

**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 for the evaluation and monitoring of the Vocational Education (Voc Ed) Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activity for WTW participants enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary educational institutions.

For participants enrolled in privately funded 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 lack basic literacy or mathematics skills, a high school diploma or GED, or English as a Second Language (ESL).
- Be entitled to receive the advance standard ancillary payment for required books and college supplies 10 days prior to the start of a semester/quarter or as soon as administratively possible. Refer to Policy 315– Ancillary Supportive Services and the Advance 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).
- Not be required to participate in Orientation and the Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT) more than once unless there is a break in aid or supportive services for more than a year.
- Not be required to participate in WTW bridging activities during school breaks.
- Receive 3 hours of study time for each enrolled academic unit/instructional hour for the purpose 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, including institutions located out-of-state, and independent institutions of higher education as defined under the Definitions section of this policy.

BOOKMARKS

[DEFINITIONS](#)

[ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA](#)

[ENROLLMENT STATUS FOR APPROVED ADULT EDUCATION SCHOOLS](#)

[SCHOOL BREAKS](#)

[ENROLLED IN MULTIPLE PUBLICLY FUNDED POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS](#)

[ADDING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO RESOURCE DATABANK \(RDB\)](#)

[CAL-OAR PERFORMANCE MEASURES RELATED TO EDUCATION](#)

[WELFARE-TO-WORK FLOW](#)

[WTW ACTIVITY AGREEMENT](#)

[ADVANCE STANDARD ANCILLARY PAYMENT](#)

[WORK PARTICIPATION](#)

[COLLABORATION WITH COLLEGE COUNSELORS AND EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS](#)

[REFERENCES](#)

[ATTACHMENTS](#)

[FORMS](#)

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. 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: An academic unit is roughly equivalent to 1 hour of class time.

Instructional Hours: An instructional hour means class time of fifty (50) minutes and is used to determine full-time/part-time enrollment status when academic units are not available.

Homework Time: Study time allowed to complete class assignments.

Proof of Enrollment: Verification that the participant has been registered or accepted as a student in an accredited public/non-profit 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 and no other verification is required.

**ELIGIBILITY
CRITERIA**

Participants 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 advance standard ancillary payment can be issued.
- Include the number of units or instructional hours enrolled in the current session (for the purpose of determining participation hours for part-time students only).

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 on how to access the Verification of Aid list, refer to the Advance Standard Ancillary Payment Request Processing Guide.

**ENROLLMENT
STATUS FOR
APPROVED
ADULT
EDUCATION
SCHOOLS**

Adult education schools often do not have academic unit designations and/or full-time and part-time enrollment status in alignment with two and four-year post-secondary educational institutions.

If the academic units are not available or applicable, instructional hours will be used to determine full-time/part-time enrollment status as follows:

- One instructional hour is defined as 50 minutes of class time.
- To determine weekly instructional hours, staff must add the participant's total weekly minutes for all classes, and then divide that total by 50 (an instructional hour).

Note: Do not round up or down.

Example: A course that meets for 60 minutes, three times a week has a total of 180 minutes, divided by 50 minutes equals a total of 3.6 instructional hours per week.

Utilize the Instructional Hours Calculator to assist when determining FT/PT enrollment status when using instructional hours.

Case Managers (CM) must refer to the CalAdultEd.org website to verify eligible adult schools and adult education providers across California prior to submitting a request to add a new adult education provider to CalSAWS.

When determining the appropriate enrollment status and advance standard ancillary payment amounts for participants enrolled in approved adult education schools, refer to the WT 60 - Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institution Guidelines.

SCHOOL BREAKS Participants must not be required to participate in WTW bridging activities during school breaks. School breaks are defined by the educational institution, this includes but is not limited to the following:

- Winter
- Summer
- Spring
- Transfer periods from one qualifying educational institution to another
Note: Transfer periods must fall between adjacent school-year terms for which enrollment or admission verification has been provided.

Participants may volunteer in WTW bridging activities during school breaks to maximize the benefits of CalWORKs and associated supportive services. If a participant chooses not to volunteer, they will not be subject to noncompliance and sanction for failing to participate or not meeting the participation requirements of the WTW Plan.

**ENROLLED IN
MULTIPLE
PUBLICLY
FUNDED POST-
SECONDARY
EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS**

When a participant is 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 advance standard ancillary payment amount. Refer to WT 60 Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institution Guidelines for details.

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

The maximum advance standard ancillary payment a participant can receive is \$500 per duration of the educational session that initiated their advance standard ancillary payment, regardless of the total number of academic units/instructional hours they are enrolled in. For example, a participant who enrolls full-time at a semester school and later enrolls part-time at an adult school will only be eligible for the maximum \$500 advance standard ancillary payment for the duration of the semester.

Note: Participants can request reimbursement for actual ancillary expenses in addition to the advance standard ancillary payment when expenses exceed the advance standard ancillary payment amount. Refer to Policy 315– Ancillary Supportive Services for more information.

Example 1 (Academic Units):

- Participant 1 enrolled in 6 academic units at Institution A (Semester).
- Participant 1 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 advance standard ancillary payment.

Example 2 (Instructional Hours/Academic Units):

- Participant 2 enrolled in 4 academic units at Institution C (Quarter).
- Participant 2 also enrolled in 4 instructional hours per week at an adult school for a 16-week academic session (Semester).
 - 4 instructional hours x 60 mins = 240 mins / 50 mins = 4.8 instructional hours per week.
 - 4 academic units (quarter-based) + 4.8 instructional hours (semester-based) per week = 8.8 academic units/instructional hours per week.
 - Participant 2 is part-time and will receive a \$250, semester-based advance standard ancillary payment.

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

- Participant 3 enrolled in 12 instructional hours at an adult school for 16 weeks (full-time/semester).
 - 12 instructional hours x 60 mins = 720 mins / 50 mins = 14.4 instructional hours per week.
 - Participant receives \$500 advance standard ancillary payment.
- Participant 3 also enrolled 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 advance standard ancillary payment due to receiving the maximum \$500 advance standard payment.
 - Participant 3 could become eligible for another advance standard ancillary payment once the term that prompted the initial payment has been completed.

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

- Participant 4 enrolled part-time (6 academic units) in a semester-based community college.
 - Participant 4 receives a \$250 advance standard ancillary payment.

- Eight weeks into the semester, participant 4 enrolled in 6 instructional hours at an adult school for 12 weeks (part-time/quarter).
 - 6 instructional hours x 60 mins = 360 mins / 50mins = 7.2 instructional hours per week.
 - 6 units at the community college + 7.2 instructional hours at the adult school = 13.2 academic units/instructional hours total (full-time equivalent).
 - Participant 4 received an additional \$250 to their original advance 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 advance standard ancillary payment. This is true even though the adult school term is in progress since the educational term which initiated an advance standard ancillary payment ended.

ADDING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO THE RESOURCE DATABANK (RDB)

If the school selected by the participant is not listed in the CalSAWS Resource Databank (RDB), the CM will follow the Add or Update Educational Providers in the CalSAWS Resource Databank (RDB) Processing Guide.

Refer to Job Aid (JA) – Resource Databank Resources (Providers) – Manage, and the Add or Update Educational Providers in the CalSAWS Resource Databank PG for further instructions.

CAL-OAR PERFORMANCE MEASURES RELATED TO EDUCATION

Accurate system entries are a crucial part of routine case processing and ensuring compliance with Cal-OAR. For specific process details, refer to Job Aid – Customer Activities - Manage.

WELFARE-TO-WORK FLOW

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

Participants are not required to be appraised/re-appraised more than once or complete a Vocational Assessment following the normal WTW flow unless there is a break in aid or supportive services for more than a year.

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 (not mandatory unless there is a break in aid/ss for more than a year)
- Completes Online Appraisal/Re-Appraisal (OCAT) (not mandatory unless there is a break in aid/ss for more than a year)
- Provides proof of enrollment
- Completes optional barrier assessment, as needed
- Signs a WTW Plan Activity Agreement (WTW 2) at least 30 days prior to the session start date or as soon as possible to receive supportive services (not required for advance standard ancillary payment)
- Receives advance standard ancillary payment at least 10 days before

- the session start date or as soon as possible
- Attends school
- Session ends, school breaks – participants are not required to participate in bridging activities during school breaks. However, participants may volunteer and be encouraged to participate in WTW activities to maximize the benefits of CalWORKs programs and supportive services.
Note: The bridging activity should complement and must not interfere with the participant's educational program. Refer to WT 15 – WTW Activities Matrix for a list of WTW activities.
- Next session - continues existing WTW 2 if appropriate or signs a new Activity Agreement to receive supportive services or if there are changes.

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 ACTIVITY
AGREEMENT
(WTW 2)**

Participants are required to sign a WTW 2 to receive supportive services. If there is no change to the enrollment status or supportive service needs, a new WTW 2 is not required for subsequent school sessions when proof of enrollment is provided at the beginning of each school session.

If the WTW 2 is not provided to the participant at least 30 days before the start of the session, the previous WTW 2 will remain in effect.

The advance standard ancillary payment amount will be issued based on the enrollment verification; therefore, a new WTW 2 is not required. Refer to WT 60 - Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institution Guidelines for instructions.

The WTW Vocational Education/Training Plan F063-41-05 is recommended to obtain the participant's educational goal and to authorize the exchange of information about the participant's WTW record between the counselor and Orange County Social Services Agency. However, it is not required, and no negative action should be taken if the participant refuses to sign or does not complete the form.

Below is a list of required content for the WTW 2:

- Vocational Education activity is *Voc Ed Public* regardless of educational goals.
- The educational schedule for the session shall include:
 - The number of units the participant is enrolled
 - Weekly participation hours (including class time and approved study time) for the purpose of receiving categorically approved childcare. Refer to Policy 301 CalWORKs Stage One Child Care Program, and the Child Care Request PG for more information.
- A description of the supportive services the participant may request including the advance standard ancillary payment for books and college supplies.

Note: At the beginning of the Voc Ed Public activity, the CM must review the Student Financial Aid Statement WTW Supportive Services - WTW 8 and discuss the option to use financial aid to pay for educational ancillary expenses with the participant to confirm the participant's decision to use financial aid to pay for supportive services. If the participant decides to use financial aid for supportive services, the appropriate advance standard ancillary payment must still be issued to the participant.

ADVANCE STANDARD ANCILLARY PAYMENT

At the beginning of each school session, upon receipt of the proof of enrollment, participants will receive an advance standard ancillary payment for required books and college supplies in accordance with their enrollment status.

The advance standard ancillary payments shall be issued at least 10 days before the beginning of the session or as soon as administratively possible, whichever comes first, to prevent an education barrier due to a lack of needed school materials. Refer to WT 60 Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institution Guidelines for details.

The advance standard ancillary payment must be issued if the participant provides proof of school enrollment for the semester. Staff should not request additional documentation to issue the advance standard ancillary payment. If the participant was eligible for the advance standard ancillary payment they received, 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.

Participants may submit the WTW Educational Ancillary Request F063-41-414 form to request reimbursement if the total educational expenses for the semester exceed the advance standard ancillary payment. **Note:** Receipts for all expenses are required.

Refer to the Advance Standard Ancillary Payment Request PG for instructions on how to process advance 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 enrolled in school full-time regardless of the session duration are deemed to meet CW participation requirements.
- Participants enrolled in school part-time for any duration are subject to WTW participation requirements and may need to combine their education with other activities to meet their required participation hours.
- Participation hours shall be determined at the beginning of the academic session and are deemed for the remainder of the session; unless courses are added causing an increase in weekly participation hours and/or changes the enrollment status from part-time to full-time.
- Participants attending school during school breaks are considered voluntary.
- Participants receive 3 hours of homework/study time for each enrolled academic unit/instructional hour. There is no distinction between credit vs. non-credit unit or supervised vs. unsupervised homework time.

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

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

Example A (academic units):

- A participant enrolled in 8 academic units.
- 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 (instructional hours):

- A participant enrolled in a non-credit class that meets 3 times a week for 1 hour each time.
 - 60 mins x 3 times per week = 180 mins
 - 180 mins / 50 mins = 3.6 instructional hours
- Weekly study time calculation:
 - 3.6 instructional hours x 3 hours of study time = 10.8 weekly study time hours

- Total participation hours calculation:
 - 10.8 weekly study time hours + 3.6 instructional hours = 14.4 total weekly hours of participation

In a Two-Parent Assistance Unit (AU), both parents may contribute towards the hourly participation requirement. In situations where both parents in the AU are attending a public school, this policy would apply to each participant separately when determining the correct advance standard ancillary payment amounts and participation hours.

COLLABORATION WITH COLLEGE COUNSELORS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS Staff must maintain professional and regular communication with the College Counselors, 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 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 Educational Liaisons, and FSS-AS OPT Education Team via chain of command as appropriate.
- 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 CalWORKs Program Community College Contact List can be used to contact Orange County Community College CalWORKs Program Offices as needed.

REFERENCES All County Letters: 21-04, 21-75E, 22-31, 24-32
 Job Aid – Customer Activities – Manage
 Job Aid – Resource Databank Resources (Providers) – Manage
 Job Aid – School Attendance Information - Add and Edit
 Policy 200– Welfare-to-Work Program, Activities and Participation Requirements
 Policy 223– Vocational Education – Privately Funded Postsecondary Educational Institutions
 Policy 301– CalWORKs Stage One Childcare Program
 Policy 310– Transportation Supportive Services
 Policy 315- Ancillary Supportive Services

ATTACHMENTS Add or Update WTW School Provider in the CalSAWS RDB PG
 CalWORKs Program College Contact List
 Advance Standard Ancillary Payment Request PG
 SSA Regional Office Educational Liaison Contacts
 Worker Tool - 15 WTW Activities Matrix
 Worker Tool - 60 Publicly Funded Postsecondary Educational Institution Guidelines
 Instructional Hours Calculator

FORMS

WTW Plan Activity Assignment - WTW 2

WTW Vocational Education/Training Plan - F063-41-05

Employment Services Communication Document - F063-41-211

WTW Educational Ancillary Request - F063-41-414

Student Financial Aid Statement WTW Supportive Services - WTW 8