Understanding What Will Take Place At My TAG Appointment

HRA’s Policies:

THE 35 HOUR WORKWEEK
HRA requires that all able-bodied participants must be fully engaged in a work or training-related activity for 35 hours per week. If you attend an educational/training program approved by the Agency, you may use a combination of class hours and work activities (e.g., Federal Work Study [FWS], Internship and Externship) to make up a 35-hour work week. The Agency will provide funds for childcare and transportation expenses to cover both the school and work requirements. As a result of the Davila Lawsuit, a Training Assessment Group (TAG) unit has been implemented to honor the participant’s preference in training, wherever possible. For students in approved two- and four-year college programs, HRA will count all hours of supervised homework as well as up to one hour of unsupervised homework for every one hour of class time/credit hours, as required by the student’s educational program, toward the individual’s hours of engagement. However, the total homework time counted for participation cannot exceed the total hours of homework required (supervised) and/or advised (unsupervised) by the educational program.

12-MONTH LIFETIME LIMIT
There is a 12-month lifetime limit on counting approved training as the primary (full-time) activity of the participant’s schedule. Once that time limit has been exhausted, the first 20 (twenty) hours of activity must be one or a combination of work activities. A maximum of 15 approved educational activity (classroom, lab hours, homework, etc.) hours may be counted to meet the 35-hours per week requirement.

GED, BASIC EDUCATION, ESL
JOB SEARCH, EMPLOYMENT PREPARATION, JOB PLACEMENT
If you attend any of these courses, a maximum of 15 approved educational activity (classroom, lab hours, homework, etc.) hours may be approved. These courses must be accompanied by a Work Experience Program (WEP) assignment, unless you are employed part-time or concurrently attending an approved skill course.

What happens at TAG?
At your first interview, it is your responsibility to bring all the documentation needed to obtain an approval for your training. This will include a completed FIA School/Training Enrollment Letter (Form W-700D) confirming your acceptance into the program, accompanied by a registrar or bursar’s receipt, or a letter of acceptance on school letterhead, and documentation verifying that you have child care in place (if needed). If you participate in FWS, then the FWS award letter will also be required.

If you are a continuing student in a program that was previously approved by the TAG unit, you must bring a completed FIA School/Training Enrollment Letter (Form W-700D) and a transcript of your last term of enrollment, with proof of grade point average (GPA), to continue receiving carfare and childcare while attending classes.
What does it mean if my program is not on the list of Available/Educational programs?

Any training/education program that has New York State Education Department accreditation, and meets a concrete employment goal, may apply to be on the available training provider list maintained by HRA. Currently, hundreds of programs have been made available by HRA. If the program you are requesting is not already on the available list, they will be given an opportunity to apply. Please note however, your educational program must be necessary to help you attain your employment goal and must relate directly to obtaining useful employment in a recognized occupation.

There are many programs which require tuition, books, and fees. HRA does not reimburse any participant for these expenses. However, upon request, a caseworker may suggest programs that provide similar services without charge. Please also note that TAG does not issue training vouchers.

If the program you are attending has been approved, and you have not exceeded your 12-month lifetime limit, all of your class hours will be counted towards your 35 hour per week activity. If your total class participation is less than 35 hours, other approved work activities may be assigned to ensure that you meet the 35-hour engagement requirement.

What does it mean if my training is Disapproved?

If the training you are enrolled in or wish to enroll in is disapproved, it doesn’t mean that you can no longer attend. You may attend, however, HRA will not count any of the classroom hours towards your mandatory 35-hour work week. A combination of the following approved work activities will make up your 35 hours:

Approved Work Activities:
- Employment
- Federal Work Study
- Internship/Externship
- WEP
- Back to Work (B2W) and WEP

Reasons why my program may be Disapproved?

1) The program is a Master’s or higher degree program
2) The program is not directly related to obtaining useful employment in a recognized occupation
3) The program was not approved by the NY State Department of Education
4) There are cautions against the organization
5) The program did not meet its placement rate requirement
6) The program failed to meet HRA’s requirements
7) The program cannot be approved because of its geographic location

Reasons why you may be Disapproved to attend a program?

1) You failed to meet the 2.0 grade point average requirement
2) The program chosen was not on the available list of training providers by HRA.
3) You have recently completed a training program
4) TAG could not verify your training documentation.

Have you acquired debt from student loans? Or, would you like to avoid doing so?

TAG offers Debt Advisement and Counseling to assist you with organizing your finances, clearing up debt, and saving money.

The Debt Counselor will:
- Conduct workshops on topics including FAFSA applications, types of aid, and student loans
- Provide one-on-one assistance to assess your specific financial matter
- Work in collaboration with the Office of Financial Empowerment to provide referrals to institutions/agencies that best fit your needs

If you are interested in attending the workshop or wish to speak with the Debt Counselor, please ask at the TAG reception desk.