

Monthly Counseling Newsletter

(11/23/2018)

TUITION WAIVER TIPS AND PRACTICES

Now that the spring semester is approaching, we will begin writing waivers again. I don't have to tell you how labor intensive this program can be! Good practices may help lighten your load.

WORKFORCE'S RESPONSIBILITY

In a recent ABT appeal hearing, a Tuition Waiver (TW) customer was appealing over being turned down for a TW and ABT because he withdrew from classes the previous semester without notifying the counselor. At the appeal, it was discovered by the examiner that the customer not only withdrew from classes the previous semester, he also withdrew from a class the semester prior to that. This meant that for a number of weeks during both semesters that he collected ABT, he was only going part-time or NO time at all! At the appeal hearing, it was determined that the customer owed back over \$14k in UI over-payments. This customer had originally promised but failed to send in his grades from both semesters, stating at the time that they were not available.

It is not uncommon to be in a position where a new TW is requested prior to the grades being posted, so a new TW is written with a verbal promise from the customer to return the grades in a week or two. This usually doesn't happen without repeated outreach calls and sometimes not even then.

For this reason, it is a good practice to set up an agreed upon return date to receive grades that are not available at the time the new semester's TW is written, especially when the customer is collecting ABT. This agreement for the submission of grades should be added to the employment plan that the customer signs. You can then add a simple note in your outlook calendar on the deadline day so you will automatically be prompted for them. (e.g. NJ00##### grades)

Inform the customer that the file is incomplete without the grades and if the grades are not received by the agreed upon date, a WD-25 will be issued to stop the ABT. You will surely hear from the customer if the ABT is stopped. The customer can always comply to restart ABT benefits. This eliminates the need to rely on your memory or to make repeated outreach calls. It

also covers you in the event the customer states that they were never told to return past grades **after** the TW was issued and blames the counselor under oath at the appeal hearing.

SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITY

Schools must complete the bottom of the TW form and return it to the Workforce Counselor. Often this practice is overlooked by the schools. This can also cause ABT benefits to be mistakenly paid out for part-time schooling. **For this reason, it is a good practice to instruct and educate the student to ask the advisor for 2 copies of the signed completed TW, and send one to you.** Direct the student to the bottom of the TW form instructing the advisor that it had to be returned so they can show them why an additional copy is being requested.

After I began this practice, I found that just the student's request for an additional copy to send to the counselor reminded the advisor their obligation, negating the need for repeated outreach to the school. Plus, I could get the student's copy if all else failed. *NOTE: This practice should not be written in to the employment plan since it is ultimately the responsibility of the school and not the customer, **BUT IT DOES WORK!!***