
EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE

1600 E. Belle Terrace

Bakersfield, CA 93307

POLICY BULLETIN: #ETR 33a-24

TO: ETR

FROM:  Aaron Ellis
Chief Workforce Development Officer

DATE: August 16, 2024

SUBJECT: Student Employment and Training (STEP) Incentive* Policy

**This Policy Bulletin Supersedes Any Previously Issued Policy Statements
Concerning the STEP Participant Incentive Policy**

PURPOSE:

Employers' Training Resource (ETR) has developed this policy to ensure that allowable and appropriate incentives, as included in our Student Employment and Training Program (STEP) Agreement, are provided for the completion of the STEP Work Readiness Workshops. This policy is intended to ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations by providing guidance to Employers' Training Resource (ETR) on the use of incentives in conjunction with the Student Training and Employment Program (STEP) in the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). This policy applies ONLY to participants enrolled in the STEP grant and is separate from the general WIOA Youth Incentive Policy. ETR staff is responsible for implementing this policy.

BACKGROUND:

The California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and Foundation for California Community Colleges (Foundation) coordinate the Student Training & Employment Program (STEP), established in 2018, to provide work experience and job preparation training for students with disabilities (SWDs) ages 16-21. Funding for STEP is through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Participant eligibility is restricted to SWDs who are enrolled in an educational program as well as actively enrolled with DOR. Under ETR's contract with the Foundation, participant age will be restricted to those ages 18-21. Participants are referred to ETR by DOR and must be fully enrolled with DOR prior to being enrolled in STEP and must be terminated from STEP upon reaching their 22nd birthday. STEP is intended to provide participants with the work readiness and soft skills needed to obtain and retain employment, learn how to advocate for their needs as individuals with disabilities in the workplace, and participate in subsidized employment to gain exposure to and experience with the workplace.

The WIOA 20 CFR Section 681.640 states that “incentive payments to youth participants are permitted for recognition and achievement directly tied to training activities and work experiences. The local program must have written policies and procedures in place governing the award of incentives and must ensure that such incentive payments are tied to the goals of the specific program; outlined in writing before the commencement of the program that may provide incentive payments; align with the local program’s organizational policies; and are in accordance with the requirements contained in 2 CFR part 200.”

Under the STEP grant, ETR is making one incentive available to participants who successfully complete the STEP Work Readiness Workshops.

POLICY:

Eligibility: Participants must be attending an educational program and be enrolled with both the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and ETR’s Student Employment and Training Program (STEP) to be eligible to earn an incentive payment under the STEP Incentive policy.

Incentives: Incentives provided to participants served directly by ETR will be in the form of Visa or American Express Gift card.

There is only ONE incentive available to STEP participants:

Work Readiness Training – \$200 for completion the of four-part STEP Work Readiness Workshop series.

STEP participants are eligible to receive this incentive after successfully completing activities in all of the following Work Readiness areas:

- 1) Soft Skills (including appropriate work site behaviors and time management);
- 2) Dressing for Success;
- 3) How to Keep Your Job;
- 4) Resume Writing (including identifying transferable skills, how to present work/life/educational experiences positively, as well as formatting, editing, and proofreading);
- 5) Communication (including public speaking and how to effectively communicate with others in the workplace); and
- 6) Interview Preparation (including anticipating commonly asked questions and how to handle them plus mock interviews).

Since the program is specifically designed for students with disabilities, workshop instructors will coach participants on learning how to advocate for any adaptive needs they may have, and work with them on how to successfully navigate challenges they may experience. It is understood that some participants may need more time than others to complete these activities; however, participants who do not successfully complete them or who drop out of the program prior to completion will not be eligible for the incentive.

PROCEDURE:

When awarding an incentive to a STEP participant, ETR Staff must adhere to the following process:

1. Document the achievement on the STEP Incentive Request Form;
2. Provide the completed STEP Incentive Request Form with related documentation to the ETR Youth Program Support Supervisor or designee for approval;
3. Once approved by the ETR Youth Program Support Supervisor or designee, provide incentive to participant;
4. Document the participant receipt of the incentive; and
5. Retain all documentation in the participant's file.

Participants served directly by ETR have thirty (30) days from the date of issuance of the incentive to pick up their Visa or American Express Gift Card.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

STEP Incentive Request Form

STEP Work Readiness Evaluation Form

*Language in the STEP solicitation and agreement refers to “stipends”; however, the structure of the payment mutually agreed upon by ETR and the Foundation is, by WIOA definition, an “incentive” not a “stipend”. The Foundation has approved payment of \$200 after completion of the Work Readiness activities and our use of the term “incentive” without requiring an amendment to the Agreement.

ETR

STEP Grant Incentive Request Form

STEP Participant Name: _____ CalJOBS#: _____ DOR AWARE#: _____

Agency: ETR/EPIC Program: STEP Enrollment Date: _____

ETR Staff Name: _____ Phone#: _____

Total amount of incentives earned this program year: _____

Maximum allowed incentive: \$200.00

Incentive Achieved:

Achievement	Date Earned	Incentive Amount
Workplace Readiness Training (\$200.00)		
Total Amount of Incentive		

Appropriate documentation must be provided with this request.

ETR Staff Signature

Date

To be completed by ETR staff

Incentive Approved: ☐ YES ☐ NO

If denied, please explain: _____

ETR Program Support Supervisor Signature

Date