

Mass Workforce Issuance

Workforce Issuance No. 09-45

Policy Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
Workforce Investment Board Chairs
Workforce Investment Board Directors
Title I Administrators
Career Center Directors
Title I Fiscal Officers
DCS Regional Managers

cc: WIA State Partners

From: Michael Taylor, Director
Department of Workforce Development

Date: July 20, 2009

Subject: **Letter to UI Claimants to Provide Information on Pell Grants, Revised**

Purpose: To revise the notification provided to Local Workforce Investment Boards, One-Stop Career Center Operators and other local workforce investment partners in MassWorkforce Issuance No. 09-45 (7/9/09) of a letter to be sent to 230,000 current UI claimants, notifying them of their potential eligibility for Federal Pell grants and other student financial aid to assist in paying for education and/or job training. The letter is being mailed in accordance with the USDOL Training and Employment Letter No. 21-08 Pell Grants and the Payment of Unemployment Benefits to Individuals in Approved Training:

http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?docn=2752

Revised schedule: As a result of technical difficulties, the originally scheduled mailing to begin on July 10th has been rescheduled to begin on July 17, 2009. Letters will be mailed in four test batches of 25,000 letters each day. Once the initial 100,000 letters have been sent, the initiative's impact on the One-Stop Career Center and UI systems will be evaluated before mailing out the next 100,000 letters. A copy of the letter can be found in Attachment A.

The letter directs claimants to seek information from a website jointly sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor:

www.opportunity.gov.

Claimants can then link to the Questions & Answers page at:

<http://federalstudentaid.ed.gov/opportunity/questions.html>

Please note: The letter has been translated into the following languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Laotian, Russian, Haitian Creole and Italian.

Background: On May 8, 2009, President Obama announced that individuals receiving UI benefits will receive special consideration for financial aid to help defray the cost of education and/or job training opportunities. In response, USDOL has requested all state UI agencies to notify UI beneficiaries that they may qualify for Pell Grants (and other student aid) and provide them information on how to apply.

The Pell Grant program is a post-secondary, educational grant program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). The grants can cover up to \$5,350 in education and training expenses and are accepted at nearly all universities and community colleges and many trade and technical schools. All Pell Grant awards are based on need and other factors.

Please note: Pell Grants are only available for individuals enrolled at least half-time in an undergraduate degree or certificate program. It must also be noted that Pell grants *are not available* to individuals who have already received a bachelor's degree.

After applying for the education or training program of their choice at any eligible college or university, community college, or trade and technical school, claimants may (within 90 days of the date of the letter) bring the letter to the school's financial aid office to verify their status as a UI beneficiary. After 90 days, the claimant can contact the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance to receive verification of their unemployment status (617-626-6800).

Required: Share this information and the attached letter with all appropriate staff. It is expected that One-Stop Career Centers will:

- Serve as a referral resource in this process.
- Assist with any Section 30 procedures needed to waive the work search requirement

Inquiries: Questions from claimants related to their unemployment insurance eligibility should be directed to 617-626-6800.

Questions from career center and/or DCS staff should be directed to Louise Meyer, DCS Special Program Manager at 508-890-3202.