

FINISH LINE GRANT - NEEDS RELATED PAYMENTS

PURPOSE: To provide guidance to Western Piedmont Workforce Development NCWorks Career Center Staff/Community College Partners to determine the appropriate use of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Funds for Emergency Assistance through the Finish Line Grant.

BACKGROUND: Governor Cooper has announced the Finish Line Grant program to help community college students who face unforeseen financial emergencies complete their training. The program leverages \$7 million in federal WIOA funds to help students pay for financial emergencies that students may face through no fault of their own. Grants are available for the 2018-2019 school year and students who have a demonstrated need may receive a maximum of \$1,000 per semester. WIOA funds allow for the provision of financial assistance to cover unforeseen emergency expenses. These may include, but are not limited to, course materials, housing, medical needs, dependent care, or other financial emergencies that may arise.

Procedure: Subject to Finish Line Grant funding availability, the maximum amount of emergency assistance is not to exceed \$1000 per semester for no more than 2 semesters and cannot be used for commonly occurring or re-occurring expenses. To qualify for the Finish Line Grant, the student must have 75% or more of a WDB-approved training program as noted in the most recent *Career Pathways Training Options* publication and be meeting satisfactory progress through their education program. The Finish Line Grant Expenditures (Attachment A) outlines allowable expenditures and those which are not allowed under the Finish Line Grant.

The steps below should be followed when requesting a Finish Line Grant.

1. Student should inquire about the Finish Line grant at the Financial Aid/Foundation office of the college which they are attending. Once community college staff confirm that the student has completed 75% or more of a WDB-approved training program as noted in the most recent *Career Pathways Training Options* publication and has satisfactory grades for said program, they will receive a Finish Line Grant Application (attachment B) and list of required eligibility

documents. They will then be referred to the NCWorks Career Center to speak to a Career Advisor.

2. The student should complete the application and ensure that they have required documents when they meet with the Career Advisor. (Social Security Card and documents verifying residency, citizenship, veteran status, and selective service where applicable)
3. Student must present documentation of the emergency need and any supporting documents: invoice for incident, service or materials (medical expense, course materials, etc), estimate of required work (car repair), child or elder care cost document, etc.
4. Student must present either a copy of their Program Evaluation (curriculum) or letter/email from the instructor (continuing education) showing that they are progressing satisfactorily in their training.
5. Once eligibility is determined, the Career Advisor will enroll the student into the NCWorks Case Management program. As a recipient of the Finish Line Grant and enrolled NCWorks participant, the student must maintain regular contact with their Career Advisor. They are required to provide documentation of attendance and successful completion of their training program and provide employment information once they obtain employment as a recipient of Finish Line Grant Funding.
6. The Workforce Administrator will email the Finish Line Grant contact at the college to inform them of enrollment and approval of Finish Line Grant funds.

FINISH LINE GRANT EXPENDITURES

Finish Line Grant expenditures fall under the heading of supportive services in WIOA Title I. see WIOA sec. 3(59) and secs. 134(d)(2) and (3). Supportive services are services that are necessary to enable individuals to participate in WIOA authorized activities.

A key principle in WIOA is to provide Local Workforce Development Boards (“WDBs”) with the authority to make policy and administrative decisions and the flexibility to tailor the public workforce system to the needs of the local community. To ensure maximum flexibility, the regulations provide Local WDBs the discretion to provide the supportive services they deem appropriate subject to the limited conditions prescribed by WIOA. Decisions about the provision of Finish Line Grant funds, including the duration, timing, and type, are made by the Local WDB.

These expenditures must be reasonable, allowable, necessary, and address a financial need that will enable the student to continue training. Care must be given to be sure that the expenditure solves a short-term problem and not simply applies a “down payment” on a chronic financial problem. All efforts should be made to disburse the grant funds to the provider of a service, instead of to the student. Examples would include paying a mechanic directly for auto repairs, or an eyeglasses provider for a new pair of glasses for a student.

Examples of Allowable Expenditures for Finish Line Grants

Transportation. Transportation assistance may be provided to assist the student to get to the community college or other places that support WIOA activities. Transportation assistance may be paid in advance based on a plan for the transportation cost. Examples are bus passes and gasoline assistance.

Auto Repairs. Auto repair payments that allow a participant to participate in educational and training activities are allowed. This includes repairs of an immediate need. Normal vehicle maintenance costs are not allowed. If a participant is repairing a personal vehicle, Finish Line Grant funds may be used to purchase the parts. Auto repair may not exceed the amount of the vehicle. WDBs should take into consideration if public transportation would be a more feasible option for the participant and, if so, Finish Line Grant funds will not be required.

Child Care. Child care assistance for children ages 12 and under who reside in the home of the student are allowed if other resources are not available. Expenditures may be limited to a daily maximum per child. Birth certificates may be required to verify the ages of children.

Payments for child care may be required by the provider for a space to be maintained for the child even when the child is not in attendance for sickness or holidays. If this is the policy of the child care center, the provider may be required to provide verification of that for the day(s) in question.

Dependent Care. Dependent care assistance may be utilized to help a participant meet their family care needs during participation in their educational activities. Dependent care service providers should be selected by the student. WDBs should ensure that Finish Line Grant funds do not duplicate dependent care assistance available from another source.

Housing Assistance. Housing assistance provided to students allows students to maintain or obtain adequate or temporary shelter while participating in educational activities. Finish line Grant funds may not pay for rental deposits or mortgage payments. Students needing housing assistance should be referred to community housing assistance programs if applicable. WDBs must ensure WIOA Title I funds do not duplicate housing assistance from another source.

Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities. Finish Line Grant funds may be utilized to assist a student who needs accommodations to enable them to participate in their educational activities. The WDB should ensure that grant do not duplicate funds provided by another source. A referral to Vocational Rehabilitation may be appropriate and, if so, Finish Line Grant funds would not be required.

Utility Bills. Students may obtain assistance in paying for utility bills, including water, gas and electric bills. Care should be taken to ensure that the grant funds do not duplicate assistance from another source.

Referrals to Health Care. Students in need of medical or counseling services should be referred to other community medical resources if applicable. The WDB should ensure Finish Line Grant funds do not duplicate medical assistance available from another source. The referrals include DOT physicals, drug screens, required immunizations, dental, ophthalmologist, drug and alcohol counseling, mental health counseling, behavioral counseling, etc.

Assistance with Books and School Supplies. Grant funds may be utilized to assist a student attending approved education classes with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items related to their education

Assistance with Tuition and Fees. In the context that the student has an emergency financial challenge that has negatively impacted the student's ability to pay for tuition and fees, then Finish Line Grant funds may be used to pay tuition and fees, however, it is not the intent of the grant program to function solely as a scholarship for a student's tuition and fees.

Examples of Unallowed Expenditures for Finish Line Grants

Finish Line Grant funds are **not** to be used for student expenses that are not allowed as supportive services including:

- Titled or deeded items or when recovery of the expense is anticipated (e.g. rent or housing deposits, mortgage payments, property taxes, fines and late fees).
- Purchase of vehicles
- Business startup costs.
- Internet or phone service (including a prepaid plan, minutes etc.)

As additions or updates are made to this document they will be available on the NC Department of Commerce website – www.nccommerce.com/workforce

Finish Line Grant Emergency Aid Application

Please Print and Answer all that apply...Use "NA" If it does not apply to you"

Please complete in ink and answer each question honestly, as the answers should represent who you are and your need for the Finish Line Grant.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Gender: Male Female **DOB:** _____ **County of Residence:** _____

Last 4 of SS# _____ **Phone:** _____

Alternate phone: _____ **Email address:** _____

Type of emergency assistance you are applying for: _____

Reason for needing emergency assistance: _____

Family Size and Income: Married _____ Single _____ Number of Children _____

Annual Household Income \$ _____

Check all that Apply to you:

Disability _____ Food Stamps _____ English Language Learner _____

Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime other than minor traffic violation: _____

If yes, please explain: _____

Do you have reliable transportation: Yes ___ No ___ Explain: _____

Education History:

Highest Grade Completed: _____ GED: _____ HS Diploma: _____ Year Graduated: _____

Have you completed 75% of your community college program? Yes ___ No ___

What is your overall GPA? _____

Employment History:

Are you currently employed: Yes _____ No _____ If Yes: Full Time ___ Part Time _____

Previous or Current Employer: _____

Job Title: _____ Phone: _____

Supervisor: _____ Address: _____

Responsibilities: _____

Wage: _____ Dates of Employment: From: _____ To: _____

Reason for leaving: _____

If unemployed, have you filed for unemployment: Yes _____ No _____

If yes, date you applied _____

Receiving any unemployment benefits: Yes: _____ No: _____ Pending: _____

If yes, when did you begin receiving unemployment benefits: _____

Veteran Status:

If you are a MALE that is 18 years old or older, have you registered for Selective Service: _____

(Please go to www.sss.gov to "check registration" if you are not sure)

Are you a Veteran? _____ If yes, when did you serve: _____

Training Information:

Community College Training Program: _____

Anticipated Completion date: _____

How can a Finish Line Grant help you to complete your training and meet your goals?

Program acceptance and enrollment is NOT guaranteed until applicant has met all eligibility requirements, completed and submitted all required documentation, and demonstrated need. Applicants will receive notification of acceptance into the program or training. If an individual does not qualify for this program, the Career Center offers many resources that are available to assist you.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

By signing below, I am confirming that the information included in this application is complete and accurate.

Furthermore, my signature below authorizes NCWorks Agencies and other partner agencies to share the confidential information in this application as needed to assist me, and any third party reporting as required by the funds. I understand this information may be used to formulate an assistance plan and to determine eligibility for assistance through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. I hereby acknowledge this consent is voluntarily given:

Signature of Applicant: _____ **Date:** _____

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities: 1-800-735-2962 (TTY) 1-800-735-8200 (Voice)

Documents needed to complete application:

- Social security Card
- Verification of residency (NCID or NCDL with correct address or postmarked mail)
- Verification of citizenship (Birth Certificate, NCDL, Passport)
- Verification of Veteran's Status (DD-214)
- Verification of Selective Service Registration – all male US citizens and male immigrants between the ages of 18 and 25 are required to register for selective service. Any male born on or after July 1, 1960 is required to have registered for Selective Service. There was no requirement for registration for males born prior to this date
- Program Evaluation (curriculum) or letter/email from instructor (continuing ed) stating that they are 75% complete and are making satisfactory progress
- Documentation of the cost of emergency need (invoice for incident, service or materials, estimate of required work, child or elder cost document, etc)

WPWDA Policy Statement

October 1, 2018