



TO: Governor's Workforce Cabinet  
FROM: Alicia Kielmovitch, Chief of Staff  
Nathan Storm, Deputy Policy Director  
RE: Workforce Diploma Reimbursement Program – RFA  
DATE: August 15, 2019

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**Recommendation: Approve Graduation Alliance as an eligible provider for the Workforce Diploma Reimbursement Program.**

**Workforce Diploma Reimbursement Program:** The Workforce Diploma Reimbursement Program offers an opportunity for eligible program providers to deliver Hoosiers over the age of twenty-two with outcomes-driven instruction within the adult education space. Through offerings, such as employability skills, career pathways, coursework, and certifications, which lead to a workforce diploma, eligible program providers will afford life-changing opportunities to those who seek to better their lives.

**Criterion 1:** As stated in IC 22-4.1-27, an Eligible Program Provider is a regionally accredited public, nonprofit, or private diploma granting institution with at least two (2) years of experience providing adult dropout recovery services. This must include recruitment, learning plan development, and proactive coaching and mentoring, in addition to the efforts culminating in the attainment of a high school diploma. Specifically, eligible program providers must assist adults more than twenty-two (22) years of age.

**Criterion 2:** Statutorily defined services include: develop employability skills and career and technical education skills; obtain a high school diploma; provide academic skill intake assessments and transcript evaluation; develop a learning plan that integrates academic requirements and career goals; provide remedial coursework in literacy and numeracy; provide a research-validated, academic resiliency assessment and intervention; provide career pathways course work; provide preparation for industry-recognized credentials; and provide career placement services.

**Criterion 3:** The eligible program provider's course catalog must include all courses necessary to meet the requirements for an Indiana diploma with a general designation, including sufficient courses to meet Graduation Pathway requirements. In addition, the eligible program provider's programs must begin no later than October 1 of the year for which the eligible program provider is applying. Finally, organizations or schools currently receiving state or federal tuition support for adult education learners may not receive additional funding through the Workforce Diploma Reimbursement Program.

If an application did not include the requirements set out within the legislation, they were disqualified.

**Application Process:** The application process began with the issuance of the request for applications (RFA) on June 21, 2019. The opportunity to submit questions for an FAQ, attend an informational webinar, and access to Cabinet staff for clarification occurred prior to application submissions. Applications were due August 2, 2019, with an interagency evaluation team evaluating the content of the applications on August 5, 2019. The evaluation team consisted of staff members from the Department of Workforce Development – Adult Education, Office of Career and Technical Education, and the Cabinet.

**Recommended Awardee:** Graduation Alliance shall be approved as an eligible program provider for the Workforce Diploma Reimbursement Program. Graduation Alliance is an established pay-for-performance adult dropout recovery program. Operating since 2015, Grad Alliance has proven results in both neighboring states of Ohio and Michigan. Grad Alliance has a reported graduation rate of 66.5%, with graduates earning



an average wage of \$14.86 for graduates, and an 11% increase in adult students who are receiving employer-sponsored health insurance benefits.

Graduation Alliance will use the following programs to meet the statutory requirements: U.S. Department of Labor's *Skills to Pay the Bills* program for employability skills tools; STAR and Wonderlic Basic Skills for skill intake assessments; and ScholarCentric for academic resiliency assessments. Through these programs, Grad Alliance creates a learning plan and career goals for each adult learner, accompanied with any necessary academic supports. While enrolled with Graduation Alliance, adult learners have the opportunity to earn certifications to accompany their high school diploma. In addition, career placement services are available through personalized coaching, as well as through partnerships Graduation Alliance has formed with the Indiana Healthcare Association, the Indiana Manufacturers Association, and the Indiana Building and Construction Trades Council. All of these services are provided at \$4,132 per student, which is below the maximum reimbursement potential per student of \$6,750.

**Next Steps:** Beginning October 1, 2019, Graduation Alliance may begin offering the required services to adult learners. On a monthly bases, Graduation Alliance will submit invoices to the Cabinet. After verification, the reimbursement will be processed. Once established as an eligible program provider, Graduation Alliance must: maintain a minimum graduation rate of 50% for each cohort; a cost per graduate of not more than \$6,750; and conduct a survey reporting student outcomes data each year.

**List of Total Applicants:**

- Elkhart Community Schools Adult Education
- Graduation Alliance
- Monroe County Community School Corporation
- Neighbors Educational Opportunity
- Washington Township Adult Education
- Whitewater Adult Education