



WS 10-11

Re-Issued
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To: All Contractors

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Subject: Managing Financial Aid/Scholarship Contribution Limits

Purpose

Change dollar limits for Workforce Solutions scholarships.

Background

Earlier this year, we raised the limits on Workforce Solutions funds we commit to education and training scholarships. We have noted that most customers do not need our financial aid up to those limits. As our scholarship dollars become scarcer, we have decided to lower our contribution to insure we can continue to provide support for significant numbers of customers.

Effective October 1, 2010, new scholarship obligations will be limited as follows:

- For *basic skills* training, an eligible customer may receive a scholarship up to \$3,000 in a 12-month period for tuition, fees, books and supplies.
- For *occupational skills* training, an eligible customer may receive a scholarship up to \$6,000 in a 12-month period for tuition, fees, books and supplies.

Scholarship Rules

Workforce Solutions helps people build careers so they can participate in the global economy: we help people get a job, keep a job, or get a better job. One of the ways we do this is to provide scholarships that support individuals' education, training or re-training in high-skill, high-growth occupations.

Although we help any customer find the resources to go to school in his or her chosen field, we reserve our own scholarship funds for those occupations which support our area's key industries and provide our customers with good jobs for the future.

This issuance includes rules applicable to scholarships using Workforce Solutions funds, except for those paid with Trade Act dollars.

1. A customer must apply for a scholarship, and staff must determine the customer as eligible, before we grant a scholarship.
2. **No employment need.** A customer may receive a scholarship for training in the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's high-skill, high-growth occupations supported by scholarship without demonstrating a lack of skills in those occupations if:
 - a. The customer is otherwise eligible for our funds; and
 - b. Tests or work background indicate that the customer has a good chance of succeeding in class and later in his or her job; and
 - c. He or she agrees to an employment plan and makes progress toward the goals listed in that plan.
3. **Dollar limits.** The following limits apply to amounts for Workforce Solutions scholarships:
 - a. For basic skills training an eligible customer may receive a scholarship up to **\$3,000** in a 12-month period for tuition, fees, books and supplies.
 - b. For occupational skills training, an eligible customer may receive a scholarship up to **\$6,000** in a 12-month period for tuition, fees, books and supplies.
4. **Education support.** Workforce Solutions provides education support to customers only if they are training in one of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's high-skill, high-growth occupations supported by scholarship, or are receiving a scholarship with Trade Act funds. This support can include financial assistance for child care expenses, transportation or other support.

Through December 31, 2010, we also provide education support for customers enrolled in Training for Jobs projects.

Education support financial aid is in addition to the amounts available for tuition, fees, books and supplies.

5. **High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations/Vendor Network.** Scholarships using Workforce Solutions funds are available to customers who:
 - a. Are training in one of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's high-skill, high-growth occupations supported by scholarship; and
 - b. Are attending training with a vendor in the Workforce Solutions network.

Find the current list of high-skill, high-growth occupations supported by scholarship at <http://wrksolutions.com/jobs/occupationindemand.html>.

6. **Bachelor's Degree.** For educational programs that award a bachelor's degree, Workforce Solutions will only award scholarships to help finance the last two years of school.
7. **Master's Degree in Nursing.** Individuals officially enrolled full-time in program tracks leading to a Master's of Science in Nursing and committed to teaching at least two years in programs leading to initial RN licensure in a Gulf Coast nursing school upon graduation are eligible for scholarship support to help finance all courses required to complete their Master's Degree in Nursing.
8. **Teachers (Secondary Level – Middle School or High School).** If the customer requests financial aid for a scholarship to pay for school to become a teacher, the customer must be seeking a teacher certification with a major or minor in math or science at the secondary level.
9. **Trade Adjustment Assistance.** Trade Act funds provide scholarships only for individuals specifically identified as eligible for this assistance. Separate rules apply to scholarships funded with Trade Act dollars, and we are issuing separate guidance for these funds.

Scholarship Registry

When the Financial Aid Payment Office notifies the system that a particular fund is closed to new scholarship commitments, staff can register the customer on a scholarship wait list in the Financial Aid Management System (FAMS) under a category labeled "Scholarship Registry".

The registry ensures we serve customers on a first-come, first-serve basis when funds become available. It is our policy to check a customer's eligibility for all fund sources, including sources outside Workforce Solutions, before adding the scholarship request to the Scholarship Registry.

The Scholarship Registry does not apply to Trade Act-funded scholarships.

Using the Scholarship Registry. When staff determine we cannot award a scholarship because our financial aid funds are fully committed, the staff member enters the scholarship request in the Scholarship Registry List.

We have attached a desk aid to this issuance that has detailed instructions for entering a scholarship request in the registry. (See *FAMS Scholarship Registry Data Entry Desk Aid*)

- The Financial Aid Specialist or designated career office staff member gives the customer a letter confirming she has been added to the Scholarship Registry. (See attached *Letter to Customer – Entered on Scholarship Registry*)

- When funds become available, the Financial Aid Payment Office mails a call-in letter to the customer on the Scholarship Registry asking her to contact Workforce Solutions to complete our financial aid process. (See attached *Letter to Customer – Call-in for FA*)
- Staff are not able to remove or delete a customer's name from the Scholarship Registry once the customer's information is entered and saved in FAMS.

Priority. Workforce Solutions gives priority first to veterans and qualified spouses of veterans and then to foster youth when there is a wait list for scholarships.

The FAMS Scholarship Registry Process Flowchart and FAMS Scholarship Registry Data Entry Desk Aid are available online in the Desk Aid section of Staff Resources Policies and Procedures <http://wrksolutions.com/staff/deskaid.html> .

The letter to a customer letting her know we've placed her on the scholarship registry wait list and the call-in letter we use to let a customer know we have money to fund a scholarship off the wait list are in the Financial Aid Scholarship Letters and Forms section of Staff Resources Policies and Procedures <http://wrksolutions.com/staff/scholarshiplettersandforms.html> .

Vendor Network

We use a network of approved vendors and programs to provide education and training services. Workforce Solutions will only provide financial aid for customers to attend a program or receive a service that is approved and listed in the network.

You can access the network for basic skills vendors and occupational skills vendors through the Workforce Solutions website at http://wrksolutions.com/aid/fin_aid_train_ed.html#tpn.

Schools interested in becoming part of Workforce Solutions vendor network may apply online. Direct them to <http://wrksolutions.com/about/vendorapplications.html>.

Action

- Make sure all staff is aware of the change in limits on some Workforce Solutions scholarships.
- Make sure staff removes all copies of the issuance 10-13 replaced by this one.

Questions

Staff should ask questions of their supervisors first. Direct questions for Board staff through the Issuance Q&A at <http://wrksolutions.com/staff/policiesandprocedures.html>.