

School or Training Program Offering No Financial Aid (Non-FAO)

Reviewed: June 2019

Purpose

This document is to inform DVR staff of the process and considerations needed to guide consumers when a training **program** does not offer financial aid. This information is not intended to cover situations where the **student** is ineligible for financial aid.

Note: If the program costs exceed \$5,000 annually (within 12 calendar months), an **exception** is required. If the identified school or program is through a private or out-of-state entity, an **Administrative Review** is required.

Rationale

This guidance explains how to assist consumers when a program not offering financial aid (non-FAO) is selected, establishing best practices on how to determine timeframes and progress measures when a non-FAO program is part of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Occasionally, a DVR consumer may choose to attend a school or program that does not offer financial aid. These programs can include Career Pathways programs, stackable credential programs, or certification programs offered by a public or private entity. It is important to make some distinctions when DVR agrees to provide support and funding for such a program.

A variety of approaches may be considered. For example: Would an MS Excel class held at the local library on a Saturday, a technical college course, or a \$125, four-hour intensive course offered by a private company meet the consumer's IPE-related need?

Best practice suggestions:

- Consumers should select a program that will lead to an employment outcome.
- The program should provide industry-recognized preparation or credentials.
- The program cost should be similar to other programs. Staff should work with consumers to find the lowest cost option that meets the consumer's need and IPE goal.
- The program may not be ineligible for financial aids due to loss of official accreditation.
- Only courses included in an IPE and identified as vocational skill or credential programs will be funded at experiential college programs (Think College, etc.). Programs of this type require direct consultation with the DVR Supervisor before being added to an IPE.

- The DVR exception process must be followed if the costs exceed \$5,000 annually (within 12 calendar months). If approved, the Director must identify parameters for the approval, e.g., timeframe, dollar amount, reason, etc.

In-State Preference

DVR has established a preference for training programs offered at in-state public schools for all post-secondary training, including programs that offer financial aids and those that do not.

Administrative Review Requirement

If a consumer selects a program and wishes to have DVR funding at either a private or out-of-state school that does not offer financial aid, an [Administrative Review](#) is required. A case note by the Director or Supervisor identifying the parameters for the approval, e.g., timeframe, dollar amount, reason, etc., is required.

Short-Term Training

If a consumer wishes to participate in a training program offered by a local agency or business, such as a child care certificate program, short-term computer class/certificate program, or food service certification course; those types of courses can be paid using the process described in this section.

It is important that the consumer establish a clear timeframe for completion of the coursework. Students should be encouraged to complete programs as quickly as possible. Timeframes should be reflected in the IPE along with responsibilities and progress measures to assist the consumer in staying on track with program completion. Attendance should be part of an overall plan and should not consist of unrelated courses that would not lead to an industry-recognized credential.

Counseling and guidance should be provided to consumers who are having difficulty meeting the timeframe for completing their program. The consumer's disability or other barriers affecting their success may need to be addressed, as those barriers may affect employment in that occupation.

Lowest-Cost Option

DVR must support the lowest-cost option for any service provided. For approved schooling and training programs, to meet a consumer's IPE needs DVR will fund the DVR Unmet Need amount, not to exceed \$5,000 annually (within 12 calendar months). All options should be explored before identifying a specific program in the IPE.

If funds exceeding \$5,000 are needed, the DVR exception process must be followed. Costs to include in the annual estimate include course or tuition costs, fees, books, and required supplies. If other support costs (travel, housing, tutoring, etc.) are extensive, consultation with a DVR Supervisor is suggested.

Procedural Checklist for DVR Staff

Note: [Administrative Approval](#) must be obtained for private and out-of-state schools if the consumer requests DVR funding for necessary costs exceeding \$5,000 annually (within 12 calendar months).

DVR staff should follow the steps outlined below when including a non-FAO school or training program in a consumer's IPE:

- ❑ Obtain cost estimates for courses/tuition, books, supplies, and fees. A copy of the bill or other formalized representation of actual costs should be used.
 - ❑ Determine the need for and cost of support services.
 - ❑ Have the consumer sign and date the [Consumer Fiscal Responsibilities Agreement](#) if not already completed.
 - ❑ Discuss with the consumer how they will document successful training progress and completion of the training (e.g., grades, certificate of completion, etc.) and provide such documentation to DVR.
 - ❑ Discuss with the consumer the consequences of not providing timely documentation of successful progress and program completion.
 - ❑ Identify if the school or provider will accept a DVR purchase order for services.
 - ❑ If the school or provider will not accept a purchase order, follow the [Direct Payment](#) instructions.
 - ❑ In an authorization case note, provide an itemized list of all training program costs (tuition, books, fees, other costs, and support services). If the total cost is over \$5,000 annually (within 12 calendar months), supervisory approval is required.
 - ❑ Authorize course cost/tuition, fees, books, and required supplies. Follow typical invoicing and receiving procedure. Indicate that the purchase order is for a Non-FAO training program.
 - ❑ Fund support services such as transportation*, child care, tutoring, disability-related equipment, personal attendants, and other needed services using purchase orders (preferred) and Expense Reimbursement Logs (ERLs).
- *Determine lowest cost option for transportation services based on the [DVR Transportation](#) guidance.*
- ❑ Obtain and complete appropriate verification for all support services provided.
 - ❑ Obtain documentation of successful completion and attach in IRIS.