



Occupational Skills Training – OST

Effective Date

4/22/2021, Revisions 3/8/2023, 7/17/2023, 9/11/2023, 6/25/2025

Policy

NEIWDB will follow State ePolicy with the addition of the following:

<https://epolicy.iwd.iowa.gov/Policy/Index?id=145&Version=2>

WIOA Title I Occupational skills training equips participants with specific vocational skills that enable them to achieve proficiency in executing real-world tasks and technical functions essential to various occupational fields, spanning entry, intermediate, and advanced levels. Notably, Youth participants who are not co-enrolled and those who do not receive funds from an Individual Training Account (ITA) are not obligated to select a training provider from the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

Northeast Iowa includes identification of existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Northeast Iowa gives priority consideration to training programs leading to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area. ***See In-Demand Occupation Determination & Usage Policy.***

Such training must:

1. Be outcome-oriented and focused on an occupational goal specified in the individual service strategy.
2. Be of sufficient duration to impart the skills needed to meet the occupational goal.
3. Lead to the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.

Northeast Iowa ensures that the training program, at a minimum, adheres to the following guidelines:

1. All participants who are enrolled in OST must apply for any financial assistance for which they may qualify.
2. OST funds may only be used to pay for tuition. Books, fees, and materials for coursework, as required, may be paid for through the Educational Assistance (EST) support service.
 - Total payments on an ITA may not exceed \$8,000. **Maximum for OST - \$6,000** and \$2,000 for EST services per participant per program year; however, may be increased in extraordinary circumstances by up to \$500.00 by the **NEIWDB Executive Director** when unusual circumstances occur.
 - Books may be paid for through the contract with the local school. If



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possible, books should be charged at the local bookstore.

3. All participants who are enrolled in OST must be covered by the training institution's tuition refund policy.
 - a. In the absence of a refund policy established by the training institution, the WIOA Title I service provider must negotiate a reasonable refund policy with the training site.
4. For Adults and Dislocated Workers, co-enrolled Youth or Youth who receive funds from and ITA, documentation of consumer choice in selecting both an approved training provider and program must be entered into in the data management system.
5. All participants are required to attend classes full-time unless no other classes are available.
6. Classes that are not a part of the curriculum are not allowed with an OST service. For example, if a student is taking a Spanish class but it is not required for the degree program the class would not be allowed. With the Title I Director review and approval, this service could be covered under PVA but the career planner must determine how that class would be a benefit and be documented in a case note.

Attendance

Participants are expected to maintain regular class attendance with the exception of Online courses. If attendance falls below 90% of the scheduled hours, participants may be put on probation.

Grades

Participants must maintain at least a "C" (2.0) GPA. If a "C" (2.0) average is not maintained, participants may be placed on probation or discontinued the next semester/quarter.

Note: In order to remain eligible for WIOA financial assistance for books, tuition and fees, all students must meet the guidelines set forth by their respective educational institutions for retaining financial assistance. Failure to meet the school's criteria for retaining financial assistance will also result in the loss of WIOA funding.

A copy of participant grades is required to be placed on file at the end of each quarter or semester. No classes can be added or dropped without WIOA Title I staff approval. Students must attend class during scheduled hours. Participants cannot substitute time assigned in one class by attendance in another but can spend extra-unscheduled hours in individual study, lab classes, etc.

WIOA Title I will pay OST costs if a student must retake a class, due to having failed or withdrawn from the class, provided the original class was not subsidized by WIOA. However, if a student does retake a class and does not qualify for OST reimbursement, support services can be provided by WIOA.

Retesting

WIOA will pay for retesting for example, CNA or HiSET tests, under Educational Testing (EDT) or Secondary Education Certification support services.



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Progress Reports

Twice a semester at the end of the first thirty (30) days and at mid- term - instructor(s) complete and sign a progress report or, where available, students may print a current grade report from the training institution's web site. Lack of progress could result in probation or termination. For short-term courses, such as CNA or summer sessions, timesheets will be required in lieu of progress reports.

Participants must maintain satisfactory progress/grades throughout the training program. A copy of grades/transcripts must be case noted and uploaded each semester/quarter.

Timesheets

Participants who receive support services are required to turn in a timesheet showing attendance every two weeks, as a written request for support service payments. The timesheets and the corresponding written request for payment will be submitted no later than the last day of the following month. Written requests for payments submitted later than the last day of the following month may not be paid.

Online Distance Learning:

The ability to monitor attendance in training is the primary concern when determining the approvability of distance training for the students. The usual meaning is that the training takes place in a room in a school where students can interact with an instructor. Therefore, the key element to approvability of distance training is based primarily on the interactive nature of the classroom training experience between instructor and student. A means of communication must be established where the instructor can ask questions of the students, and the students can respond and ask questions of the instructor.

Distance training is allowable if the Provider/Program is active on the State ETPL.