

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.

References

- EARN Manual
- [PA DHS Cash Assistance Handbook](#)
- Work Ready Manual

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-sufficiency¹ 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.

¹ See Partner4Work Self-Sufficiency Policy

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- 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.
- 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.
 - NOTE: Vouchers will be considered for participants without a diploma or GED if they are simultaneously enrolled in a program to obtain these credentials (such as with our Adult Ed partners).

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.

Training providers will receive 50% of the total training voucher funding amount when a participant successfully enrolls into and begins an approved training program. Training providers will receive the remaining 50% of the total training voucher funding amount when a participant successfully completes the approved training program. Information on this payment structure is further described in the training provider vendor agreement.

Partner4Work may establish an alternate payment structure under the following circumstances:

- The 50/50 payment structure is prohibitive and would limit access to the training program.
- An alternate payment structure would enable participation in high quality, effective programming.

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. Requests for second and subsequent countable training must be submitted to the Bureau of Employment Programs (BEP) for approval.

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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.

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.

NOTE: Providers must ensure all required forms are completed and signed before submitting for approval.

Policy Exceptions

Under limited circumstances, Partner4Work may grant exceptions to requirements within this policy. Requests for exceptions may be submitted using the [Policy Exception Form](#), also available at www.partner4work.org.

Exception requests will be reviewed based on their allowability under any applicable legislation, regulation, and policy. 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: July 1, 2024

Last Reviewed: June 1, 2026

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Policy Updates:

Date	Policy Update
7/1/2024	• Added language describing the payment structure for Adult TANF training voucher funding, including 50% payment at enrollment/start of an approved training program and 50% payment upon successful program completion. • Added a caveat to the language referenced above, citing the limited circumstances under which a provider may set up alternate mechanisms for funding.
2/18/2026	• The Policy Exceptions subsection has been updated to direct users to the new request form.
07/01/2026	• A references section was added to this policy. • Additional language was added to clarify when a participant without a high school diploma/GED may qualify for a training voucher. • Additional language was added to note that a second/subsequent training voucher may be considered with BEP approval. • An additional clause was included to note that all required forms must be completed/signed prior to submission to Partner4Work.