expenses that the state is able to cover for the worker (such as books and transportation costs).

### **Q: Under what circumstances can a worker receive TAA without being enrolled in training?**

A: A worker may still receive income support through TAA without being enrolled in training under certain circumstances:

- The worker is unable to participate in or complete training due to a health condition;
- No training program is available; or
- An enrollment date is not immediately available.

### ***Q: Can workers of companies that provided services to HC&S file a petition for TAA if they lose their job as a result of HC&S closing?***

A: Yes, workers of up- and down-stream firms can file a petition for TAA if they lose their jobs as a result or if their hours are reduced. Workers must work for a firm that was a supplier or a downstream producer to a TAA certified firm and either (1) the sales or production for the TAA-certified firm accounted for at least 20% of the sales or production of the petitioning firm or (2) a loss of business with

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a TAA-certified firm contributed importantly to the workers' job losses. The following groups can file a petition for TAA for workers of up- or down-stream firms:

- A group of three or more workers from such a firm;
- A union; or
- A state government workforce official or other authorized representative.

Once a petition is filed, USDOL will conduct an investigation and issue a determination.

***Q: Are there any TAA benefits for firms that are impacted by HC&S's closure?***

A: Yes. The Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration provides assistance for firms through Trade Adjustment Assistance Centers (TAACs). Companies affected by trade can go to the TAACs and seek advice and consultations on how to adjust their business to better compete. No cash benefits are available.

- In order to qualify for assistance, the company must be certified by EDA's headquarters.
- The TAAC covering Hawaii is the Western TAAC, which is operated out of the University of Southern California (<http://wesrac.usc.edu/wtaac/>).
- Companies are adversely affected by the HC&S closure should first contact the TAAC for a free consultation on petitioning for certification. If the TAAC thinks there is something that can be done, they will recommend the company seek certification with EDA's headquarters. Once that process is completed, the company may then seek assistance from the TAAC.
- The company is required to cover some of the cost of the services provided by the TAAC: usually 25% of the cost of the adjustment plan and 50% of the cost of implementation. EDA covers the remainder.