

### 24.13 EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

This Section provides information about types of educational activities that may meet an individual's work requirement. However, the federal law and the WV state law differ in the way educational activities may be used.

Under Federal Law: An educational activity is mandatory for parents under the age of 20, who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent. In addition, attending school is an eligibility requirement for unemancipated parents under age 18 who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent, when the infant is at least 12 weeks old. See Section 9.21,A,3. Any individual who does not fall into either of these 2 groups is restricted in the number of education hours which can be used to meet the federal participation requirement. This is described in detail in Section 24.5. However, under WV state law, those who are not mandatory for participation in educational activities, may select other educational options which do not meet federal requirements.

Under WV State Law: Any WV WORKS recipient who must meet a federal participation requirement may elect to participate in any educational activity, regardless of any restrictions in Section 24.5. The participation must be full-time as defined by the institution or course of study, regardless of the number of hours of actual participation. The client must not be required to participate in any other activity to increase his participation hours to the minimum federal requirement. However, the client may voluntarily participate in any other activity, but no sanction may be imposed for failure to participate in that other activity. More details about this are in Appendix E.

**EXAMPLE:** A mother and 2 children apply for WV WORKS. She is not temporarily exempt from meeting the work participation requirement, so the Worker discusses possible opportunities for her to become self-supporting. The client indicates that she wants to participate in a literacy program and the Worker accepts this as her work activity. The literacy classes are held 2 nights/week for 2½ hours each night. This does not meet the client's federal work participation requirement, but the client has selected an educational activity and full-time is defined by the literacy course as 5 hrs./week. Therefore, the client must not be required to participate in any other work activity while participating in a literacy program.

The West Virginia Education Program (WVEP) provides an alternative to receipt of WV WORKS and allows the client the opportunity to choose to participate in another Program which offers the same cash benefit as WV WORKS and allows him to start or continue his college education. See item E below.

A. LITERACY

When the client cannot read, he may be placed in a literacy program. To qualify for such placement, the individual must test at or below standards set by the literacy provider. Not available for WVEP.

B. HIGH SCHOOL

The student must adhere to the established attendance policy of the institution. Regardless of the actual number of hours of attendance, the parent meets his participation requirement.

When the individual is no longer accepted in the school system, or, placing him back in the school system is inappropriate, he must be placed in Adult Basic Education (ABE), vocational training or an alternative school setting. Not available for WVEP.

C. ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Those adults whose native language is not English and who have difficulty reading, writing and/or speaking English, may receive education in English language skills. Not available for WVEP.

D. ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (ABE)

Adult Basic Education (ABE) includes training in basic skills. It may also be used to help prepare for the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) test. Not available for WVEP.

E. COLLEGE

Use of college attendance to meet a work requirement depends on the kind of requirement being met.

1. Meeting the Federal Requirement

Attending undergraduate or graduate college classes does not meet the federal work requirement for any

individual. However, some undergraduate courses require that students be placed in an unpaid work environment. Such undergraduate placements may be used to meet the work federal requirement. These placements include, but are not limited to: student teaching, internships, clinical work assignments and unpaid work experience. No such placements for graduate students are used to meet the work requirement. When the student does not participate in such activities for a sufficient number of hours to meet his participation requirement, he must also participate in another activity. If he does not participate in such activities at all, he must meet all of his work participation hours in another activity or combination of activities.

**NOTE:** Participation in College Work Study is employment.

2. Meeting the State Requirement

The client cannot be required to participate in any other activity to meet the federal work requirement when he chooses to attend college, as long as he attends full-time as defined by the institution.

At the client's option, he may choose to participate in WVEP. See item 3 below. There are some advantages and disadvantages to both options and the Worker must provide the client sufficient information to make an informed choice. Appendix E of this Chapter compares the WV WORKS educational component based on the State law, to the WVEP.

3. West Virginia Education Program (WVEP)

WVEP is a State-funded program that provides the client an alternative to the receipt of WV WORKS and, thereby, allows him to reserve some of his 60 months of eligibility while attending college as an undergraduate. Because the WV WORKS AG is closed while the client participates in WVEP, the AG is removed from the WV WORKS universe when determining the State's federal participation rate.

During participation in WVEP the client receives cash assistance in an amount equal to what he

would receive as a WV WORKS recipient. This has some adverse implications for Food Stamps and Medicaid and may require an additional work requirement not required by WV WORKS. The Worker must provide the client sufficient information to make an informed choice. Appendix E of this Chapter compares the WV WORKS educational component, based on the State law, to WVEP. Instructions for placing a WV WORKS recipient in the WVEP were released on June 26, 2000 and remain in effect.

F. RELEASE OF INFORMATION (WT-15)

Form WT-15, a release of information form, may be used to obtain information about a client's participation in educational activities, satisfactory progress and testing from institutions and other education activity providers. The form provides a means for the client to authorize the Worker to receive such information.

The WT-15 must be read and explained to the client prior to a specific placement or requirement. The form is signed by the client at the time the Worker needs to obtain specific information. The signed form is filed in the case record.