

EARN

EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT AND RETENTION NETWORK



PROGRAM POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Office of Income Maintenance
Bureau of Employment Programs**

PROGRAM YEAR 2024-2025

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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

Program Overview

Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) is designed to provide a range of services to meet individuals' needs, including access to education and training opportunities to move clients toward family economic stability. The program is based on human-centered design and includes a combination of case management, coaching, licensed counseling, and peer-to-peer experiences to develop a career pathway through job placement and job retention goals for the participants referred from the County Assistance Office (CAO).

Human-Centered Design is a framework for systems and services that places the needs and problems of those accessing the systems or services at the forefront. It allows for individuals or teams who design the systems and services to use empathy and creativity to understand the individual, their needs, and problems from their perspective to create plans for solutions to meet their goals.

Eligibility Criteria

CAO staff will determine eligibility for the EARN program and refer clients to EARN based on CAO policy and procedures. CAO staff will complete the Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR) with hourly requirement based on household composition.

Individuals eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Extended Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (ETANF) in areas where there is no Work Ready provider, and ineligible for or declining Diversion, may be referred to the EARN contractor. Individuals who are ineligible for or decline diversion may be referred to EARN as a SNAP E&T participant if they are receiving SNAP benefits.

SECTION 2 – REFERRALS

CAO Referrals

Outreach efforts to increase program enrollment rates and continued participation are expected to begin when a program receives a referral in the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). Outreach efforts are to include contacting program participants prior to their enrollment date to introduce yourselves and your program, confirming the participant's attendance, and answering any additional questions that the participant may have. Programs must make a minimum of three contact attempts should the initial attempt be unsuccessful. Documentation of contact attempts is required and are to be entered on the participant's CIS Referral Details screen. Programs are required to develop a plan for referral outreach available to the Bureau of Employment Programs (BEP) via the Program Implementation Plan (PIP).

The provider will make every reasonable accommodation to accept referrals every day of the business week.

EARN programs may set their orientation times and dates; however, a client must be given an opportunity to report to the program and should not have their referral rejected if they are late for the program's orientation or scheduled appointment date. Initial meetings with the client may be done via phone or other electronic means. The client does not need to physically report to the EARN center to be enrolled in programming.

In the case of an employed individual being referred to EARN for additional participation hours, case managers should meet with the client at a time and location that does not interfere with the client's scheduled work hours.

It is expected that the program will continue to communicate with the CAO before referral rejecting a client. Local procedures should be established and followed to ensure the best interests of the participants are considered and addressed. The outreach plan, submitted via the PIP, should align with local procedure.

The EARN provider must act on the CAO referral within 14 calendar days of the referral date.

NOTE: The referral date is not included in this count. It is day zero.

Reverse Referrals

Reverse Referrals are program referrals that are initiated by the EARN service provider instead of the CAO. The provider must use the Reverse Referral Form (PA 1951) ([Attachment A](#)) to give the local CAO the information necessary to determine if the referral for a specific program or service is appropriate and allowable. The referral determination can then be shared with the individual and provider. The submission of a PA 1951 does not change the policy or process for

determining appropriate referrals or completing the AMR and submitting a system referral if the referral is approved. The form offers individuals an additional way to request consideration for programs and services in which they are interested.

The CAO has 15 calendar days to:

- determine eligibility for a contracted program referral;
- complete/update the Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR) or Employment Development Plan (EDP) and obtain recipient's signature;
- discuss and issue special allowances as needed for participation;
- return a completed copy of the PA 1951 to the recipient and contracted program with the eligibility determination; and
- submit an electronic referral via eCIS

NOTE: The contracted program may assist the CAO in obtaining the recipient's signature on required documents to complete the referral.

A recipient does not need to provide a PA 1951 to be referred to an E&T program by the CAO. The recipient may contact the CAO directly, in-person or by telephone, to request to participate in cash or SNAP E&T, complete or update an AMR or EDP, and receive an electronic referral to an E&T program.

The use of the PA 1951 does not change the policy or process for completing the AMR or EDP and submitting an electronic referral via eCIS if the activity is approved. A face-to-face appointment is not required. The AMR or EDP may be updated by telephone, and/or with the assistance of a contracted provider. A copy, signed and initialed by the recipient, must be returned to the CAO by either the recipient or contractor. If a signed copy is not received by the CAO within 10 calendar days of the date the EDP or AMR was sent to the recipient for signature, the CAO will reject the reverse referral.

The electronic referral to a contracted program and SPALs to support the activity may not be processed until the signed and completed AMR or EDP is returned to the CAO.

If the CAO determines the E&T referral is not appropriate, or if the individual and/or contractor does not return a completed AMR/EDP, the CAO must notify the recipient and the contracted program by returning a completed PA 1951 indicating that the reverse referral was rejected

Providers must report reverse referrals to DHS using the Reverse Referral Tracking Report ([Attachment B](#)). DHS is monitoring how many reverse referrals are rejected or accepted by the CAO. Only the reverse referrals that have received a response by the CAO should be on the list. Programs should inform BEP if pending reverse referrals are taking longer than 15 calendar days to be reviewed by the CAO. BEP can assist the programs in resolving the issue. The Reverse Referral Report is due by the close of business the first week of the month following the reporting month. Please refer to Contractor Letter #2021-05-25 Reverse Referrals ([Attachment C](#)) for more background and guidance regarding the Reverse Referral process.

Project Referral Rejection Codes

If the client does not report for orientation the EARN service provider will conduct outreach to the client to enroll and engage the client. If the client refuses to cooperate at the orientation, the provider should speak with the client one-on-one to share the benefits of EARN programming, success stories/testimonials, and other materials as well as determine how they can work with the client to engage in and successfully complete the program.

Referral rejection codes will be used to track the reason a client's referral to EARN is rejected prior to enrollment. The EARN service provider must data enter these codes in CWDS.

The following project referral rejection codes may be used with EARN:

- Code 1 – Failed to report (after documented repeated attempts at outreach)
- Code 2 – Refused to cooperate (after documented repeated attempts at outreach)
- Code 4 – No Action Taken (System Generated)
- Code 5 – Other
- Code T – Referred in error

SECTION 3 - ENROLLMENTS

Initial Program Enrollment

The EARN service provider must enroll the client in the program on the date they report to or agree to participate via phone or other electronic means. Data entry of the client's enrollment in CWDS must be completed within three business days of the date of enrollment.

NOTE: The client's reporting date is not included in this 3 business-day count.

To enroll a client (Project Code D—or NC for Philadelphia), the EARN service provider will enter an enrollment date in CWDS. After enrolling the client in the program, the EARN service provider must open at least one activity code to track participation. Under **NO** circumstance is a client to have an open project without an open activity code.

Once notified that the participant is to be enrolled, the EARN service provider will conduct a case review to become familiar with the client's background and situation to determine what additional assistance the participant will need to achieve family economic security. The EARN service provider will review the information below:

- Family and social history
- Medical information including physician, clinic, and hospital records
- Work history
- Information regarding services the participant is receiving from other agencies or providers
- Case narratives
- Job readiness assessment
- Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR), (for ETANF participants this includes eligibility track number and the reason for eligibility)
- Information regarding the participant's current and past participation in Employment and Training (E&T) programs
- Draft Maximizing Participation Project (MPP) Service Plan (for MPP participants only)
- Educational activities and outcome of those experiences
- Need for technology to support remote participation
- Any other pertinent information

Each participant shall have an in-person or remote orientation, either individually or in a group, to the EARN Program within five business days of the participant's referral. During participant orientation the EARN service provider must review the EARN policies and participant requirements with the participant, including:

- The goals and purpose of the program
- The overall approach to reaching these goals including participation in a joint planning process to identify needs and appropriate activities
- Attendance requirements to include hourly requirements, holidays, excused and unexcused absence policy
- Participant and EARN rights and responsibilities
- Explanation of how participant progress is tracked and measured
- Information on the grievance procedure
- Confidentiality agreement
- Authorization for release of participant information
- Program requirements (lunch, breaks, behavior, dress code, reporting changes, income, submission of paystubs to the EARN and the CAO)

For TANF participants, the EARN service provider and its team shall conduct an in-person or remote comprehensive household assessment that identifies participant strengths and barriers to employment and family economic security. The assessment shall be completed within 14 business days after the enrollment date. As part of the assessment, the participant's social indicators of health (SIOH) shall be identified and reviewed with the participant to the extent that the participant is willing and able to share. The assessment should be conducted in a private setting to the extent possible whenever it is conducted in person. The SIOH include, but are not limited to:

- Interests and goals
- Household composition
- Current employment and financial status
- Education
- Language and literacy (including English proficiency)
- Housing
- Food security and nutritional education
- Clothing
- Transportation
- General and mental health
- Drug and alcohol dependency
- Criminal History
- Criminal background inquiry and checks
- Domestic violence (If Domestic Violence is indicated, providers must ensure that any additional conversation is done in a private and safe space)
- Pregnancy

- Childcare and parenting
- Support network
- Work experience
- Work Capacity Assessment if required for ETANF participants

The appropriate activity for the assessment period will be AC 8 - Assessment. Based on the results of the assessment and initial social service professional appointment, the EARN program will determine the next appropriate activity and develop the Individualized Employment Plan (IEP).

Providers are expected to share any completed assessments with the receiving provider whenever a participant transitions to another E&T provider in the network.

The assessment must be completed within 14 business days following the enrollment. To capture the performance standard correctly, the provider is expected to open AC 08, complete the assessment and close AC 08 within 14 business days following the participant enrollment.

Individualized Employment Plan (IEP) /Service Plans

The EARN service provider will use the comprehensive household assessment to coordinate with the participant to create and execute a service plan called an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) in CWDS. The IEP will be a living document that follows the participant throughout their enrollment. In coordination with the participant, the EARN service provider shall develop and use the IEP as the comprehensive plan to:

- Describe goals, objectives, interests, and planned services of the participant, as determined from the assessment
- Promote strategies to be instituted to address the participant's barriers and achieve goals to gain and maintain family economic security such as:
 - Treatments (including substance use disorder treatment, mental health treatment, and other rehabilitative treatments)
 - Interventions (including crisis mitigation and barrier remediation)
 - Education
 - Training and credentialing
 - Work experience (such as pre-apprenticeship or other unpaid work experience)
 - Community service opportunities
 - Job readiness and skills (such as soft skills and employment tools, basic life skills, barrier remediation, career exploration, assessments, and aptitude testing)
- Measure goals, including specific outcomes, to be achieved to demonstrate stabilization of the participant's barriers and needs, the time frame(s) for achieving them, the resources available and to be used to realize the outcomes, and the desires and motivation of the participant that may have an impact on their success
- If required, work with a multidisciplinary group consisting of a CAO worker or an agent authorized by the Department and professionals from various disciplines, which may

include physicians, psychologists and vocational or behavioral rehabilitation specialists to develop a service plan that meets the needs of the participant

To remain enrolled in EARN, the client must agree to the terms of the IEP and sign and date the document at the time of completion. Updated staff and participant signatures must be obtained when there is a change or addition to the goal or objective.

If a participant already has an existing IEP in CWDS, the provider is expected to review the IEP and make any necessary updates to the goals, barriers, or objectives upon enrollment. The EARN service provider is to create the IEP in CWDS 2.0 using the Add Plan feature.

NOTE: Inability or refusal to make progress with the IEP should be documented in the case notes and discussed at the local DST meeting.

As part of the ongoing services to the participant, the EARN service provider will:

1. **Maintain on-going contact with the participant.** Ongoing contact is defined as monthly contact that can be done via face-to-face meetings, telephony, or electronic means. The EARN service provider shall use one or more of the following methods and/or other appropriate methods deemed helpful in engaging and supporting the participant in working through the IEP:
 - Intensive case management
 - Coaching
 - Peer-to-peer experiences

2. **Identify and refer the participant and/or their family to the appropriate local community resource(s) to achieve goals** identified in the IEP, such as:
 - Shelter
 - Education
 - Adult Basic Education
 - English as a Second Language
 - Post-secondary institutions
 - Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS) providers
 - Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT)
 - WIOA Title I Individual Training Accounts
 - Registered Pre-Apprenticeships
 - Legal Assistance
 - Legal services
 - Criminal background inquiries and checks

- Criminal record expungement
 - Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
 - Life skills, including:
 - Financial literacy
 - Parenting
 - Nutrition
 - Other appropriate information
 - Another Employment & Training Provider
 - EARN program in another area
 - Work Ready
 - KEYS
 - ELECT
 - SNAP 50/50
 - SNAP EARN
3. **Advocate for the participant and their family when connecting to local community resources by providing participants with:**
- Maintain active connection and point of contact for all community partners in CWDS
 - Assistance with application and scheduling, warm handoffs are encouraged to connect participants with services
 - Ongoing case management and services while participant engages with the community resource
 - Referrals should be driven by the outcome of the assessment with all identified needs supported through a referral to community partners
 - Referrals should also be made anytime a need is identified throughout the enrollment period
4. **Employ or have access to, at least one qualified Social Service Professional (SSP) to provide an outlet to discuss topics such as mental, social, physical, emotional, and behavioral health aspects of the participant's life.** The work performed by the SSP should be separated from the scope of work being performed by other staff. Social Service Professionals may consist of licensed professional counselors, social workers, therapists, allied health professionals or a combination of these professionals. The EARN service provider will submit to BEP, the qualifications of said professional for review.
- Social Service Professionals must be available in sufficient numbers so that each participant can be offered the opportunity to have an introductory 1-on-1 meeting with said professional within 28 business days of their program enrollment.
 - During this introductory meeting the Social Service Professional will be required to explain their offered services, review participant assessments, offer services or resources to address identified barriers, and act as a social service coordinator

between the grantee, participant, and outside resources. The Social Service Professional will then coordinate and refer the client to any appropriate ongoing services; if the SSP will be the ongoing service provider, the SSP may enroll the client as well. Licensed professionals must be made available on site at least one day per month, based on participant need. 1-on-1 meeting days comply with this requirement.

- If the social service professional is not a licensed social worker or counselor, they may only act as a referral source and must refer the participant to professionals specially trained to provide such services. This includes but not limited to domestic violence or physical and mental health related issues.
- Social Service professionals must be made available to participants upon request. The licensed professional, or their organization, must respond to participant requests for services within 24 hours. At a minimum the response must include documented outreach to schedule an appointment.
- The EARN service provider should develop a crisis response plan to include professional having flexible hours of contact, including but not limited to weekends and after “traditional” work hours. The EARN service provider shall continue to provide participants with access to these services as often as needed through the end of the 12-month retention period.

All referrals to the social service professional are to be recorded in CWDS using the service authorization. The provider is to create a service category and select Scheduled Appointments and record the appointment date and outcome of the meeting.

Outcomes of the meeting should be recorded using Meeting Complete or Refused to Cooperate.

NOTE: If the social service professional does not have access to CWDS, the data entry can be completed by provider designated staff.

5. **Provide activities and programs that lead to acquiring job-related and job readiness skills** in addition to education and employment activities. Job-related and job readiness skills may include but are not limited to:

- Time management
- Analytical thinking
- Executive function and decision making
- Verbal and written communications
- Leadership
- Professional behaviors and attire
- Career exploration
- Aptitude testing

- Interpersonal communication
 - Collaboration
 - Problem solving
 - Financial literacy
 - Digital literacy
 - Resume writing
 - Interview techniques
 - Education on regional High Priority Occupations and local job market: [High Priority Occupations](https://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Products/HPOs/Pages/default.aspx) <https://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Products/HPOs/Pages/default.aspx>; [County Profiles](#)
6. **Provide or refer participants to formal credentialing programs or trainings**, which may include:
- Industry skill certifications to achieve and demonstrate skills necessary for specific occupations
 - Upgrades of an individual's job-related skills including instructional certificate programs that are awarded based upon completion or accumulated credits
 - Associate degree programs including those that result in an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, or an Associate of Applied Science degree
 - Baccalaureate degree programs including those that result in a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or a Bachelor of Applied Science degree
 - Organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring training other than a degree
 - High School Equivalency, GED, Adult Basic Education, and English as a Second Language programs as stand-alone activities or as part of a career pathway in which these classes are integrated within, being taken concurrently with, or for a limited-duration prerequisite to post-secondary education or training as part of a career pathway program
7. **Facilitate the transfer of participants to other DHS employment and training programs**, when appropriate and approved by both the CAO and the receiving program. Program transfer options include, but are not limited to:
- Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS) is a collaborative program between the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) and Pennsylvania Community Colleges. The program includes an appropriate combination of case management, coaching, and peer-to-peer experiences to develop a career pathway through upskilling, certificate, and/or associate degree program completion. The EARN service provider shall transfer to the KEYS program those participants who have enrolled or are interested in enrolling at a Pennsylvania community college to pursue an education activity that leads to receipt of a diploma, certificate, license, or industry recognized credential. The EARN service provider shall coordinate

educational activities at community colleges with the KEYS program and shall terminate the EARN participants who meet all requirements for KEYS and desire to participate in KEYS. The EARN service provider shall facilitate the referral and transfer to KEYS. The EARN service provider may not terminate EARN participants who have expressed interest in community college but have not yet enrolled. The EARN service provider shall coordinate with the KEYS Program Coordinator when participants express a desire to enter community college. If such participants subsequently enroll in a community college, the EARN service provider shall terminate the EARN participant who meets all requirements to enroll in KEYS and shall facilitate the referral and transfer to KEYS. The KEYS program will request an updated AMR and referral to KEYS from the CAO using the reverse referral process.

- ELECT is a joint initiative between the Department and Pennsylvania Department of Education that enables school districts and intermediate units to help pregnant and parenting teens earn a high school diploma or HSE credential, become better parents and transition to employment, career training or higher education. Their services are available to students ages 22 and younger. An ELECT referral must be completed before the participant reaches the age of 22. The EARN service provider shall coordinate educational activities with the ELECT programs and shall terminate the EARN participation of TANF participants who meet all requirements to enroll in ELECT and desire to do so and shall facilitate the referral and transfer to ELECT. The ELECT program will request an updated AMR and referral to ELECT from the CAO.
8. **Place participants in unsubsidized employment.** To identify and fill employment opportunities, the EARN service provider should utilize the resources within the local area including but not limited to, Workforce Development Boards, existing and newly developed relationships with local employers, chambers of commerce, employer lead groups, career workshops, job fairs, and Registered Apprenticeship programs. The EARN service provider shall require participants meet in person with potential employers, where appropriate. The EARN service provider shall advocate and advise their participants to accept employment consistent with their IEP even if the employment will not result in a placement performance outcome.

The EARN service provider achieves a placement performance outcome when a participant is working in unsubsidized employment (Activity 33) at least 80 hours in a four consecutive week period at the higher of the state minimum wage plus two dollars per hour or the federal minimum wage plus two dollars per hour for all qualifying hours worked. Once the participant is placed in employment and has entered the retention period, the EARN service provider shall contact the participant weekly for the first three months and bi-weekly or as often as needed based on the participant's IEP thereafter.

9. **Provide wraparound services.** Wraparound services are TANF employment and training activities for individuals, who simultaneously participate in unsubsidized employment. These wraparound services will assist the participant in meeting their goals, strengthen their skills, and meet their hourly requirements throughout their program enrollment. For the purposes of service provision, the EARN service provider shall provide wraparound services to participants who are not able to meet participation requirements through unsubsidized employment alone when TANF benefits remain open.

10. **Assist and incentivize participants who obtain employment to achieve satisfactory performance, retain employment, and to increase earnings over time** through the provision of retention services. The EARN service provider shall provide retention services when an individual obtains unsubsidized employment and is placed in CWDS Extended Hold indicating the initial TANF recipient supports and services have ended, and retention supports, and services have begun. The EARN service provider shall provide retention supports and services for up to one year after the participant's TANF benefit closes due to earned income.

Extended Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (ETANF) Participants

ETANF recipients are individuals who have received more than 1830 days of TANF with a hardship as defined by the state (to include domestic violence victims and individuals who are temporarily or permanently disabled and required to participate in Maximizing Participation Project) who have been granted additional time and opportunities to work toward achieving economic independence, including continuing or starting an education or training activity. There are currently Seven Hardship Tracks in which an individual may be placed to qualify for ETANF:

Hardship Track 1- Domestic Violence

The adult or other family member who is or has been a victim of domestic violence or is at risk of further domestic violence qualifies the family for Extended TANF in this track.

DHS Contracted Provider Responsibilities

If an adult eligible in this track is referred to an E&T program, that program is responsible to know whether the adult is receiving good cause or an exemption for RESET based on the information included on the AMR.

If the E&T program is not clear what the RESET status of the individual is, they should discuss with the CAO upon receiving and accepting the referral.

The E&T program is responsible to serve the eligible adult as outlined in their contract language, statement of work, and program manual.

Hardship Track 2-Maximizing Participation Project (MPP)

The adult who is exempt from RESET due to a verified physical or mental disability which

temporarily (more than 90 days) or permanently precludes them from any form of employment or work-related activity will be required to comply with MPP and cooperate in obtaining a Work Capacity Assessment (WCA).

The adult who previously received Extended TANF in the Deferral Track (Track 3) and did not resolve their good cause situation while in that track and who is mandatory to participate in RESET but establishes good cause for not participating in RESET will be required to comply with MPP and cooperate in obtaining a WCA.

DHS Contracted Provider Responsibilities

The DHS Contracted Provider (Work Ready or EARN in counties where there is no Work Ready) is responsible to enroll the individual into intensive case management services, complete all necessary assessments, facilitate completion of assessments by medical professionals, seek local human service supports and services the adult family may need, and to assist the individual with seeking any federal benefits for which they may be eligible. This could also include referrals to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and other state programs not under DHS purview.

While the adult eligible in this track is cooperating with the WCA, the CAO and members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) will meet with the adult to develop the MPP Service Plan and determine what activities they should pursue during the period of time they are awaiting the WCA results.

The DHS Contracted Provider is responsible to share the results of the WCA with the MDT. The MDT will utilize the WCA results summary to create the final MPP Service Plan.

Upon development of the Final MPP Service Plan, the eligible adult will continue in MPP until:

All barriers are stabilized, and they are terminated from MPP to be reviewed by the CAO for eligibility in another Hardship Track

OR

SSI/RSDI is approved

OR

They are terminated from MPP for failure to comply

OR

They gain employment and are terminated to be reviewed by the CAO to for eligibility in another Hardship Track.

The E&T program is responsible to serve the eligible adult as outlined in their contract language, statement of work, and program manual.

Hardship Track 3- Deferral (aka Deferred Referral)

This hardship track was designed for a family with an adult who has a temporary good cause situation usually no longer than 90 days. Examples of good cause reasons could be a temporary disability, housing crisis or lack of childcare. The adult who meets one of the criteria for the Deferral Track will have a period, usually no longer than 90 days, to work on and/or resolve their situation prior to being required to comply with one of the other tracks.

There are two exceptions:

- A TANF parent providing care for a disabled family member living in the home (ETP 54) is also placed in this track. The need for a caregiver must be verified on the Caregiver Review Form ([PA 1820](#)).
- A parent in a one-parent household who chooses to use the time limited newborn exemption.

DHS Contracted Provider Responsibilities

If an adult eligible in this track is referred to an E&T program, that program is responsible to know whether the adult is receiving good cause or an exemption for RESET based on the information included on the AMR.

If the E&T program is not clear what the RESET status of the individual is, they should discuss with the CAO upon receiving and accepting the referral.

The E&T program is responsible to serve the eligible adult as outlined in their contract language, statement of work, and program manual.

Hardship Track 4- Referred to or Enrolled in an E&T Program

The adult who is currently referred to or enrolled in an approved Employment and Training program is considered eligible for Extended TANF in this track as they are already engaged in 30 hours per week of work and/or work-related activities.

DHS Contracted Provider Responsibilities

The E&T program is responsible to serve the eligible adult as outlined in their contract language, statement of work, and program manual. If the individual has problems meeting their hourly requirement or a situation arises that may require a good cause review or eligibility review in another Hardship Track, the E&T program should discuss the situation with the CAO.

Hardship Track 5- Work Plus

The mandatory RESET adult who is not working or who is employed an average of less than 20 hours per week and is capable of working at least 30 hours per week will be required to enroll

and participate in the Work Plus (WP) Track, which includes full family and/or individual assessments.

The mandatory RESET adult who can, or is, participating an average of 20 hours per week in work and/or work-activities, and has established good cause for not participating in work and/or work-activities for the remaining portion of the 30 hours per week ETANF requirement, will also be required to enroll and participate in the WP Track and be referred to the appropriate E&T contractor for additional support.

The mandatory RESET adult who is employed an average of 20-29 hours per week and has established good cause for not working or participating at least 30 hours per week will be required to enroll and participate in the WP Track.

DHS Contracted Provider Responsibilities

If an adult eligible in this track is referred to an E&T program, that program is responsible to know whether the adult is receiving good cause or an exemption for RESET based on the information included on the AMR.

If the E&T program is not clear what the RESET status of the individual is, they should discuss with the CAO upon receiving and accepting the referral.

The E&T program is responsible to serve the eligible adult as outlined in their contract language, statement of work, and program manual.

Hardship Track 6- Working but Not Meeting Hourly Requirements

The mandatory RESET adult who is working an average of at least 20 hours per week, but not more than 29 hours per week and does NOT have good cause for not participating at least 30 hours per week, will be referred to a DHS contracted provider and must enroll and participate via Hardship Track 6.

DHS Contracted Provider Responsibilities

The E&T program is responsible to serve the eligible adult as outlined in their contract language, statement of work, and program manual.

Hardship Track 7- Working and Meeting Hourly Requirements

The mandatory RESET adult who is working an average of at least 30 hours per week is considered eligible for Extended TANF in this track if the employment continues, and the family remains eligible.

DHS Contracted Provider Responsibilities

An adult eligible in this track is not required to be referred to E&T programming, however they may elect to be referred for case management, job retention, up-skilling, or job upgrade services.

The E&T program is responsible to serve the eligible adult as outlined in their contract language, statement of work, and program manual.

Please refer to [ATTACHMENT D](#) Contractor Letter #2021-05-06 ETANF Participants for more guidance on the various Hardship Tracks and participants' and CAOs' responsibilities

Refugee Participants

When a qualifying immigrant eligible for refugee benefits enters the country, they do not have a social security number immediately. For Cuban/Haitian Entrants (Cuban/Haitian parolees) they also do not have work authorization and must apply for an "EAD" or Employment Authorization Document (which is a card). Those "refugees" who are eligible for benefits must engage in employment and training activities as a condition of eligibility while they receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) for a limit of 12 months from date of entry.

For refugee participants, the EARN service provider will:

- Accept refugee participants in counties where there is no readily accessible refugee employment service provider.
- Provide specialized job development and case management services remotely for the benefit of the refugee participant.

If there are any questions regarding enrolling refugee participants, please reach out to your Program Advisor or email the Refugee Resettlement Unit: RA-PWREFUGEEPROGRAM@PA.GOV

The CAO will determine and record RESET participation hourly requirements on the participant's AMR. The EARN service provider must ensure the client participates for at least the minimum number of hours required. The chart below shows the hourly requirements for TANF recipients, as defined by federal regulations.

Participation Hours

Core Hours: Required for all individuals who are mandatory to participate in Road to Economic Self-Sufficiency through Employment and Training (RESET).

Noncore Hours: Available if additional hours are needed to meet the minimum work requirement after the required core activity hours are met or when all opportunities to participate in a countable core activity have been exhausted or are not available.

Case Management Hours: Should be used when participants are involved in intensive case management, including weekly participant contacts, face to face meetings, and participation in barrier remediation appointments and activities. This code is not federally recognized as a core or noncore activity.

An individual can participate in more than one core activity to meet the minimum work requirement. Once the required number of core hours are met, an individual may choose to participate in any core or noncore activity.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION	MINIMUM HOURS per WEEK
SINGLE PARENT	
child under age 6	20 hours in a core activity
all children over age 6	30 hours with at least 20 in a core activity
ETANF household w/children	The mandatory adult must participate for 30 hours per week, regardless of the age of the children, unless the adult has a verified exemption or established good cause.
pregnant/no other children	30 hours with at least 20 in a core activity
under age 22, head of household	Meeting participation requirement if satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or GED program. Enter 20 hours
TWO-PARENT	
both parents under age 22, heads of household	Meeting participation requirement if satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or GED program. Enter 20 hours for each parent.
not receiving federally funded childcare	35 hours combined. One parent must participate in at least 30 hours in a core activity
receiving federally funded childcare	55 hours combined, at least 50 hours in a core activity. One parent must participate in at least 30 hours in a core activity. Either parent may participate for any remaining activity hours in noncore activities
one parent DS, NS or DF not receiving federally funded childcare	One parent must participate in 35 hours, at least 30 hours in a core activity
one parent DS, NS or DF receiving federally funded childcare	One parent must participate in 55 hours, at least 50 hours in a core activity
one parent disabled – J parent	20 or 30 hours depending on the family composition. One parent must participate for 20 hours in core activities and childcare does not affect the number of participation hours
one parent ETP code 53	30 hours. One parent must participate for 20 hours in core activities and childcare does not affect the number of participation hours

NOTE: Lunchbreaks do not count towards participation but should be offered following the same break schedule offered to provider employees.

SECTION 4 – Employment and Training (E&T) ACTIVITIES

E&T Activity Codes and Descriptions

E&T Activity Codes will be used to track the activities in which the EARN client is engaged at any specific time. The EARN service provider will data enter the activity codes in CWDS. Multiple activity codes can be entered at the same time; however, the activity codes in CWDS and the activities listed on the IEP must agree. The activity codes that may be used in the EARN program are listed in the table on the following pages, along with descriptions of each code. Please note the designation of core or noncore for each activity, as well as durational time limits and important notes.

The EARN service provider must enter participation hours after the client attends the service or activity and documentation is provided.

For EARN clients who self-initiate, it is important to note that education clients can remain in their educational track. EARNs should encourage and support clients as they seek to improve themselves through education. See the self-initiated student section below for more clarification.

NOTE: Self-initiated clients who are enrolled in EARN should have the appropriate activity code opened along with the appropriate sub-project code. See the [Self-Initiated Students Section](#).

Paid Activities				
Type	Definition	Limitations	Activity Codes	Verification Requirements
Unsubsidized Employment	The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Commonwealth) defines unsubsidized employment as full- or part-time employment in the public or private sector, including self-employment, apprenticeships, internships, work study, and employment resulting in income-in-kind compensation, in which neither the employer nor employee receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds.	The number of countable hours of unsubsidized employment counted towards participation is determined based on the hours of work, including any paid breaks built into the schedule, and any paid leave time, including sick, personal, vacation, parental, and holiday time, granted by the employer. For individuals with tipped wages, the actual hours stated on the pay stub are the verified hours worked.	AC 30 – Income-in-kind Employment AC 33 – Unsubsidized Employment	Below is a list of allowable methods to document and verify paid activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies of paystubs that reflect actual hours for corresponding week ending pay periods or, at least one pay stub that was current, if it is representative of ongoing income, at the time it was used to project hours (for no more than six months); A letter or statement from the employer that enumerates hours and includes gross pay amounts and pay dates;
Subsidized Private Sector Employment	The Commonwealth defines subsidized private sector employment as full- or part-time employment in the private sector for which the for-profit employer receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds to offset some or all the wages and costs of employment for the individual. This includes apprenticeships, internships, work study, and any other subsidized employment with a for-profit employer in which the employer is provided with a wage subsidy to assist with payment of wages to the individual for work performed.	Subsidized private and public sector employment does not include “on-the-job training” programs, where employers are subsidized to offset the costs of training. Hours of participation in supportive activities, such as substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment or rehabilitation activities, or various other barrier-removal or educational activities, can only	AC 23 – Subsidized Employment Private Sector AC 51 – Subsidized Work Study (private sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of an attendance record as verified by the employer that enumerates hours and includes gross pay amounts and pay dates; State or contractor employment verification form that contains historical gross pay amounts, pay dates, and pay rate; Time sheets as verified by the employer that enumerate hours of employment and includes gross pay amounts and pay dates; A letter stating the details of the work provided as income-in-kind to include the number of hours or

<p>Subsidized Public Sector Employment</p>	<p>The Commonwealth defines subsidized public sector employment as full- or part-time employment in the public sector for which the employer receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds to offset some or all wages and costs of employing an individual. Subsidized public sector employment includes apprenticeships, internships, and work study with a unit of federal, state, or local government, or non-profit organization in which the employer is provided with a subsidy to assist with payment of wages to the individual for work performed. Examples of subsidized public sector employment include: Preservation, enhancement, and remediation of the environment; Caring for and supporting the education and well-being of children, the elderly, persons with physical or developmental disabilities, and persons with low incomes; Improvement activities on public land or facilities; Projects or activities which improve public health, safety, and welfare; and On-going activities that support the services provided by non-profit and government organizations.</p>	<p>count toward the participation if the individual is paid for these hours as part of the subsidized employment activity. If not, see Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance for guidance.</p> <p>When employment is subsidized with TANF funds, provided by the Commonwealth, there must be an approved operational budget, with a budget justification that provides a comprehensive subsidized employment plan and outlines time limits.</p>	<p>AC 26 – Subsidized Employment Public Sector AC 51 – Subsidized Work Study (public sector)</p>	<p>total value of the goods or services;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collateral contacts including employee’s supervisory, pay roll, or management staff but not a co-worker (obtain name, phone number, and title of the employer’s representative providing the information); or • Independent verification sources such as employee’s pay account (via phone, email, or digital device), Commonwealth-contracted verification providers (such as Equifax/Work Number). • Statement from the self-employed individual showing gross earned income (less allowable business expenses) such as business ledgers, invoices, expense reports, or a representative tax return.
<p>On-the-Job Training (OJT)</p>	<p>The Commonwealth defines on-the-job training (OJT) as full- or part-time, private, or public sector training that is given to a paid employee while they are engaged in productive work. This</p>		<p>AC 22 – On-the-Job Training</p>	

	<p>training provides knowledge and skills essential to the adequate level of performance on the job.</p> <p>OJT provides individualized occupational skills training to acquire specific skills and employment competencies through participation in a work setting. The participant gains familiarity with the processes, work tasks, tools and methods of a specific job or group of jobs. OJT is intended to place participants in occupations that improve their prospects for employment that leads to self-sufficiency. This activity may include internships, practicums, professional certification, and clinical training required by an academic or training institution for licensure, when the client is paid by an employer to attend.</p>			
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Unpaid Activities				
Type	Definition	Limitations	Activity Codes	Verification Requirements
Work Experience	The Commonwealth defines work experience as a work activity performed in return for welfare that provides the individual with an opportunity to acquire the general skills, knowledge, and work habits necessary to obtain and maintain employment. The purpose of work experience is to improve the	Individuals can participate in work experience as their work activity to the extent permitted under the Fair Labor and Standards Act (FLSA). This information should be provided with the Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR).	AC 21 – Work Experience (unpaid)	An individual’s participation in work experience is verified by contracted providers who maintain attendance records such as paper or electronic time sheets, time clocks, swipe card systems, telephone time, official Commonwealth forms,

	<p>employability of those who cannot find or maintain unsubsidized full-time employment. This activity must be supervised by an employer, work site sponsor, or other responsible party on an ongoing basis no less frequently than once each day in which the individual is scheduled to participate. Unpaid pre-apprenticeships, unpaid entrepreneurship, unpaid apprenticeships, and unpaid internships are an examples of work experience. Work experience also includes work associated with the refurbishing of publicly assisted housing.</p>	<p>Individuals who are engaged in work experience for the full number of hours permissible under FLSA but whose permissible hours under the FLSA are lower than the hours required to meet full participation are deemed the additional core hours.</p> <p>Example: In a single-parent household, regardless of the age of the youngest child, the parent can deem their work experience hours up to their <i>core hourly requirement per week</i>. Therefore, if the parent has an FLSA maximum of 14 hours of work experience per week and participate for all 14 hours in any given week, the participant is deemed to have met their core participation requirement and 20 hours is entered into CWDS.</p>		<p>and/or other attendance systems. All methods include the participants' identifying information including name and/or ID number and are to be signed or verified by a case manager, instructor, or supervisor. Methods of verification from the Provider Website could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Employment and Training Activity Verification Form (PA 1895); or • A preapproved contractor attendance sheet that contains the same data captured in the PA 1895; or • Work Experience Verification Form (PA 1980)
<p>Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance</p>	<p>The Commonwealth defines job search and job readiness assistance as the act of seeking or obtaining employment and/or preparation to seek or obtain employment. Job Readiness includes appropriate employability/skills/education</p>	<p>Time spent in only AC 8 – Assessment is limited to fourteen business days. Except for AC 8 (see above) Pennsylvania has opted not to enforce time limits associated with this federal activity (AC 4,</p>	<p>AC 4 – Life and Parenting Skills AC 8 – Assessment AC 42 – Job Search</p>	<p>Employment and training, substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, and other rehabilitative services providers maintain paper or electronic time sheets, time clocks, swipe card systems, telephone time,</p>

	<p>assessments, life skills training/coaching, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, or rehabilitation activities. <i>Such treatment or therapy must be determined to be necessary and documented by qualified medical, substance abuse, or mental health professionals.</i></p> <p>Job search (AC 42) and job readiness activities must be supervised by the contracted provider, TANF agency, or other responsible party on an ongoing basis not less frequently than once each day in which the individual is scheduled to participate.</p> <p>Examples of activities included under this type are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace preparation that may include instruction in interviewing techniques, resume preparation skills, time management, and identification of employer and workplace expectations. (AC 44) • Problem solving, reading comprehension, decision making, and critical thinking skills (all considered executive function abilities) (AC 44) • Limited basic literacy and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) preparation embedded with job readiness assistance as necessary for an individual to seek or obtain employment; this includes literacy and English instruction in the context of preparing a resume or job application, interviewing skills, 	<p>AC 42, AC 44, and AC 49) at the contractor level when an individual is actively engaged with the contractor and working on their goal plan as listed on their AMR and IEP regardless of how long the individual remains in these activity codes.</p>	<p>AC 44 – Job Readiness Assistance including barrier remediation</p> <p>AC 49 – Rehabilitative Services</p>	<p>other attendance systems, and job search logs with date/time stamps to verify the participant's attendance and activities. All methods include the participants' identifying information including name and/or ID number and are to be signed or verified by a case manager, instructor, or supervisor.</p>
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	<p>workplace expectations, and effective job seeking (AC 44)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier remediation services to prepare individuals for job search and employment such as (but not limited to) criminal history assistance, family services, homelessness/housing services, domestic violence assistance, and vocational rehabilitation (AC 44) • Basic life skills instruction such as balancing life and work, budgeting, parenting classes, and household management. (AC 4) • Career exploration including aptitude testing. (AC 44) • Job readiness, skills, and literacy assessments. (AC 44) <p>Substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, and other rehabilitative treatments <u>when the necessity of treatment is documented by a qualified medical, abuse, or mental health professional.</u> (AC 49)</p>			
<p>Community Service Programs</p>	<p>The Commonwealth defines community service programs as structured programs and embedded activities in which individuals perform unpaid work for the direct benefit of the community under the auspices of public or nonprofit organizations. Community service programs must be limited to projects that serve a useful community purpose in fields such as health, social service, environmental protection, education,</p>	<p>An individual may participate in community service programs for an unlimited number of hours, but the Commonwealth considers only the total number of hours allowed under the FLSA toward participation requirements.</p> <p>Individuals who are engaged in work experience for the full</p>	<p>AC 20 – Community Service</p>	<p>An individual’s participation in community service is verified by contracted providers who maintain attendance records such as paper or electronic time sheets, time clocks, swipe card systems, telephone time, official Commonwealth forms, and/or other attendance systems. All methods include the participants’ identifying</p>

	<p>urban and rural redevelopment, welfare, recreation, public facilities, public safety, and childcare. Community service programs are designed to improve the employability of individuals not otherwise able to obtain unsubsidized full-time employment and must be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than once a day in which the individual is scheduled to participate.</p> <p>Activities identified as community service programs must include community and social services provided by federal, state, and local governments, faith-based organizations, and non-profit organizations that qualify as tax-exempt under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code. These organizations must be qualified to provide community service opportunities that provide value in the activities or tasks that participants perform comparable to work for which an employer would normally pay at least minimum wage.</p>	<p>number of hours permissible under FLSA but whose permissible hours under the FLSA are lower than the hours required to meet full participation are deemed the additional core hours.</p> <p>Example: In a single-parent household, regardless of the age of the youngest child, the parent can deem their community service hours up to their <i>core hourly requirement per week</i>. Therefore, if the parent has an FLSA maximum of 14 hours of community service per week and participate for all 14 hours in any given week, the participant is deemed to have met their core participation requirement and 20 hours is entered into CWDS.</p>		<p>information including name and/or ID number and are to be signed or verified by a case manager, instructor, or supervisor. Methods of verification could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Employment and Training Activity Verification Form (PA 1895); or • A preapproved contractor attendance sheet that contains the same data captured in the PA 1895; or • Community Service Verification Form (PA 1979) <p>See the Provider Website for community service forms: Attachment G- PA 590 Attachment H- Community Service Desk Guide Attachment I- PA 1694</p>
<p>Vocational Educational Training</p>	<p>The Commonwealth defines vocational educational training as organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of an individual for employment in current or emerging occupations. Vocational educational training includes a specific curriculum of training provided by a</p>	<p>The vocational educational training that is provided must be consistent with local labor market demands.</p> <p>Pennsylvania allows for individuals to continue their vocational educational trainings for 24 months with possibility of</p>	<p>AC 11 – English-as-a-Second Language (ESL)/English Language Training (ELT) AC 12 – Adult Basic Education/Literacy (ABE)</p>	<p>Due to changes in technology, a student participating in vocational educational activities on campus or online may have their hours of participation verified utilizing several different methods. All methods include documentation of class</p>

	<p>contracted employment and training vendor, an accredited educational provider, or an accredited Internet-based educational institution that is intended to prepare the participant for a specific occupation.</p> <p>Activities identified as vocational educational training include certificate and credit-yielding activities designed to prepare the individual with the skill and knowledge necessary to perform the duties of a specific job or occupation. Vocational educational training programs that lead to employment are facilitated by employment and training contractors contracted by the Commonwealth and may include vocational-technical schools, degree or certificate programs at secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, and accredited Internet-based educational institutions. Vocational educational training may take place at a secondary school, but it will not consist of secondary school training or be part of a secondary school diploma. The Commonwealth includes attendance at community college or its equivalent in a course of study intended to prepare the participant for a specific occupation as Vocational Educational</p>	<p>six-month extensions thereafter. Seek BEP approval after 24 months.</p> <p>Pennsylvania allows for second and subsequent trainings based on specific criteria. You must seek BEP approval prior to enrolling or supporting a participant in a second or subsequent training.</p> <p>The student’s class schedule, syllabus, and enrollment details must be acquired and maintained/updated each semester/period of educational enrollment.</p> <p>The school’s study policy must be acquired and retained. This document identifies the number of study time hours expected by the school. A student can receive one hour of unsupervised study time for one hour of class time with no verification needed. Study time that is documented and monitored by the E&T contractor or an accredited education provider can also be counted. Total study time hours – unsupervised and supervised–</p>	<p>AC 14 – Enrolled in a KEYS/KEYS Expansion Program Institution</p> <p>AC 16 – Enrolled in any post-secondary institution not defined as a KEYS/KEYS Expansion Program Institution</p> <p>AC 24 – Other Vocational Education</p> <p>AC 27 – Other Vocational Education - Credential Program Only</p>	<p>schedule, class credits, ongoing case manager contact, study policy, and satisfactory progress in the vocational educational activity.</p> <p>When the participant is enrolled with a Commonwealth contracted employment and training program, staff may utilize self-reported hours of participation in an accredited educational institution if they have ongoing contact with the participant, access to course credits and grades, and are otherwise able to monitor course progress. Ongoing contact is defined as monthly contact that may be in-person, via telephone, or electronic.</p> <p><u>For credited courses, supervised or unsupervised study time</u> is counted at the maximum time indicated by the accredited educational institution’s study policy. If the institution has no study policy, the Commonwealth will count one hour of study time for every hour of classroom time.</p>
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	<p>Training. Vocational educational training may include programs leading to a baccalaureate degree.</p> <p><u>Accredited internet-based education and distance learning</u>, including blended learning (hybrid of online and in-person classes), is counted toward participation as vocational educational training.</p> <p>Activities that the Commonwealth counts toward participation in vocational educational training include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • industry skill certifications to achieve and demonstrate skills necessary for specific occupations; • credentialing programs provided to improve an individual’s ability to obtain and maintain employment; • upgrades of an individual’s job-related skills including instructional certificate programs that are awarded based upon completion or accumulated credits; • associate degree programs including those that result in an associate of arts, associate of science, or an associate of applied science degree in vocational fields; • High School Equivalency (HSE), General Equivalency Degree (GED), Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL) programs when these classes are integrated within, taken concurrently with, or for a limited- 	<p>may not exceed the number of study time hours expected for the course as determined by the school’s study policy.</p>		<p>For courses that are <u>not credited, supervised or unsupervised study time</u> is counted at the maximum time indicated by the accredited educational institution’s study policy. The total hours of countable unsupervised and supervised study time may not exceed the number of hours as verified by the institution’s study policy. If the institution has no study policy the Commonwealth will count one hour of study time for every hour of classroom time.</p>
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	<p>duration prerequisite to post-secondary education or training as part of a career pathway program;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • baccalaureate degree programs including those that result in a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in vocational fields; and • organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring training other than a baccalaureate degree. 			
<p>Satisfactory Attendance at a Secondary School or in a Course of Study Leading to a Certificate of General Equivalence</p>	<p>The Commonwealth defines satisfactory school attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received such a certificate, as an individual regularly attending secondary school or course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence. The individual must be participating in accordance with the requirements of the secondary school or course of study. The activity must be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than once each day in which the individual is scheduled to participate.</p> <p>Activities identified as satisfactory school attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence include active and</p>	<p>For ELECT Students: When the participant maintains satisfactory progress as determined by the educational provider, the client will receive credit for 20 hours per week of activity when 21 years or younger.</p> <p>For Non-ELECT Students: When the individual maintains satisfactory progress as determined by the educational provider and is 22 or older, enter the actual hours of participation.</p>	<p>AC 13 – High School/HSE/GED/GED prep (ELECT students only)</p> <p>AC 18 – Satisfactory Attendance in High School or Equivalent HSE/GED/GED prep (non-ELECT students)</p>	<p><u>Satisfactory school attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence</u> meet federally required work participation hours using documentation from the educational institution that the student is maintaining expected regular daily attendance.</p> <p>Regular attendance is identified by the school district or educational provider. The Commonwealth does not extend excused absence criteria beyond that which the educational institution adopts for its students.</p>

	<p>successful participation in high school, vocational technical school, on-line courses, and any accredited curriculum that results in a high school diploma or its equivalent. This also includes enrollment and participation the Commonwealth’s Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT), Pregnant and Parenting Youth (PPY) and Fatherhood Initiative programs in any of the manners described above.</p> <p><u>Accredited Internet-based education and distance learning</u> including blended learning (hybrid of online and in-person classes), is counted toward participation as satisfactory school attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence.</p>			<p>For an individual who is 22 or older and not enrolled in the ELECT program, utilize Vocational Educational Training verification guidance.</p> <p>Vocational Education Activity Codes- 7/1/22</p>
<p>Providing Child Care Services to an Individual Who is Participating in a Community Service Program</p>	<p>The Commonwealth defines providing childcare services to an individual who is participating in a community service program as an individual caring for the child(ren), <u>without payment</u>, to enable another TANF or state-funded, Separate State Program (SSP) recipient in community service program as described above under Community Service Programs.</p> <p>This is an unpaid activity and must be a structured program designed to improve</p>	<p>Providing childcare services to an individual who is participating in a community service program is counted toward participation using documentation of actual hours the recipient of the childcare is engaged in community service plus reasonable travel time to and from the community service site.</p>	<p>AC 6 – Providing Child Care Services to an Individual Participating in a Community Service Program</p>	<p>An individual’s participation in providing childcare services to an individual who is participating in a community service program is verified by contracted providers who maintain attendance records such as paper or electronic time sheets, time clocks, swipe card systems, telephone time, official Commonwealth forms, and/or other attendance systems. All methods include the participants’ identifying information including name and/or ID number and are to</p>

	<p>the employability of individuals who participate in this activity. This activity must be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than once each day in which the individual is scheduled to participate.</p>	<p>If the individual receives any income either from the parent of the children or the state’s subsidized childcare system, this activity is then deemed to be a paid activity and should be recorded and verified as such.</p>		<p>be signed or verified by a case manager, instructor, or supervisor. Methods of verification may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Employment and Training Activity Verification Form (PA 1895); or • A preapproved contractor attendance sheet that contains the same data captured in the PA 1895; and • The contractor must obtain documentation of the individual’s participation in a Community Service Program for which the childcare is needed.
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Remote Activities and Service Provision

Contracted providers are responsible for developing a remote participation plan for everyone who will be using this option as part of the PIP. Review the E&T Activity Codes and Descriptions chart (p. 17) for methods on how to log and verify each type of activity conducted remotely.

Ongoing Social Service and/or Licensed Counseling Services

EARN service providers must also provide access to professionals who are trained and certified to provide social work or counseling services. These additional services will be available to support participants who may need more intensive assistance or who want to discuss topics impacting their life with a trusted and trained professional. The professionals should have knowledge of local resources and social service coordination, as well as counseling skills to establish rapport, discuss sensitive topics such as domestic violence and substance use concerns, and respond effectively to participant needs including referrals to ongoing counseling or therapeutic services if needed.

The professionals will serve as a resource for staff to consult with regarding participant needs, as appropriate. They will also work with staff to identify and address broader issues that may be impacting participants' success. This may include communication and advocacy with relevant entities including program administrators and state staff.

If it is determined by a medical professional that the participant will receive ongoing services provided by the EARN service provider's licensed counselor and/or social service professional, the provider will implement the following procedure:

- All participants receiving ongoing counseling services will be indicated by the opening of the CWDS sub-project code 78.
- For sub-project code 78 participants who require mental health rehabilitation as verified by a medical professional, the appropriate CWDS activity code is 49 as defined in the table above.
- Ongoing case management services (activity code 92) provided by the contractor in association with the participants involvement with activity code 49 should be tracked independently and only for time spent providing case management services to participants.
- Appropriate CWDS case progress notes will be updated as the participant proceeds through the counseling services.

If it is not determined medically necessary but the participant will be receiving ongoing services provided by the EARN service provider's licensed counselor and/or social service professional, the provider will follow all guidance above with the exception that activity code 44 (barrier remediation) will be used in place of 49 (rehabilitative services).

Vocational Education

Self-Initiated Students

TANF participants who self-enroll in post-secondary education—also known as self-initiated students—will be referred to EARN from the CAO. EARN is responsible for case management, verification and data entry of participation hours, and job placement assistance after graduation. Self-initiated students fall into two main categories 1.) KEYS Expansion Students and 2.) Non-KEYS Students.

Student Category	Activity Code	Sub Project Code 1	Sub Project Code 2	Core Y/N	Durational Limits	Comments
KEYS Expansion (Enrolled in a KEYS approved educational institution)	14	45: Career & Tech Students	48: Students who are in months 13 to 24 of voc ed time	Y	24 months with 6-month extensions available. Enter an additional sub-project code if beyond 12 months. (See Sub Project Code 2 in chart)	For a complete list of schools, review Appendix E: KEYS Program Institutions
		46: State-Owned University Students	49: Students who are in month 25 or over of voc ed time			
Non-KEYS	16	50	n/a	Y	24 months with 6-month extensions available	
	24		n/a		24 months with 6-month extensions available if specific criteria is met	
	27				24 months with 6-month extensions thereafter if specific criteria is met. For credential, license, certificate, and degree programs only	
Study Time Policy						
The school's study policy must be obtained and retained. This document identifies the number of study time hours expected by the school. A student can receive one hour of unsupervised study time for one hour of class time with no verification needed. Study time that is documented and monitored by the E&T contractor or an accredited education provider can also be counted. Total study time hours – unsupervised and supervised, may not exceed the number of study time hours expected for the course as determined by the school's study policy.						
Extension Requests						
Extensions while an individual is already participating in an E&T program will be approved by BEP via E&T contractor request. The request should contain the most recent AMR, vocational education extension addendum and most recent transcripts. Extension requests are to be sent to: TANF RA-PWBEP.TANF@pa.gov or SNAP RA-PWBEP.SNAP@pa.gov						

[Credentialing and Training Services](#)

The EARN service provider must provide credentialing and training opportunities for participants as outlined in this section. Vocational educational training is defined as “organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring training other than an advanced degree.”

All vocational education activities conducted in-house, whether designed to provide a credential/certification or not, must be matched to a growing job market within the Workforce Development Area.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) co-enrollment opportunities are to be explored by all EARN providers. Co-Enrollment ensures that an individual receives skills training, or other education, to carry out their individualized employment plan while providing needed support to reduce the probability of participant drop-out due to barriers. Participants who are co-enrolled in multiple programs have resources leveraged in a way that increases the probability to achieve long-term success in the labor market.

WIOA mandated core programs and partner programs identified for co-enrollment include:

- Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities (Title I);
- Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Title II);
- Wagner-Peyser (Title III);
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Title IV); and
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T)
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

[Credentialing Programs](#)

Credentials consist of an industry recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of a Registered Pre-Apprenticeship or Registered Apprenticeship, a license issued by the Pennsylvania Department of State or federal government, or an associate’s or baccalaureate degree. Credentials measure competence in core content and performance standards in a specific set of work-related tasks. The work-related tasks and assessment must connect with workforce demands. The EARN service provider shall submit proposed in-house credentials to the Bureau of Employment Programs (BEP) for review prior to implementation. Credentialing programs must have a direct connection to industries listed on the High Priority Occupation (HPO) list. In-house credentialing is tracked using AC 27. In its sole discretion, BEP will approve the credentials. The EARN service provider shall include the following in any credentialing program package:

1. Certification area: A statement including what marketable, valuable skill will be earned by the participant when the program is completed. Program's value: Justification of why the certification is valuable in your area industry, and how developing the skill will improve the participant's chance of gaining employment in a high priority occupation based on the workforce area and moving toward self-sufficiency.
2. Curriculum: The subjects that the certification program will cover.
3. **Example:** If the program is going to lead to a certificate in customer service, list all the subjects covered such as: Proper Dress Codes, Professional Writing Skills, How to Speak to Customers, etc.
4. Syllabus: A day-to-day outline of the progression of the program, including time frames. This should provide detail on how the curriculum will be taught. It also needs to include the goal of each lesson.
5. Assessment: The methods to be used in measuring student progress.
6. Statement of study time expectations (if applicable): Study time will not be granted automatically for these programs. If a client is expected to study outside of class time, then a statement of what the study time expectations are must accompany the program description. If a statement of study time is not submitted, no study time will be allowed when a case is pulled for validation.

Providers are to maintain an accurate and current list of all credentialing programs.

NOTE: External credentialing programs, already accredited by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and/or any trainings programs provided via Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's (DLI) [Eligible Training Participant List \(ETPL\)](#), must still be submitted to BEP for review. This ensures that BEP can maintain a list of all credentialing programs being offered to participants.

If changes are made to the approved certification program, an updated package must be resubmitted for endorsement to BEP at least 10 business days prior to implementation. However, changes should be submitted as quickly as possible as the certification process may take longer. Certification program packages should be submitted to the BEP EARN resource account, RA-BOPEARNPOLICY@PA.GOV.

Other Vocational Education Activities (not credentialed)

Vocational education activities conducted in-house without the intent of credentialing must be accompanied by a curriculum that is available at the request of BEP. When closing a non-credentialing AC 24, code 1 or 9 should be data entered. Closing code C should not be used.

HSE/GED/ESL/ABE

Vocational Education training includes adult education activities, such as High School Equivalency (HSE), General Equivalence Degree (GED), English-as-a Second Language (ESL) and Adult Basic Education (GED). Secondary equivalency is the participation in and completion of a credible HSE program. All participants, regardless of TANF/ETANF status, without a high school diploma or HSE, regardless of age, may pursue HSE. The EARN service provider shall determine whether the structure of the HSE program is suitable to the participant's knowledge base and learning style based on the program's assessment. HSE can be obtained through the General Equivalency Diploma (GED®) test or High School Equivalency Test (HiSET®). In all instances, participants will receive good cause to waive the requirement to fulfill additional core or noncore hours and activities.

Vocational Education not provided by the EARN Contractor

Hours of participation and/or certifications will only be recognized for those educational institutions who are approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to grant degrees or certifications and are operating as a licensed business as registered with the Pennsylvania Department of State (DOS).

Online education/certification will only be accepted if the online institution is recognized by the United States Department of Education as an accredited institution. EARN contractors must be diligent in ensuring they are connecting their participants with educational institutions and programs that will offer the individuals viable and suitable career pathways.

PDE approved training facilities can be searched at the following link:

<http://www.edna.pa.gov/Screens/wfSearchEntity.aspx>

Businesses licensed with DOS can be searched at the following link:

<https://www.corporations.pa.gov/Search/CorpSearch>

Online colleges approved by the US Department of Education can be searched at the following link:

<https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home>

Activity Closing Codes

The EARN service provider is required to data enter an appropriate activity closing code when ending the client's participation in an activity. The code used to terminate the activity will indicate the completion of the activity and must be entered before terminating the project in CWDS.

NOTE: All activities and sub-projects must be end-dated before a termination code can be data entered on the Edit Participant Case Details Screen to end the client's project enrollment.

The following activity closing codes may be used with EARN activities:

Activity Closing Code 1 – Not Complete

Activity Closing Code 9 – Complete

Activity Closing Code C – Credentialing Complete

The CWDS IEP must accurately represent a client's scheduled activities. If a client no longer has scheduled days of participation in an activity, the activity must be closed. The activity can be reopened when additional hours of participation are needed to meet AMR requirements.

SECTION 5 – TRACKING PROGRAM PARTICIPATION & RECORD KEEPING

Tracking Participation

Participation hours in all activities except unsubsidized employment must be tracked by the EARN program staff. The tracking guidance below applies to activities other than unsubsidized employment.

Key Terms Related to Tracking Participation

Daily supervision must be provided by the employment and training contractor, the accredited educational provider, or an accredited Internet-based educational institution.

Daily supervision does not mean daily in-person contact. Daily supervision requires ongoing contact. The supervision must be ongoing and may be via telephone or electronic contact such as email, text, course attendance reports and grades, or other software and ensures that the individual participates and progresses in their assigned activities.

Ongoing contact is defined as monthly contact that may be in-person, via telephone, or electronic.

Satisfactory Progress is defined as meeting the college's expectations to remain enrolled in the college the following semester. Where required, evidence of satisfactory progress can include:

- Electronic communication with the instructor or college personnel to verify that the student is attending class or completing required assignments on a weekly basis;
- Weekly progress reports from the college; or
- Documentation of expected assignments and confirmation of completion and submission of assignments on a weekly basis.

When unpaid work activities are coordinated through an employment and training contractor, the contractor reports directly to the Commonwealth via a computerized and automated data processing interface and maintains documentation in the case record for six years. Data entry by the contractor of the hours of participation is sufficient documentation.

Absences

Excused Absences

Clients engaged in unpaid work activities may be given participation credit for excused absences. For a client to receive credit for excused absence time, including holiday time, they must have been scheduled to participate on the day and time of the absence. Credit may only be given for the number of hours the client would have been scheduled on that day.

Example: If a client is scheduled to participate in Activity 24 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Monday but is excused for a medical appointment during that time, they may be credited with three hours of excused time.

A client may receive excused absence credit for up to 16 hours in a month and no more than 80 hours of excused absences within a rolling 12-month period, excluding DHS recognized holidays. An excused absence tracking log should be completed and kept up to date.

EARN is to document the reason for the use of excused time in the case narrative and list the time as excused on the EARN attendance sheet. When available, the EARN service provider is to collect documentation from a third party describing or documenting the reason for the absence.

Clients can be excused from participation for the following reasons:

- Medical appointments for the client or dependents
- CAO appointments
- WIC appointments
- Legal appointments
- School appointments, including school events
- Counseling appointments
- Housing appointments
- Obtaining childcare
- Child support appointments
- Obtaining birth certificates
- Obtaining documents needed for eligibility for DHS programs
- Obtaining transportation
- Other appointments deemed necessary by the contractor

The use of excused absences must be discussed with the client—the client should be notified of the excused absence hours used and hours remaining.

For working clients, paid annual, sick, or paid time off, as reflected on a client's paystub or pay statement may be included in the number of hours tracked for that period.

Holidays

Clients receive credit for participation on the following days recognized by DHS as holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s. Birthday, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

For a client to receive credit for holiday time, they must have been scheduled to participate on that day. Credit may only be given for the number of hours the client would have been scheduled.

Make-Up Time

For clients that do not meet their required number of hours in any week, the EARN service provider is required to develop a plan for the client to make up the hours during the month in which the hours were missed. If clients are unable to make up hours within the month, they should still be encouraged to make up missed hours.

Make-up plans should be developed between the client and case manager within a week of the absence. The plan should be maintained in the case record.

EARN providers should consider developing a make-up plan as opposed to using excused absence time when feasible.

Banking Hours

For absences not covered above, including religious holidays not observed by the Department, the EARN provider should allow participants to “bank” hours in the same month as the absence(s). The participant must notify the EARN provider of their intentions in advance and together they must develop a plan to make sure hourly requirements are still met within the month of the absence.

Employment Documentation

Employment hours must be verified through paystubs, documentation from the employer, DHS approved Employment Verification Form (EVF) ([Attachment J](#)) or the Work Number (or similar service). Hours of employment for TANF and former TANF participants may be projected from a single paystub for 6 months at a time. The service provider will be asked to provide actual paystubs for the purpose of job placement validation and TANF sampling. A copy of at least one pay stub that was current, if it is representative of ongoing income, at the time it was used should be used to project future hours in CWDS at the beginning of each month in situations where the participant has not provided any updates. Once employment information is verified, the EARN service provider must enter a placement report in CWDS to notify the CAO of the client’s earned income.

For tipped employment, the hourly wage should be calculated based off of the same 4 consecutive week period of pay documentation used to establish representative pay (as defined by the Pennsylvania TANF Work Verification Plan), where the gross amount of pay, including tips, divided by the number of hours stated on the pay documentation, equals the hourly rate. This hourly rate can be entered into the associated employment activity's placement report in CWDS, and used ongoing, unless the pay or employment changes.

Retention

Retention eligibility begins when a participant’s TANF benefits close due to earned income. The program will be notified of TANF closure when the participant’s case status changes from

Enrolled to 45 Day Hold. This indicates the client's TANF budget has a closure date and program must contact the CAO to verify the reason for the TANF closure.

NOTE: When a client is eligible for Transitional Cash Assistance (Program Status Code 71), the CWDS case does not go into 45 Day Hold status until shortly before TCA closes. The Cash Closing Case List widget on the Case Management Dashboard helps the

contractor identify participants whose TANF cash budget has closed prior to the CWDS case status changing from Enrolled to 45 Day Hold. Please review [Attachment R](#) for the Cash Closing Widget Instructions for further clarification.

County Assistance Offices

- eCIS
- CWDS Enrollment Report – Program Status Code
- BEP Program Monitor / Advisor

If the client is not eligible for TCA, then the 45 Day Hold status in will post in CWDS the day following TANF closure.

If TANF closure results in eligibility for retention services, the EARN service provider will move the client into Extended Hold Status and open sub-project code 01 beginning the day after the TANF case is closed.

During the retention period it is not necessary to collect paystubs for the entire 12 months. Employment verification is necessary at months 6 and 12 for validation purposes. During the retention period, providers must data enter hours each month using the hours from the placement verification.

If the following occurs during Retention period	Program Action
Participant loses employment and TANF remains closed.	Subproject 01 remains open, AC33 is closed and AC92 is opened. Participant is reengaged with case management activities with no hourly requirement. Retention clock continues.
Participant loses employment and TANF is re-opened.	Subproject 01 and AC33 are closed. Participant is reengaged to meet TANF hourly requirement as established on the AMR. Retention clock resets.
Participant is still employed, but TANF reopens	Subproject 01 is closed and AC33 remains open. Participant is reengaged in wrap around hours to meet the TANF hourly requirement established on the AMR. Retention clock resets.

A participant may achieve the 6-month benchmark only once per enrollment. **Example:** Participant A achieves the 6-month benchmark in 6/2024, but then in 8/2024 loses employment and TANF is reopen, resetting the retention clock. The participant cannot once again achieve the 6-month benchmark during the same enrollment. Retention may continue if an individual is on a leave of absence during the retention period. There must be verification that the participant is still an active employee while on an approved leave of absence. Failure to data enter the representative hours monthly will result in errors on the Missing Attendance

Hours report.

Retention and Increased Earned Income Verification

The EARN service provider must verify employment at 6 months (183 days) and 12 months (365 days) after retention begins. DHS will work with our internal resources to data match wage and income information and distribute it to providers. The provider will be responsible for verifying employment information for participants that cannot be matched and/or verified through DHS mechanisms. The methods of employment verification include but are not limited to paystubs, documentation from the employer, DHS approved Employment Verification Form (EVF), the Work Number (or similar service), or CIS. To meet the Increased Earned Income performance measure, verification of actual income is required, and the hourly rate must be adjusted for the initial job placement.

Retention Services

Retention services should be a continuum of services provided prior to placement. Client contact should occur weekly for the first three months and then bi-weekly, or as often as needed, while the client remains in retention. Retention contacts should include a comprehensive overview of the client's IEP as well as a discussion to determine if the client needs any referrals for services. Programs should look to develop and offer workshops or events that are designed to support employed participants.

AC 92 should be opened if the participant is in retention, has lost their job and the TANF benefits remain closed. AC 92 will be used to track the participant engagement.

Data Entry

EARN service providers may have their own data information system to track program referrals, rejections, enrollments, participant data, activities, and terminations. However, CIS, CWDS, and DocuShare are the official data systems that DHS will use to validate a client's activities and evaluate achievement of outcomes. EARN provider staff hired to perform data entry are required to attend CWDS training.

DHS has instituted restrictions on timeframes for the data entry of client information into CWDS. These restrictions are necessary to ensure the timely reporting to the Department's state and federal partners, and timely action by CAOs affecting clients' eligibility for benefits or continued participation in EARN.

CWDS Access/Termination

To obtain access to CWDS, the CWDS User Agreement Form & MD 205_34 need to be completed for the new user and submitted to the CWDS resource account RA-CWDS@pa.gov . Please submit in one document per user access request. [CWDS/eCIS Access \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Upon the departure of an employee from the employment program agency, access to CWDS will be terminated promptly and securely to safeguard sensitive information.

It is the responsibility of the employee's immediate supervisor or designated administrative personnel to notify the BEP CWDS resource account RA-CWDS@pa.gov and the BEP EARN resource account ra-bopearnpolicy@pa.gov of the employee's departure within three business days.

Supervisors and administrative personnel responsible for initiating access termination requests are accountable for ensuring the timely and accurate execution of the process.

Failure to adhere to the access termination protocol may result in disciplinary action.

The EARN service provider must complete data entry into CWDS as follows:

Reporting Element	System of Record	Reporting Deadline
Program Implementation Plan	DocuShare	45 business days following the start of the PY
Assessment	Case Record	14 business days following the date of enrollment
IEP	CWDS	14 business days following the date of enrollment
Case Progress Notes	CWDS	30 calendar days following the point of contact
TANF Sampling	CWDS	1 st day of the month following the month of request
Annual Monitoring/Technical Assistance	N/A	Ongoing
Referrals	CWDS	14 business days following the discovery of need
Unsubsidized Employment	CWDS	All hours must be entered by the last day of the month up to two months after the month of participation (i.e., March hours must be entered into CWDS by May 31 st).

Any data not entered by the data entry deadlines will not count toward the performance outcomes.

Mathematical rounding will be used to round clients' hours: round down to the next whole hour if the fraction is .49 or below and round up to the next whole hour if the fraction is .5 or above. Mathematical rounding will be instituted at the end of each week per activity.

EARN service providers must promptly and correctly data enter information into CWDS. It is essential to capture all client activity hours to assure accountability and track participant activities for each month they receive a TANF payment as federally required.

All information data entered into CWDS must match the information on the EARN attendance sheets ([see Attachment F](#)). All service providers must develop a data reconciliation process to ensure that all information in CWDS is accurate. Data reconciliation must be completed at least monthly.

EARN service providers are expected to maintain a data accuracy and timeliness rate of at least 85%.

NOTE: EARN service providers may refer to the CWDS manual for further information on the operation of CWDS. Data entry questions can be directed to the CWDS Help Desk at 1-866-236-6297 or RA-CWDS@pa.gov.

EARN Case Record Requirements

The EARN service provider will create a confidential EARN Case Record. The EARN Case Record must be kept in a secure location with limited accessibility. Staff not associated with the EARN case may not have access to the EARN Case Record or narrative.

The EARN service provider will document the following in the EARN Case Record narrative:

- date, time, and location of all EARN related contacts
- purpose and outcome of all EARN related contacts
- any changes in the client's conditions or circumstances
- solutions offered and the client's responses
- services and supports requested or provided
- pertinent information received from the CAO
- any other relevant information

NOTE: The EARN service providers are required to document their narratives using the CWDS Create Case Progress Notes screen. All case progress notes are to be entered within 30 calendar days following the contact. Additionally, it is suggested to identify case notes with specific topics, for example "Incentives."

The following documents should be maintained in the client's file and must be available for upload in CWDS for validation and focused case review purposes:

- AMR
- Service Plan/IEP
- Attendance Sheets, including make-up plans (See [Attachment F](#)) for the EARN Attendance sheet)
- Job Search Logs
- Excused Absence Logs
- Release of Information Form (See [Attachment L](#))
- Employment Verification Form (EVF) (See [Attachment J](#))
- Verification of Retention
- Other Relevant Information

Documents must be retained for a period of six years.

Internal Data Reconciliation

The EARN program is evaluated based on eCIS and CWDS information; therefore, it is imperative that the contractor schedule time at least once a month to reconcile the data found throughout all systems and case files used by the contractor to ensure the accuracy of the data used to track participants.

At a minimum, the following must be consistent in all the data systems.	Critical data that must match across all reporting systems.
Client Information System	Project begin and end dates
Commonwealth Workforce Development System	Activities, including begin and end dates
Job Placement and Retention Report	Time and attendance information.
Case Records	Employment information (employer, job start and end dates, medical information, wages, etc.)

The CWDS enrollment, closings, and other reports must be accessed and utilized for reconciliation purposes.

SECTION 6 – TERMINATIONS

Project Termination

Project termination codes reflect program outcomes, including whether the client secured employment or not. The EARN service provider must include the reason for termination in the narrative of the client’s case record.

Termination codes 3, 5, and 7 must be data entered within three business days of the date of the decision to terminate. For clients terminated with employment/retention codes 1 and 8, the termination date may date back to the final day worked which completes the 12-month retention period as verified by paystubs.

Programs must conduct outreach efforts for clients who miss three consecutive scheduled days of program activity. If a client does not respond to the outreach efforts and does not report on the fourth day the client must be terminated from the program. Clients who report at any time on the fourth day should not be terminated.

The CAO and contractor members of the DST can decide jointly to terminate an underperforming client from the program even if attendance does not warrant it under the three-day absence rule. Alternatively, if it is determined by the CAO that a client who missed three or more consecutive scheduled days or fell short of their required hours would benefit from remaining in the program, and there is a plan of action with the client for them to be re-engaged immediately, the client may be retained in the program. The plan of action should include using excused and/or unexcused absences and make-up time to remain within a reasonable level of compliance with their AMR. This should be noted in the contractor’s case narrative and the decision documented by the CAO. In no circumstance should the contractor make the decision to retain the client without approval from the CAO and contact with the client.

When a client moves out of their county of residence, the EARN provider must terminate the project.

NOTE: Decisions to ban a participant from the program must be elevated and approved by BEP prior to termination.

Banning Guidance

The following is intended to be guidance to assist providers in determining when a participant should be banned. It is recognized that each situation may be unique and might require additional steps or discussion before a decision to ban a participant can be reached. The decision to ban a participant should be a last resort after all attempts to remediate the situation have taken place.

The safety and well-being of all participants and program staff are paramount. Any behavior that jeopardizes this safety will be subject to immediate action.

Disruptive or criminal behavior includes but is not limited to physical violence, verbal abuse (making threats), harassment (stalking), theft, vandalism, possession of weapons, or any act that creates an unsafe environment for others.

Individuals engaging in serious offenses, such as physical violence or possession of weapons, will be immediately banned from the employment program without warning.

For less serious offenses, such as repeated instances of verbal abuse, harassment, or minor theft, a progressive disciplinary action approach will be followed:

- First Offense: Verbal warning and counseling session outlining the consequences of continued behavior.
- Second Offense: Written warning, mandatory participation in behavior modification workshops, and probationary period.
- Third Offense: Temporary suspension from the program pending further review with BEP approval.
- Fourth Offense: Permanent ban from the program with BEP approval.

Remote participation should be given as an alternative option to promote the safety and well-being of program staff and participants while also allowing the participant to benefit from employment and training services.

Participants should be made aware of any site rules regarding acceptable behavioral standards upon enrollment. The participant should be included in all levels of any progressive discipline and be given due process prior to taking any action to terminate or ban.

Participants and staff are encouraged to report any incidents of disruptive or criminal behavior promptly to program administrators. Reports will be handled with confidentiality and investigated thoroughly.

Regular training sessions and workshops will be conducted to educate participants and staff on acceptable behavior standards, conflict resolution techniques, and the importance of maintaining a safe and respectful environment.

Program administrators must elevate any instance of banning a participant to BEP prior to making decisions regarding the banning of individuals from the employment program. The provider will submit any incident reports, case notes or documentation to BEP for review. BEP will review and provide a decision within 7 business days. BEP will review and evaluate the request always with the primary concern of ensuring the safety and well-being of all involved parties.

Project Termination Codes

Termination Type	Code	Clarifications
Part-time Employment. Client obtains employment for 20 to 29 hours per week as validated by CWDS reports.	1	The termination date may date back to the final day worked which completes 12-month retention period.
Full-time Employment. Client obtains employment for 30 hours or more per week as validated by CWDS reports.	8	
<p>Withdraws or Terminates Without Good Cause. Client withdraws from the program without good cause or fails to comply with the contractor’s absence policies.</p> <p>This includes clients who are terminated from the program for missing three consecutive scheduled days of activity without a valid excuse and who do not report on the fourth day.</p> <p>It also includes participants who have been placed but terminated without meeting retention requirements.</p>	3	Good cause is determined by the CAO after the client is terminated. Use code 3 unless the CAO determines at the time of termination that good cause will be granted, at which time code 7 is appropriate.
Obtains SSI/RSDI. Client is approved for SSI/RSDI.	J	
Transfers to KEYS or ELECT. Client transfers to KEYS or ELECT program to fulfill their hourly participation requirements.	X	Provider must facilitate the referral/transfer to the KEYS or ELECT program. The KEYS/ELECT program will request an updated AMR and referral from the CAO using the reverse referral process prior to termination from the EARN program.
Completion of planned AMR activities with no employment. Client has successfully completed the EARN Program and is transferred back to the CAO to be referred to another appropriate E&T program.	5	
Other. Client’s reason for termination does not fit other termination codes listed here.	7	

SECTION 7 – PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS & STANDARDS

Performance Outcomes

Certain performance outcomes will be used to assess the effectiveness of the service provider. Performance outcomes for EARN PY 2023 – 2024 are outlined in the chart below. If the service provider does not meet the threshold/goal for any of the categories listed, a corrective action plan must be submitted.

Outcome	TANF Outcome Description	TANF Goal	Measurement
Secondary Equivalent and Credentialing	A participant must receive a diploma or certification that will provide the participant with an industry-recognized certificate or certification (as defined in Section III(H)(a - c)) and marketable skill directly related to their employment goals listed in their AMR and IEP.	50% of all participants in an activity that results in the achievement of a credential.	Number of credential activities closed where credential earned during program year / number of credential activities closed during the program year.
Successful Referral to Educational Programming	Grantee shall coordinate educational activities with ELECT service providers and the KEYS program programs where appropriate; providing supports to ensure successful transfer, referral, and enrollment to the receiving program (as defined in Section III(H)(d)).	90% of those terminated from EARN with Project Termination Code X go onto enroll with ELECT or KEYS program within 90 days.	Number of individuals who have a referral (regardless of outcome) to ELECT, SNAP 50/50, TANF KEYS or SNAP KEYS within 90 days following Project Termination X in program year /number of individuals with project term code X in program year.

<p>Employment with hourly wage (\$2 hour above minimum wage)</p>	<p>Grantee shall place participants in unsubsidized employment, for an average of 20 hours in a consecutive four-week period, with a wage at least two dollars above the higher of the federal or state minimum wage as of July 1 of the program year.</p>	<p>65% of all enrolled participants who become employed achieve Employment with hourly wage.</p>	<p>Number of cases where individual is employed with hourly wage and meeting the employment measurement during the program year / number of cases with active unsubsidized employment who are eligible for placement during program year.</p>
<p>Retention (six- and twelve-month benchmarks)</p>	<p>Retention begins when an individual has TANF or ETANF close due to earned income from employment and is placed in CWDS extended hold. The Grantee shall provide documentation of the participant's retention semi-annually (six and twelve months)</p>	<p>70% of all enrolled participants who met the employment reporting measure at six-months will achieve the benchmark 50% of all enrolled participants who met the employment reporting measure at twelve-months will achieve the benchmark</p>	<p>Count of individuals enrolled in retention, who achieved the employment reporting measure at or prior to retention, achieve 183 or 365 days in retention; divided by all individuals who achieved retention and employment reporting measure who had retention either between 0-183 days or 183-365 days. (Only individuals who could cross the day count threshold in the PY would be counted.)</p>

Reporting Measures

Grantee will be expected to report on the following measures monthly:

Outcome	TANF Outcome Description	Measurement
Employment/Placement	Grantee shall place participants in unsubsidized employment for an average of 20 hours per week in a consecutive four-week period	Actual hours of attendance entered for unsubsidized employment in a four-week period.
Employment related to High Priority Occupations (HPO)	Grantee shall place participants in unsubsidized employment for an average of 20 hours per week in a consecutive four-week period and the employment is related to an HPO L&I: High Priority Occupations (HPOs)	O*NET or SOC code in placement report in CWDS unsubsidized employment activity in a case is determined to be a DLI HPO for program county after, or in conjunction with Employment/ Placement measures.
Employment related to IEP/Goals	Grantee shall place participants in unsubsidized employment for an average of 20 hours per week in a consecutive four-week period and the employment is related to a marketable skill consistent with their employment goals listed in their AMR and IEP.	Goal or Skill in IEP/EDP has a SOC/O*NET code that matches the SOC/O*NET code of an unsubsidized employment achieved during the case/enrollment that has also met the “Employment” reporting measure.
Employment related to education/training	Grantee shall place participants in unsubsidized employment for an average of 20 hours per week in a consecutive four-week period and the employment is aligned with their completed credentialing, certification, or vocational education studies.	SOC/O*NET code for unsubsidized employment that meets “Employment” performance measure matches CIP code associated to previously completed credential/training activity on case. CWDS will match the CIP code to the SOC/O*NET code based on the 2020 CIP/SOC Crosswalk .

Retention IEP Services	Grantee shall continue to update the participation IEP throughout the retention period until the individual is terminated from the E&T program; no later than 12 months post-TANF closure.	IEP has at least one component updated, as indicated by date in CWDS, between start of retention activity and end of retention activity.
Earned Income	Participants that achieved Employment who, at the conclusion of the 12- month retention period, have increased their hourly wage.	Individuals who achieve employment w/wage performance measure and achieve 12-month retention will have placement report hourly wage data reviewed to determine if an increase occurred between the start and end of retention.

Service Delivery Standards

Grantee will strive to meet the service delivery standards below. Close adherence to these service standards will ensure quality assurance, align with EARN program design, and drive program participant outcomes.

Outcome	TANF Outcome Description	TANF Goal	Measurement
Assessment and IEP	Grantee shall conduct and complete a comprehensive household assessment (Section III.B.) as well as complete and document a detailed IEP (Section III.C.) that includes plans to address participant challenges (barriers) and agreed upon plan for resolution within 14 business days of a participant's enrollment.	90% of all participants enrolled with the Grantee for whom an assessment is required.	Count of individuals who have assessment activity complete, with IEP showing updated or new barrier and goal, with assessment activity end & participant signature date occurring less than or equal to 14 business days from the case begin date divided by all newly enrolled individuals in program year.
Referrals to External Support Services	Grantee shall complete a referral to a community-based organization to help assist the individual, family, or both within 14 business days of discovering the need	90% of all enrolled participants for whom a need has been identified.	Count of new IEP Barriers that have referral made to an outside agency within 14 business days of IEP Barrier being opened divided by all IEP Barriers with a referral made to an outside agency. (Only IEP Barriers with an associated referral will be evaluated.)

<p>Social Service Professional</p>	<p>Grantee shall have a network of professionals as required by Section III. D so that eligible participants have a one-on-one meeting within 28 business days following the date of enrollment.</p>	<p>80% of all enrolled participants for whom a meeting is required will have an introductory one-on-one meeting with the licensed professional within 28 business days following the date of enrollment.</p>	<p>LC/SW services that are opened within 28 business days or fewer business days after enrollment.</p>
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Monitoring

DHS will monitor EARN service providers at least annually but may conduct more frequent monitoring at its discretion. Monitoring will include a review of data systems, monthly case record reviews as well as site visits to review program compliance. DHS will also conduct training and information sessions, along with technical assistance for the service providers as needed.

EARN service providers that do not meet minimum outcomes and expectations will be asked to submit a corrective action plan addressing the deficiencies within 14 business days of notification of the deficiencies. Regular progress reports on actions to correct the deficiencies will also be required.

EARN service providers that have multiple areas of deficiencies or those who do not show progress because of the corrective action plans are required to participate in meetings to plan and review progress.

See [Attachment M](#) for detailed information on performance validation.

Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance (TA) will be provided throughout the year. TA can be in the form of one-on-one conversations or done in a group setting such as the EARN monthly calls. TA can cover a variety of topics including but not limited to:

- A review of performance goals or standards
- Policy or procedural training
- Collaborative roundtable discussions
- DST support

A provider may request TA at any time throughout the program year.

Monthly TANF Sample

The monthly TANF Sample is used for the following purposes:

1. To ensure program performance requirements and standards in service are supported.
2. As part of ongoing TANF audits associated with federal block grant funding.
3. To provide the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) with required information for the federal TANF Data Report.

The monthly TANF Sample is a random selection of cases that are submitted to and reviewed by the federal government. The time spent participating in work or work-related programs must be verified and documented. That documentation must be available for review upon Pennsylvania's request and retained for at least six years. All requested information and documentation must be provided complete, accurate, and in a timely manner.

Because the TANF Sample is random, there is no way to know which cases will be selected monthly. For this reason, and to assure accountability, it is important that E&T providers accurately and promptly track participant activities for each month they receive a TANF payment. For verification purposes, documentation should be kept in the case record for all hours of participation.

Providers are to enter actual hours for each week in which hours have been recorded for any activity. Mathematical rounding will be instituted at the end of each month based on the combined weekly totals.

Monthly, E&T providers will receive an email alerting them if any of their TANF enrollees have been sampled for the target month. E&T providers will be instructed to access their CWDS Program Administration Dashboard to obtain their list of sampled participants.

Designated E&T provider staff may access the TANF Sampling Checklist, the TANF Sampling PowerPoint training, and instructions for Using CWDS for the TANF Sample in the Provider Resource File here. These documents will also be available on the Provider Resource and Collaboration website upon its release.

Contractors who do not have access to CWDS should contact Bureau of Employment Programs (BEP) at RA-TANFsample@pa.gov to request access immediately or contact your program advisor for assistance.

Program Implementation Plan

At the beginning of each program year, every provider will be required to submit a Program Implementation Plan (PIP) to BEP ([Attachment N](#)). This plan will be used by the providers to explain how they intend to operate and design programming that aligns with the requirements

outlined in the Statement of Work. The PIP must be submitted to BEP within 45 days of the program year start.

The PIP will be used in conjunction with the monthly reports to evaluate program effectiveness and may be referenced throughout the year as part of program monitoring, technical assistance, and overall program performance.

SECTION 8 – PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

[Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 \(ADA\)](#)

The ADA prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. It also mandates the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services. All contractors must comply with the ADA. Civil rights and non-discrimination training can be accessed on the Provider Website: [BEP Training Resources](#) (sharepoint.com).

[Limited English Proficiency \(LEP\)](#)

Each EARN provider must have a written LEP policy that includes a plan to serve LEP populations, compliance with Title VI Requirements, acceptable use of volunteer interpreters, and the description and level of training staff has obtained yearly. The EARN provider will provide yearly LEP training and will maintain documentation of the staff receiving yearly LEP training. [LEP training can be found on the Provider website: BEP Training Resources \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

The EARN provider will provide LEP participants with information in their native language either through translation or interpretation. The EARN provider will notify participants of the availability of oral and written language services at no cost to the participant.

[Confidentiality](#)

All clients must be assured that the personal data they provide will be confidential.

The EARN service provider will keep client information obtained from the client or other sources confidential. It will only be released upon the client's written approval, obtained on DHS approved Authorization for Release of Information Forms ([Attachment G](#)), and only for the purpose specified by the client.

Per the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule (45 CFR Parts 160 and 164) all personal health information should be retained for a period of six years. All EARN information should be kept for a period of six years, after which the information should be shredded.

Data sharing with any third party must adhere to DHS' data sharing agreement and approved by DHS prior to implementation.

All program staff must receive annual training to ensure full understanding of safeguarding

policies. Safeguarding Information training can be found here: [BEP Training Resources](#) (sharepoint.com) The EARN provider will provide yearly safeguarding information training to staff and maintain documentation of all staff trained.

The EARN must have a secure e-mail site set up by DHS when transmitting information between the CAO and program. Without a secure e-mail site, EARN programs are not permitted to transmit participant information via e-mail.

Disposition of Equipment

Grantees must request approval for disposal instructions from the state office for all inventories. Equipment may be disposed of with no obligation to the federal program, if all of the following criteria are met: (2 CFR §200.313(e))

1. Equipment is no longer needed in the current program;
2. Equipment is not needed in other programs or previously funded by a federal agency;
3. Equipment is an item that has a current per-unit fair market value of less than \$5,000.

Grantee may purchase or lease equipment with federal funds if:

1. It is reasonable and necessary to operate its federal program effectively;
2. Existing equipment will not be sufficient; and
3. The costs are reasonable.

Client Incentives

TANF participants may receive incentives, as funding permits, to promote positive behavior and/or to reinforce a student's demonstration of improved behavior such as increased or sustained attendance, goal attainment and active program participation. TANF incentives must encourage participation in a TANF activity and accomplish one or more of the four purposes of TANF:

1. Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;
2. End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
3. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies;
4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families

These supports may be given in advance of the individual's compliance with participation to promote attendance in employment and training activities and programming. If an individual does not subsequently participate or comply, the provider should evaluate if continued incentives would improve the participant's outcomes.

It is not allowable to use TANF incentives on items the individual is eligible to receive through a special allowance. TANF funds cannot be used to supplement authorized SPALs. Additionally, TANF incentives may not be issued for costs related to entertainment such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities.

The EARN service provider must maintain a list of all incentives issued that includes at a minimum the following information: amount and type of incentive issued, name of individual receiving incentive, date issued and reason for issuance of incentive. All incentives given to a participant should also be recorded in the CWDS case narrative. The issuances of client incentives are subject to monitoring.

Promotional Program Materials

All promotional program materials created to share externally must be submitted and approved by BEP prior to implementing use. Promotional materials include brochures, pamphlets, surveys, flyers and posters. DHS has the sole discretion on determining allowable program materials that can be shared with the CAO and participants.

Supportive Services

EARN service providers will not issue special allowances to clients. Clients may continue to be eligible for CAO-issued special allowances. The EARN provider may assist clients in completing and submitting the SPAL Request Form (PA 1883), along with any supporting documentation, to the CAO. This form and documentation may be submitted by secure email or fax or via CWDS. (If submitting through CWDS, a SPAL Verification form must still be submitted separately to the CAO).

The CAO will consider multiple factors when determining eligibility for a SPAL, including, but not limited to, those listed below.

The item or service must:

1. Be required for participation in work or an approved activity.
2. Be the least costly and most practical item or service that will meet the need;
3. Not be available from another source or at no cost to the client; and
4. Not be already owned by or previously paid for by participant

SPALs will not be issued by the CAO if the requested item or service is available at no cost to the participant from another source.

If the CAO finds the client eligible for the SPAL, the client is to provide a receipt showing that the SPAL was used for the intended purpose within 14 calendar days. Failure to document how the SPAL was used within the 14-day time frame, or documentation showing the SPAL was used inappropriately, may result in an overpayment for the client.

See [Attachment O](#) for the SPAL Request Form and [Attachment P](#) for the SPAL Desk Guide used by the CAOs.

Direct Service Team (DST) Meetings

DST Meetings provide an opportunity for CAOs and case managers from contracted employment and training programs to meet, at least monthly, to problem solve for individual clients and reconcile records.

The DST must consist of at least a representative from the CAO and a program operator from the EARN provider. DHS has made a commitment to reforming E&T programming to better suit the varied needs, challenges, and situations that our participants represent. As such, one initiative is to foster better communication between all area contracted E&T providers and the CAO. Contracted E&T providers should establish a meeting time and location to engage the CAO via DST meetings no less than once a month; in-person meetings are preferred but telephone meetings are also permissible.

Contracted E&T providers will utilize the DST meetings to reconcile records, develop makeup plans, discuss participant issues, and collaborate toward resolutions with meaningful impact.

Local Management Committee (LMC) Meetings

This meeting is responsible for the coordination of operations and services provided in the local areas to public assistance recipients. All local E&T program providers are required to attend.

See [Attachment Q](#) for detailed LMC information.

Maximizing Participation Project (MPP) and Multidisciplinary Team Meetings (MDT)

Maximizing Participation Project (MPP) is an Extended TANF eligibility track for certain ETANF adults who:

- are exempt from RESET due to a verified temporary (more than 90 days) or permanent physical or mental disability as determined by a Medical Assessment Form (MAF) ([PA 635](#));

OR

- previously received ETANF in Deferral Hardship Track 3 and was unable to resolve barriers to participation and have demonstrated a pattern of being terminated from E&T programs with good cause due to these barriers.

Certain ETANF adults must agree to enroll with a DHS contractor who provides MPP services, cooperate with a Work Capacity Assessment (WCA), cooperate with MPP requirements, and cooperate with the MPP Service Plan if they want to receive ETANF for themselves and their family.

Cooperation with MPP requirements is mandatory for the ETANF adult who meets one of the criteria for this track. MPP focuses on the needs and barriers of the entire family. The primary goal of MPP is to help ETANF adults become economically independent and set goals by providing services and encouragement that will help the family remediate or stabilize barriers that may hinder them from achieving self-sufficiency. This is accomplished through appropriate assessments, evaluations, services, and activities.

There is no maximum number of months an ETANF adult may be eligible in MPP.

[The MPP Multi-Disciplinary Team \(MDT\)](#)

MPP has a team-centered approach. A team of professionals, called the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) will help the individual identify and resolve barriers. The MDT will consist of members from the CAO (such as TANF Income Maintenance Caseworker (IMCW), IMCW Supervisor, and DAP worker), DHS Contractor, the ETANF adult, and any other professionals such as members of the Local Management Committee (LMC) who are able to provide professional feedback and assistance in the development of the MPP Service Plan.

The MDT will meet with the adult to develop the MPP Service Plan and determine what activities they should pursue during the time they are awaiting the WCA results. The MPP Service Plan should include activities to support the needs and assist with the removal of barriers to economic independence. This could include, but is not limited to, doctors' appointments, therapy sessions, life skills coaching, rehabilitation, ESL, ABE, HSE/GED, post-secondary education, and parenting classes.

The MPP **MDT** will coordinate with local social service agencies such as:

- Mental Health (MH) Agencies.
- Drug and Alcohol (D&A) Agencies.
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).
- Other social services or medical assistance agencies as appropriate, examples include:
 - Domestic Violence Agencies.
 - Housing Agencies.
 - Crisis Intervention Centers.
 - Children and Youth Agencies

The MDT should determine if participants are ready or able to increase activity hours because they have resolved or stabilized their barriers sufficiently, or have minimal barriers, and do not require extensive interventions MPP participants who need the support of a ramp-up to employment can be referred to the appropriate **DHS** contractor for Employment and Training activities.

[See Attachment S - MDT](#)

Contacts

Questions regarding EARN program policy should be addressed to RA-BOPEARNPOLICY@PA.GOV.

Questions regarding EARN program validation requirements should be addressed to RA-BPE-DPI@PA.GOV.

Questions regarding EARN program data entry into CWDS should be addressed to the CWDS Help Desk at 1-866-236-6297 or RA-CWDS@pa.gov