



WS 15-11
August 26, 2015
Financial Aid
Expires: Continuing

To: All Contractors

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Subject: Managing Financial Aid/Changes to Education & Training Related Expenses

Purpose

Transmit changes to policy and procedures for providing education and training related financial aid

Background

Workforce Solutions financial aid includes help with education and training related expenses so that customers can get a job, keep a job, or get a better job. We provide education and training related payments through scholarships for tuition, fees, and books at vendors and programs approved in our Education and Training Vendor Network.

Customers and staff can access approved programs and vendors through the [Workforce Solutions Training & Education](#) page.

Changes

We are making the following changes to financial aid for education and training related expenses:

- Relabeling Occupational Skills Training as Career Training
- Adding a scholarship category for Career Advancement Training
- Referring customers to local and on-line general computer literacy and skills training before referring to the list of approved programs for scholarships
- Using training available through the adult education and literacy consortium before providing scholarships for adult basic education, literacy, and GED preparation

Career Training and Career Advancement Training

Career Training

Career training, previously referred to as occupational training, consists of courses or programs that prepare a customer for a new career in select Workforce Solutions high-skill, high-growth occupations ([List](#)) ([Booklet](#)). The occupations we support for career training are denoted on the high-skill, high-growth list and booklet by a “☆”. Notice that not all occupations contain the “☆” icon.

Typically, staff will help a customer enter into Workforce Solutions-supported career training when the customer is first entering the workforce or looking to transition into a new profession.

Career Advancement Training

Career advancement training consists of short-duration workshops, seminars or courses (usually less than six months) to help customers achieve industry-recognized credentials and/or enhance skills or knowledge in the system’s high-skill, high-growth occupations ([List](#)) ([Booklet](#)). The occupations we support for career advancement training are denoted on the high-skill, high-growth list and booklet by a “\$”. Unlike career training, our scholarship dollars will support all of our high-skill, high-growth-occupations for career advancement training. Notice that **all** occupations contain the “\$” symbol.

The goal of career advancement training is to help a customer get the skills he or she needs that build on existing skills and experience.

Examples of customers who may want career advancement training to return to work or get a better job include: a software developer wants to learn a new programming language; a financial analyst wants to prepare for a Series 6 examination; a recent graduate from an accounting program wants to take an SAP course; an unemployed MIG welder wants to learn flux core welding; a documentation specialist needs a paralegal certificate to promote.

For career training and career advancement training:

Remember, customers who need to develop new skills receive career training and those who need to enhance existing skills receive career advancement training.

Customers must complete a financial aid application and are limited to a maximum of \$6,000 within a calendar year. Staff should continue following existing assessment, eligibility and documentation procedures. All existing scholarship procedures and requirements apply.

Customers and staff can find approved training programs and vendors through the career training and career advancement training links on the [Workforce Solutions Training & Education](#) page.

Because career advancement training is a new category, we are working on developing training offerings to add to our network. As a result, a customer may be interested in a

career advancement training opportunity that is not listed on our network. Similarly, while we have a substantial number of career training options, there are times when a customer is interested in a **career training** program that is not listed on our vendor network.

In both instances, career office staff should document the name of the vendor and program, a contact person and contact information for the training vendor. Since training program approval can be a lengthy process, this information should be forwarded as soon as possible to the Financial Aid Payment Office's Training Vendor Procurement Coordinator, Wanda Nathan at: (wanda.nathan@wrksolutions.com).

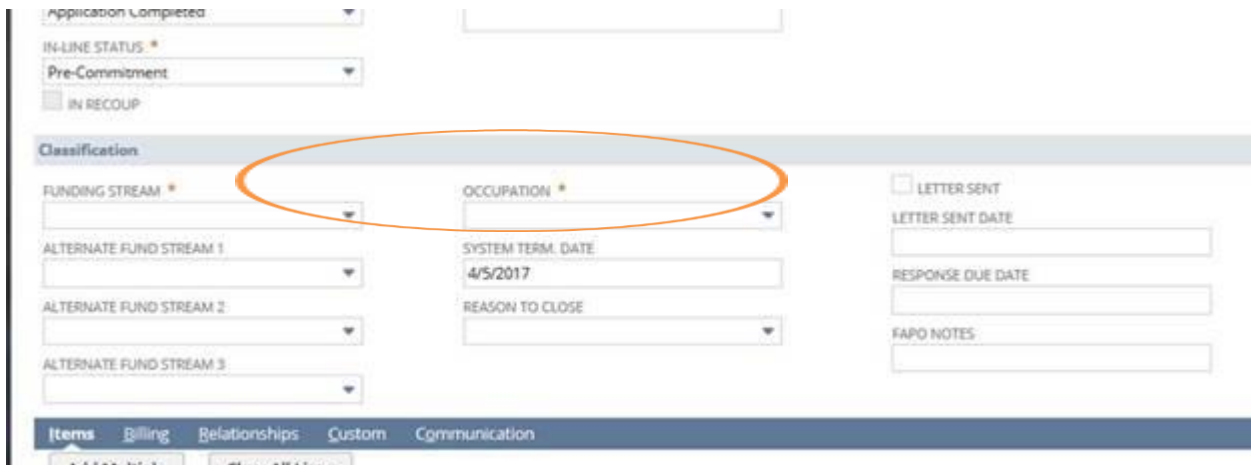
Special Note for TWIST

1. Complete TWIST data entry as usual.
2. **For Career Training:** In Service Tracking, use Service Category 4 – Training Services – Occupational Skill and Service 1 – Occupational/Vocational Training.
3. **For Career Advancement Training:** In Service Tracking, use Service Category 4 – Training Services – Occupational Skill and Service 77 – Skill Upgrading/Retraining.
4. Select the career training or career advancement training vendor from the dropdown list at [Training Work Site](#).
5. If you cannot find training vendor on this dropdown list, contact workforcesecurity@wrksolutions.com.

Special Note for FAMS

The “Occupation” drop-down in FAMS (see graphic below) lists all of our high-skill, high-growth occupations ([List](#)) ([Booklet](#)).

Note: Occupations marked with the prefix “z” should not be used.



FAMS Users should:

1. create commitment/estimate as usual;

2. click on the “Occupation” drop-down box in the “Classification” section to select desired occupation; and
3. contact the FAMS Administrator (joseph.chauncey@wrksolutions.com) if the high-skill, high-growth occupation is not on the dropdown list.

General Computer Literacy and Skills Training

For customers requesting assistance with general computer literacy and skills training, first discuss the customer’s employment goals and help the customer develop a plan to meet those goals. If general computer literacy and skills training is part of that plan, first refer the customer to free local and online computer literacy and skills training resources. If these resources do not meet the needs of the customer, help the customer select from our list of approved [basic skills providers](#).

Free local and online computer literacy and skill training resources include but are not limited to:

- <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/>
- 211Texas - Search term: “Computer and Related Technology Classes”
<https://211texas.hhsc.state.tx.us/211/search.do?resetSearch=true&selectedMenuId=searchMenuId>
- United Way of Greater Houston 2-1-1 Helpline
Search term: “computer classes”
<http://referral.unitedwayhouston.org/KeywordList.aspx?;;0;;N;0;270821;computer%20classes;All>
- Many public library locations also offer computer literacy classes. Check city and/or county library calendar listings.

Adult Education and Literacy

For customers requesting assistance with adult education and literacy, use the network of adult education and literacy services referenced in Issuance WS 15-05 Adult Education and Literacy before accessing [basic skills providers](#) on the Education and Training Vendor Network.

The adult education and literacy consortium providers offer literacy, adult basic education, GED preparation, combined GED and skills training, English as a Second Language and EL/Civics classes in about 200 locations throughout the Gulf Coast region.

- First refer customers interested in these services to adult education and literacy providers using the referral tool available at the [AEL Services Home Page](#).
- If the adult education and literacy providers are unable to meet the needs of the customer, use the approved [basic skills providers](#).

Action

- Make sure staff are aware of the changes to policy and procedure for providing education related financial aid.
- If necessary, we will work with Contractor Management and NWI staff to organize staff development opportunities.

Questions

Staff should ask questions of their supervisors first. Direct questions for Board staff through the [Issuance Q&A](#).