

# PARTNER WORK

## ADULT TANF TRAINING VOUCHER POLICY

### Purpose

Partner4Work has adopted the following policy with respect to the use of training vouchers for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Extended TANF (ETANF) participants in the Allegheny County Employment Retention and Advancement Network (EARN) and Work Ready programs.

### Affected Parties

This policy applies to all TANF participants in Allegheny County EARN and Work Ready programs. Allegheny County EARN and Work Ready staff are responsible for implementing this policy.

### Definitions of Key Terms

A TANF training voucher is a funding mechanism through which eligible individuals can get financial resources to support participation in quality vocational training expected to result in employment in high demand occupations.

### Eligibility Requirements

Training voucher funding is not guaranteed to any participant and is contingent on funding availability. EARN and Work Ready participants may qualify for a TANF training voucher if it is determined by contracted provider staff that they meet the following criteria:

- A participant in the Allegheny County EARN/Work Ready program, in good standing with program requirements and expectations.
- After an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning, staff have determined that the participant:
  - Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency<sup>1</sup> or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services only;
  - Is in need of training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment;
  - Has the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services.
- An individual has the time available for participation in the training program according to allowable Allegheny County EARN/Work Ready program activities.

### Additional Eligibility and Suitability Information

- Students are required to complete financial aid forms if the program qualifies. Pell, PHEAA, and related grants can be utilized concurrently with TANF training vouchers, but TANF funding must be used as a last resort, when other funding is not available.
- If the training program selected is greater than \$5,000, the student must indicate how the remaining costs of training will be funded.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Partner4Work Self-Sufficiency Policy

# PARTNER WORK

- Contracted EARN/Work Ready staff must determine students eligible and suitable for training. Determining training suitability involves establishing an individual's level of need and qualification related to participating in their desired training program, among other factors, including but not limited to considering alternative career approaches, likelihood of gainful employment upon completion, and alignment with an individual's established career pathway.
- Training vouchers will not be issued for any student who does not have a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent.

## Policy

### *Adult TANF Training Voucher Cap*

Participants may receive a maximum of \$5,000 in training voucher funding during their participation in an EARN/Work Ready program, which will be paid directly to the organization providing the training to the participant.

### *Maximum Duration of Training Voucher*

Training vouchers may be valid for up to two years.

### *Number of Training Vouchers per Participant*

Participants are limited to receiving only one training voucher during their time in EARN/Work Ready programming.

### *Expenses a Training Voucher May Cover*

Training vouchers may support tuition and other training costs that are not covered under Special Allowances (SPAL), including fees, books, and school supplies (if the books and supplies are required by the school). SPALs that could be used to cover related training costs must be pursued before being considered for funding through a training voucher.

### *Trainings covered by Training Vouchers*

Training vouchers will be awarded to quality training programs that prepare individuals to succeed in the workforce with strong connections to employment opportunities. Priority for training vouchers will be given to programs with the following characteristics:

- Approved for credential recognition by the PA Department of Human Services,
- Provides an industry-recognized credential,
- Included on Pennsylvania's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL),
- Included on Pennsylvania's High Priority Occupation (HPO) List.

Registered Apprenticeships qualify for training vouchers; participants are encouraged to consider an Apprenticeship as a viable career pathway.

Before awarding a training voucher, EARN/Work Ready staff should engage in employer conversations to confirm there are job placements available after a participant completes training.

Training vouchers are designed to get people back into the labor force quickly. An occupation requiring a bachelor's degree or higher education is not eligible to receive funding.

# PARTNER WORK

Training vouchers should align with key industry sectors identified by Partner4Work. Partner4Work and contracted EARN/Work Ready Providers will work to align training funds across programs to ensure a broad portfolio of strong training options.

## *Partner4Work Approval*

Contracted EARN/Work Ready providers must receive approval from Partner4Work on each training voucher before proceeding.

## *Policy exceptions*

Under limited circumstances, Partner4Work may grant exceptions to requirements within this policy. Requests for exceptions may be submitted to [asmith@partner4work.org](mailto:asmith@partner4work.org). Requests should include the following:

- The specific policy requirement for which an exception is being requested;
- A clear summary of the exception being requested and the reason for the exception; and
- The Name and Participant ID of the participant(s) for which an exception is being requested; or
- The name and FEIN of the business customer for which an exception is being requested.

Exception requests will be reviewed based on their allowability under applicable TANF-related legislation, regulations, and policy/guidance. Partner4Work will also consider funding availability, how an exception will lead to improved outcomes for the customer(s) being served, and other relevant factors.

**Effective Date: 12/11/2020**