



Keystone Works Creating Opportunities for Job Seekers and Business

Making the connection between job seekers and business is among Governor Corbett's highest priorities. Often, unemployed Pennsylvanians need skills training to be successful in the workplace, and business needs access to motivated workers able to get the job done.

Keystone Works will deliver that training and make those connections.

Keystone Works is a means to help unemployed Pennsylvanians get back to work while strengthening the workforce through job-specific training. Keystone Works provides employer-driven training opportunities for unemployed workers. When participants complete training, employers are offered incentives to then hire that employee. Businesses are able to find skilled workers who meet their needs while limiting up-front risk and cost associated with hiring a new employee. Unemployment compensation claimants are able to gain occupational skills to bolster their résumé, maintain a connection to the workforce and have opportunity for full-time employment.

Keystone Works for Business

Businesses participating in Keystone Works pay no wages to the trainee. Training can be conducted for up to 24 hours per week for up to eight weeks. Referred individuals will be prescreened by PA CareerLink® staff to meet the criteria outlined by the business in their training application and plan. Businesses will have the opportunity to interview referred individuals to ensure they are an appropriate match. Trainees who complete the program will have received up to 192 hours of training, enabling them to be immediately productive if hired.

Businesses who hire those trainees will receive a monetary incentive for doing so -- \$375 every four weeks the trainee is employed full-time, up to a total of \$1,500 per trainee hired.

Keystone Works for Job Seekers

Recently unemployed Pennsylvanians on state-funded unemployment compensation (UC) (the first 26 weeks) will be able to get on-the-job training while maintaining their UC benefits. The training will be in high-priority occupations leading to career-focused employment. Training will be Department of Labor & Industry-certified and delivered on site and on the job by businesses with openings to fill.

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Keystone Works for Pennsylvania

Nearly every Pennsylvania business is eligible to participate, as are thousands of motivated UC claimants looking for work.

There's no fee for anyone, individual or business, to participate in Keystone Works. UC claimants or businesses that want to make connections through Keystone Works should contact their local PA CareerLink® office to learn more. Visit us online at www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us to find the location and contact information for the office nearest you. Call, write or drop by. No appointment is necessary. For more information about the Keystone Works Program, visit www.dli.state.pa.us/keystoneworks.

SEWN Program Provides Assistance to Manufacturers

The Strategic Early Warning Network (SEWN), a program of the Steel Valley Authority funded by the Department of Labor & Industry (department), provides free and confidential assistance to Pennsylvania's small- and medium-sized manufacturers. Experience shows that a company's problems are easier to address before they reach the crisis stage. It is also easier and less costly to save an existing local company than to create a new business or attract one from outside the region. SEWN works with the Rapid Response Team of the department, other state-local agencies, and businesses and labor representatives to track early warning "alerts." Then:

- **Immediate Engagement:** Within 48 hours of a call from or about a distressed business, the SEWN staff team will contact company management, owner and/or employees to set up a site visit.
- **Quick Diagnosis:** SEWN then assesses the situation and helps to define the company's critical problems.
- **Layoff Aversion/Retention Plan:** Then, working with all business stakeholders, SEWN will inventory all available resources and help develop and implement solutions (free of charge).

SEWN annually provides professional and confidential turnaround and financial services to small- and middle-sized firms employing 25 to 500 workers through the following core services:

- **Financial Restructuring** to enable businesses to meet current financial obligations/investment needs.
- **Operational Restructuring and Cost Management** to assist businesses in reducing their cost of goods sold, securing new markets for their services, improving the quality of their products, and utilizing new technologies in order to return them to competitiveness in the marketplace.
- **Ownership Transition and Buyouts** to secure investors, management, and new business plans necessary to change the ownership, organization, and direction of businesses, including succession buyouts.
- **High Performance Workplace Strategies** to enable businesses to implement strategies that will improve their productivity and competitiveness.
- **New Markets Strategies** to provide inexpensive access to sales and marketing consultants to improve the company's sales performance and ability to find the new markets and customers needed to sustain these vital businesses and jobs, especially when firms suddenly lose primary customers.

Since its inception in 1993, SEWN has contributed to the retention and revival of more than to **800 industrial enterprises within Pennsylvania**, impacting **over 19,000 jobs**. For additional information, please contact your local SEWN office:

Western PA SEWN: sewn@steelvalley.org
Central PA SEWN: sewncentral@steelvalley.org

Northeastern PA SEWN: sewnne@steelvalley.org
Southeastern PA SEWN: sewnse@steelvalley.org

Rate Notice Triggers Important Deadlines

Three important deadlines are set when the department issues the Pennsylvania UC Contribution Rate Notice, Form UC-657, for calendar year 2013. The department expects to issue Form UC-657 to the majority of employers on Dec. 31, 2012.

- 1. Appeal your contribution rate:** If you want to appeal your contribution rate, you must do so within 90 days of the mailing date of Form UC-657. This means that an appeal, based on a Dec. 31, 2012, mailing date is due by March 31, 2013. If your Form UC-657 is dated after Dec. 31, 2012, you should adjust your appeal deadline accordingly.
- 2. Make voluntary contributions:** If you want to make a voluntary contribution to reduce your 2013 rate, it must be made no more than 30 days after the mailing date of Form UC-657 and within the first 120 days of the calendar year. For example, if your Form UC-657 is dated Dec. 31, 2012, a voluntary contribution is due by Jan. 30, 2013. In order to affect any 2013 rate, the voluntary contribution must be submitted by April 30, 2013, even if April 30, 2013, is fewer than 30 days from the date of Form UC-657.
- 3. Adjust your account balance:** April 30, 2013, is the last day an employer with a debit reserve account balance may elect to adjust the balance to an amount equal to negative 20 percent of its average annual taxable payroll. In return for the adjustment, the employer must pay contributions at the maximum rate for three years.

The interest rate for contributions past due during 2013 will be posted online in December at www.uc.pa.gov. Pursuant to Section 308 of the UC law, the minimum interest rate is 9 percent.

Employers who have questions regarding their quarterly tax information, contribution rates, registration and/or clearance issues should continue to contact the Office of UC Tax Services' Employer Contact Center at 866-403-6163.

Attention Reimbursable Employers

The annual Reimbursable Employer's Election for Relief From Charges and Notice of Solvency Fee form for calendar year 2013 was mailed in mid-October 2012.

If you are a reimbursable employer and wish to be eligible to request relief from charges associated with applications for benefits (claims) with an effective date in the upcoming year, your solvency fee payment must be postmarked within 30 days of the mailing date of the notice. Also, all reports required by the Pennsylvania UC law for calendar quarters through the second quarter of 2012 must be filed.

Note: The Pennsylvania UC Law requires the department to periodically re-determine the solvency fee rate, which is used to compute the employer's solvency fee. The solvency fee rate effective for calendar year 2013 is 0.12 percent. The next recalculation of the rate will occur in 2013 to be effective for calendar year 2014 elections.

An employer's solvency fee is determined by multiplying the solvency fee rate, 0.12 percent (.0012), in effect for calendar year 2013 by the employer's gross wages for the period spanning the third quarter of 2011 through the second quarter of 2012. If the result of this calculation is an amount that is less than \$25, a minimum solvency fee of \$25 is due.

For more information on the reimbursable relief-from-charge option, visit www.uc.pa.gov or call the UC Employer Contact Center toll-free at 866-403-6163 (within the Harrisburg area, 717-787-7679).

Avoid Higher Tax Rates, Interest and Penalties - Report Wages and Pay Taxes on Time

You will be assigned a delinquency contribution rate for 2013 if you:

- have not registered with the department for UC purposes,
- were involved in a business transfer and have not filed the necessary reports regarding the transfer, and/or
- have not filed all quarterly reports and paid all contributions, interest and penalties due through the second quarter of 2012.

A delinquency rate means that approximately 3 percentage points will be added to your contribution rate.

Wages reported to the department after Sept. 30, 2012, and contributions paid after that date, cannot be used in the calculation of an experienced-based rate for 2013.

To avoid a delinquency rate, an incorrect experience-based rate, or both, as well as interest and penalty charges, you should review your UC account to be sure you have filed all reports and paid all contributions, interest and penalties due.

If you are unable to pay in full, you can avoid the delinquency rate by entering into an approved payment plan with the department. To do so, contact your nearest Field Accounting Service Office. These offices are listed in the government section of your phone directory and online at www.dli.state.pa.us. Click "Services Near You," then select your county to find the office in your area.

EMPLOYERS - Do You Have New Hires?

Report your new hires electronically to the Pennsylvania New Hires Reporting Program, saving time and postage. Simply go to our website at www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us and click on the "Report New Hires" link under the "Employers" section. It's fast, free and paperless.

Call Chris White at 717-214-1125 or visit our website at www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us for more information.

JNET Crossmatch Prevent UC Fraud

Recently, the department worked with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Justice Network (JNET) to develop a "crossmatch" to detect UC claimants who are claiming benefits while being incarcerated. Under the Pennsylvania UC Law, all incarcerated claimants, regardless of the facility or whether they have been convicted, are ineligible for UC benefits.

The JNET system compares records from county prisons in Pennsylvania with the department's records of current UC claimants. When an incarcerated claimant is identified, JNET provides a notification to the department. After factfinding, if UC benefits have been filed for and paid on the claimant's UC claim during his or her incarceration, the department will issue a notice of determination finding the claimant ineligible and overpaid for the UC benefits claimed during the incarceration.

The department also conducts a similar "crossmatch" with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections monthly to detect if UC benefits are being claimed while individuals are incarcerated in state correctional

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institutions. These methods increase the department's ability to detect and prevent improper UC payments and help maintain the overall integrity of Pennsylvania's UC program.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Program

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is a federal program that provides assistance to workers impacted by foreign imports or shifts in production to foreign countries. This program is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (USDOL) through the department, under the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers provisions of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (Trade Act) (19 USC § 2271 *et seq.*). TAA benefits are 100 percent funded by the federal government; the costs of benefits to workers are not charged to the firm.

A group of workers at a firm or subdivision can petition to be certified as "adversely affected" if a significant number or proportion of workers are laid off, experience a reduction in hours or wages, or are threatened with such layoffs or reductions. The workers' separations or threatened separations must be caused by:

- an increase of imports of like or competitive articles, components, or services from a foreign country that contributed significantly to a decrease in sales and/or production at the firm, or,
- the firm's acquisition of like or competitive articles or services from a foreign country or the firm's shift in the production of articles or the supply of services to a foreign country.

Workers at a firm or subdivision that is a supplier or downstream producer to a certified firm may also be covered under the TAA Program as secondarily affected under certain circumstances.

Adversely affected workers, covered under TAA certifications issued by USDOL, may qualify to receive reemployment benefits, training, job search allowances, and relocation allowances. Additionally, weekly cash Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA) may be payable following the exhaustion of state and federal UC benefits. Affected workers also may be eligible for federal tax credits for the cost of health insurance. Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) provides income supplements in lieu of TRA for certain older workers who return to work with a different firm.

The first step required by the TAA Program is to file a petition to obtain a certification of group eligibility for adversely affected workers. A petition may be filed by any of the following: a group of three or more workers, an official of the company where the workers worked, the official certified union that represents the workers, and a state workforce official, or Pennsylvania CareerLink® operators/partners. The best method to file a petition with the USDOL and the department is online at www.doleta.gov/tradeact/. Click "file online."

The petition may also be downloaded at the web address above. The completed TAA petition must be mailed or faxed to both:

United States Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Division of Trade Adjustment Assistance
Room C-5311
200 Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20210
Fax: 202-693-3584 or 3585

AND

Office of UC Benefits Policy
Federal Programs
TAA
Room 604
651 Boas St.
Harrisburg, PA 17121
Fax: 717-772-0378

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After a petition is certified, all the workers covered by the certification will be notified by the department and a meeting will be scheduled to explain the eligibility requirements.

For further information on the TAA program, visit www.doleta.gov/tradeact/

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms (TAAF)

Effective Oct. 21, 2011, Congress enacted PL 112-40, which extends the provisions of the TAAF program that previously expired in February 2011. TAAF provides financial assistance to manufacturers affected by import competition. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce, this cost-sharing federal assistance program pays for half the cost of consultants or industry-specific experts to develop plans that improve a manufacturer's competitiveness.

To learn more about TAAF, contact your regional TAA center representative shown below:

MidAtlantic TAAC
 550 Township Line Road, Suite 450
 Blue Bell, PA 19422
 Toll Free: 800-566-7522
 Phone: 610-825-7819
 Fax: 610-825-7708
 Email: info@mataac.org
 URL: www.mataac.org

Tips to Improve Wage Reporting

Employers can improve the processing of vital wage information for unemployment compensation (UC) purposes by using the correct data in their electronic file or on their paper forms. The following are common mistakes made on Form UC-2A, Employer's Quarterly Report of Wages Paid to Each Employee.

- **Leaving the quarter and year field blank or not including it in the correct format.** "March 31, 2012" is not an acceptable format for the first quarter of 2012. Please use "1/2012." On paper forms, the quarter and year must be on ALL pages.
- **Filing multiple reports either by submitting both a paper and electronic copy or by submitting multiple versions by paper or electronically.** If you need to make corrections to previously filed reports, use UC-2AX - Corrected Pennsylvania Gross Wages Paid to Employees, or, contact the Office of Unemployment Compensation Tax Services at 866-403-6163 (within the Harrisburg area, 717-787-7679), and select Option 2.
- **Listing the same worker more than once on the wage detail.** The Employee Quarterly UC Total Wages should be entered as the quarterly gross wage paid, including bonuses, tips or other income. When one worker is listed multiple times, the system cannot automatically determine if these wages are to be added together or if the second record should replace the first record.
- **Providing less than nine-digits for the Social Security Number (SSN).** A nine-digit SSN is required for all employees. If the SSN begins with a zero, include the leading zero. The Internal

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Revenue Service (IRS) requires employers to solicit an employee's SSN at the time the employee begins work. Refer to Publication 1586 - Reasonable Cause Regulations and Requirements for Missing and Incorrect Name/TINs for additional information about the IRS requirements.

- **Omitting the employee's last name.** A last name for every employee is required.
- **Name fields cannot contain numeric values.** Only one apostrophe and/or dash is permitted in the "First", "Middle" and "Last Name" fields. The suffix must be one of the following values: Jr, Sr, I, II, III or IV. Do not include any punctuation or spaces.
- **Entering values greater than 14 in the "Employee Credit Weeks" field.** Employee Credit Weeks are the number of weeks in the reporting period in which \$100 or more was earned, regardless of when paid. Use right-justify and zero-fill. Valid values are 0 through 14.
- **Entering values in the "Plant Number" field.** The Pennsylvania UC system no longer accepts plant numbers; this field should be blank.

The following are common mistakes specific to providing an employer's Pennsylvania UC Tax Account Number on Form UC-2A:

- Utilizing an incomplete or incorrect PA UC Tax Account Number.
- Utilizing the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) instead of the PA UC Account Number.
- Entering the PA UC Tax Account Number without spaces or hyphens.
- Omitting the "Check Digit" field if unknown. If the check digit is unknown, enter zero in the field.
- Omitting zeros which can result in wages being posted to an incorrect account. On computer record formats, the PA UC Tax Account Number should be left justified and filled to nine digits, without hyphens.
- On paper forms, the PA UC Tax Account Number must be on ALL pages.

See the examples below for the correct format for the PA UC Tax Account Number on paper forms.

Prefix (up to 2 digits)	Number (up to 5 digits)	Check Digit (one character)	Correct Format for Wage Report
07	8288	8	07-08288-8
02	58773	&	02-58773-&
82	84715	0	82-84715-0
01	264	7	01-00264-7
06	6	Unknown	06-00006-0

Questions about Form UC-2A should be directed to the nearest Field Accounting Service office. These offices are listed in the government section of your phone directory and online at www.dli.state.pa.us. Click "Services Near You," then select your county to find the office in your area. Or, contact Benefit-Operations at 717-783-2247.

UC Issues Update is published by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry on a quarterly basis. Questions, comments and feedback can be sent via email to uc-news@state.pa.us. General UC Tax information is available by calling 717-787-7679 or outside of the Harrisburg area, toll free 866-403-6163 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you have questions regarding UC benefit charges to your account, please call 717-787-4677 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **If you suspect fraud, contact 800-692-7469.**

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Equal Opportunity Employer/Program