Minnesota

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

HANDBOOK

2015 Law: For Petition Numbers 85,000 and Above

Table of Contents

Introduction to TAA 1

Eligibility. 1

Determining Eligibility 1

Steps in Eligibility Process 2

Applying for TAA Services 3

Program Benefits 4

1) Employment and Case Management Services 4
2) TAA Funded Training 4
3) Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA). 6
4) Waiver of Training 8
5) Job Search Allowance 8
6) Relocation Allowance. 9
7) Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) 10
8) Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) 11

Appeal Process. 12

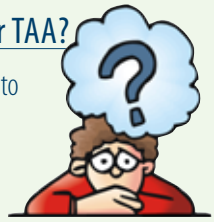
Discrimination Complaint Procedures 13

Contact Information 14

Suitable Employment:

TAA doesn't help workers get just any job. TAA helps workers get "suitable employment". This means that any job pursued through TAA must be similar to or better than a worker's previous position.

Am I eligible for TAA?



There are three ways to determine if you are eligible for TAA:

1. If you have received a notification from Minnesota TAA staff, you may be eligible for TAA services.
2. If you lost your job or lost work hours with an employer who was included in a certified petition, you may be eligible for TAA. Please note, petitions have a start and an end date. Your job or work hour loss must fall within those dates to be eligible under a petition. Also, your position at the employer must be included in the petition. To search petitions filed, visit: **www.doleta.gov/tradeact/taa/taa_search_form.cfm**
3. Contact the Minnesota TAA staff via email at **DEED.TAA@state.mn.us** or via phone at 651-259-7543.

Introduction to TAA

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is a federal program available to workers who lose their jobs or whose work hours are reduced because of foreign trade. TAA provides resources to help workers get new skills and find a new job when foreign competition reduces the demand for the products they make or the services they provide. An example of this is if a worker's job was moved overseas for cheaper labor. Another example is if the production of an item in another country has caused people to buy less of that item from US producers, leading to layoffs. TAA supports these "trade impacted" workers through a variety of benefits, including: Career counseling, job search assistance, funding for training, and extended Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Eligibility

Determining Eligibility

Those eligible for TAA services receive a certified letter in the mail, informing them of their eligibility. To be considered eligible for TAA services, a worker must meet two requirements:

1. He or She must be a member of a group of workers "certified" as trade impacted through the Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance.
2. The worker must either a) have lost their job or had their hours reduced through no fault of their own or b) have evidence they will lose their job or face work hour cuts in the future.

STEPS IN THE ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

The Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance (OTAA), housed within the US Department of Labor (US DOL), determines eligibility for the TAA program. OTAA certifies groups of workers as affected by foreign trade and eligible for TAA based on petitions filed for investigation. The steps in the eligibility process are:

1. Workers lose work hours or jobs due to foreign trade or are informed by their employer that this may soon happen.

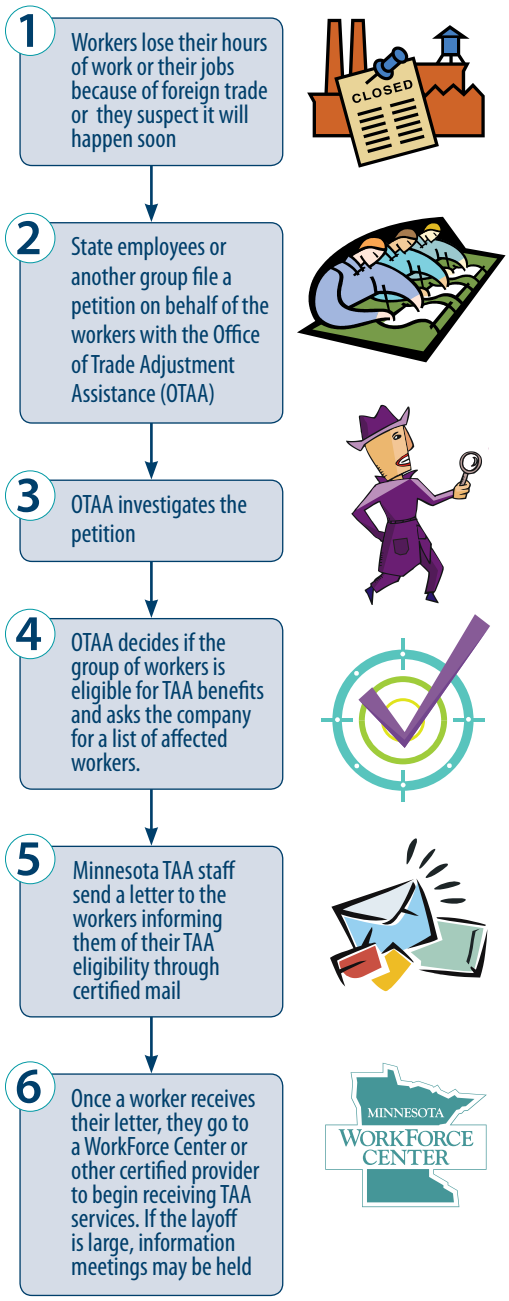
2. State employees, groups of at least three workers, union representatives, or company representatives file a petition to OTAA asking them to investigate a layoff or reduction of work hours. In this petition, a specific group of workers are identified as being affected by foreign trade and likely eligible for TAA.

3. OTAA investigates the petition, gathering information on how the specific group of workers lost their jobs or lost their work hours.

4. OTAA determines if the workers are eligible for TAA. If the workers are eligible (in other words, the petition is "certified") TAA asks the company for a list of the affected workers.

5. Minnesota TAA staff send notifications out to the group of affected workers via certified mail. These notifications inform the workers of their eligibility for TAA and provide instructions on how to apply for benefits.

6. Once a worker receives their notification letter, they go to a WorkForce Center or other certified provider to begin receiving TAA services. If a large layoff (usually 20 or more workers) has occurred, TAA staff will hold a benefits information meeting for these workers.



Applying for TAA Services

To apply for TAA services, complete the following steps:

1. **Contact or visit a WorkForce Center or certified service provider.** Tell them you are TAA eligible and would like to apply to the Dislocated Worker program to access TAA benefits. The WorkForce Center staff will direct you to meet with a Dislocated Worker Counselor. You can locate the nearest WorkForce Center at: **http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/recently-unemployed/layoff/dwp-service-providers.jsp**

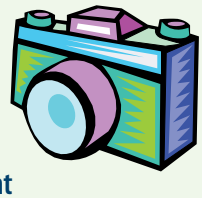
2. **Meet with a Dislocated Worker Counselor and learn about the benefits available to you through TAA.** It is important that your counselor knows you are TAA eligible. Although every person in TAA is "co-enrolled" in the Dislocated Worker program in Minnesota, being TAA eligible qualifies you for more benefits than other dislocated workers.

3. **Submit a TAA Application with the help of your Dislocated Worker Counselor.** Your counselor will guide you through determining which benefits you would like to access and completing the appropriate applications.

Timeliness is important!

If you are considering training, make sure you complete a TAA training application within 26 weeks of the last day you worked or from the date of your petition's certification to be eligible for a type of extended Unemployment Insurance called Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA). More information on TRA can be found on page 6 of this handbook.

Snapshot of Benefits



TAA provides the following benefits:

1. **Employment and Case Management Services:** Dislocated Worker Counselors in WorkForce Centers or other service providers can help you build job seeking skills, research growing careers, and explore training opportunities.
2. **TAA Funded Training:** Tuition assistance is available to get certification, training, or education in a high demand profession.
3. **Transportation Assistance:** Financial assistance if you drive over 15 miles one way to attend training from your home.
4. **Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA):** Extended unemployment insurance benefits through TAA, referred to as TRA, may be available to you if you attend full-time training.
5. **Waiver of Training:** While not technically a benefit, waivers of training allow TAA participants to receive TRA when they face a delayed start to training.
6. **Job Search Allowance:** Financial assistance if you need to look for a new job that is further than 15 miles from your home.
7. **Relocation Assistance Allowance:** Financial assistance to move you and your family if you find a job further than 15 miles from your home.
8. **Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA):** Wage supplement available to workers at least 50 years of age if a new job pays less than their trade impacted position.

Program Benefits

1) Employment and Case Management Services

To access employment and case management services, meet with your Dislocated Worker Counselor at your local WorkForce Center or other service provider. Your Dislocated Worker Counselor can help you:

- Assess your skills and access the services you need;
- Develop an Individual Employment Plan to keep your job search on track and in the right direction;
- Find information on available training in your area;
- Investigate short-term, pre-vocational services;
- Provide individual career counseling;
- Use labor market information to find high growth professions; and
- Understand the supportive services (such as child care, transportation/housing assistance, and needs-related payments) that are available to you.

2) TAA Funded Training

TAA funds training for customers to help them get the skills they need to find a new job that is as good as or better than their previous position. There are three types of training that TAA will fund: Credentialed Training, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Apprenticeships/Customized Training.

Credentialed Training

Credentialed Training programs are programs found at institutions of higher education, such as Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) schools. These programs will train you on skills you need to get a new job. They include training such as: certificate programs, associates degrees, or other degrees. The ISEEK website, **www.iseek.org**, is a great resource to find Credentialed Training. If you are approved for TAA funded Credentialed Training, TAA will pay for 100% of the tuition, program fees, books, and other required costs associated with attending the program.

How long do I have to complete training?

You have 104 weeks (2 years) to complete your training program. Scheduled breaks between terms are not counted in these week limits. If you require over 104 weeks, meet with your Dislocated Worker counselor and inform TAA immediately.

Can I enroll as a part-time student?

You may enroll as a part-time or full-time student. If you enroll as a part-time student, however, you are not eligible for Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA).

What about prerequisite or remedial training?

TAA will pay for any remedial or prerequisite education necessary for you to participate in your training program, but the time spent completing these courses will be included in your 104 available weeks.

To be eligible for TAA funded skills training, you must meet six eligibility criteria:

1. There is no employment available that is similar to or better than your previous position;
2. You would benefit from the training;
3. It is reasonable to expect that you will be employed following completion of the training;
4. The training is available;
5. You are qualified to undertake the training; and
6. The training is suitable for you and available at a reasonable cost (*NOTE: you **cannot** use your own resources to help pay for training under TAA*).

While you are enrolled in training, it is important that you contact your Dislocated Worker Counselor at least every 30 days, or as they instruct you. You must also submit:

- Your course registrations prior to the start of a term,
- Progress reports every 60 days,
- End of term grades as soon as they are issued, and
- Final certification or certificate at end of training.

On-the-Job Training

- On-the-Job Training (OJT) is a wage subsidy that can be paid to employers who are willing to hire and train TAA participants for a new job. Under an OJT, an employer can receive up to 50% of a TAA participant's wage, in the form of a reimbursement, to train the participant.

Any OJT must meet the following requirements:

- The OJT will lead to employment that is full-time and similar to or better than a participant's previous position;
- There is a training curriculum that provides the worker with the required skills for the job; and
- The training curriculum has measurable training benchmarks in place to show the worker is gaining the required knowledge or skills.

Other important OJT requirements include:

- OJTs have a maximum total duration of 104 weeks;
- The costs of an OJT have a soft cap determined by TAA; and
- While participating in an OJT, TAA customers are ***not*** eligible for TRA.

Apprenticeship Training and Customized Training

TAA can pay for Registered Apprenticeship programs and customized training set up with employers. In an apprenticeship, companies employ TAA participants as they work through a series of related instruction. Although typically thought to be in the skilled trades (such as carpenters or electricians), apprenticeships have broadened to include many other industries (such as health care and high-tech manufacturing). TAA funds can pay for expenses related to instruction, tools, uniforms, equipment, books, and transportation. As apprentices are usually employed, they are typically not eligible for TRA. However, RTAA benefits may still apply.

3) Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA)

Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) is extended Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits for TAA participants who are 1) enrolled in full-time training or 2) receiving a temporary Waiver of Training. Waivers of Training excuse TAA participants from training and are explained in the next section.

The amount of money you will receive through TRA each week is generally the same as what you received with UI.

TRA is a division of UI.

For questions regarding your TRA benefits, please contact TRA at **DEED.TRA@state.mn.us** or call 651-296-0253 and ask for a TRA Specialist.

THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF TRA

Basic TRA	Provides up to 52 weeks of benefits minus whatever you have already received through UI. For example, if you have already collected 26 weeks of UI benefits, you will be able to collect 26 weeks of Basic TRA.
Additional TRA	Provides up to 65 extra weeks of TRA benefits to TAA participants that need it to complete full-time training. After you finish Basic TRA, you have a total of 78 weeks to collect all of your Additional TRA benefits, *or until your training ends, whichever happens first.*
Completion TRA	Provides up to 13 extra weeks of TRA benefits for TAA participants who successfully complete their training within the approved schedule of their TAA Training Plan, who maintain good academic standing, and fulfill other requirements. Your Dislocated Worker Counselor will help evaluate if you qualify for Completion TRA.

TRA ELIGIBILITY TIMELINE

TRA ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for TRA, you must:

- Have worked for at least 26 weeks with the same company during the 52 weeks before the layoff that qualified you for TAA. These 26 weeks may include some types of employer authorized leave and disability leave.
- Be participating in full-time training, within 30 days of starting full-time training, or on a Waiver of Training
- Have exhausted your UI benefits and any federal extensions

BREAKS IN TRAINING

Schools have breaks during holidays and between semesters/trimesters. You may continue to collect your TRA benefits as long as these breaks do not last longer than 30 business days. If you have a break greater than 30 business days, notify your counselor and consult with a TRA Specialist right away.

APPLY FOR TRA

To apply for TRA, complete the following steps:

1. Complete the TAA Training Application Packet within 26 weeks after your last day of full-time work or after the company you worked for was certified as trade impacted, whichever is later. This is your decision period, your Dislocated Worker Counselor will help you with this. The TRA application is included in the TAA Training Application.
2. Submit TAA Training Application Packet to TAA staff for approval. TAA staff will then review it and forward it to TRA staff.
3. You will receive a letter from TRA staff informing you if you are eligible for TRA.

WORKING AND RECEIVING TRA

Working will not affect your TRA benefit if you meet two conditions:

1. You are enrolled in full-time training; and
2. You are earning equal to or less than your weekly TRA benefit amount in your job.

If you earn greater than your TRA weekly benefit, the benefit will decrease at a rate based on a formula. Contact a TRA Specialist for details specific to your situation.

TRA HANDBOOK

For more information on TRA, download the TRA Handbook found at: **http://mn.gov/deed/images/TRA_Handbook.pdf**

4) Waiver of Training

Waivers of Training allow TAA participants to receive Basic TRA when they must delay the start date for their training program. Generally, Waivers of Training last up to 26 weeks or until the reason for the waiver no longer applies. Once you exhaust Basic TRA, your waiver ends. If you have a Waiver of Training, you must actively search for work and keep track of your work search during the waiver. There are three reasons that a TAA participant can receive a Waiver of Training:

1. You are temporarily unable to begin training due to a health condition;
2. The closest available enrollment date for training is between 30-60 days after the decision period; or
3. There is no training program available or no training available at a reasonable cost.

APPLYING FOR A WAIVER OF TRAINING

Work with your Dislocated Worker Counselor to file a Waiver of Training Application. This application must be submitted within 26 weeks from your petition's certification date (found on your eligibility letter) or the last day of your full-time work, whichever is later.

WAIVER REVIEW

In order to continue qualifying for a Waiver of Training, you need to check with your Dislocated Worker Counselor at least every 30 days for a review. If this review does not take place, you may lose future benefits.

JOB SEARCH

While your waiver is active, and until 30 days prior to the start date of your training, you are required to undertake a job search, like you would do when receiving UI. This means you must keep track of the employers you contact, must be available to work and will accept work that is similar to your previous job.

5) Job Search Allowance

Job Search Allowance pays for 90 percent of reasonable travel costs if you need to travel to attend an interview or secure employment. Travel costs include, but are not exclusive to, meals, lodging, gas, airfare, and car rentals. Job Search Allowance can pay for one or more trips, as long as the jobs are similar to or better than your previous position. The maximum amount of money any TAA customer can receive through Job Search Allowance, regardless of number of trips, is $1,250.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to receive Job Search Allowance you meet the following requirements

- **Pre-Approval:** You must apply, meet all the eligibility requirements, and be approved before you leave for your interview;
- **Interview Documentation:** You must have an interview in the place you want to travel and be able to document the interview. This documentation may include an invitation email or the names and contact information for people who will be interviewing you;
- **Job Quality:** The job you are interviewing for must be similar to or better than your previous job; and
- **15 Miles:** The interview is more than 15 miles one-way from your home.

DEADLINE

If you have not attended training, you must apply for benefits within 365 days (1 year) of your last day of work or after your previous employer was trade-certified, whichever is later. If you have attended training, you must apply for benefits within 182 days after your last day of training.

APPLYING FOR JOB SEARCH ALLOWANCE

1. Contact your Dislocated Worker Counselor and TAA Specialist before your interview to get the Job Search Allowance Application.
2. Fill out the Job Search Allowance Application and provide any necessary documentation of scheduled interviews.
3. Your TAA Specialist will contact you after receiving your application to let you know if you have been approved. Ensure you understand what expenses are reasonable and reimbursable.
4. Make your trip. Keep all of your receipts and documentation of your expenses while on your trip.
5. Register on the SWIFT accounting system so that you can receive reimbursement. Visit the website: **https://supplier.swift.state.mn.us/psp/fmssupap/SUPPLIER/ERP/h/**
6. Submit receipts and expense documentation to your TAA Specialist when you return.

6) Relocation Allowance

Relocation Allowance can pay for 90 percent of the costs of moving you, your family, and your belongings to a place where you have found a new job. Some of the costs Relocation Allowance can pay for include: Transportation, lodging, meals, trailer rental, mobile home moving, and moving/temporary storage of belongings. Additionally, you can receive a lump sum payment that is three times your previous weekly wage, up to $1,250.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to receive Relocation Allowance you meet the following requirements

- **Pre-Approval:** You must apply for, meet all the eligibility requirements, and be approved before you move.

- **Job Offer:** You must have been offered a job that is similar to or better than your previous position that requires you to move.
- **15 Miles:** Your new job must be at least 15 miles away one-way from your current home.
- **Non-Temporary Employment:** The job that you are moving to must not be temporary employment.
- **Full-time Employment:** The job that you are moving to must be full-time employment.

DEADLINES

- If you have not attended training, you must apply for benefits within 425 days of your last day of work or after your previous employer was trade-certified, whichever is later.
- If you have attended training, you must apply for benefits within 182 days after your last day of training.
- After approval, you have 182 days to complete the move and submit documentation for reimbursement.

APPLYING FOR RELOCATION ALLOWANCE

1. Contact your Dislocated Worker Counselor and TAA Specialist before you move to begin completing the Relocation Allowance Application.
2. Complete and submit the Relocation Allowance Application to your Dislocated Worker Counselor and TAA Specialist. This includes gathering all necessary supporting documentation.
3. Register on the SWIFT accounting system so that you can receive reimbursement. Visit the website: **https://supplier.swift.state.mn.us/psp/fmssupap/SUPPLIER/ERP/h/**
4. Once approved, conduct your move and save your receipts. Ensure you understand what expenses are considered reasonable and reimbursable.
5. Submit receipts to TAA Specialist when your move is complete.

7) Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA)

Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) provides a wage supplement for workers who are at least 50 years old and have accepted a job that pays less than they received at their TAA qualifying employer. RTAA will pay 50 percent of the difference between your new, lower wage job and your previous wage from the job that made you eligible for TAA.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to receive RTAA you must meet the following requirements:

- **50 Years or Older:** To receive RTAA you must be 50 years of age or older at the time you are reemployed.
- **Lower Paying New Job:** To receive RTAA, your new job(s) must pay less than your previous job that made you eligible for TAA.
- **Wages less than $50,000:** To receive RTAA, your new job(s) must have annual wages that are less than $50,000 a year.
- **Full-time:** You must work at least 32 hours per week at one or more jobs if you are not enrolled in TAA funded training. If you are enrolled in training, you must work at least 20 hours per week.

DURATION

You may receive RTAA for up to 104 weeks (2 years) after the date that you find a new job or after the date that you exhausted all of your rights to UI, whichever is earlier. The maximum amount of money any individual can receive through RTAA is $10,000. Contact the TRA unit at DEED.TRA@state.mn.us for more information.

TRA

You may still receive RTAA if you have previously received Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA), but the maximum amount of money that you can receive through RTAA ($10,000) will be reduced by the amount of TRA you have received.

APPLY FOR RTAA

To apply for RTAA, complete the following steps:

1. After you get your new job, contact your Dislocated Worker Counselor to complete the RTAA Application and return it to your TRA Specialist for approval.
2. TRA staff will review your application and mail you a determination.
3. If approved, you will receive forms and instructions for how to collect your RTAA.

8) HEALTH COVERAGE TAX CREDIT (HCTC)

STAY COVERED

HCTC is a tax credit through the IRS for certain health insurance coverage.

- HCTC pays 72.5% of qualified health insurance premiums for eligible individuals and their families.
- May be available to those who use COBRA, some open market plans, and/or some spouse's insurance plans where the client pays at least 75% of the premium. The client must contact the IRS to determine if plan is eligible.
- Must receive at least $1/month of UI/TRA or RTAA each month.
- Fill out Form 8885 from the IRS for year-end returns.
- Taxpayers may elect to file for HCTC with a year-end tax credit, or by enrolling in the advance credit option beginning January 2017.

Please go to the following link for the HCTC form:

https://www.irs.gov/uac/About-Form-8885

Appeal Process

As a customer of the TAA program, you deserve high quality services. If you feel a determination is incorrect, you have the right to appeal the decision and have a fair hearing. Follow the steps below to receive a review of the determination regarding your eligibility for any TAA service or benefit.

1. **Submit a first-level appeal:** Submit a first-level appeal to have an unemployment law judge review your eligibility for any TAA service or benefit. You must file an appeal within 20 calendar days of TAA sending your determination of ineligibility. The deadline to file an appeal will be included in your determination letter. An appeal must be in writing. Appeal correspondence will be via the postal service mail unless you have requested digital correspondence. Include the following information in your appeal: your name, your social security number, and the reason for the appeal. Under the Minnesota Unemployment Insurance Law, "a written statement delivered or mailed to the department that could reasonably be interpreted to mean that an involved applicant is in disagreement with a specific determination or decision is considered an appeal. No specific words need be used for the written statement to be considered an appeal." Submit your appeal via email, mail, or fax using the information below:

Email: DEED.TAA@state.mn.us
Fax: 651-296-0288
Mail: MN DEED — Trade Act Unit
1st National Bank Building
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200
St. Paul, MN 55101

Appeal Hearing Guide: **http://www.uimn.org/uimn/images/appealhearingguide.pdf**

Your appeal will be immediately forwarded to the Unemployment Insurance system in Minnesota. The Department will then schedule a hearing with an unemployment law judge. You will receive a confirmation of your hearing by mail. These hearings are conducted by phone. If you require an accommodation, please call the appeals department at 651-296-3745. To prepare for your hearing, follow the Appeal Hearing Guide at the web address above.

2. **Request Reconsideration:** Any decision issued by an unemployment law judge may be reviewed if a request for reconsideration is filed within 20 calendar days of the mail date of the decision. This deadline for requesting reconsideration will appear on the unemployment law judge's decision. After you request reconsideration, the unemployment law judge will reconsider your case and issue an order.

3. **Court of Appeals:** Any reconsideration order issued by an unemployment law judge may be appealed to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. Instructions to appeal a reconsideration order are available at: **www.mncourts.gov**

    a. Click Clerk of Appellate Courts (located on the left navigation bar)

    b. Scroll down to Popular Forms, and select Unemployment Packet.

Discrimination Complaint Procedures

Minnesota state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, creed marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, sexual orientation, genetic information (Minn. Stat. 363A.08) and, for beneficiaries, citizenship as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States.

Discrimination complaints for the TAA program will be handled following the discrimination complaint procedures for recipients of WIA Title I-B funds. To view the Discrimination Complaint Policy for WIA Title I-B, visit **https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyDetail.aspx?pol=300**. This policy provides detailed information about each step in filing a discrimination complaint.

This information is available in alternate formats to individuals with disabilities by calling 651-259-7543 or emailing **DEED.TAA@state.mn.us**.

The contact information for the MN DEED Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity is:

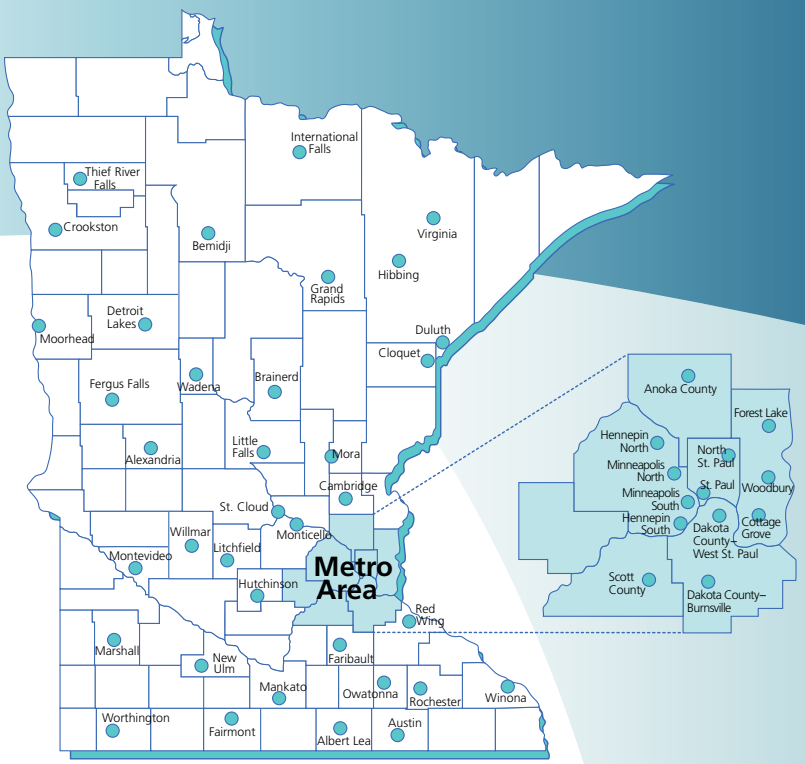
MN Department of Employment
and Economic Development

The Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
First National Bank Building, Suite E200
332 Minnesota Street
St. Paul, MN 55101-1351

651-259-7094
TTY: 651-296-3900

ODEO.DEED@state.mn.us

Minnesota WorkForce Centers



Contact Information

	Minnesota TAA Staff	Minnesota TRA Staff
Address	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Trade Act Unit 1st National Bank Building 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200 St. Paul, MN 55101	UI Customer Service P.O. Box 75576 St. Paul, MN 55175-0576
Phone	651-259-7543 (toll free) 1-888-234-1330	(UI Customer Service) 651-296-3644 (toll free) 1-877-898-9090 **Ask for a TRA Specialist*
Email	DEED.TAA@state.mn.us	DEED.TRA@state.mn.us
Web	http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/recently-unemployed/layoff/applytaa.jsp	http://mn.gov/deed/images/TRA_Handbook.pdf
Fax	651-296-0288	651-296-0253

Minnesota
Department of Employment and Economic Development