

YOUTH TUITION POLICY #: 3020

Original Policy Date: 6/15/2008
Effective Date:

Current Revision Date: / /2012

Purpose:

The Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC) is issuing this policy to provide guidance regarding the use of Workforce Investment Act funds for youth program tuition assistance. This policy only applies to WIA Youth-funded programs within the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Area comprised of Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties.

Background:

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) stipulates ten different program elements that Workforce Development Councils must ensure are offered throughout their service area. One of those required program elements is Occupational Skill Training. One of the various ways to offer and support Youth Occupational Skill Training is in the way of tuition assistance to include; academic or occupational learning, development of leadership skills, further education, or additional training.

Policy:

Occupational Skill Training for purposes of this policy is defined as any training that will provide a participant with an opportunity to enhance their ability to succeed in certain occupations either at entry, intermediate, or advance career levels. Tuition assistance may be available to support Occupational Skill Training with WIA funds being used if the payment is a necessary need to accomplish goals described in the customer's Individual Service Strategy. ITAs are not intended to facilitate the acquisition of degrees, diplomas, or certificates strictly for the sake of education. Acquisition of an ITA must have a direct connection in preparing the customer for a specific occupation available in the labor market. See covered costs below.

In response to the target industry investment priorities identified in the Strategic Plan, the SWWDC has established three occupational categories eligible for tuition assistance.

The SWWDC authorizes tuition assistance as follows:

- **Priority Demand Occupations:** Tuition assistance may be approved for occupations that the SWWDC has determined to be in high demand as listed on the Qualifying Occupation List.
- **Demand Occupations:** Tuition assistance may be approved for occupations that the SWWDC has determined to be in demand, but lacks a significant projected growth potential as listed on the Qualifying Occupation List.
- **Provisional Occupations:** A limited number of training services may be approved for occupations listed as "in balance" if evidence exists that the

occupation pays a Self-Sufficient wage with adequate local demand as determined by the SWWDC.

Eligible Training Providers

The SWWDC authorizes tuition assistance to be paid to providers on the Washington State Eligible Training Providers List (ETP). Tuition assistance can only be issued to training provided by an educational institution that is on the ETP and for a program also listed on the ETP. This information is posted at: www.wtb.wa.gov/etp/

The SWWDC, in partnership with the state, will identify training providers whose performance qualifies them to receive WIA funds to train those in need. These include post secondary educational institutions, national apprenticeship programs, community-based organizations, private organizations, other public or private providers, and local Workforce Councils who meet conditions of WIA Section 117(f)(1).

Covered Costs

WIA tuition assistance may be used if all other resources have either been exhausted or unavailable at the time of the need. Other resources to consider before WIA funds include but are not limited to PELL grants, scholarships, federal financial aid, or other WIA sources. When it makes sense, the SWWDC encourages those over 18 to be co-enrolled with the WIA Adult Program. At this time, tuition assistance can be a shared cost between both programs.

Tuition assistance is approved to use in the following ways:

1. One quarter of tuition at a community college. During that quarter, it is the expectation that the participant is working towards securing other means of support, such as financial aid, scholarships, or other work supports.
2. One semester class at a University. During that semester, it is the expectation that the participant is working towards securing other means of support, such as financial aid, scholarships, or other work supports.
3. A career and technical education course at an accredited school. For example, an OSHA Certification or Certified Nursing Assistant. The course must enhance the participant's knowledge and skill in a demand occupation.

Only required costs associated with approved training programs will be covered. Required costs that can be submitted for coverage under tuition assistance are:

- Tuition, enrollment fees, and other fees such as lab and testing required for coursework outlined in the required course of study;
- Required textbooks as listed on course syllabi;
- Required supplies and training materials as listed on course syllabi or supply lists; and
- Required tools as listed on course tool lists.

Optional costs, including tuition and fees for coursework not included in the required course of study; textbooks not listed as required on course syllabi; and supplies, training materials, and tools which are not required for all participants in the training program, are not covered.

Customers are required to maintain satisfactory progress in the selected training program. Satisfactory progress is defined as:

- Maintaining a grade point average sufficient to graduate from and/or receive certification in their approved area of study; and/or
- Completing sufficient credit hours to complete program in the timeframe established; and/or
- Contact with the customer's case manager must be made at the end of each training segment to ensure satisfactory progress is being made, whether that be quarter, class, session, etc.

Supportive services, if appropriate, shall be delivered pursuant to the SWWDC's Supportive Services Policy #3021.

Limitations and Guidelines:

The following guidelines are provided to assist in administering tuition assistance:

1. Service Providers are authorized to provide tuition assistance up to \$2,000 (including follow-up) per participant for their entire enrollment with the WIA Youth Program.
2. For tuition assistance amounts above \$2,000, an exception request must be submitted to the SWWDC Program Manager utilizing the WIA.
3. Customer files must adequately document that all tuition assistance is allowable, reasonable, justified, and not otherwise available to the customer and show evidence of collaboration, when feasible. Assessment of the customer's need for tuition assistance must also be documented in SKIES case notes.

Right to Reduce or Eliminate:

The SWWDC reserves the right to reduce or eliminate WIA-funded assistance in the event funding is reduced or other budgetary constraints exist. In such circumstances, the SWWDC would work with its service providers to determine equitable measures to effect the reduction or elimination, including sufficient prior notice for participants. In no event would a reduction or elimination of WIA-funded assistance be retroactive.

References/Resources:

- Final WIA Regulations 20 CRF Part 664
- Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council's Supportive Services Policy #3021
- WIA Request for Exception form