



# Self Employment Assistance (SEA)

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**Funder Organization:** Self Employment Assistance (SEA) is administered through the State of Oregon Employment Department.

**Program URL:**

SEA home page: <https://www.oregon.gov/employ/unemployment/pages/sea.aspx>

**Type of Fund:** Unemployment insurance (UI) weekly income while you start your own business.

**Target Audience or Geography:** Dislocated workers in Oregon.

**Estimated Time of Arrival for Public Rollout:** Current and ongoing.

## Brief Program Description

The SEA program is an option for Unemployment Insurance claimants who have been identified as likely to run out of benefits before they return to work. Claimants are identified and scored using a computerized mathematical formula called “worker profiling” which attributes a “worker profile score” for each applicant. Higher scores are often attributable to laid-off workers with very unique professional skills that are less likely to find regular employment AND might have a better chance of employment through the pursuit of self-employment.

SEA program participants may attend SEA counseling/training and can engage in self-employment activities on a full-time basis.

The program operates as a collaborative effort between the Oregon Employment Department, and the Oregon Small Business Development Center Network (SBDC).

## To qualify for SEA, you must:

- Be eligible for, and receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits
- Be unlikely to return to your previous employment and not a member in good standing with a closed shop union
- Have been identified as likely to exhaust Unemployment Insurance benefits
- Have a viable business idea
- Be willing to work full-time to develop your business
- Have or be able to obtain the financial backing needed to start and sustain the business until it becomes self-supporting, and
- If the business requires an occupational license (state license), you must already have that license at the time of your SEA application

## Responsibilities

All SEA participants must attend self-employment assistance training (if directed to do so), complete a market feasibility study and a written business plan, and be engaged in self-employment activities on a full-time basis for each week claimed.

## Benefits

SEA benefits include:

- Weekly Unemployment Insurance benefits while participating in self-employment activities.
- Waiver of the actively seeking work requirement while participating in the program.
- Business counseling and technical assistance on developing a market feasibility study and a business plan.
- Money earned from the business is not deducted from your weekly benefit payment.

If you participate in the SEA program you won't have work search requirements while claiming benefits. However, you will need to attest that you are working full time to launch your business.

You can receive business start-up counseling and advice from Oregon's Small Business Development Center Network (SBDC) free of charge. To learn more, go to: <http://www.bizcenter.org>.

**\*Classes and books are at cost to the participant.**

If you make money from your private enterprise, you keep the proceeds and still get your full weekly benefit payment.

People come to the program in all states of readiness to do business, so we don't require applicants to wait for a class to start etc. When you are accepted into the program is when you start.

The Oregon SBDC Network strives to provide the most accurate information as it becomes available. The Oregon SBDC Network does not provide legal or tax advice. We recommend that you seek legal and/or tax advice from licensed professionals. The Oregon SBDC Network cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in the information provided in this document. Please contact us for any recommended revisions at [support@bizcenter.org](mailto:support@bizcenter.org).

## How to Apply

Please remember that not every Oregon Unemployment Insurance claimant is eligible for this program.

1. Contact the UI Special Programs Center to see if you meet minimum eligibility. (See contact information below.)
2. Get an application for Self Employment Assistance. Make sure your Worker Profile Score is written on the application. Request this form at the local Employment Department office.
3. Set up Secure Email with a UI Special Programs Center Program Specialist. Once done, send the completed application to the UI Special Programs Center through secure email. They will contact you to confirm that you have met all eligibility requirements and to give you further instructions.

**Required forms and Documentation:** Participants must complete both a market feasibility study and a written business plan. For assistance with this process, contact your local Oregon Small Business Development Center.

## Program Contact Information

### UI Special Programs

**Mailing Address:** Oregon Employment Department  
PO Box 14518  
Salem, OR 97309

**Hours of Operation:** 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Phone:** (503)-947-1800; Toll Free: (800)-436-6191, TTY: 7-1-1

**Email:** [ED\\_SEA@oregon.gov](mailto:ED_SEA@oregon.gov)

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