

County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS)
CalWORKs Program Guide (CPG) Special Notice

Employment Services Postsecondary Education Participation

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Effective Date:

March 1, 2021

Background:

Senate Bill (SB) 1232 requires that all Employment Services (ES) participants who are enrolled full time or part time in a publicly funded postsecondary educational program receive a standard advanced ancillary payment for books and college supplies prior to the start of the academic period. SB 1232 also modifies current requirements related to Appraisal, Initial Engagement and Assessment for qualifying students.

Purpose:

The purpose of this Special Notice is to provide guidance related to the implementation of SB 1232 provisions.

Policy:

ES participants enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary education:

- Are not required to complete the Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT) if already enrolled in school at the time of Appraisal
- Are excluded from the requirement to participate in Initial Job Search
- Are allowed three hours of study time for each academic unit towards hourly participation requirements, with no distinction between supervised and unsupervised study time
- May participate in concurrent ES activities while enrolled in a Self-Initiated Program (SIP) or when the allowable class and study time hours are insufficient to meet participation requirements
- May be assigned to educational activities at any time during the 48 months of CalWORKs as the 12-month time limit for Vocational Training (VTR) no longer applies
- Will only complete an Assessment for the purpose of identifying barriers such as domestic violence, substance use, mental health, learning disabilities, and assigning appropriate activities
- Are eligible to receive a standard advanced ancillary payment to cover required books and educational supplies at least 10 days prior to the beginning of the academic period to ensure participation
- Are required to provide verification of educational expenses only when requesting a reimbursement for the amount exceeding the standard advanced ancillary payment

Procedure:

CalWORKs Program Guide (CPG) and Processing Guide (PG) sections will be updated to reflect these new regulations:

Ancillary Supportive Services (CPG 10-011.A and PG 10-011.A.2)

ES participants who provide verified proof of enrollment in a publicly funded postsecondary education activity will receive a standard advanced ancillary payment as follows:

- Full-Time Enrollment = 12 or more units per semester/quarter
 - \$500 per semester or \$350 per quarter
- Part-Time Enrollment = Less than 12 units per semester/quarter
 - \$250 per semester or \$175 per quarter

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All participants may request a reimbursement for the actual costs of educational expenses exceeding the standard advanced ancillary payment. The Employment Case Manager (ECM) will:

- Review the request to determine if the educational expenses are required and allowable per current policies
- Issue form 27-380 ES Verification Checklist listing all pending verification needed to process the reimbursement along with the corresponding due date
- Issue a reimbursement for the allowable and verified educational expenses exceeding the standard advanced ancillary payment within 20-calendar days of the receipt of acceptable verification

ES Activity Documentation and Reporting Requirements (CPG 10-300.A and PG 10-300.A.1)

ES participants are required to provide proof of enrollment prior to each academic term in order to develop a WTW2 plan and receive standard advanced ancillary payments. Verification of enrollment as defined by the postsecondary education provider may include, but is not limited to, a welcome letter or acceptance email from the school, proof of registration for the upcoming or current academic period and class schedule, when available. The ECM will obtain proof of enrollment either from the participant or the school directly.

Proof of ongoing enrollment is sufficient for the ECM to determine satisfactory progress in an educational activity as it is based on meeting satisfactory progress standards established by the school.

Welfare-to-Work Orientation Appraisal (CPG 10-005.D)

ES participants enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary education are not required to complete OCAT if already enrolled in school at the time of Appraisal. The ECM will identify the participant's needs and barriers during Appraisal by completing form 27-01 WTW Appraisal Tool.

Employment Services Activities (CPG 10-005.H and PG 10-005.H.1)

ES participants enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary education are allowed three hours of study time per week for each academic unit towards hourly participation requirements, with no distinction between supervised and unsupervised study time. Academic units, as defined by the educational provider, and the counting of study time include both credit and non-credit classes. The ECM will determine allowable weekly study time based on the ratio of three hours of study time for each academic unit. The ECM will confirm how weekly units are converted to hours with the school.

Note: SB 1232 has no impact on the current calculation of allowable study time hours for Work Participation Rate (WPR) purposes.

Assessment and Reassessment (CPG 10-005.F and PG 10-005.F.1)

ES participants enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary education will complete an Assessment or Reassessment only for the purpose of assigning appropriate activities to address identified barriers. If Assessment/Reassessment is completed, the outcome cannot be used to limit or restrict a participant's choice in educational or training goals.

ES participants cannot be prevented from attending school due to a barrier or placed in Noncompliance for refusal to complete Assessment/Reassessment. The ECM will document the reason for refusal to complete Assessment/Reassessment in case comments.

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Employment Services Plan (CPG 10-005.G and PG 10-005.G.1)

ES participants enrolled in publicly funded postsecondary education are required to sign a WTW2 plan if eligible to receive standard advanced ancillary payments.

If enrollment verification is obtained, the ECM will develop/sign the WTW2 with the participant and issue a standard advanced ancillary payment at least ten calendar days prior to the beginning of the academic period.

If enrollment verification is not obtained at least ten calendar days prior to the beginning of the academic period, the ECM will develop/sign the WTW2 with the participant and issue a standard ancillary payment no later than ten calendar days from date of receipt of all required items.

If the WTW2 is not developed/signed timely with the participant for the next academic period, ancillary services will continue at the same level until the updated WTW2 is signed. The ECM will reconcile the amount issued with the standard ancillary payment the participant was eligible to and issue a supplement, if applicable.

Important: The ECM will discuss the importance of reporting school enrollment as soon as possible with the participant to ensure timely issuance of standard advanced ancillary payments and successful participation.

Impacts:

None

References:

ACL 21-04

Sunset Date:

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by March 31, 2024.

Approval for Release:

 for:

Rick Wanne, Director
Self Sufficiency Services