

St. Charles Region Local Policy Cover Sheet

Policy Subject: Occupational Skills Training (ITA and Eligibility)
Based on information in OWD Issuance: 17-2021
Effective Date: Updated March 2021; Clarified page #4 December 3, 2021
Revision Date: June 2022
Expiration Date: Continuous, until further notice
Does this require Local Plan Modification? No

ST. CHARLES COUNTY REGION

ITA and Eligibility Policy for Individualized Career Services

(OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING)

Updated June 2022

The St. Charles Region will ensure compliance with all aspects of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) for Occupational Skills Training.

The St. Charles Job Center will process payments, reimbursements and other fiscal activities of all classroom training approved by WIOA staff in this office. Staff will ensure schools and programs are listed on the State's Eligible Training Provider System as eligible to receive WIOA funds prior to approval.

Enrollment of a participant into Occupational Skills Training is the culmination of a thorough assessment process performed by the St. Charles Job Center and documented in the individual's Employment Plan and in case notes.

Individuals meeting the criteria listed above can be considered for Occupational Skills Training if they are determined to be:

- Unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment, that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;
- Unemployed or underemployed;
- In need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, through career services alone;
- Has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services;
- The participant has chosen a career field that is growing or in-demand; and
- The participant has researched more than one school that offers the training program of choice.

Enrollment Process for Occupational Skills Training

After the Case Manager and the participant come to an agreement on the choice of careers and the training facility, the participant will contact the school's financial aid office to apply for any other available financial assistance (E.G. Pell grant). **The St. Charles Region will only approve funding for Pell Grant Applicants after their Pell Grant funding has been denied or only partially funded. Our LWDB will only pay for training**

after all Pell Grant funds have been expended. If the school does not estimate Title IV awards, the participant may be referred to the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) for assistance.

Note: Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits for education and training services does not preclude a veteran or the veteran's eligible spouse from receiving WIOA funded services, including training funds. Our region will also not require veterans or spouses to exhaust their entitlement to VA funded training benefits prior to allowing them to enroll in WIOA funded training.

After the participant has applied for financial aid, the participant will meet with their Case Manager to determine a start date and any supportive services needed for successful completion of the training program. Resources available to provide these supportive services (i.e., Housing Authority, FSD, etc.) will be discussed and any appropriate referrals made.

Upon approval of a participant's request for training funds, a "Training Approval and Authorization to Pay" form (see attached) will be completed by the case manager using information submitted by participant on a "Request for Classroom Training" form (see attached). Upon completion, the original form will be given to the participant to take to the school. A copy will be given to the participant and a copy will be kept in the participant's WIOA file.

Those participants enrolling in a credit hour course will be preliminarily approved for the total credit hours required to complete the certificate program. However, case managers will ensure enrollment in appropriate classes each semester to complete the program as agreed upon. The "Training Approval" form will be completed on a semester-by-semester basis based on satisfactory progress and the availability of WIOA training funds.

Attendance Policy

Classroom Training participants are expected to attend all regularly scheduled class hours unless otherwise arranged with their case manager.

The only absences to be considered excused are when the school cancels classes.

Participants may be put on probation after missing more than 10% of the total training hours. Students will be given written notice of their probation status and asked to sign the probation agreement, if any absences occur after probation, the participant may be terminated from approved training. This restriction may be waived on an individual basis if the probationary student is making a sincere effort to attend class.

Students may take a Leave of Absence (LOA) if approved by both the Case Manager and the school the participant is attending. The school should submit a letter stating the time period that the student will be on a LOA.

Leaves of Absence are only to be used for medical or similar emergency situations.

If the participant must repeat a portion of the course due to a LOA, other absences, or low or failing grades and the school charges an additional cost, the St. Charles Job Center may not fund any repeated portion. The participant may be liable for the cost of any repeated course work.

If a participant drops out of training, our LWDB will attempt to recover the training funds from the training provider, following the training provider's refund policy. Attempts and results will be documented in case notes.

Criteria for School Approval

The St. Charles Region will consider the following criteria when approving funding for Classroom Training participants:

- Schools to be considered for Classroom Training must be listed on the Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) list
- Training-related job placement of past graduates as listed in the ETPS system
- Employment retention rates of past graduates as listed in the ETPS system and/or as verified by WIOA staff
- School/program must have had at least one full size graduating class
- The training provider's emphasis on timely completion of course work, I.E. the school must have a proven track record of students completing planned programs as originally scheduled.
- Return on Investment: the average wage at placement versus the cost of attendance including tuition, supplies and fees must be relative.
- Most affordable alternative: when more than one program is offered locally with a start date within a three-month time frame and programs are of comparable quality, the least expensive school will be approved unless good cause can be documented for choosing the more costly training.
- A training provider's vocational programs should teach all the skills required for employment in the field.
- The training provider must follow the St. Charles Job Center's procedures regarding referral, enrollment, paperwork, and billing (see attached).

- When possible, geographic location and class schedule will be considered as it corresponds to participant's convenience.

Reverse Referrals

The St. Charles Job Center will not automatically accept reverse referrals from training providers. All applicants referred by any training provider must go through a complete objective assessment and eligibility determination without predetermined outcomes. Training providers may refer individuals for assessment with the understanding that enrollment in their school is not a guarantee and that the St. Charles Job Center may not agree that this is the appropriate training for the individual.

All individuals determined to be appropriate for and in need of occupational skills training will be referred to all schools in the area to ensure they make an informed decision as to which school is best for them.

Other Training Considerations

- The individual must be a resident of the St. Charles County workforce area, unless approved by the Director.
- The St. Charles Job Center will approve Occupational Skills training in one career field per participant, unless otherwise approved by the Director on a case-by-case basis. Multiple courses/certifications in the chosen career field are allowable when deemed appropriate by the Career Counselor and approved by the Director.
- As of 06/20/2019, the maximum amount that the St. Charles Job Center will approve for training is \$10,000, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director on a case-by-case basis. This does NOT mean that every participant will be approved for this maximum amount, but that the amount is a guideline that will not generally be exceeded. Each request will be considered individually for cost of training considering all other factors discussed herein.
- The maximum length of training that will be approved is 2 years.
- Preference for available training funds will be given to veterans.
- When funding is limited, case managers will consider "most in need".

Title IV Coordination

All participants assessed as appropriate OST candidates will be required to apply for all available grants under Title IV as well as any other financial aid that may be available before requesting WIOA training funds. This may be done at the school identified for training or

through the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC). In addition, St. Charles Job Center staff can assist participants in researching and completing applications for additional grant funding. The school must coordinate and communicate any Title IV awards a WIOA student will be receiving with the WIOA Case Manager.

Whenever possible, the St. Charles American Job Center would like to have a written estimate of the grant amount prior to final WIOA approval.

Inter-Agency Coordination

The St. Charles American Job Center will coordinate any assistance the participant is receiving from other agencies to avoid duplication of services. Other services to be screened for include but are not limited to: FSD childcare; Housing Authority's rental assistance; Title IV awards; Unemployment Insurance; Vocational Rehabilitation's training services; **RSB's training services, youth transition services and supportive services**; and Social Security assistance.

Monitoring Progress

The Case Manager will regularly monitor the participant's progress to ensure training is being provided as planned and satisfactory progress is being accomplished. This will usually occur on a monthly basis for training that lasts longer than 3 weeks. The participant will be advised to contact their case manager if they encounter problems of any kind that may affect their ability to continue in and complete their approved training program successfully.

Job Search

Participants will be encouraged to contact their Case Manager prior to completion of their program in order to begin their job search. St. Charles Job Center staff will be available to assist with resume development, locating job leads, cover letters, interview skills, or whatever may be needed to insure a successful job search.