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WorkFirst Education and Training Opportunities



THE ALLIANCE
for Equal Justice

MEMBER

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- ❖ Read this only if you live in the state of Washington.
 - ❖ Due to the pandemic, DSHS had temporarily stopped requiring WorkFirst activities if you got TANF. But starting September 1, 2021, you have to meet your WorkFirst participation requirements again.
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Introduction

Are you interested in training or education? Read about your options here. Ask your WorkFirst worker to add any options that make sense for you to your IRP.

Expressions you should know:

- **DSHS:** Department of Social and Health Services.
- **ESD:** Employment Security Department (Job Services Center).
- **E&T plan:** you and ESD sign this about your work goals and plan.
- **IRP** (Individual Responsibility Plan): Document you signed with DSHS.
- **Seasonal Worker:** your way of life is yearly seasonal work such as fishing, field labor, and/or harvesting. In the off-season, you can get full-time education and training, with no work requirement.
- **Success Plan:** you sign this with your school's WorkFirst coordinator about your education goals and plan.
- **WAC** (Washington Administrative Code) – some of the rules DSHS must follow. It is available online at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/> or at your local library.
- **WCCC** = Working Connections Child Care.
- **Meeting the work requirement:** Can include paid or subsidized work, like 16-19 hours a week of Work-Study, Community Jobs, or paid Work Experience, and internships or practicum if approved on your IRP.

Basic Education

Basic description	High school diploma or high school equivalency, English as a Second Language (“ESL”), Families that Work, Workplace Basics, Adult Basic Ed.
Example	Listed above.
Who must do this?	Parents ages 16 or 17 whose child lives with them. Must be in high school or equivalency program.
Who may do this?	People 18 or older who need it to get a job + one of these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the work requirement. (See p.1.) • Do job search for at least 20 hours/week. • Did job search without getting a job. • Seasonal workers.
Can I get help with childcare?	Yes. Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) will pay for childcare for work activity and class time with no limit.
Do I have to work at the same time?	People 20 or older must meet the work requirement except seasonal workers.
Are there time limits?	No.
Where is it?	High schools, community and technical colleges.
Who approves my plan?	Your DSHS WorkFirst worker.
What papers do I need?	Your basic ed. plan must be in your Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP). It can also be in success or E&T plan.
Where can I learn more?	Your WorkFirst worker should have more information and a list of local programs, or go directly to local schools/colleges offering basic education.
Legal Info	WAC 388-310-0900 ; RCW 74.08A.250 (9) & (10) .

Skills Enhancement Training

Basic description	Training in skills directly related to getting a job.
Example	Word Processing, data entry, flagger training.
Who may do this?	<p>People meeting the work requirement.</p> <p>People with no job skills for local entry-level jobs & this is the only way to get the skills.</p> <p>Seasonal workers.</p>
Can I get help with childcare?	Yes. Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) will pay for childcare for work, work activity, and class time with no limit.
Do I have to work at the same time?	Yes, unless you are a seasonal worker or you show this is the only way to get job skills for local, entry-level jobs (+ do Job Search).
Are there time limits?	No.
Where is it?	Community based organizations, businesses, tribal governments, or community/technical colleges.
Who approves my plan?	Your DSHS WorkFirst worker.
What papers do I need?	Skills enhancement training must be in your IRP. It can also be in success or E&T plan.
Where can I learn more?	Your WorkFirst worker should have more information and a list of local programs, or go directly to places offering skills enhancement training.
Legal Information	<p>WAC 388-310-1050;</p> <p>RCW 74.08A.250(8).</p>

Vocational Education

Basic description	Training leading to a degree or certificate in an occupation.
Example	Massage Therapy, Computer Technician, Medical Transcription, and so on.
Who may do this?	People meeting the work requirement, Seasonal Workers, and/or people with limited English proficiency who have no job skills for local entry level jobs & this is the only way to get the skills.
Can I get help with childcare?	Yes. Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) will pay for childcare while you work and while you are in school for up to 12 months. If you leave TANF, you can get 24 extra months of childcare for school hours.
Do I have to work at the same time?	At least 20 hours/week (or 16+ work-study) unless you are a seasonal worker or limited English proficiency and show this is the only way you can get job skills for local, entry level jobs.
Are there time limits?	Yes. You can get approval for Vocational Ed as a WorkFirst activity for up to 12 months, possibly 24.
Where is it?	Community, technical, or tribal colleges.
Who approves my plan?	Your DSHS WorkFirst worker.
What papers do I need?	Vocational Ed. must be in your IRP. It can also be in success or E&T plan.
Where can I learn more?	Your WorkFirst worker should have more information and a list of local programs, or go directly to schools.
Legal Information	WAC 388-310-1000 ; RCW 74.08A.250 (7) .

Customized Job Skills Training

Basic description	Training in skills needed for a particular entry-level job that pays more than average entry-level wages.
Example	Depends on the employers who provide training in your area.
Who may do this?	Anyone in WorkFirst. Availability depends on how many employers take part.
Can I get help with childcare?	Yes. Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) pays for childcare for training, and up to 30 days before training starts.
Do I have to work at the same time?	No.
Are there time limits?	Yes. 8 to 22 weeks.
Where is it offered?	Community, technical, or tribal colleges.
Who approves my plan?	WorkFirst Worker, ESD/JSC Worker, and College WF Coordinator.
What papers do I need?	IRP with DSHS and success plan with ESD/JSC and E&T Plan with college. They should work together to develop your plan.
Other	Local employers or industries must commit to hiring or giving hiring preference to participants who successfully complete the training.
Where can I learn more?	Your WorkFirst worker should have more information and a list of local programs.
Legal Information	WAC 388-310-1000(3) .

High Wage/High Demand Training:

- **Information Technology/Health Care Other Professional Technical Programs**

Basic description	Start and finish a 1-year or shorter training program in approved information technology ("IT"), health care fields, or other professional technical programs.
Examples	Dental assistant, computer tech, and so on.
Who may do this?	Anyone in WorkFirst interested in certain approved jobs.
Can I get help with childcare?	Yes. Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) pays for childcare for class time, transportation time up to 10 hours/week, and study time up to three hours/day.
Do I have to work at the same time?	No, but you must do job placement with ESD during your last school quarter and after you finish school if you do not have a job yet.
Are there time limits?	Yes. 12 months.
Where is it?	Community and technical colleges. Acceptable courses vary by school.
Who approves my plan?	WorkFirst Worker, ESD/JSC Worker, AND College WF Coordinator.
What papers do I need?	IRP with DSHS and Success Plan with ESD/JSC and E&T Plan with college.
Other	One-time only, unless you get an exception. Limited to a list of selected fields.
Where can I learn more?	Your WorkFirst worker has more information. ESD has a list of approved programs.
Legal Info	WAC 388-310-1000(4)(a)(i) .

- **Certificate/ Degree Completion**

Basic description	Finish the last year of a 2- or 4-year degree or certificate for a high wage, high demand field.
Example	ESD defines high wage high demand jobs.
Who may do this?	Anyone in WorkFirst with 1 year left to finish certain degree/certificate programs.
Can I get help with childcare?	Yes. WCCC pays for childcare for work activity and class time.
Do I have to work at the same time?	No, but you must do job placement with ESD in your last school quarter and after you finish school if you do not have a job yet.
Are there time limits?	Yes. 12 months.
Where is it?	Community, technical, 4-year or tribal colleges.
Who approves my plan?	WorkFirst Worker, ESD/JSC Worker, AND College WF Coordinator.
What papers do I need?	IRP with DSHS and Success Plan with ESD/JSC and E&T Plan with college.
Other	One-time only, unless you get an exception. ESD must say it is a high wage, high demand job.
Where can I learn more?	Your WorkFirst worker has more information. ESD has a list of approved high wage high demand training. College career counselors can help you get information to support the high wage/high demand requirements.
Legal Info	WAC 388-310-1000(4)(a)(ii) .

General Information

2-adult households: Each person in the household is entitled to these opportunities. Both parents in a two-parent household, or a parent and teenaged child, could be in training or education at the same time. The 2 adults must have a combined total of 55 hours/week.

Combining Education and Training: Generally, it is okay to combine 2 or more opportunities. Example: you could get your first year of education under the vocational education track. You could then get a second year by completing a degree in an approved field under the certificate/degree completion track.

Some restrictions apply when combining these for more than 1 year. To learn more, contact resources below.

Three other options include Community Jobs (CJ), Work experience (WEX) and on-the-job training (OJT).

- **CJ** allows you to work at selected job sites for up to 9 months. DSHS pays part of your wages. [WAC 388-310-1300](#).
- **WEX** teaches basic job skills by assigning you to unpaid work at selected locations. [WAC 388-310-1100](#).
- **OJT** is skills training an employer provides at their place of business. They pay you to work AND to get training at your job or in a classroom. They may reimburse your employer for up to half your wages for regular work hours & approved training time. [WAC 388-310-1200](#).

Help with tuition and books: Ask your school or training program for help first. Check with the school WorkFirst Coordinator, if there is one. If they cannot help, WorkFirst should help pay.

Problems with DSHS: You can ask for an administrative hearing at DSHS and call 1-888-201-1014 for free legal advice from CLEAR. You should also contact POWER: call 866-343-9716 (toll-free) or 360-352-9716 (Olympia office).

WorkFirst Education and Training Opportunities

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