

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

Program/Area: CalWORKs/Welfare-to-Work

Title: Vocational Education - Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institutions

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PURPOSE

Provide guidelines regarding evaluating and monitoring the Vocational Education (Voc Ed) Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activities for WTW participants enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary educational institutions.

For participants enrolled in privately postsecondary educational institutions, refer to [Policy 223 – Vocational Education – Privately Funded Postsecondary Educational Institutions](#) for information.

POLICY

Participants enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary educational institutions shall:

- Be approved for all educational goals including Adult Basic Education (ABE), Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, PhD, teaching credential and certificate programs at any time while receiving aid.
 - ABE is intended for participants who are lacking basic literacy or mathematics skills, a high school diploma or GED, or English as a Second Language (ESL).
- Be entitled to receive advanced standard ancillary payments for required books and college supplies 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 Vocational Assessment).
- Online Appraisal/Re-Appraisal Tool (OCAT) remains a component of the WTW engagement process per current rules.
- Receive 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 Vocational 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. Vocational Assessment is not mandated.

These provisions apply to participants enrolled in online schools as well even if the institution is located out-of-state, and independent institutions of higher education as defined under the [Definitions](#) section of this policy.

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DEFINITIONS

Postsecondary Education: Any continuing education program designed primarily for students who have completed or terminated high school, 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 [CalAdultEd.org](#) lists eligible adult education school providers in California.

Independent Institutions of Higher Education: Non-public higher education institutions that 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 allowed to complete class assignments.

Proof of Enrollment: Verification that participant has been registered or accepted as a student in an accredited education institution. Examples of verification include school registration, class schedule, welcome letter, or acceptance email from the school.

Satisfactory Progress: 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 is 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, e.g., enrollment status). For information to access the list, refer to the [Supportive Services - Advanced Standard Ancillary Payment Processing Guide](#) (PG).

ENROLLMENT STATUS FOR APPROVED ADULT EDUCATION SCHOOLS/ SUMMER SESSIONS/ WINTER INTERSESSIONS Adult education schools often do not apply semester or quarter designations and/or full-time and part-time enrollment status in alignment with two and four-year post-secondary educational institutions.

Instructional hours will be used to determine full-time/part-time enrollment status and homework hours as follows:

- One academic unit is roughly equivalent to 1 instructional hour per week.
- To determine weekly instructional hours, staff must add the participant's actual number of instructional hours for the week and round up to the nearest hour.

Example: A course that meets for 50 minutes, three times a week has a total of 2 hours and 30 minutes of actual instructional hours per week which will be rounded up to 3 instructional hours per week.

Case Managers (CM) must refer to the [CalAdultEd](#) website to verify eligible adult schools and adult education providers across California.

In determining the appropriate enrollment status and advanced standard ancillary payment amounts for participants enrolled in approved adult education schools, summer sessions and winter intersessions, refer to the [WT - 60 Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institution Guidelines](#).

ENROLLED IN MULTIPLE PUBLICLY FUNDED POST- If participants enrolled simultaneously in multiple publicly funded postsecondary educational institutions, CMs will calculate the total number of units and/or instructional hours across all educational institutions to determine the participant's full-time/part-time enrollment status and the appropriate advanced standard ancillary payment amount.

SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- Participants enrolled for a total of 12 units or hours, or more, are full-time.
- Participants enrolled for less than 12 units or hours are part-time.

For supportive services purposes, if participants enrolled in quarter-based and semester-based institutions simultaneously, CMs will issue the appropriate semester-based advanced standard ancillary payment.

The maximum advanced standard ancillary payment a participant can receive is \$500 per duration of the educational session which initiated their advanced standard ancillary payment, regardless of the total number of academic units/instructional hours they are enrolled in (e.g. participant enrolls full-time at a semester school and later enrolls part-time at an adult school towards the end of the semester, they will only be eligible to the maximum \$500 advanced standard ancillary payment for the duration of the semester).

Note: Participant can request reimbursement for actual ancillary expenses in addition to the advanced standard ancillary payment when those expenses exceed the advanced standard ancillary payment amount. Refer to [Policy 315 – Ancillary Supportive Services](#) for more information.

Example 1 (Academic Units):

- Participant 1 is enrolled in 6 academic units at Institution A (Semester).
- Participant 1 is also enrolled in 6 academic units at Institution B (Quarter).
 - 6 academic semester units + 6 academic quarter units = 12 academic units total
 - Participant 1 is full-time and will receive a \$500, semester-based advanced standard ancillary payment.

Example 2 (Instructional Hours/Academic Units):

- Participant 2 is enrolled in 4 academic units at Institution C (Quarter).
- Participant 2 is also enrolled in 4 instructional hours per week at an adult school on a 16-week academic session (Semester).
 - 4 academic units (quarter-based) + 4 instructional hours (semester-based) per week = 8 academic units/instructional hours total factored at a semester-based level.
 - Participant 2 is part-time and will receive a \$250 advanced standard ancillary payment.

Example 3 (Enrolled More Than Full-Time in Multiple Schools with Misaligned Terms):

- Participant 3 is enrolled in 12 instructional hours at an adult school for 16 weeks (full-time/semester).
 - Participant receives \$500 advanced standard ancillary payment.
- Participant 3 also enrolls in 3 academic units at a community college (part-time/semester) while enrolled at the adult school.

- Participant 3 is not eligible for any additional advanced standard ancillary payment due to receiving the maximum \$500 advanced standard payment.
 - Participant 3 could become eligible for another advanced standard ancillary payment once the term which prompted the initial payment has been completed.

Example 4 (Enrolled Part-Time at Multiple Schools with Misaligned Terms):

- Participant 4 is enrolled part-time (6 academic units) in semester-based community college.
 - Participant 4 receives a \$250 advanced standard ancillary payment.
- Eight weeks into the semester, participant 4 enrolls in 6 instructional hours at an adult school for 12 weeks (part-time/quarter).
 - 6 units at the community college + 6 instructional hours at the adult school = 12 academic units/instructional hours total (full-time equivalent).
 - Participant 4 receives an additional \$250 to their original advanced standard ancillary payment.
- The community college semester ends, and participant 4 enrolls full-time in a full summer session at the semester-based community college.
 - Participant 4 is eligible for a \$350, full summer school session advanced standard ancillary payment. This is true even though the adult school term is in progress since the educational term which initiated an advanced standard ancillary payment ended.

ADDING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO PROVIDER LIST

Refer to the [Add WTW School Provider to the WTW Educational Provider List Processing Guide](#) (PG) for further instructions.

If the participant's selected school is not listed in the WTW Educational Provider List, the CM will complete the [Request for Non Supportive Services/Vendors form](#), and forward to FSS-AS Policy & Quality Assurance (PQA) via chain of command for approval.

ENTERING SCHOOL INFORMATION IN CASE RECORD

All school information must be entered into the case record. Refer to Education and Skills Development Access Rate section of the [Cal-OAR Detail Window Desk Guide](#) for instructions.

The CM will send the completed [Employment Services Communication Document](#) (F063-41-211) form to the Eligibility Worker to update the case record once the participants report or complete their certificate/degree.

WTW FLOW

Participants may request to participate in a Vocational Education activity at any time while receiving aid.

Participants are required to be appraised/re-appraised following the normal WTW flow. However, they are not required to be referred to or complete a Vocational 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 Online Appraisal/Re-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 a new WTW plan if there are changes

*Bridging activities can be any WTW activity. 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 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.

Participants who are no longer enrolled in a publicly funded postsecondary educational institution will return to the normal WTW Flow. Refer to [Policy 200 - Welfare-to-Work Program, Activities and Participation Requirements](#).

WTW PLAN

Participants 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 when 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 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 10 days prior to the session start date.

If the WTW plan is not provided to the participant at least 30 days before the start of the session, the previous WTW plan will remain in effect. The advanced standard ancillary payment amount will be issued based on the enrollment verification. Refer to [WT - 60 Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institution Guidelines](#) for instructions.

The [WTW Vocational Education/Training Plan \(F063-41-05\)](#) can be utilized to obtain participant's educational goal. However, it is not required, so no negative action can be taken if the participant refused or did not provide the form.

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.

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

- Vocational Education activity is Voc Ed – Public Non-Profit regardless of educational goals.
- Educational goals as indicated on the [F063-41-05](#) or disclosed by the participant.
- 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 (including 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 Processing Guide](#) (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.

Note: At the beginning of Voc Ed activity, the CM must review the [WTW 8 – Student Financial Aid Statement WTW Supportive Services](#) and discuss the option to use financial aid to pay for educational ancillary expenses with participant to confirm the participant's decision to use financial aid to pay for supportive services. However, if the participant decides to use financial aid for supportive services, the appropriate advanced standard ancillary payment must still 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 10 days before the beginning of the session to prevent a lack of needed school materials as a barrier to education. Refer to [WT - 60 Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institution Guidelines](#) for details.

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 participant 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.

Participant may submit the [WTW Educational Ancillary Request \(F063-41-414\)](#) to request reimbursement if the total educational expenses for the semester exceed

the advanced standard ancillary payment. **Note:** Receipts for all expenses are required.

Refer to the [Supportive Services - Advanced Standard Ancillary Payment Processing Guide](#) (PG) for instructions on how to process advanced standard ancillary 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 requirements as a condition of eligibility.

- Participants attending school full-time during the regular academic or summer session regardless of the session duration are considered meeting WTW participation requirements.
- Participants attending school part-time during the regular academic or summer session of any duration are subject to WTW participation requirements and may need to combine their education with other activities to meet their required participation hours.
- Participants attending school during winter intersessions are considered meeting WTW participation requirements.
- Participants receive 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 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 3 hours per class hour, if the school verifies there is higher need for any given course or individual (e.g., for an individual with a learning disability that requires additional study hours be allotted).

Example A (academic units):

- A participant is enrolled in 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 3 times a week for 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 school, this policy would apply to each participant in determining the correct advanced standard ancillary payment amounts and participation hours.

INFORMING NOTICE

The informing notice, [Important Information For WTW Participants Interested In Further Education \(F063-41-447\)](#) 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 their education or training as their WTW activity, 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 CalWORKs.
- In some cases, the College Counselors may advocate on behalf of the participant.

Note: Concerns should be documented and reported immediately to the Supervisor/[SSA Regional Office Educational Liaison Contacts](#).
- 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 during a Fair Hearing.

The [CW Program Community College Contact List](#) can be used to contact Orange County Community College CW Program Offices as needed.

REFERENCES

All County Letters: 21-04, 21-75E, 22-31
[Policy 200 – Welfare-to-Work Program, Activities and Participation Requirements](#)
[Policy 223 – Vocational Education – Privately Funded Postsecondary Educational Institutions](#)
[Policy 301 – Child Care Program](#)
[Policy 302 – Child Care Services - Stage One](#)
[Policy 310 – Transportation Supportive Services](#)
[Policy 315 – Ancillary Supportive Services](#)

ATTACHMENTS

[Add WTW School Provider to the WTW Educational Provider List PG](#)
[Cal-OAR Detail Window Desk Guide](#)

[CW Program Community College Contact List](#)
[SSA Regional Office Educational Liaison Contacts](#)
[Supportive Services – Advanced Standard Ancillary Payment PG](#)
[Supportive Services – Child Care Request PG](#)
[Worker Tool - 15 WTW Activities Matrix](#)
[Worker Tool - 60 Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institution Guidelines.](#)

FORMS

[F063-41-05 WTW Vocational Education/Training Plan](#)
[F063-41-211 Employment Services Communication Document](#)
[F063-41-414 WTW Educational Ancillary Request](#)
[F063-41-447 Important Information For WTW Participants Interested In Further Education](#)
[WTW 8 – Student Financial Aid Statement WTW Supportive Services](#)

OCCSSA