

# **Guaranteed Free Training (GFT) Program Guidelines**



For Fiscal Year  
2005 – 2006

## **Basic Skills Training**

Up to \$450 per eligible employee

## **Information**

## **Technology Training**

Up to \$700 per eligible employee

**All training can begin July 1, 2005**

The Goal of the **Guaranteed Free Training** Program is to strengthen the business environment of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by improving the skill level and productivity of Pennsylvania workers.

Funding for the Guaranteed Free Training (GFT) program is provided by the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

## **Basic Skills Training**

In order to be eligible for the Grant, employers and their employees must meet the following set of qualifications:

### **Employer must:**

- be based in Pennsylvania or maintain a significant presence in the state
- be a manufacturing and/or technology-based business, including Biotech and Environmental-Tech Companies
- Point of sale retail businesses, employment agencies, government, education, training vendors and non-profit entities are **not** eligible. Note: some nonprofit healthcare may qualify as exceptions. Please contact a WEDnetPA partner for more information.

### **Employers must verify those employees participating in the training:**

- earn at least 150% of the current minimum wage, excluding benefits
- are permanent full-time employees and receive full-time benefits
- are verifiable residents of Pennsylvania and are employed in Pennsylvania
- are front-line employees or first level supervisors in manufacturing or technology based companies, including Biotech and Environmental-Tech Companies. Employees with decision making responsibilities (budgetary, policy making, etc.) and/or who supervise other supervisors are excluded from this program. Sales staff members may qualify if they are NOT receiving sales training and are considered first level supervisor or front-line employees.

## **Information Technology Training**

In order to be eligible for the Grant, employers and their employees must meet the following set of qualifications:

### **Employer must:**

- be based in Pennsylvania or maintain a significant presence in the state
- the Grant is not limited to specific economic clusters
- Point of sale retail businesses, employment agencies, government, education, training vendors and non-profit entities are **not** eligible. Note: some nonprofit healthcare may qualify as exceptions. Please contact a WEDnetPA partner for more information.

### **Employers must verify those employees participating in the training:**

- earn at least 150% of the current minimum wage, excluding benefits
- are permanent full-time employees and receive full-time benefits
- are verifiable residents of Pennsylvania and are employed in Pennsylvania
- are new or current technical workers & information technology professionals (not IT end users) OR front-line manufacturing employees and first level manufacturing supervisors of manufacturing based companies who are limited to advanced applied manufacturing technology training ONLY.

## **Basic Skills Training**

### **Additional Requirements:**

- Verify that any employee involved in this training contract does not exceed the maximum reimbursement for any GFT contract of \$450 for the Basic Skills training
- A Company may receive a maximum of up to \$75,000 per fiscal year
- The company is also limited to participation in the Guaranteed Free Training program and the Customized Job Training program to two consecutive years and three out of the past five years. This restriction includes GAT offers. If a GAT offer is for multiple years, each year is counted as a year of eligibility. A company can check their eligibility at [http://www.wednetpa.com/programs/participation\\_search.asp](http://www.wednetpa.com/programs/participation_search.asp).

### **Employee Turnover Policy:**

- Companies with a high historical employee turnover rate of 50% or greater may be declared ineligible
- Prior grant recipients with a high employee turnover rate of 40% or greater may be declared ineligible

This policy may be waived based on sufficient written justification from the company and is at the discretion of the WEDnetPA statewide director. This written justification should be submitted at the time of application.

The employer will sign the applicable Statement of Eligibility Memorandum of Agreement (WED-002) confirming that they will meet all of the requirements of the program.

## **Information Technology Training**

### **Additional Requirements:**

- Verify that any employee involved in this training contract does not exceed the maximum reimbursement for any GFT contract of \$700 for the Information Technology training
- A Company may receive a maximum of up to \$50,000 per fiscal year
- The company is also limited to participation in the Guaranteed Free Training program and the Customized Job Training program to two consecutive years and three out of the past five years. This restriction includes GAT offers. If a GAT offer is for multiple years, each year is counted as a year of eligibility. A company can check their eligibility at [http://www.wednetpa.com/programs/participation\\_search.asp](http://www.wednetpa.com/programs/participation_search.asp).

### **Employee Turnover Policy:**

- Companies with a high historical employee turnover rate (greater than 50%) may be declared ineligible
- Prior grant recipients with a high employee turnover rate (greater than 40%) may be declared ineligible

This policy may be waived based on sufficient written justification from the company and is at the discretion of the WEDnetPA statewide director. This written justification should be submitted at the time of application.

The employer will sign the applicable Statement of Eligibility Memorandum of Agreement (WED-002) confirming that they will meet all of the requirements of the program.

## **Basic Skills Training**

### **Eligible Training:**

Eligible training activities, as set forth by DCED will be those that improve the skill level of employees through the introduction of **basic** and/or **entry-level** work skills required to be successful in various jobs. As such, basic and entry-level training will be defined according to the type and scope of business being conducted by the employer.

Training for employees that is above basic and/or entry-level may be eligible for the Customized Job Training program, which is also funded by the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). Please consult a WEDnetPA member for assistance.

The eligible training period can begin July 1, 2005 and end June 30, 2006. Training cannot begin prior to the start of the program of July 1, 2005 and training must not have been invoiced on a previous WEDnetPA contract.

Training must be commenced within 5 months of the contract award date or the awarded funds will be forfeited and reallocated to other companies for a second round of funding.

## **Information Technology Training**

### **Eligible Training:**

Eligible training uses technology to **improve the skill level** of trainees. Eligible trainees are new or current technical workers and information technology professionals (not IT end users) as well as front-line manufacturing employees and first level manufacturing supervisors of a manufacturing based company who are limited to receiving advanced applied manufacturing technology training **ONLY**. As such, Information Technology training will be defined according to the type and scope of business being conducted by the employer but cannot include company-wide software end user training.

Front-line manufacturing employees and first level manufacturing supervisors of manufacturing based companies are limited to receive advanced applied manufacturing technology training **ONLY** which will be defined according to the type and scope of business being conducted by the employer.

Training not eligible under the Information Technology program may be eligible under the Basic Skills program. Please consult a WEDnetPA member for assistance.

The eligible training period can begin July 1, 2005 and end June 30, 2006. Training cannot begin prior to the start of the program of July 1, 2005 and training must not have been invoiced on a previous WEDnetPA contract.

Training must be commenced within 5 months of the contract award date or the awarded funds will be forfeited and reallocated to other companies for a second round of funding.

## **Basic Skills Training**

### **Types of Eligible Training (not all inclusive):**

- Communication and Teamwork
- Applied Mathematics and Measurement
- Workplace Health and Safety
- Problem Solving
- Quality Assurance
- Business Operations
- Computers
- Product and Process Control
- Workplace Behavior Skills
- Manufacturing Fundamentals:
  - Blueprint Reading
  - Welding, Soldering
  - Tooling, Grinding
  - Machine Setup & Maintenance

***No On-the-Job, Orientation or any type of sales training is permissible.*** Grant funds cannot be used for adult literacy activities. Where appropriate, WEDnetPA members will collaborate with Adult Literacy Service providers to address workplace literacy needs. Company in-house training is permitted for eligible training.

Training can be provided by the WEDnetPA member institution, inhouse or by third party vendors. The company will always select their training provider. The WEDnetPA members are responsible for determining if the instructor(s) are properly qualified through education or experience to provide the proposed training.

WEDnetPA also offers online training through ACT. Please check [www.wednetpa.com](http://www.wednetpa.com) for more details. The eligibility requirements described above also apply to the online program.

## **Information Technology Training**

### **Types of Eligible Training (not all inclusive):**

- E-Business/Commerce
- Technology Support
- Information Security
- Data Base Development
- Software Engineering
- Computer Programming
- Network Administration
- Systems Analysts
- Management Information Systems
- Website Design & Development
- Advanced Applied Manufacturing Technology:
  - CAD -CAM
  - CNC -PLC

***No On-the-Job, Orientation, or any type of sales training is permissible. Introductory Information Technology, Introductory Applied Manufacturing Technology courses, any type of sales training, any basic spreadsheet, word processing, presentation/graphic or database management software training does not qualify for ITT reimbursement as they are considered basic skills and are eligible under the Basic Skills program.*** Company wide software training for end users is not eligible for the Information Technology training program. Company in-house training is permitted for eligible training.

Training can be provided by the WEDnetPA member institution, inhouse or by third party vendors. The company will always select their training provider. The WEDnetPA members are responsible for determining if the instructor(s) are properly qualified through education or experience to provide the proposed training.

WEDnetPA also offers online training through ACT. Please check [www.wednetpa.com](http://www.wednetpa.com) for more details. The eligibility requirements described above also apply to the online program.

## **Guaranteed Free Training**

### **Eligibility:**

For companies applying for funding, eligibility must be determined on three levels: company, employee and training. Once a company has been determined as eligible, a WEDnetPA partner can apply for funding on their behalf for eligible employees. Training must also qualify for eligibility before reimbursement will be made.

### **Subcontracting:**

WEDnetPA members are encouraged to subcontract with other WEDnetPA members or other third party training providers where appropriate or requested by the company. The company will always select the training provider. The WEDnetPA Third Party Subcontractor Memorandum of Agreement (WED-004) must be completed if the WEDnetPA member is reimbursing the subcontractor directly. By signing the Third Party Memorandum of Agreement, the subcontractor is responsible for meeting all of the same reporting requirements as WEDnetPA members would under these guidelines. In cases where a WEDnetPA member is using a subcontractor for the training, the WEDnetPA member will receive reimbursement for the training, and will be responsible for reimbursing the subcontractor or company according to the terms of the subcontract.

WEDnetPA does not endorse any third party training vendor services.

### **Application Process:**

Only the 33 approved WEDnetPA members are authorized to process applications for the **Guaranteed Free Training** program. WEDnetPA accepts no responsibility for applications solicited by entities other than the 33 approved WEDnetPA members. In order to apply for Grant funds, the WEDnetPA member, on behalf of the company, must complete the following forms and submit them to the WEDnetPA statewide office for review and final approval:

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. GFT Training Application   | Form WED-003 rev. 7/01/05 |
| 2. GFT Training Statement of Eligibility Memorandum of Agreement                  | Form WED-002 rev. 7/01/05 |
| 3. GFT Training Third Party Subcontractor Memorandum of Agreement (if applicable) | Form WED-004 rev. 7/01/05 |
| 4. ACT Online Training Employee Upload File                                       | Form WED-009 rev. 7/01/05 |

WEDnetPA members may accept applications for training for Basic Skills and the Information Technology from potential companies **May 2, 2005 through July 15, 2005, or until the funds are exhausted**. WEDnetPA members, on behalf of a company, may submit applications (WED-003) to the statewide office for review from July 16, 2005-August 5, 2005. All WEDnetPA members who submit applications during this period will be notified in writing beginning the third week in August regarding the approval/non-approval of their pending applications.

Applications for DCED Governors Action Team (GAT) offer letters may be submitted any time during the fiscal year. For consideration, a copy of the GAT offer letter with the signed acceptance page and a completed employee upload file (WED-005) must

accompany the application (WED-003). Generally, GFT policy guidelines apply to GAT offer letters. Within these guidelines, WEDnetPA is only obligated to fund the company based on the specific stipulations of the GAT offer letter.

When applications are reviewed, consideration will be given to, but not limited to the following target areas: industry cluster, geographic impact, company size and quality of jobs.

Applications may continue be accepted after the initial application period but approval will be based on the availability of the remaining funds for the current fiscal year.

**Reimbursement for Training:**

WEDnetPA members, on behalf of the company, are eligible to receive up to \$450 for the Basic Skills and \$700 for the Information Technology in grant funds per eligible employee in one fiscal year, regardless of training methodology (i.e. traditional, online, blended, etc.). If a trainee meets the requirement of an eligible employee in two separate fiscal years, WEDnetPA member, on behalf of the company, may invoice up to \$450 for basic skills training and \$700 for information technology training for that eligible employee in each of the fiscal years as long as it is for *different* training.

In order for the WEDnetPA member to receive reimbursement for training provided, the employer and employees must first meet all of the eligibility requirements as set forth under the Employer Eligibility section of this document. If the cost of providing the training exceeds the stated cap per employee under the Grant, the employer must cover the balance of those costs.

**Eligible expenses** are the hourly salary of the trainer(s) for actual hours trained (not to include preparation time), instructor benefits (not to exceed 40%), cost of books and training materials, room rental (if applicable) for off company site training only, copying/printing of training materials or other materials consumed within the training period. Companies who provide in-house training may seek reimbursement for only actual training costs incurred.

**Examples of ineligible expenses** (but not limited to) are exam fees, university fees, membership fees, sales tax, any travel expenses for trainers or employees trained, preparation time of trainer, costs to develop the training, videos, video rental, room rental for on company site training, food, materials and tools used in job (calculators, calipers, hard hats, etc.), shipping and handling of training materials to training site, training materials not consumed within training period such as hardware, software, employee salary during training period, general education requirements towards degree work, college level advance degree coursework, credit courses towards completion of degree work unrelated to current job and fixed assets. Please consult a WEDnetPA member for clarification of eligible training costs.

Companies providing in-house training will only be reimbursed for actual costs incurred. Please consult above for further details of eligible and ineligible expenses.

**Invoicing Process:**

After the training has been completed, the WEDnetPA member may submit a signed invoice on an approved contract, on a monthly basis, to the statewide office for reimbursement. That signed invoice **must** include the MIS generated GFT Training Activity Report and the MIS generated GFT Verification Report signed by a company official. The GFT Verification Report signed by a company official will serve as the employers’ guarantee of satisfaction statement.

If the company is dissatisfied with the training and a Third Party Subcontractor Memorandum of Agreement (WED-004) is on file at the WEDnetPA statewide office, the training provider will retrain the employees at the training provider’s expense.

**Refund Policy:**

In the rare case that pre-invoicing is authorized, if a trainee(s) drops out of the training prior to 50% of the course being completed and invoiced, the employer will be responsible for reimbursing the WEDnetPA statewide office according to the following schedule:

- 10% or less of the course complete.....company returns 90% of the funds
- 11 - 20% of the course complete.....company returns 80% of the funds
- 21 - 30% of the course complete.....company returns 70% of the funds
- 31 - 40% of the course complete.....company returns 60% of the funds
- 41 - 49% of the course complete.....company returns 50% of the funds
- 50% or more of the course complete .....company does not return funds

Otherwise, training must be completed prior to submission of invoicing documentation.

**Reporting Requirements:**

There are a number of reporting requirements from the Department of Community and Economic Development. In order for the WEDnetPA statewide office to meet those requirements, an application has been developed that includes all of the required information. That application and other required documents must be completed and submitted to a WEDnetPA partner for approval by the statewide office. The application process is outlined elsewhere in this document.

There are specific reporting requirements for invoicing. The invoicing guidelines and procedures are outlined elsewhere in this document.

**Contact Information:** For additional information regarding the **Guaranteed Free Training** program, please contact an authorized WEDnetPA member in your area or visit our web site at [www.wednetpa.com](http://www.wednetpa.com).