

# Tools for Change

A guide  
for HEU  
members  
facing  
layoff



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# Introduction

HEU is committed to helping union members – who lose their jobs due to privatization, restructuring and facility closures – access the resources they need.

The guide provides an overview of employment and other related resources. There is a wide array of employment and career services in communities throughout the province.

It is not our intention to replace existing and free employment services funded by HRDC (Human Resources Development Canada). Instead, we want you to have the background knowledge and information so that you can select the services that will be most useful to you while you are unemployed.

*Adapted from the 2003 original - March 2006*

# Employment Resources

## **Employment Insurance**

This number provides general information about employment insurance as well as detailed information about your own claim:

[1.800.206.7218](tel:18002067218)

## **Human Resource Centres Canada (HRCC)**

The following number will give you the address and phone number of the Human Resource Centre closest to your home:

[1.800.OCANADA \(1.800.622.6232\)](tel:1800OCANADA)

## **Inquiry BC**

Call this number from anywhere in B.C. for information on services in your area:

[1.800.663.7867](tel:18006637867)

## **The Red Book Directory of Services for the Lower Mainland**

The Red Book is available at Lower Mainland libraries and has information on community resources and employment services in the Lower Mainland:

[604.875.6381](tel:6048756381)

## **Libraries**

Ask the librarian in your community for assistance in accessing information on local services.

# Employment Insurance Benefits (EI)

To receive EI benefits you must submit an application (either in person or on-line) to your local Human Resources Development of Canada (HRDC) office. Filing can be done on-line through Appli-web at:

[www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ei-ae](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ei-ae)

EI now has “TELEDEC,” an automated service that allows you to submit your claimant’s reports using a touch-tone telephone, instead of mailing them. TELEDEC and Direct Deposit are the standard ways of processing and receiving your EI benefits.

To receive EI information by phone, call:

[1.800.206.7218](tel:1.800.206.7218)

## What information do I need when applying for EI?

### Identification:

You will need your Social Insurance Number (SIN) and personal identification such as birth certificate, driver’s licence or passport. You will be assigned a telephone access code (TAC). This code, combined with your SIN, is your electronic signature, making you responsible for the information you provide.

### Record of Employment:

You must have your ROE (Record of Employment) from your employer. You should receive your ROE within five working days of your last day of work. If you do not receive it within five days, call your HEU representative.

**Bank Account Information:**

Benefits will be paid directly into your bank account if you provide a voided blank cheque. If you use TELEDEC and Direct Deposit, your payment is deposited into your bank account in two business days. If you choose to report by mail, your payment is deposited to your bank account two business days after your report is processed.

**How is EI reporting done?**

Reporting is normally done through TELEDEC at:

1.800.531.7555

In order to access this system, you will need:

- social insurance number (SIN)
- telephone access code (TAC)
- employment information

When you call, you can select Option 1 for a demonstration or Option 2 for reporting.



### **What is the waiting period?**

You must serve a two-week unpaid waiting period before your EI benefits will begin to be paid.

### **What do I report?**

You will be making a weekly report of all earnings in the week they are earned (Sunday to Saturday).

### **How long will I receive EI?**

The maximum length of time that you can receive EI is 45 weeks. The number of weeks varies depending on the number of years you have worked as well as the unemployment rate in your region.

### **How to avoid EI disqualification, disentitlement or penalty:**

While you are receiving EI benefits, you are required to:

- be willing and able to work
- be looking for work, even temporary work
- report accurately all income from any employment
- report any absence out of country (or you may pay a penalty as well as lose benefits)
- follow staff instructions, including a call to attend an interview
- report all work, even if you'll be paid later

# Training and funding

## Frequent questions about training and funding



How do I apply for training support while on EI?

**ANSWER:** Anyone wanting to take training or attend school or college will need to complete an individual action plan for HRDC (EI) and explain why the training or education is useful to him or her. This process must happen before the course starts. If your plan is accepted by HRDC, you will not be required to search for a job while taking full-time instruction or a course.

To apply for training, you need to contact your nearest Human Resource Centre Canada (HRCC) office for information on how to apply for EI training support. HRCC may refer you to a community agency to attend a group sessions and/or one-to-one counselling where the process of applying for EI training support is explained.



## **Q** What's required for full-time studies?

**ANSWER:** For full-time studies/training, HRDC requires a work action plan and counselling appointment. HRDC defines "Full-Time Training" as:

- Minimum of 25 hours in class time
- Training that will lead to employment
- A maximum of 52 weeks

HRDC can pay for the cost of approved full-time training programs.

## **Q** What's required for part-time studies?

**ANSWER:** HRDC defines "Part-Time Training" as less than 25 hours weekly. They require you to fill out a Training Course Questionnaire that is reviewed by their staff. Although you get approval to take part-time training while on EI, HRDC will not pay the costs of part-time training courses.

### **The training application form**

The application form varies in length depending on your catchment area (i.e. the Burnaby form is 15 pages; the Surrey form is nine pages).

The application form includes sections on job searches, career goals, informational interviews, colleges/schools and budgeting.

- 1.** You are asked to document your job search



2. You must identify an employment barrier and your career goal should relate to your previous education or experience.
3. You are expected to conduct three informational interviews by contacting employers at firms where you would like to work and asking them about job prospects once you have completed your training program.
4. It is your responsibility to do Labour Market Research relating to your chosen career. If you can show that your targeted occupation is in demand, you are more likely to receive training funds.

Job futures at <[www.jobfutures.ca](http://www.jobfutures.ca)> can be a helpful site to determine the job growth in different sectors. Information can be also found in Public libraries or in EI career centers.

5. You are asked to contact three different colleges/training schools.
  - Begin by contacting a public college. They are usually less expensive and more widely recognized by health care and other employers.
  - If a private college is the only option, ensure that it is accredited by contacting the Private Post Secondary Education Commission (PPSEC) at:

Phone: 604.660.4440 or 1.800.661.7441

Website: <[www.ppsec.bc.ca](http://www.ppsec.bc.ca)>

- It is a good idea to meet with the program coordinator/counsellor to learn more about the training program you are interested in.

### **What should I look for in a training program?**

#### **Training /College Program Checklist:**

- What are the wait list, cost and program length?
- How much time is classroom instruction and how much is independent study and/or job experience?
- How successful were the graduates in finding employment? And where did they find jobs?
- Can I talk to someone who has taken the course?

## Other sources of financial assistance

### Student Loans:

You are expected to contribute in some way to the cost of your training. This will be negotiated with you before your application is approved. While HRDC does not expect you to take out a Canada Student Loan, this may be one way for you to make a contribution to your training

Student loans are available from the Ministry of Advanced Education in B.C. You apply for student loans at the institution where you are taking your course. Six months after you finish your course, you start making monthly repayments to the government with interest. Contact your school's financial aid office for current information at:

[www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentservices/student/sp/awards/hcs.htm](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentservices/student/sp/awards/hcs.htm)

## Funds and bursaries

- LPN return to nursing funds

[www.healthplanning.gov.bc.ca/ndirect/nstrategies.html](http://www.healthplanning.gov.bc.ca/ndirect/nstrategies.html)

- Columbia Institute Awards program

[www.columbiainstitute.ca](http://www.columbiainstitute.ca)

## Work sharing while learning (WSWL)

### What is WSWL?

Work Sharing While Learning (WSWL) is an innovative and a very new approach designed to help prevent layoffs and encourage investment in employee learning and re-skilling by employers who operate in

EI Economic Regions with an unemployment rate of 10 per cent and higher. This program applies to anyone living outside the Lower Mainland and Victoria.

For further information, please contact your nearest HRCC (Human Resources Centre of Canada). To locate your nearest HRCC, call:

- **Phone:**  
1.800.OCANADA
- **Website:**  
<http://www.hrdc.gc.ca/menu/profile-search.shtml>

# Medical Services Plan

For questions about your MSP (Medical Services Plan) payments, call:

604.683.7151 (or 1.800.663.7100)

There are two types of subsidies available to lower the cost of Medical Service Plan premiums:

- Regular premium assistance
- Temporary premium assistance.

## **Regular premium assistance**

This is offered to families having a combined net income of \$24,000/year or less (based on the previous year's income).

## **Temporary premium assistance**

Temporary assistance is for people unable to pay their premiums because of unexpected financial hardship (i.e. job layoff). To qualify, you must provide information (i.e. budget) that shows you are unable to pay your premiums. In most cases, premium assistance will continue until you advise MSP your income has changed (or until MSP determines you are no longer eligible).

Temporary premium assistance is currently being managed by the Ministry of Provincial Revenue at:

1-800-207-2051

If you have internet access, a temporary premium assistance application can be downloaded from:

<[www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/msp](http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/msp)>

# Pension information

**It is important to get information about your pension options before you are laid off, because if you want to purchase back periods of service (i.e. unpaid LOAs), you must apply before your last day of work.**

If you are a member of the Municipal Pension Plan, you can get information from the HEU website, the Pensions B.C. website or by calling the Pension Corporation/ Municipal Pension Plan:

- **In Victoria:**  
250-953-3000
- **In Vancouver:**  
604-660-5366
- **Other areas of B.C.**  
1-800-668-6335
- **Mailing address:**  
Municipal Pension Plan  
Pension Corporation  
P.O. Box 9464 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9V8
- **E-mail:**  
MPP.PensionCorp@pensionsbc.ca

To access information about purchasing back years of service, go to the B.C. Pensions website at <[www.pensionsbc.ca](http://www.pensionsbc.ca)>. Click on “Municipal,” “Publications,” scroll down to “Pensionfacts” and download these PDF files:

- Terminating employment
- Paying for your purchase option;
- Purchase of service

