

## 1. How can I earn a Reward Payment for the Work and Training/Education Activity?

You can earn a Reward Payment if you have worked at least 10 hours a week, each week during the two-month activity period you are submitting for, in addition to **successfully completing** an approved training or education course (a minimum of 35 hours). You must submit proof of the hours and dates you have worked and proof of your successfully completed coursework. As proof of coursework, an official transcript or letter from your Education/training provider will need to show:

- Your full name
- Name of the institution
- Official title of the course completed
- Official name of your training or education provider (with contact information if a letter)
- Date of course completion
- Indication that the course was successfully completed
- Hours completed and credits earned for the course

## 2. What does it mean to **successfully complete** a training or education course?

Successfully completing a training or education course means:

1. You received a passing grade or earned a certificate for a training/education course that is at least 35 hours; **AND**
2. You completed the course within the activity period you are submitting for; **AND**
3. You worked at least 10 hours a week over the two-month activity period, while taking the training/education course.

## 3. Where can I find out about available approved training and education courses?

You can receive more information about where to take approved training and education courses from the same place where you attended Orientation on how to earn Reward Payments. The site where you attended Reward Payments Orientation can be an important resource to help you find a training/education course that is right for you. You can also visit the following websites to find out about several possible institutions and providers offering approved training and education courses:

1. Licensed by the Bureau of Proprietary School (BPS)- you can find an accredited training provider at this site: [http://www.highered.nysed.gov/bpss/directory\\_main\\_page.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/bpss/directory_main_page.htm)
2. New York State directory of Higher Education Institutions—you can find an accredited institution of higher education at this site:

[http://www.highered.nysed.gov/Quality\\_Assurance/directory/index.html](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/Quality_Assurance/directory/index.html)

3. Sloan Consortium Directory of Online degree and certificate programs — you can find information about on line courses at this site: <http://www.sloan-c.org/programs/index.asp>
4. High Growth Industry Trainings approved by Department of Small Businesses (DSBS)—you can find out about NYC trainings in the high-growth industries at this site: [www.nyc.gov/trainingguide](http://www.nyc.gov/trainingguide)

#### **4. If I am enrolled or have identified a training that I would like to take, how can I find out if it is on the list of approved training courses?**

You should confirm whether the course you have chosen is approved by checking to see if it is listed on one of the following websites:

1. Licensed by the Bureau of Proprietary School (BPS)— you can find an accredited training provider at this site: [http://www.highered.nysed.gov/bpss/directory\\_main\\_page.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/bpss/directory_main_page.htm)
2. New York State directory of Higher Education Institutions —you can find an accredited institution of higher education at this site: [http://www.highered.nysed.gov/Quality\\_Assurance/directory/index.html](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/Quality_Assurance/directory/index.html)
3. Sloan Consortium Directory of Online degree and certificate programs —you can find information about on line courses at this site: <http://www.sloan-c.org/programs/index.asp>
4. High Growth Industry Trainings approved by Department of Small Businesses (DSBS) — you can find out NYC trainings in high-growth industries at this site: [www.nyc.gov/trainingguide](http://www.nyc.gov/trainingguide)

If you do not find your training or education course on one of the websites above, it is probably not an approved training course. However, you can consult the organization where you attended your Reward Payments Orientation if you have questions or if you do not find your training but think it might be eligible

#### **5. Do I have to take my GED test and pass it before I can earn Reward Payments as part of the Work and Training/Education Activity?**

If you can prove that you have made satisfactory progress towards the goal of earning the credential (must successfully complete at least 35 hours of coursework) and provide documentation (an official transcript or a letter from your education or training provider) of the items listed below, then you can earn a Reward Payment:

- Your full name
- Official name and contact information for your education or training provider
- Official name of the course you completed
- Date of course completion
- Indication that the course was successfully completed
- Hours completed and credits earned for the course

#### **6. Do Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses qualify as approved trainings for Work Rewards?**

Yes, ESL, GED, and ABE can count as an approved training so long as you successfully complete at least 35 hours of coursework and can show proof that it is administered by a recognized non-profit organization (501c 3). *Note that these courses will not be on the list of approved training and education courses mentioned previously.* If you are not sure if your program is eligible, consult the organization where you attended the Orientation.

#### **7. My employer is holding a mandatory training for work; does this count as an approved training?**

No, “in-house” orientation trainings offered as a condition to begin employment and/or other Human Resource related trainings required at your place of employment do not count as eligible activities to earn Reward Payments.

## **8. Do I have to pay for my own training and/educational coursework?**

Many trainings and educational courses have fees or charge tuition. Work Rewards **does not** provide funding for training or educational coursework. But you should ask a staff person at the place where you received orientation for a list of courses that are free or have reduced fees. In addition, you may be eligible for a Individualized Training Account (ITA) through your local Workforce1 Center . If you are eligible for an ITA voucher you will not have to pay for the course. The organization where you attended your Reward Payments Orientation can provide you with more information about Workforce 1 locations and how to apply for an ITA voucher.

## **9. Can I earn Reward Payments for Education/Training while also earning a Payment for Full-time work in the same activity period?**

Yes, it is possible to earn both a Reward Payment for full-time work and a Reward Payment for education/training during the same activity period. If you have worked full-time while also successfully completing an approved job training or education course, and can provide the proper documentation for both activities (see the Activity Coupons for details), then you can earn Reward Payments for both activities.

## **10. Can I earn rewards for more than one training course in each pay period?**

Yes, you can submit more than one coupon for training if you successfully complete more than one course in a single activity period. Make sure you attach your proof of work to both coupons in addition to each official transcript from your training courses. In order to earn this Reward Payment, each training course must be a minimum of 35 hours. In other words, you cannot combine two trainings to add up to 35 hours

## **11. If I complete my training as part of the Education/Training Activity but I fail the course, can I still earn the reward payment?**

No, in order to earn a Reward Payment related to training, you must show proof that you successfully completed AND passed the course by submitting an official certificate or transcript that includes:

- Your full name
- Name of the institution
- Official title of the course completed
- Official name and contact information of your training or education provider
- Date of course completion
- Indication that the course was successfully completed
- Hours completed and credits earned for the course

## **12. Can a Work Experience Program (WEP) assignment count towards a Work or Training Activity?**

No, Work Experience Program (WEP) assignments do not count towards either work or training/education activities for the purpose of earning a Reward Payment, although they can be important first steps to a paid job

## **13. If I am on Cash Assistance and am mandated to attend a job search program, can I count participation in Work Rewards for this requirement?**

No, Work Rewards is a voluntary program and will not count towards the requirements of Cash Assistance job search programs.

#### **14. I just enrolled in Work Rewards, however, I was working and completed a training during an activity period that has already passed. Can I submit my coupons now and earn Reward Payments?**

To receive Reward Payments for an activity period that has already passed, you must have already been enrolled in the Work Rewards Program prior to or within the activity period you are submitting for. In other words, if you enrolled in the program in June 2008 you **cannot** submit a coupon from the activity period April 1, 2008-May 31, 2008.

#### **15. I enrolled in Work Rewards in June but I began an approved training course in May. I will successfully complete the course in June and I am working 20 hours a week. Can I earn the Rewards Payment?**

As long as you worked at least 10 hours a week over the two-month activity period and completed at least 35 hours of coursework in the same activity period you can earn Reward Payments. The amount you earn depends on how many hours of coursework you completed while you were enrolled in Work Rewards. **For example**, if you enrolled in Work Rewards in June, completed a 75 hour training in June but did the first 40 hours of training in May, you will earn Reward Payments for the 35 hours of training you completed in June. You must also show proof of working at least 10 hours a week during the same period you attended and successfully completed the training.

#### **16. Will Reward Payments affect my benefits?**

Reward Payments WILL NOT affect your taxes or your eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), for cash assistance (TANF or Safety Net Assistance), food stamps, or public health insurance administered by HRA. However, if you are a Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiary, participation in Work Rewards **could** affect your benefit payment:

- If your Rewards Payments are considered unearned income by the Social Security Administration, your SSI benefits would be reduced by the amount of the Reward Payment dollar-for-dollar, except for the first \$20 of Reward Payment. There may be ways to shelter the Reward Payments from being considered unearned income by working with a Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) office, whose purpose is to give SSI beneficiaries accurate information on how work activity will affect their benefits and help them take advantage of work incentives. Staff can let you know how to contact your local WIPA office.
- The rules concerning your rent payments and housing established by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) or the Housing Preservation Department (HPD) will not change.