



## SkillUp Washington Attainment Fund Overview

### Attainment Fund Background:

In February 2009, SkillUp Washington asked SJI to conduct a feasibility study on the potential for creating an Attainment Fund to provide emergency support funds to promote persistence and completion in postsecondary education opportunities for individuals and their families.

SJI conducted an environmental scan of similar emergency/support service funds and established an Advisory Group of community based organizations, workforce intermediaries, and community colleges to help inform the recommendations made to SkillUp Washington.

### Attainment Fund Givens:

SkillUp Washington provided SJI with the following givens around development of the Attainment Fund. A successful Attainment Fund:

- Does not supplant other forms of similar funds;
- Provides last-resort support funds;
- Is available only to eligible participants who are 200% or below the Federal Poverty Guideline;
- Is linked to participant outcomes.

### Priority Characteristics of an Effective Fund:

The Advisory Group provided a list of priority characteristics to ensure an effective Attainment Fund that would meet the needs of eligible participants of the postsecondary education continuum. An effective Attainment Fund must:

- Be flexible;
- Be timely;
- Use the current system;
- Be linked to case management;
- Have a single point of contact between the participant and the Fund;
- Exhibit continuity for the participant along the education continuum.

It is with these givens and characteristics in mind that SJI developed an operations plan for the initial implementation of the Attainment Fund. Attainment Fund implementation will most likely occur in three phases:

- **Phase I:** Attainment Fund access for participants of the *College for Working Adults* Fall 2009 cohort programs funded by SkillUp Washington.
- **Phase II:** Attainment Fund access for participants of “On-Ramp” and “Bridge” programs (definition to be determined through work sponsored by SkillUp Washington). SJI will provide research and development around planning for expanded Attainment Fund access.
- **Phase III:** Potential expansion of Attainment Fund access to participants of other community college programs (i.e. outside of the *College for Working Adults*).

These potential phases and expanded Attainment Fund access are subject to change based on evaluation of Phase I, capitalization of the Fund, and the research and development work conducted to determine the feasibility of expanding the scope of the Fund.

**Attainment Fund Operations Overview:**

Phase I of Attainment Fund implementation will be to allow participants of the *College for Working Adults* (CWA) Fall 2009 cohort programs who are 200% FPL and below to access the Attainment Fund for support services and emergency financial assistance.

**Fund Manager:** Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) has been selected as the Fund Manager and will be the centralized administrative arm of the Attainment Fund.

**Student Point of Access:** The Support Specialists (or other appointed student support positions) at the five CWA programs funded by SkillUp Washington will serve as the point of contact for student access to the Fund.

**Administration/Contracts:**

As the Fund Manager, SJI will enter into a contract agreement with each of the five colleges participating in the CWA program funded by SkillUp Washington. Each CWA program will be allocated a maximum Attainment Fund budget based upon Attainment Fund capitalization, duration of program, size of cohort, and number of cohort participants at 200% FPL or below.

**Eligibility Definitions:** The Attainment Fund is available to students of one of the 5 SkillUp Washington funded *College for Working Adults* Fall 2009 cohort program, that have an income at or below 200% of the federal poverty guideline. The eligibility requirements should be complemented by a comprehensive assessment of the student's barriers to education persistence; an individualized budget, developed at each point of Attainment Fund access, outlining the student's monthly expenses and need for assistance; an education plan, updated as participant need requires; and documentation of other sources of funding leveraged or accessed prior to accessing the Attainment Fund (i.e. use of the Attainment Fund as a fund of last resort).

The Attainment Fund has two primary components:

- **College Cash Reimbursement:** A portion of the Attainment Fund allocated to the *College for Working Adults* program for support services as noted in the left column of the table below. Money spent by the CWA/Support Specialist on such purchases/services and invoiced for reimbursement will be deducted from the college allocation. Purchases over \$300.00 require pre-approval from the SJI Fund Manager, prior to the CWA/Support Specialist expending funds; upon pre-approval the CWA/Support Specialist may purchase the service and request reimbursement.
- **Fund Manager Provided Services:** SJI, as the Fund Manager, will provide payment directly to the service provider for the services noted in the right column of the table below. To access these services the CWA/Support Specialist will submit appropriate request forms. Fund Manager Provided Services will be deducted from the college's allocation on the monthly invoice and will be provided from the Attainment Fund, at SJI's discretion.

<b>Agency Cash Reimbursement:</b>	<b>Fund Manager Provided Services:</b>
(CWA/Support Specialist may purchase and request reimbursement from the Attainment Fund <u>if under \$300</u> . Purchases \$300 or more require pre-approval from the Fund Manager)	(SJI pays the vendor/service provider directly – CWA/Support Specialist must submit appropriate request forms.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Transportation Assistance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ bus tickets, bus passes</li> <li>➤ gas assistance</li> <li>➤ driver’s licensing fees &amp; testing</li> <li>➤ car repair</li> <li>➤ driving lessons</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Clothing Assistance</b></li> <li>● <b>Eye Care / Glasses</b></li> <li>● <b>Utility Assistance</b> (maximum \$200)</li> <li>● <b>Tools/School Supplies</b> (excluding books &amp; computers)</li> <li>● <b>Training Related Testing &amp; Certification Fees</b></li> <li>● <b>Physical Exam / Medical Screening &amp; Testing</b> (only as related to training)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Rental Assistance</b> (maximum \$600)</li> <li>● <b>Emergency Shelter</b> (maximum \$600)</li> <li>● <b>Transitional Housing</b> (maximum \$500)</li> <li>● <b>Childcare Co-Pay Assistance</b> (if student receives subsidized childcare through Working Connections, or another subsidy program)</li> <li>● <b>Other “Bulk Buy” Services</b> for which SJI may develop Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) with service providers (services to be determined)</li> </ul>

**Unlisted Services:**

The Support Specialist may contact the SJI Contract/Support Services Manager if a student is in need of services not listed here. This is not an exhaustive list; therefore, SJI will do its best to protect the interests of SkillUp Washington in determining services that may be provided through the Attainment Fund. Services provided by the Attainment Fund must be clearly linked to a barrier to student persistence and/or attainment.

**Attainment Fund Exclusions:**

Due to limited funding, the following items and services are not eligible for reimbursement from the Attainment Fund at this time:

- Tuition & Fees
- Books
- Computer Hardware or Software
- Internet Connectivity
- Cash Assistance or Stipends
- Food
- Healthcare costs
- Debts, fines, or late fees
- Items and services unrelated to a student’s persistence in the *College for Working Adults* program.

The Support Specialist should maintain a working knowledge of existing resources/funding streams, in the community and at the College, to assist students in accessing other sources of funding and resources for services not covered by the Attainment Fund.

**Attainment Fund Usage Limits:**

The lifetime limit for Attainment Fund use is \$2,000 per participant. If a student/participant re-enrolls in any program, current or future, which provides access to the SkillUp Washington Attainment Fund, any former use of the Attainment Fund will be counted towards the \$2,000 limit. It is expected that this limit would be reached only in very rare circumstances. As the Attainment Fund is a fund of last resort, and not an entitlement, students are not guaranteed the use of \$2,000 – however no student may exceed this amount.

**Capitalization:**

For the period of 9/1/09 – 12/31/09, \$60,000 is available to provide support services to students.