

441—93.8(239B) Education and training activities. Education refers to any academic or vocational course of study that enables a participant to complete high school, improves a participant's ability to read and speak English, or prepares a participant for a specific professional or vocational area of employment. Though employment leading to economic self-sufficiency is the eventual goal of all FIAs, it is recognized that education increases a person's chance of finding employment, particularly employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency. Any participant who requests participation in educational activities shall be evaluated to determine the likelihood of success. If the request is approved, a training plan shall be developed and included in the participant's FIA.

93.8(1) Participant requirements. The decision to include education in an FIA shall take into account the results of the educational evaluation pursuant to paragraph 93.8(1)"b" and the current educational level of the participant. Prior academic or vocational training is not, in itself, a reason for denial or approval of educational services. All family members who are approved for education shall be eligible for all program benefits, even when two or more family members are simultaneously participating and even if participation is at the same educational facility and in the same program. For education to be approved for inclusion in an FIA, the following requirements shall be met.

a. Vocational goal. For a participant enrolled in postsecondary education, the education must lead to a specific vocational goal. A degree in general studies or programs not leading to specific occupational outcomes cannot be included in a participant's FIA.

(1) Except as provided in subparagraph 93.8(1)"a"(2), a vocational goal must be in an occupational field for which available labor market information or emerging business trends in the participant's local area indicate employment potential. These trends or statistics must be provided by a legitimate source, such as but not limited to:

1. The department of workforce development,
2. Private employment agencies, or
3. Local employers providing jobs paying at least minimum wage for which the education is being requested.

(2) Information to support employment potential in the participant's local area is not required when:

1. The participant has a documented job offer in the field before entering the training; or
2. The participant is willing to relocate after training to an area where there is employment potential. Documentation for the new location shall meet the requirements in subparagraph 93.8(1)"a"(1).

(3) For participants attending high school or high school equivalency activities, adult basic education or English as a second language, the vocational goal is to improve employability by successfully completing the activity.

b. Educational evaluation. An educational evaluation shall be completed according to subrule 93.5(3) before postsecondary education is included as an FIA activity. A participant under the age of 19 does not need to complete an educational evaluation in order to have high school completion included in the FIA.

(1) A participant who chooses to enter educational activities before obtaining approval is not eligible to receive supports as described in subrule 93.8(6), cannot use that activity to meet the FIA participation obligation, and shall be expected to participate in other FIA activities.

(2) A participant who is already involved in education at the time of FIP application or enters education before approval must meet the requirements in this rule before the educational activities can be included in the FIA. Once approved, the current educational activity may then be included in the participant's FIA, and the participant will be eligible to receive supports as described in subrule 93.8(6).

93.8(2) Provider requirements. Both public and private agencies may provide educational activities.

a. Type of provider. Education may be included in the FIA if obtained from a provider that is approved or registered with the state or is accredited by an appropriate accrediting agency. Training provided by a community action program, church, or other agency may be included in the FIA only if the PROMISE JOBS worker determines that:

- (1) The training is adequate and leads to the completion of the participant's vocational goal; and

(2) The training provider possesses appropriate and up-to-date equipment; has qualified instructors, adequate facilities, a complete curriculum, acceptable grade point requirements, and a good job-placement history; and demonstrates expenses of training that are reasonable and comparable to the costs of similar programs.

b. Time and attendance. The provider must verify the participant's actual hours of attendance in an educational activity with Form 470-2617 pursuant to subrule 93.10(2). If the educational activity is structured in such a way that verification cannot be obtained or the educational provider is unwilling to provide time and attendance verification, the educational activity cannot be included in the participant's FIA. Exceptions apply for distance learning as described at paragraph 93.10(2) "f" and for participants under age 20 as described at subparagraph 93.10(2) "b"(3).

93.8(3) Approvable activities. Training plans shall include only training activities that can be considered as meeting the FIA obligations for participation. The following activities may be included in a training plan:

- a.* Adult basic education.
 - b.* Continuing education units when needed for the participant to be recertified or retrained to reenter a field in which the participant was previously trained or employed or to maintain certification needed to remain employed.
 - c.* Correspondence courses when the courses are required but not offered by an educational facility attended by the participant.
 - d.* English as a second language.
 - e.* High school or high school equivalency completion. Any participant who does not have a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma (HSED) shall be encouraged to obtain a diploma. A participant who is 18 years of age or older may be approved to return to regular high school only when the participant can graduate within one year of the normal graduation date. High school equivalency or high school courses and other types of vocational training may run concurrently.
 - f.* Online or distance learning. Distance learning includes training such as, but not limited to, that conducted over the Iowa communications network, online courses, virtual courses, or Web conferencing.
- The training:

- (1) Must include interaction between the instructor and the student, such as required chats or message boards;
- (2) Must include mechanisms for evaluation and measurement of student achievement; and
- (3) Must be offered in Iowa unless the conditions in paragraph 93.8(3) "g" apply. An online training program shall be considered an out-of-state training program when any of the required training or testing occurs out-of-state.

- g.* Out-of-state training. Out-of-state training is approvable only when:
 - (1) Similar training is not available in Iowa,
 - (2) Relocation required to attend an in-state facility would be unnecessary if attending an out-of-state facility, or
 - (3) The only in-state facilities within commuting distance are private schools where tuition costs are higher than at an out-of-state facility within commuting distance.

- h.* Postsecondary education up to and including a baccalaureate degree program.
 - (1) A participant with no postsecondary education may be approved for training resulting in a certificate of program completion or an academic degree, such as an associate or baccalaureate degree. Participants who have not completed a high school education or received a high school equivalency diploma (HSED) may be required to do so before courses leading to an associate degree or higher are approved.

- (2) A participant who has a baccalaureate degree or higher is considered employable. No further training shall be approved unless the participant's physical or mental status has changed to such an extent that the past education is no longer appropriate. The participant must provide supportive evidence from either a qualified medical or mental health professional or the state rehabilitation agency.

(3) A participant who has successfully completed a postsecondary educational program that provides less than a baccalaureate degree may be approved for further training if the participant meets one of the following criteria:

1. The previous training is in an occupation that is outdated.
2. The previous training is in a field where current labor market information or emerging business trends show little or no employment opportunity.
3. The training requested is a progression in a specific career that moves a participant from entry-level positions to higher levels of pay, skill, responsibility, or authority.
4. The participant's background makes employment in the area in which the participant is trained impossible.
5. Changes in the participant's physical or mental status make the past training no longer appropriate. The participant must provide supportive evidence from a qualified medical or mental health professional or the state rehabilitation agency.
 - i. Prerequisite courses required by the selected training program.
 - j. Remedial coursework for one term when needed as determined by testing conducted by the training facility.
 - k. Summer school.

93.8(4) *Nonapprovable training activities.* Nonapprovable training activities shall not be included in the FIA. When an activity in which the participant is enrolled becomes nonapprovable, PROMISE JOBS shall cancel the current training plan and require the participant to renegotiate the FIA to include other activities. Form 470-0602 shall be issued to inform the participant that the request for education is canceled. Nonapprovable activities include the following:

- a. A course or training that the participant has previously completed.
- b. Any course or training in a field in which the participant does not intend to seek employment after the training is completed. An exception may be made when the reason for not seeking employment is to receive further education when the education:
 - (1) Is a planned progression in a specific career path; and
 - (2) Will not lead to an advanced degree beyond a baccalaureate.
- c. A training program that does not relate to the identified vocational goal.
- d. Educational activities for which the participant has failed to earn the grades required for admission.
- e. Education in a field in which the participant will not be able to be employed due to known criminal convictions or founded child or dependent adult abuse.
- f. Out-of-state training except as allowed under paragraph 93.8(3) "g."
- g. Training for jobs paying less than state minimum wage.
- h. Training that will not be completed until after the participant leaves FIP. Training programs that exceed the known length of time during which the participant will remain eligible for FIP assistance shall be approved only if:
 - (1) The time remaining in the training is minimal and tuition has already been paid.
 - (2) There is a reasonable plan for how the program will be completed without the assistance and support from FIP or PROMISE JOBS. A reasonable plan may include, but not be limited to, school loans, grants, and scholarships.

93.8(5) *Training plan content.* Once a participant is approved for training, a training plan shall be developed and written into the participant's FIA. The training plan shall include:

- a. Academic enrollment hours. Participants are encouraged to maintain as full an academic workload as is possible in order to complete their education in a timely manner. However, a person may choose to participate in education along with other activities such as employment, job readiness skills training, other job readiness activities, or other FIA activities.
- b. Approved training plan activities.
- c. The specific educational goal as defined in paragraph 93.8(1) "a."
- d. A date by which the participant expects to complete training. This end date depends on:
 - (1) Time frames specified for a program as established by the educational facility.

- (2) Whether the participant is attending full-time or part-time.
- (3) Problems or barriers to involvement as identified in subrule 93.4(5) or 93.14(1).

e. Testing schedule. Participants enrolled in ABE or ESL programs must be able to complete training in the time determined by the testing schedule unless the PROMISE JOBS worker and, if appropriate, the participant's academic advisor or instructor agree that additional time may be allowed. Under no circumstances, however, shall more than 6 additional months be allowed. Additional time shall not be allowed if, as a result, months required to complete training would exceed 24 months for ABE or 12 months for ESL.

93.8(6) Supportive payments. PROMISE JOBS may provide payment for certain expenses when needed to participate in approved education and training activities as described in this subrule and in subrule 93.11(4).

a. Eligibility.

(1) Eligibility for PROMISE JOBS supportive payments for education and training begins with the date when the participant begins training under an approved plan or is removed from a waiting list as described at paragraph 93.4(4) "d," whichever is later.

(2) Participant eligibility for child care assistance and transportation payments begins as described in subparagraph 93.8(6) "a"(1) and shall be terminated when a training plan is canceled.

(3) Each participant in postsecondary vocational training is limited to 24 fiscal months of PROMISE JOBS payment of expenses needed for participation. The 24 fiscal months do not have to be consecutive. See paragraph 93.8(6) "b" for additional limits on child care expenses.

(4) When more than one facility offers a particular program, payment is limited to the amount required to attend the nearest educational facility except when attending a facility that is farther away will allow the family to reach self-sufficiency earlier.

b. Child care. Child care assistance shall be provided as described at subrule 93.11(2) and 441—Chapter 170 when needed for participation in education and training activities except as described in subparagraphs 93.8(6) "b"(1) and 93.8(6) "b"(2).

(1) Child care assistance payments needed for participation in postsecondary education activities are limited to 24 fiscal months.

(2) All child care assistance payments issued for child care for participation in postsecondary education activities count toward this limit, including payments issued while the person was not a PROMISE JOBS participant, pursuant to 441—subparagraph 170.2(2) "b"(1).

c. Transportation. Transportation payments shall be provided as described at subrule 93.11(3) when needed for participation in educational activities unless transportation payments are available from another source. Transportation needed for participation in education activities is subject to the limits described in paragraph 93.8(6) "a."

(1) When a participant receives a transportation payment from another program which equals or exceeds that possible under PROMISE JOBS, transportation shall not be paid by PROMISE JOBS for any month covered by the other program.

(2) When the amount received from another program is less than that possible under PROMISE JOBS, a supplemental payment may be made as long as the combined payment does not exceed that normally paid by PROMISE JOBS.

(3) When a participant is enrolled in high school, a transportation payment shall not be allowed if transportation is available from another source, such as the school district. If child care needs or the needs of the child or the participant make it impractical or inappropriate for the participant to use transportation provided by the school district, a transportation payment may be authorized.

d. Training expenses. Participants enrolled in high school or high school equivalency completion, ABE, ESL, or postsecondary vocational training may be eligible for payment of the following expenses of training when required for participation, subject to limits in subrule 93.11(4):

- (1) Enrollment fees,
- (2) School application fees,
- (3) Educational grant or scholarship application fees,
- (4) Licensing, certification and testing fees,

- (5) Travel costs required for certification or testing, and
- (6) Certain practicum expenses as described in subparagraph 93.11(4)“a”(3).

e. Direct education costs. Participants enrolled in high school or high school equivalency completion, ABE, ESL, or short-term training programs of 29 weeks or less may also be eligible for payment for direct education costs, including:

- (1) Tuition,
 - (2) Books,
 - (3) Fees including graduation,
 - (4) Basic school supplies,
 - (5) Specific supplies related to obtaining credit for a course and required of all students in a course,
- and
- (6) Required uniforms.

f. Supplies purchased with PROMISE JOBS funds. Participants who successfully complete their training plans may keep any books or supplies, including tools, which were purchased with PROMISE JOBS funds. Participants who leave their training program before completion and do not obtain training-related employment within 60 days of leaving training shall return all reusable supplies, including books and tools, but not clothing, purchased by PROMISE JOBS.

(1) The PROMISE JOBS worker is authorized to donate to nonprofit organizations any items determined to be unusable by the PROMISE JOBS program.

(2) When tools are not returned, the amount of the PROMISE JOBS payment shall be considered an overpayment unless the participant verifies theft of the tools through documentation of timely report to a law enforcement agency.

93.8(7) Documentation.

a. Plan. The following information shall be documented in the participant’s file.

- (1) Evaluation results, pursuant to paragraph 93.8(1)“b.”
- (2) Current educational level.
- (3) Justification for approval of additional postsecondary education pursuant to subrule 93.5(3).
- (4) Academic probationary status pursuant to subrule 93.8(8).
- (5) Justification for denial of education. Form 470-0602, Notice of Decision: Services, shall be issued to the participant to deny the request for education.

b. Participation. A participant shall provide documentation of the actual hours of participation in education and homework and of grades and academic progress as described in subrule 93.10(2).

93.8(8) Academic probation. A participant may be placed on academic probation for at least one term, or a comparable time limit appropriate to the educational program, after which the participant shall be reevaluated for continued inclusion in education activities. This subrule does not apply to parents under the age of 18 who are attending high school completion programs.

a. Placing a participant on academic probation. The PROMISE JOBS worker may choose to place a participant on academic probation in the following circumstances:

(1) The educational evaluation completed according to paragraph 93.8(1)“b” identifies some factors with the participant’s ability or past circumstances that could make successful completion of the training difficult but the participant’s motivation is high and changes in the participant’s life situation indicate a realistic probability of success.

(2) The participant was previously unable to maintain the cumulative grade point average required by a training facility in training comparable to that being requested.

(3) The participant enrolled but did not complete a previous education activity without good cause.

(4) At the end of a term, or of a comparable period applicable to the educational program, the participant is receiving less than a 2.0 grade point average or less than a higher average that is required by the specific training facility or curriculum.

b. Probation outcomes. The participant shall be removed from probation for satisfactory performance if, by the end of the established probationary period, the participant is receiving at least a 2.0 grade point average or a higher average as required by the specific training facility or curriculum.

(1) **Reevaluation.** If the participant is not receiving the required grade point by the end of the probationary period, the participant shall be reevaluated to determine continued eligibility for participation in education using the same type of information used to originally evaluate the likelihood of academic success as identified in paragraph 93.8(1)“b.” Documentation shall meet the requirements as stated in subrule 93.8(7).

(2) **Continued probation.** Probation may be continued when reevaluation indicates that education is appropriate. The PROMISE JOBS worker may also consider continued probation when:

1. Temporary barriers such as illness or family emergencies that interfered with successful participation have been resolved.

2. Long-term barriers to successful participation have been identified and accommodations developed and implemented.

3. The counselor or the lead instructor in the educational program verifies that there is an excellent likelihood the student will raise the grade point to the acceptable level in the next term or a comparable time limit appropriate to the educational program.

(3) **Cancellation of a training plan.** The participant’s current training plan shall be canceled if the participant has failed to maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average or a higher average required by the specific training facility or curriculum, and reevaluation indicates no mitigating circumstances as listed in subparagraph 93.8(8)“b”(2). When a training plan is canceled, the participant will be required to renegotiate the family investment agreement to include either a new, more appropriate training plan or other FIA activities. Form 470-0602, Notice of Decision: Services, shall be issued to the participant to inform the participant that the approval for education is canceled.

93.8(9) Limited benefit plan. Participants in education choose a limited benefit plan through the following actions.

a. Failure to participate. The participant fails to maintain education activities or follow training plan requirements as specified in the participant's FIA, and the participant does not have good cause. Procedures at subrule 93.4(5) and rules 441—93.13(239B) and 441—93.14(239B) shall apply.

b. Misuse of payments. The participant misuses expense payments to the extent that the training plan is no longer achievable or knowingly provides receipts or any other written statements that have been altered, forged, or, in any way, are not authentic.

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