County of Orange Social Services Agency
Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services Division

Program/Area:  CalWORKs/Welfare-to-Work
Title:  Vocational Education and Training – Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institutions
Number:  223 A  Status:  Signature on File  
Effective Date:  01/01/2021  Date:  11/23/2021
Approved:

PURPOSE
Provide guidelines regarding evaluating and monitoring the Vocational Education and Training (VTC/VTR) Welfare-To-Work (WTW) activities for WTW PARTICIPANTs enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary educational institutions. In this policy, “PARTICIPANT(s)” refers to WTW participant(s) enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary educational institutions.

For PARTICIPANTs enrolled in private postsecondary educational institutions, refer Policy 223 – Vocational Education and Training – Privately Funded Postsecondary Educational Institutions for information.

POLICY
PARTICIPANTs enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary educational institutions shall:

- Be approved for all education programs, including Associate, Bachelor’s, Master’s, PhD, teaching credential and certificate programs at any time while receiving aid.
- Be entitled to receive advanced standard ancillary payments for required books and college supplies ten (10) days prior to the start of a semester/quarter. Refer to Policy 315 Ancillary Supportive Services and the Supportive Services - Advanced Standard Ancillary Payment Processing Guide (PG) for more information.
- Not be required to participate in the initial engagement activities (such as Job Search and Job Readiness (JSR), and Employment Readiness Assessment)
  ○ Online Appraisal/Re-Appraisal Tool (OCAT) remains a component of the WTW engagement process per current rules. However, PARTICIPANTs already enrolled in public institution at the time of Appraisal are not required to complete an OCAT.

- Receive three (3) hours of study time for each enrolled academic unit/hour for purposes of calculating WTW hourly requirements. There is no distinction between credit vs. non-credit unit or supervised vs. unsupervised homework time.
Complete Assessment only for the purpose of identifying any barriers to participation in education, such as domestic violence, substance use, mental health, learning disability, or other barriers.

Not be disallowed from attending the institution due to refusal to attend an Assessment.

These provisions only apply to PARTICIPANTs enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary educational institutions, including online schools even if the institution is located out-of-state, and independent institutions of higher education as defined under the Definitions section of this policy.

**Postsecondary Education**: any continuing education program designed primarily for students who have completed or terminated their high school or are beyond the high school age, including academic, vocational, or professional education.

**Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institution**: includes community colleges, state universities, approved Adult Education schools, occupational schools, trade and technical schools, and institutions operated by the state or the United States government. This link lists eligible adult schools and adult education providers in California.

**Independent Institutions of Higher Education**: non-public higher education institutions are formed as non-profit corporations in California and accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

**Academic Unit (class time/hour)**: includes credit and non-credit classes. For example, English Language Learner for U.S. Citizenship, and Basic Math Computation are non-credit courses but class time and homework time are allowable.
**Homework Time:** study time in addition to class time to complete class assignments.

**Proof of Enrollment:** school registration, class schedule, welcome letter, or acceptance email from the school.

**Satisfactory Progress:** is determined by current standards of the educational institution. Proof of enrollment is sufficient to demonstrate satisfactory progress.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

**PARTICIPANT** must provide proof of school enrollment at the beginning of each school session.

Proof of enrollment must:

- Clearly indicate the enrollment status (full-time/part-time) so the appropriate advanced standard ancillary payment can be issued; and
- Include number of units enrolled in the current session for the purpose of determining participation hours for part-time students.

Acceptable proof of enrollment may include, but not limited to, a letter/email from the school indicating the **PARTICIPANT** is enrolled at the institution for the upcoming session, a class schedule for the upcoming session, or the Community College Verification of Aid List (if all pertinent information is provided on the list, i.e. enrollment status) submitted by the colleges.

### WTW FLOW

**PARTICIPANT**s may request to participate in Vocational Education and Training activity at any time while receiving aid.

**PARTICIPANT**s are required to attend orientation and appraisal/OCAT consistent with the normal WTW flow. However, they are **not** required to be referred to and complete an Employment Readiness Assessment.

Below is an example timeline of the sequence of activities for a **PARTICIPANT** enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary educational institutions:

- Opens CalWORKs case
- Expresses intent to participate in a publicly funded postsecondary educational institution
- Completes Orientation
- Completes Appraisal/OCAT
- Provides proof of enrollment
- Completes optional barrier assessment, as needed
- Signs a WTW plan at least 30 days prior to session start date or as soon as possible
- Receives advanced standard ancillary payment at least 10 days before session start date or as soon as possible
- Attends school
- Session ends – may be assigned bridging activities during school break*
• Next session - continues existing WTW plan if appropriate or signs new WTW plan if there are changes

*Bridging activities can be any of the full array of WTW activities. However, the bridging activity should complement and must not interfere with the PARTICIPANT’s educational program. PARTICIPANTs who are not assigned bridging activities when school is out of session will have good cause to not participate. Refer to WT 15 WTW Activities Matrix for a list of WTW activities.

PARTICIPANTs who no longer enrolled in a publicly funded postsecondary educational institution will return to the normal WTW Flow.

**WTW PLAN**

PARTICIPANTs who are eligible for the provisions of this policy shall be required to sign a WTW plan to receive supportive services. If there is no change to the enrollment status or supportive service needs, a new WTW plan is not required for subsequent school sessions if a proof of enrollment is provided at the beginning of each school session.

A new or revised WTW plan must be provided to the PARTICIPANT no later than thirty (30) days prior to the start of the educational session or as soon as administratively possible upon receiving the proof of enrollment. This will help ensure enough processing time to provide the advanced standard ancillary payment at least ten (10) days prior to the session start date.

If the WTW plan is not provided to the PARTICIPANT at least thirty (30) days before the start of the session, the previous WTW plan will remain in effect and the previous advanced standard ancillary payment amount will be issued to the PARTICIPANT regardless of changes discovered upon receiving proof of enrollment.

Below is a list of required content for the WTW Plan:

• The education schedule for the session, including:
  ○ The number of units the PARTICIPANT is enrolled in (not required for PARTICIPANTs enrolled full-time)
  ○ Weekly participation hours (include class time, and approved study time) for the purpose of receiving categorically approved childcare. **Note**: Childcare shall be authorized full-time unless the recipient specifically requests part-time care. Refer to Policy 301 CalWORKs Child Care Program, Policy 302 Child Care Services- Stage One and the Supportive Services- Child Care Request PG for more information.

• A description of the supportive services the PARTICIPANT may request, including the advanced standard ancillary payment for books and college supplies. PARTICIPANT may submit the WTW Educational Ancillary Request (F063-41-414) to request educational ancillary supportive services.

**Note**: At the beginning of VTC/VTR activity, the Case Manager (CM) must review the WTW 8 Student Financial Aid Statement and discuss the option to
use financial aid to pay for educational ancillary expenses with PARTICIPANT to confirm the PARTICIPANT’s decision. However, if a PARTICIPANT decides to use financial aid for supportive services, the appropriate advanced standard ancillary payment must be issued to PARTICIPANT.

**ADVANCED STANDARD ANCILLARY PAYMENT**

PARTICIPANTs will receive an advanced standard ancillary payment for required books and college supplies accordance to enrollment status. The advanced standard ancillary payments shall be issued at least ten (10) days before the beginning of the session to prevent a lack of needed school materials as a barrier to education.

- Full-time enrollment status – $500 for the semester or $350 for the quarter of enrollment.
- Part-time enrollment status – $250 for the semester or $175 for the quarter of enrollment.

The advanced standard ancillary payment is provided if the PARTICIPANT provides the proof of school enrollment for the semester. Staff should not request additional documentation to issue advanced standard ancillary payment. If the student was eligible for the advanced standard ancillary payment that they received, then there is no overpayment even if the PARTICIPANT’s enrollment status later changes from full-time to part-time, or they decide not to attend school.

Refer to the Supportive Services - Advanced Standard Ancillary Payment PG for instructions on how to process Advanced Standard Ancillary Payments.

PARTICIPANTs may also request reimbursement for the actual expenses which exceed the applicable standard payments. In these instances, the CM shall communicate with the Eligibility Worker to issue reimbursement within twenty (20) calendar days of the PARTICIPANT’s request and obtain verification of expenses.

**Note:** Reimbursement for expenses more than the standard ancillary payment must comply with current policy and regulations for ancillary supportive service payments. Refer to Policy 310 Transportation Supportive Services and Policy 315 Ancillary Supportive Services for more information.

**WORK PARTICIPATION**

CalWORKs recipients are subject to WTW participation as a condition of eligibility.

- PARTICIPANTs attending school full-time are considered meeting WTW participation requirements.
- PARTICIPANTs attending school part-time are subject to WTW hourly participation requirements and may need to combine their education with other activities to meet their required participation hours.
- PARTICIPANTs receive three (3) hours of homework/study time for each enrolled academic unit/hour. There is no distinction between
credit vs. non-credit unit or supervised vs. unsupervised homework time.

To calculate weekly homework/study hours, CMs should determine the academic units or weekly class hours for each class and multiply that by three (3). The weekly homework/study hours would then be added to the weekly class hours to determine the weekly participation hours.

Note: PARTICIPANTs may receive actual homework/study hours above the three (3) hours per class hour, if the school verifies there is higher need for any given course(s) or individual(s) (e.g., for an individual with learning disability that requires additional study hours be allotted).

**Example A (academic units):**
- A PARTICIPANT is enrolled in eight (8) academic units (hours).
- Weekly study time calculation:
  - 8 academic units X 3 hours of study time = 24 weekly study time hours
- Total participation hours calculation:
  - 24 weekly study time hours + 8 academic units = 32 total weekly hours of participation

**Example B (non-credit class):**
- A PARTICIPANT is enrolled in a non-credit class that meets three (3) times a week for one (1) hour each time.
  - 1 class hour X 3 times per week = 3 class hours per week
- Weekly study time calculation:
  - 3 class hours X 3 hours of study time = 9 weekly study hours
- Total participation hours calculation:
  - 9 weekly study hours + 3 class hours = 12 total weekly hours of participation

In a Two-Parent Assistance Unit (AU), at the option of the AU, both parents may contribute towards the hourly participation requirement. In situations where both parents in the AU are attending publicly funded postsecondary educational institution, this policy would apply to each PARTICIPANT in determining the correct advanced standard ancillary payment amounts and participation hours.

**WELFARE-TO-WORK VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING PLAN**

The Welfare-To-Work Vocational Education/Training Plan (F063-41-05) provides essential information for the CM to document the PARTICIPANT’s training goal; however, it is not required, no negative action can be taken if the PARTICIPANT refused or did not provide the form.

The CM is to complete the appropriate fields on the F063-41-05 and provide it to the PARTICIPANT.
A new **F063-41-05** should be provided when there is a change in the PARTICIPANT’s school and/or training goal that is different from the original approved education plan.

**Note**: Clients may choose to participate in any education program or courses in which they are permitted to enroll by the educational institution, even if the educational program is not expected to lead to employment.

**DOCUMENTATION**

To be eligible for the advanced standard ancillary payment and this policy provision, PARTICIPANT must provide the proof of enrollment in a publicly funded postsecondary institution.

**INFORMING NOTICE**

The Informing Notice **F063-41-447** is included in the CalWORKs Application, Annual Redetermination, and Welfare-to-Work Appraisal packets to inform CalWORKs applicants and recipients of the option to pursue educational career pathway, and highlights the new changes for participation in postsecondary higher education.

**COLLABORATION WITH COLLEGE COUNSELORS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS**

SSA staff must maintain professional and regular communication with the College Counselors. This is important to promote the success of the PARTICIPANT.

Community Colleges receive funding from the State to provide professional counselors to assist PARTICIPANTs. These counselors follow guidelines provided to them by the State Chancellor’s Office.

- College Counselors receive training about federal, State, and County regulations within CW.
- In some cases, the College Counselors may advocate on behalf of the PARTICIPANT and can do so if the action is reasonable, and not disruptive to operations and the case management process.
- College Counselors also review specific policy issues and act on the advice of their own legal counsel. This may include representing a PARTICIPANT and speaking about their situation with the judge during a Fair Hearing.

SSA’s goal is to create a working relationship of mutual intent that will assist the PARTICIPANT’s transition to self-sufficiency.

The **CW Program Community College Contact List** can be used to contact Orange County Community College CW Program Offices.

Concerns should be documented and reported immediately to the Supervisor/SSA Regional Office Educational Liaison Contacts.

**REFERENCES**

ACL 21-04, ACL 21-75E

*Policy 223 Vocational Education and Training – Private Postsecondary Educational Institutions*

*Policy 310 Transportation Supportive Services*