

Coal Workforce Transition Program

Frequently Asked Questions

*Please note this list of questions is not exhaustive and is subject to change. Please refer to the website for more information: www.alberta.ca/coal-workers

What is the Coal Workforce Transition Program?

The Coal Workforce Transition Program provides financial support for relocation, retirement, re-employment and education to ensure a meaningful transition for workers affected by the phase out of coal-fired electricity generation. This program ensures workers can continue to provide for their families as they prepare for new jobs or retirements.

Who can apply?

A worker who was continuously employed for at least one year with one or more of the affected coal-fired power plants or mines, immediately prior to the date of layoff.

Is there an age requirement for the program?

No, there is no age requirement for this program.

When can a worker apply?

Applications are available on the Government of Alberta website at www.alberta.ca/coal-workers. Workers can apply starting January 2, 2018.

How can a worker apply?

For Bridge to Re-employment and Bridge to Retirement, applications must be submitted in person. Please call the Alberta Supports Contact Centre at 1-877-644-9992 to schedule an appointment. The Relocation Assistance application must be submitted by email, fax, or mail (application submission instructions are included on the application form).

Prior to going in for your appointment please insure you have the proper documentation.

You will need:

Bridge-to-Re-employment

- Government issued ID

Bridge-to-Retirement

- Government issued ID
- Copy of Employer Pension statement

How much financial support can a worker get?

Bridge-to-Reemployment

Bridge to Re-employment payments will help workers in their transition to re-employment. Workers will receive support through a relief grant that when combined with Employment Insurance benefits will provide 75 per cent of a worker's previous weekly earnings. The relief grant will continue up to the date of full time re-employment or 45 weeks, whichever is shorter.

Bridge-to-Retirement

Bridge to Retirement payments will support workers in transitioning into retirement. It will provide a relief grant of 75 per cent of a worker's previous weekly earnings, up to the point of pension eligibility, or 72 weeks, or when employment income (gross income) is greater than the relief payment, whichever is shorter.

Relocation assistance

Relocation Assistance will provide a one-time lump sum payment up to \$5,000 to assist laid-off workers with the costs associated with relocating their household a minimum of 40km for confirmed new full-time employment or self-employment.

When will I get paid and how often?

Bridge to Re-employment and Retirement relief payments will be paid bi-weekly. A one-time payment for Relocation Assistance will be made after the move takes place, and the application and supporting documentation has been received and approved.

Can a worker apply for supports multiple times?

No. Workers can apply for each support program once.

Will the financial support received be taxable?

Yes. The Bridge to Re-employment, Bridge to Retirement, and Relocation Assistance relief payments are taxable. This will be reflected in your payment amount.

Will a worker's Employment Insurance benefit amount be reduced due to the Government of Alberta relief grant payments?

No. The amount of relief payment received will not result in a decrease to a worker's weekly Employment Insurance benefit amount.

How can a worker contact the processing centre?

If you require additional information or would like to make an appointment to submit an application for Bridge to Re-employment or Bridge to Retirement, please call the Alberta Supports Contact Centre toll free at: 1-877-644-9992. ***Please select option "For Information on coal transition program".**

Are workers who are on apprenticeships eligible?

Yes. The apprenticeship training period is considered as part of the one year of continuous employment with the employer. Apprentices must meet all program eligibility criteria.

Under the Bridge to Re-employment, what if a worker finds part-time or temporary contractual work?

Workers are encouraged to find new work. If a worker has full time (35hrs or more/week) employment, the relief grant payment will be paused. Workers must submit a Change of Circumstance form and any pause can only occur within the first year of application.

Are employees who were bumped by thermal coal plant workers eligible for the relief grant program?

Yes, the relief grants are available to employees affected by bumping. Employers must provide written confirmation confirming these employees were bumped as a result of layoffs at one of the listed coal plants or mines. Employees who were bumped must be living and working in Alberta when they were laid off. These employees can call the Alberta Supports Contact Centre at 1-877-644-9992 to schedule an appointment to submit their application for Bridge to Re-employment and Bridge to Retirement relief grants.

If a worker is eligible for their employer pension at time of layoff, can they receive Bridge to Retirement for up to 72 weeks and postpone collecting their employer pension?

This relief grant is aimed at assisting individuals who are close to retirement, but who are not yet eligible for their employer pension. Workers, who are eligible for their company pension, but wish to delay accessing their retirement pension, are not eligible for Bridge to Retirement.

Is there an application deadline for the relief grants or relocation assistance?

Yes. Applicants to Bridge to Re-employment and Relocation Assistance must apply within 52 weeks (1 year) from date of layoff. Bridge to Retirement applicants must apply within three months from date of layoff.

If a worker is on maternity or parental leave and laid-off are they eligible to apply?

Workers receiving special leave benefits are encouraged to apply. If the employee has had a minimum of one year of service with one of the listed coal plants or mines prior to their layoff, the employee may be eligible.