

NEWS RELEASE

communications@dew.sc.gov



SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
Employment and Workforce



For Release
January 22, 2024

Incentive Program Provides \$500 to South Carolinians Who Earn a Secondary Diploma and an Additional \$500 for Training

Partnering with the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, this newly enhanced program rewards high school completion through the SCDE's Office of Adult Education as well as short-term occupational training through the South Carolina Technical College System to grow the state's skilled workforce.

Columbia, S.C. – The General Educational Development (GED) Incentive Program began as a partnership between the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) and the S.C. Department of Education's (SCDE) Office of Adult Education, through which Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants could earn their GED for free through their local Adult Education Center and receive a one-time \$500 incentive payment from the General Assembly upon passing the GED exam.

Originally offered only to individuals receiving UI benefits as a growth opportunity during the pandemic, the program was expanded last year to provide \$500 to *anyone* in South Carolina who earns their GED. In addition, the program has expanded to provide an additional \$500 to individuals who complete short-term occupational training through the S.C. Technical College System.

Aside from potentially receiving up to \$1,000 for successfully completing the GED exam and occupational training, perhaps the greatest motivator for South Carolinians to complete their secondary education and upskill themselves is to open doors to the possibilities of higher-paying jobs, sustainable wages, and professional growth opportunities.

"The seamless collaboration between DEW, SCDE Adult Education, and the S.C. Technical College System to offer this life-changing program is a testament to the care and passion each has for the populations they serve," stated DEW Executive Director William Floyd. "Thanks to the GED Incentive Program, eligible South Carolinians can broaden their professional opportunities as part of DEW's continued workforce development efforts, which prepare a skilled and growing workforce for rewarding careers with current and future employers in the state."

"This partnership confirms the commitment of all three agencies to serve South Carolinians seeking to invest in themselves and respond to the ever-evolving needs of a modern employment landscape," said State Superintendent Ellen Weaver. "This expansion of the GED Incentive Program showcases the transformative power of an accessible education in South Carolina. The SCDE's Office of Adult Education is eager to highlight the many ways we are here for the educational needs of every South Carolinian."

"We need a skilled workforce to ensure South Carolina's continued success. Programs like this, connecting learners with education and training opportunities, expand the talent pool and provide a true win-win," said Dr. Tim Hardee, S.C. Technical College System President. "This multi-agency partnership grows our state's workforce while providing South Carolinians a clear path to pursue their dreams and build a brighter future."

To be eligible for incentive payments, an individual must be a South Carolina resident, at least 19 years old, and not currently hold a GED or High School Diploma from any state. They must also have started a secondary credential program (GED or high school diploma) by July 1, 2023, and earn a credential by June 1, 2024, through

the Department of SCDE's Adult Education program and qualifying technical colleges in the Technical College System. Funding for this program is limited and incentive payments will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis.

There is no better time for South Carolinians seeking to earn a GED and short-term occupational training credential. South Carolina's GED Incentive Program provides participants with up to 1,000 reasons to start today.

To learn more about the GED Incentive program, visit <https://dew.sc.gov/ged-incentive-program>.

###

The S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce is putting South Carolinians to work. The agency has four missions: (1) workforce development; (2) free job match employment services; (3) unemployment insurance; and (4) labor market information. All four missions contribute to workforce development in South Carolina. The agency is dedicated to advancing South Carolina through services and programs that meet the needs of our businesses, jobseekers, and those looking to advance their careers.

The mission of adult education in South Carolina is to; assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency; assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary for them to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and assist adults in the completion of a secondary-school education.

The SC Technical College System. Comprised of 16 colleges located strategically across the state and two internationally renowned statewide programs, readySC™ and Apprenticeship Carolina™, the SC Technical College System is dedicated to furthering economic and workforce development in South Carolina. The System offers affordable, accessible, and relevant workforce education and training programs that are innovative, technologically advanced, and life changing for current and future generations. Learn more about the System by visiting www.sctechsystem.edu.