

ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE MANUAL

CHAPTER CONTENTS

Section		Page
734	WORK: VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION	V-1
734-1	APPROVAL CRITERIA	V-2
734-2	TUITION COSTS	V-2
734-3	JOB SKILLS TRAINING	V-3
734-4	SELF-INITIATED TRAINING (SIT)	V-3
734-5	COLLEGE EDUCATION	V-4
734-6	EDUCATION.....	V-4
734-7	MINOR PARENTS AND TEEN PARENTS	V-5
734-8	EDUCATIONAL BREAKS	V-5
734-9	ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS	V-6
734-10	ADULT EDUCATION	V-6

ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE MANUAL

THIS PAGE LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY

WORK: VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Vocational Training provides participants with marketable job skills for paid work. Without such skills, the participant may remain unemployable, or employable only in low paying occupations. Participants with few job skills, outdated job skills, or skills no longer in demand may benefit from training designed to bring their qualifications in line with those required by local employers.

Vocational Training provides marketable job skills, rather than opportunities for career change. Care must be taken in assigning this activity to ensure the training prepares the participant for the earliest paid employment opportunity, and that it concludes within the Temporary Assistance participant's 60 month lifetime limit on benefits.

Generally, the length of Vocational Training activities should not exceed 12 months. The case worker must ask a supervisor to review and approve a training activity that exceeds this limit. Participation in Vocational Training beyond this limit doesn't count toward meeting participation targets. The supervisor may approve training activities that exceeds this limit when the training offers viable employment opportunities with earnings that allow the family to leave Temporary Assistance prior to the 60 month limit.

This chapter provides policy for the following Temporary Assistance training activities:

- **Job Skills Training.** This activity provides specific vocational training or vocational education, and at completion typically provides a certification or diploma.
- **Self Initiated Training.** Some participants will identify employment goals prior to involvement in Temporary Assistance's work programs. These training programs, also known as SIT, typically involve enrollment in recognized vocational or technical schools, or in other higher education programs (University of Alaska).
- **College Education.** This activity prepares a participant for professional or para-professional occupations consistent with their employment goals. Often this activity is referred to as post-secondary education (PSE) or University education.

ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE MANUAL

734-1 APPROVAL CRITERIA

Proposed Vocational Training activities must meet all of the following criteria before the case worker may assign it as a work activity on their Plan:

- The training takes place within Alaska.
- The number of remaining Temporary Assistance assistance months allows the participant enough time to complete the training, plus search for and find unsubsidized employment. See the [60 Month Assistance Limit](#) chapter.
- The participant demonstrates the ability and motivation to successfully complete the training at a level that matches performance expectations.
- The training leads to employment in a recognized occupation expected to be in demand within the labor market. Labor market information (LMI) must support this determination. See the [Work: Assessment and Assignment](#) chapter for more information.

734-2 TUITION COSTS

Within Alaska, numerous agencies and programs fund training costs. JTPA and STEP often fund tuition and other costs related to training. Pell grants and other educational assistance grants provide another way to meet tuition costs. Often, training providers will assist the participant make application for tuition funds, and receive the Pell grant directly on behalf of the participant.

The participant also may voluntarily agree to incur debt in order to pay for training related tuition costs. The Post-Secondary Education Commission offers participants the opportunity to borrow money to finance training costs.

Educational assistance grants and loans may or may not count as income when determining Temporary Assistance eligibility and benefit amounts. See the [Income](#) chapters for more information about the treatment of educational grants and loans.

ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE MANUAL

734-2 **Continued**

As a last resort, Temporary Assistance training funds may be available for approved programs when other resources are not. Consult the office or unit supervisor prior to authorizing Temporary Assistance funds to cover tuition costs. The [Work: Supportive Services Payments](#) chapter fully describes Temporary Assistance-funded tuition payments policy.

734-3 **JOB SKILLS TRAINING**

Jobs skills training involves participation in an organized educational program that directly relates to preparation for employment. This training gives the participant specialized knowledge, abilities, and job skills. Depending on the program and the participant's expected goals, job skills training may be as elaborate as an apprenticeship program or as simple as a job sampling placement. Often programs provide combinations of vocational training, basic education, and job sampling, for example the Job Corps program.

Job skills training typically last less than a year, and often is condensed into short, intense courses of instruction. These programs generally offer specific diplomas or other formal certification of skill level.

734-4 **SELF-INITIATED TRAINING (SIT)**

During Employability Assessment, the case worker may discover a participant already takes part in training or higher education they initiated on their own. Typically SIT programs involve college or other post secondary type of education the participant enrolled in prior to selection for a work program. Sometimes partner agencies, or the old JOBS program, developed SIT programs. Based on a current assessment of the participant's employability, and if the SIT meets all the criteria listed in this chapter, the case worker may approve it as training activity.

If a partner agency helped establish the SIT, then compare their employability assessment and training plan with the criteria. Also, determine the partner's willingness to cover the SIT's costs.

ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE MANUAL

734-4 **Continued**

Participants may continue to pursue unapproved training or education, but must make themselves available to take part in work activities assigned on their Plan. Mandatory participants risk a penalty if they refuse to drop or modify personal activities that interfere with work activities assigned on their Plan.

734-5 **COLLEGE EDUCATION**

This activity prepares a participant for professional or para-professional occupations consistent with their employment goals. Often this activity is referred to as post-secondary education (PSE) or University education. College-level education when it is a SIT may be approved, if it meets the criteria listed in this chapter. Expect college to prepare a participant to enter a paid job that quickly leads to Temporary Assistance case closure.

Evaluate approval of college education plans carefully, especially those that exceed 12 months in length. Lengthy college plans, including those that the participant initiated on their own, use up time-limited assistance months, and require the participant to remain dependent on Temporary Assistance while attending college. This is contrary to the intent of Temporary Assistance.

734-6 **EDUCATION**

Education activities enhance a participant's ability to gain employment. Programs offering education vary from area to area and agency to agency. Some provide very basic reading instruction and others skills needed to cope with everyday challenges. These activities can be assigned when the participant's personal educational level and goals indicate a need for completing a high school program or enhancing basic literacy skills.

The rest of this chapter describes Temporary Assistance policy on Education activities. Local procedures provide further guidance on use of local resources when assigning participants to educational activities, and reflecting expectations in their Family Self Sufficiency Plan. Such assignments must reflect both the participant's need for the education and their willingness to attend the activity. Exception: Minor parents must attend high school or GED Preparation as a condition of their eligibility for Temporary Assistance.

ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE MANUAL

734-6 **Continued**

Education activities include remedial, basic skills, or literacy training as a prerequisite to occupational-specific training or necessary for success in work search or general work performance. Participation in Education activities may lead to the award of a high school or General Educational Development (GED) diploma, to improvements in elementary reading and writing skills, or to the ability to speak, read, and write English.

734-7 **MINOR PARENTS AND TEEN PARENTS**

Minor parents must meet specific eligibility requirements related to high school completion. A minor parent is a parent under the age of 18 who remains unmarried and unemancipated. Refer to the Minor Parent section in the [Special Types of Case Processing](#) chapter for more information on the school attendance requirement.

Teen parents who are 18 or 19 years of age without a diploma may finish high school or prepare to earn a GED. High school completion, or a GED diploma are often key to obtaining their first paid employment opportunity. Before referring a teen parent to adult education, make sure they want to work on their GED. If not, assign them to another work activity that will lead them to their employment goals.

Refer minor parents and teen parents who lack basic literacy, a high school diploma, or a GED to a high school provider. Refer minor parents and teen parents to a local adult education center when the high school curriculum or environment no longer suits their educational needs; or when a teen parent needs more than five high school credits to earn a high school diploma.

734-8 **EDUCATIONAL BREAKS**

For the duration of their summer break from high school, alternative school, GED Preparation, or other educational activity, assign mandatory participants to an interim Temporary Assistance work activity (such as Youth Work Experience or other summer employment).

ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE MANUAL

734-9 ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

Local school districts may offer alternative programs for students to earn a high school diploma. Each local DPA office ascertains the nature of alternative education programs for teen parents by contacting their local school district, and then makes arrangements for referring teen participants to the local alternative high school.

In addition to academics, alternative schools offer students specialized services. These programs often offer parenting classes, on-site child care, and case management services. Alternative high school programs are viable options in planning goals for minor and teen parents.

734-10 ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education programs typically focus on the adult learner, however, many programs accept teen parents who have special needs or interests. This activity provides GED Preparation, literacy improvement, and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.

Assign adults, or teens, to this activity when they need high school completion (GED) or basic literacy to meet employment goals. Consider assigning this activity in combination with Job Sampling or Community Work Experience, especially for participants whose lack of basic skills keeps them from finding paid work. Tailor the assignment to meet the participant's specific need.

The GED includes exams on five content areas: Social Studies, Science, Arts and Literature, Math, and a written essay. In rural areas or under unusual circumstances, a participant may prepare through correspondence study. The General Educational Development (GED) diploma has the same value as a high school diploma.

Literacy improvement includes development of basic reading, writing, and math skills. Participants showing poor writing, reading, or math skills may need a referral to an adult educator for literacy testing. When test results are below grade 8.9, additional basic education may be necessary to reach employment goals.

ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE MANUAL

734-10 Continued

Some participants may lack the ability to speak English. Adult basic education programs provide instruction in reading and writing English. Refer participants lacking basic English skills and who have been unable to find paid work to a local program offering this education.

Adult educators have daily contact with participants, and thus gain insight into their personalities, strengths, and weaknesses. Rely on these insights when monitoring the participant's progress toward employment, and when routinely updating their Employability Assessment and Plan.

ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE MANUAL

THIS PAGE LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY