Occupational Skills Training (OST)

Occupational skills training is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. Occupational skills training is available to adult, dislocated worker (DLW), and out-of-school youth (OSY) participants.

Occupational skills training must:

- Be outcome-oriented and focused on an occupational goal specified in the participant's IEP/ISS;
- Be of sufficient duration to impart the skills needed to meet the occupational goal; and
- Lead to the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.

Training may be provided only to participants who have been determined unable to obtain or retain permanent employment at self-sufficient wages and have been assessed and found to have the necessary skills to complete training in accordance with their employment plan. Participants must have a high school diploma or GED prior to being placed in an OST. Participants who do not have a high school diploma or GED prior to the commencement of training must participate in Adult Education and Literacy Activities in combination with their OST.

Consumer Choice

Training services must be provided in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice in a participant's selection of an eligible training provider (ETP). The requirements for consumer choice are listed below.

1. The local board, through the one-stop center, has made the ETP list available to customers via NEworks.

2. An individual who has been determined eligible for training services may select a program from the ETP list after consultation with a career planner.

3. Consultation with a career planner must include:

   a. either an interview, evaluation, or assessment and career planning informed by local labor market information and training provider performance information;

   b. appraisal of the participant's need for training services based on an interview, evaluation, or assessment and career planning informed by local labor market information and training provider performance information or any other career service received; and

   c. documentation of the participant's need for training services in the participant's case file.

4. There is no requirement that career services be provided as a condition for receipt of training services. However, if career services are not provided before training, the career planner must document the circumstances that justified the decision to provide training

services without first providing the services described in item 3 above.

5. Unless the program has exhausted training funds for the program year, the career planner must refer the individual to the selected provider and establish an individual training account (ITA) for the individual to pay for training.

Nebraska's Eligible Training Provider List

OST can only be provided by eligible training providers with eligible programs. The complete list of approved programs can be found online at NEworks.nebraska.gov under the Education Services menu, look for ETPL Approved Programs.

The consultation requirement for training services requires that career planners discuss programs that are on the ETPL, not programs that may be added to the ETPL.

South Dakota's Eligible Training Provider List

Greater Nebraska (GN) participants may also use South Dakota's Eligible Training Provider List for OST. The complete list of approved programs can be found online at http://dlr.sd.gov.

More information on the ETPL can be found in Section 6 Adult & DLW Career Services.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

All OST programs must be funded by an ITA. ITAs funded by the youth program may be used for OSY (ages 16 through 24) only.

The youth program cannot fund ITAs for ISY. However, ISY between the ages of 18 and 21 may co-enroll in the adult program if the individual's needs, knowledge, skills, and interests align with the adult program, to receive training services through an Eligible Training Provider and under an ITA funded by the adult program.

Use of ITA funds for occupational skills training for ISY ages 14 through 17 is strictly prohibited.

The ITA must be printed, signed and scanned into ECM indexed under *WIOA Individual Training Account Voucher* within 10 days after the start of their training program.

Coordination of Services

OST is WIOA-funded only when assistance from other sources, agencies, or programs is not available. When WIOA funds supplement other sources of funding for training, the WIOA program must:

*   along with training providers, coordinate funds made available for training;
*   make funding arrangements with one-stop partners and other entities regarding participants who require assistance beyond that available under grant assistance from other sources; and

- consider the availability of other sources of grants to pay for training costs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), training funds available from the State, Federal Pell Grants, and other funding sources.

Pell Grants

In the event a participant has been awarded a Pell Grant, the Pell Grant must be applied against the cost of the OST and any education fees the training provider charges to attend training before WIOA funds are utilized. If the participant has been awarded Pell Grant assistance for education-related expenses, the assistance must not be used to offset or reduce WIOA funding for the cost of OST and education fees.

If a participant's application for Pell Grant assistance is pending, the participant may enroll in occupational skills training and WIOA funds may be used to pay the costs of training, including any education fees, while the application is processing, subject to the following three requirements.

- The career planner must arrange with the training provider and participant for allocation of the Pell Grant should it be subsequently awarded.

- If the Pell Grant is subsequently awarded and:

  - **does** cover the cost of occupational skills training and required education fees to be paid during the Pell Grant award period, the training provider **must** reimburse the program for WIOA funds paid to the training provider using the full amount disbursed for the Pell Grant award period; or

  - **exceeds** the cost of the occupational skills training and required education fees to be paid during the Pell Grant award period, the training provider **must** reimburse the local youth program only for the amount paid to the training provider by the program, with the balance belonging solely to the participant.

- Pell Grant assistance disbursed on the participant's behalf for education-related expenses belongs solely to the participant and **must not** be used to offset or reduce WIOA funding for the cost of occupational skills training and education fees.

Training Limits

Limits for OST's

Short-Term Training	$2,500	The maximum allowed for training of six months or less is $2,500.
Short-Term Training – Commercial Driver's License	$4,500	The exception for short-term training is a maximum of $4,500 if it is for truck driver training to obtain a CDL license.
Occupational Skills Training	$7,000	The maximum cost allowed for training of more than six months is $7,000 with a time limitation

		requiring the client to complete the training program as a whole in 30 months or less. These limitations may be extended with the approval of the Administrative Entity.
Combination of OJT & OST	$9,000	When a combination of OJT and OST are used the maximum cost allowed for training is $9,000, not to exceed other set limits.

An individual may select training that costs more than the maximum amount available for ITAs under local policy when other sources of funds are available to supplement the ITA, such as Pell Grants and scholarships.

Youth Incentive

Youth program participants may receive monetary stipends as an incentive for recognition and achievement directly tied to this activity. See Section 14 Youth Incentives for more information.

Required Action

Required Documents

The following forms must to be signed by participants enrolled in an OST prior to the start of training. The forms are available at dol.nebraska.gov > Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act > Local Workforce Development Areas > Greater Nebraska > Local and Regional Plan Documents > Operations Manual & Forms

- FERPA (Release of Information FERPA)
- Memorandum for the Record (ITA Funds Agreement Memorandum for the Record)
- Student Orientation Agreement (Student Orientation Agreement)

*ECM Index

Approved training program and demand occupation must be verified and uploaded to ECM indexed under *School Records* and *Demand Occupation* prior to the participant beginning a training program.

Approved Training Program: The approved training program is from the ETP list. Screen shot the ETP list verifying the individual's selected program is approved and upload to ECM.

Example

ETPL Programs

Program	Program Leads To	Provider	Address	City	State	Zip Code	Total Program Costs
(Pre) Computer Science - Associate of Science	An associate degree	Western Nebraska Community College	1750 Sweetwater Avenue	ALLIANCE	NE	69301	$10,776.00
(Pre) Computer Science - Associate of Science	An associate degree	Western Nebraska Community College	1601 East 27th Street	SCOTTSBLUFF	NE	69361	$10,776.00
(Pre) Computer Science - Associate of Science	An associate degree	Western Nebraska Community College	371 College Drive	SIDNEY	NE	69162	$10,776.00
160 hour Class A CDL Course - Certificate	An industry-recognized certificate or certification. A license recognized by the State involved or the Federal Government	JTL Truck Driver Training, Inc.	10008 Sapp Bors. Drive	Omaha	NE	68138	$4,821.50

Demand occupation: Demand occupation verification can be obtained off the LMI portion of NEworks. From the NEworks home screen > Labor Market Analysis > Career Resources, H3 (High Wage, High Skill, High Demand). Screen shot the program listed on the H3 report and upload to ECM.

Example

Long-term Occupational Projections, 2016-2026 with High Wage, Skill, and Demand (H3) Indicators - Panhandle Economic Region

Demand RANK	SOC	SOC Title	High Demand	High Skill	High Wage	H3	2016 Estimated Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Numeric Change = I-H	Percent Change =(I-H)/H	Labor Force Exits	Annual Labor Force Exits	Occupational Transfers	Annual Occupational Transfers	Growth Openings	Avg Annual Growth Openings	Total Openings =L+N+P	Avg Annual Openings =M+O+Q	Education
296	11-1011	Chief Executives		★	★		51	49	-2	-3.9%	14	1	21	2	-2	0	33	3	Bachelor's degree
19	11-1021	General and Operations Managers	★	★	★	✓	756	756	0	0.0%	157	16	451	45	0	0	608	61	Bachelor's degree
118	11-1031	Legislators	★		★		111	115	4	3.6%	31	3	47	5	4	0	82	8	Bachelor's degree
187.5	11-2021	Marketing Managers	★	★	★	✓	27	31	4	14.8%	7	1	18	2	4	0	29	3	Bachelor's degree
117	11-2022	Sales Managers	★	★	★	✓	101	105	4	4.0%	23	2	63	6	4	0	90	8	Bachelor's degree

ITA: The ITA is generated in the NEworks training activity. To print the ITA, enter the training activity > Scroll to the bottom of the first page of the activity (do not select edit activity at the top) > Print. The ITA must be signed by the participant and career planner within 10 days of the start of the activity and uploaded to ECM indexed under *WIOA Individual Training Account Voucher*.

Assessments

Participants must be provided a basic reading and math assessment prior to beginning a training activity. There is no need to test a participant if they have recently (within the last six months) completed an accepted assessment with another program and you can obtain the results from that program. Reference Section 16 CASAS of this manual for more information on acceptable assessments.

NEworks Training Justification Tab

The NEworks training justification tab must be completed prior to opening the training activity. The tab is located in the application and consists of a series of seven questions. The first six questions must be answered, yes, for the participant to be eligible for training services. The seventh question is only applicable for Trade participants. The tab also requires the expected occupation and industry from the selected training.

Expand *Staff Profiles* > Expand *Case Management Profile* > *Programs* > expand the *WIOA Application* > expand the *Training Justification* tab > select *Add Training Justification* > complete the wizard > *Save*.

Cost of Attendance (COA)

The COA must be completed each semester prior to obligating OST funds. For step-by-step procedures on how to complete the COA, reference Section 19 Bill Pay Guide of this manual. The COA must be uploaded to ECM indexed under *Training Budget Worksheet*.

The financial aid document must be uploaded to ECM and indexed separately each school year under *Student Financial Aid*.

Opening the NEworks Activity

Career planners must open the NEworks activity and voucher on the day the participant begins their OST. Follow the Opening an NEworks Activity procedures in Section 4 Documentation of this manual. Case note the services provided and open the corresponding IEP/ISS objective.

NEworks Codes & Service, Course, Contract Name		
300	Occupational Skills Training - Approved Provider List (ITA)- Adult, DLW	The program the student is attending
416	Occupational Skills Training - Approved Provider List- Youth	The program the student is attending

Closing the NEworks Activity

Career planners will complete the closure on the last day of the training period and should not wait until the final payment/reimbursement has been made to the employer. Follow the Closing an NEworks Activity procedures in Section 4 Documentation of this manual.

If the OST ended prematurely, the career planner will close the OST activity on the last day they attended classes and discuss next steps with the participant.

- If it is appropriate for the participant to continue to be part of the WIOA Title 1 program, the career planner will continue to assist the participant with their employment plan.
- For Adult and DLW participants, enrollment in a second training program is prohibited. However, career planners can assist the participant with job searching and/ or an OJT opportunity.

If the participant does not continue with the WIOA Title 1 program, the career planner will close all activities and create case closure following the case closure procedures in Section 17 Case Closure.