

Job Training for the Unemployed

Governor Culver announced that the US Department of Labor has certified \$70.8 million in federal Recovery Act funds to the state of Iowa. Iowa became eligible for these funds as a result of the passage of Senate File 197, the law modernizing Iowa's unemployment insurance system.

"These funds will directly benefit unemployed Iowans who are seeking to improve their skills in the workplace, and to stay competitive. In addition, these funds will help to stabilize the state Unemployment Trust Fund, to minimize the impact of the national recession on Iowa's employers," said Governor Culver.

Job Training

Senate File 197 provides an additional 26 weeks in unemployment benefits, if the individual participates in a

Iowa Workforce Development department approved training program. The individual would have to have been in a declining occupation or involuntarily separated from employment by a permanent reduction in operations at their last job.

The benefits will not pay for the training, but will assist Iowans who want to improve their skills by extending their unemployment benefits. It is also hoped that this will be a long-term solution for a chronic unemployed person since they will be trained for a better, long-term career.

Changes to the Base Period

One of the difficulties in qualifying for unemployment benefits in Iowa has been that some workers do not have enough wages earned in a particular period to qualify for unemployment. Senate File 197

allows a base period of wages for the most recent quarter to be counted.

This change helps the seasonal employed worker who may not work for extended periods of time, or who works sporadically, qualify for unemployment. There are 19 states that already have this provision in their unemployment laws.

Iowa was the first state in the country to fully pass an unemployment modernization bill and completely qualify for all the federal benefits. The \$70.8 million Iowa is certified to receive is part of a \$7 billion national unemployment insurance modernization initiative signed into law by President Obama as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.