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Hoosiers rarely take advantage of benefit program that's now costing workers thousands

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Photo by: RTV6/Jason Strong



PERU — Angie Barrows is anxious about heading back to school to train for a new career after working 19 years at Schneider Electric.

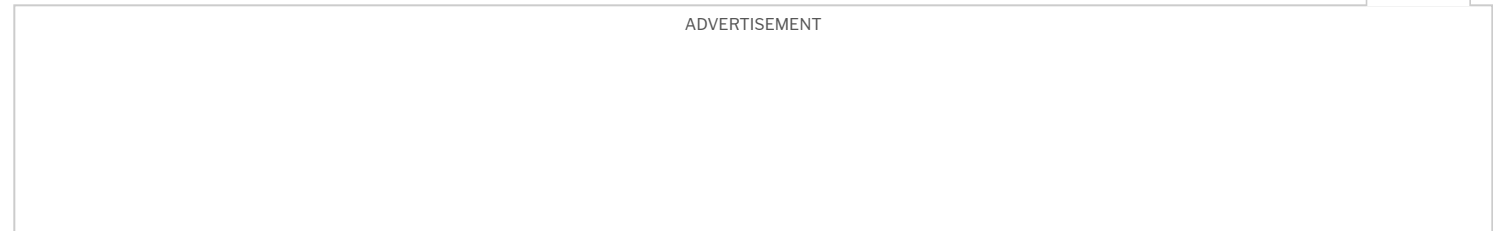
"I never thought I'd have to look for another job, but ... here we go," Barrows, who has worked for Schneider Electric for 19 years, said.

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Since some Schneider jobs are Mexico bound, all employees are eligible to get federal benefits through the Trade Adjustment Act, or TAA.

It pays for training, moving expenses, and, if you're 50 and older, a wage subsidy up to \$10,000.

"Our goal is to not only help increase their employ-ability skills but to get them back into the workforce as quickly as we possibly can, at that highest possible wag," Mandy Mahurin, with the Department of Workforce Development, said.

Call 6 Investigates found that the majority of Hoosier workers that can tap into the federal funding don't. In some cases, it's because of retirement or finding a new job.

We found that less than one-third of workers sign up for TAA programs meant to get them back on their feet.

At Schneider, with about 300 impacted workers, it would be shocking if 90 of them took advantage of TAA.

We're talking big money.

On average, Hoosier workers are leaving more than \$22,000 in training and support on the table.

"So this is money that those workers have paid in for years and years and years, and this is their opportunity to get back what they put into it," Mahurin said.

"It truly is a once in a lifetime thing that we hope that they (at Schneider

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Compared to women, men overall are less likely to sign-up for the TAA benefits.

"TAA is such a critical program because it has a vast menu of services available there's something in the program for everyone," Mahurin said. "Regardless where they are in their life or age-wise or education or employment history. there's something there that could benefit anyone in their goals for employment and training."

Hiring Hoosiers is an initiative from RTV6 that works to connect Hoosiers to employment opportunities, career development resources, training programs and educational paths. [Learn more about Hiring Hoosiers](#) and see new stories weekdays at 6 a.m. on RTV6.

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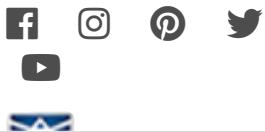
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