

Eligibility for the Self-Employment Assistance Program (SEAP)

Who is eligible to apply for the Self-Employment Assistance Program (SEAP)?

The SEAP is open to people who are out of work and meet certain requirements.

You must be:

- Eligible for at least 13 more weeks of unemployment insurance (UI) benefits
- Identified by the State's profiling system as likely to exhaust benefits
- Willing to work full-time to start a business in New York State

You must receive written acceptance into the SEAP before you can start your own business while collecting benefits.

I live outside of New York State and collect New York State UI benefits. May I participate in the SEAP?

Yes. You don't have to live in New York State to take part in the SEAP. However, you must be eligible for benefits and willing to establish your business in New York State.

Am I eligible to participate in the SEAP if I have done so in the past?

No. The law allows you to participate in the SEAP only once.

Am I eligible for the SEAP if I already have a business but wish to expand it?

No. In this situation, you would not qualify for UI benefits because you would not be totally unemployed. You must first qualify for UI benefits before you can participate in the SEAP.

Will I qualify if I previously owned the same type of business that I want to start?

No. The purpose of the SEAP is to help those who want to be entrepreneurs and who have not owned a similar business.

Can I accept a job while in the program?

Yes, you may accept a job. However, you are not required to accept a job offer once you are in the program.

All of your full-time work activities must be related to starting your business. Any job you accept must be part-time. Your weekly SEAP benefit will be reduced by one quarter for each day you work, up to three days. You will not be eligible for SEAP benefits in any week that you work four or more days or earn more than the maximum weekly benefit rate.

If you accept a full-time job offer, you will no longer qualify for SEAP benefits. If it is a temporary job that ends during your benefit year, you may reopen your claim and continue with the program when the job ends.

Can I participate in the SEAP if I am already in a full-time training program?

No. The SEAP requires that you devote full-time efforts toward starting a business.

To learn more about the SEAP and view an orientation, go to www.labor.ny.gov/seap.