

When can I begin taking High School courses at your school?

We are starting to complete applications for the 2017 Winter Semester [which begins Feb 6/17], although you are welcome to call for an appointment to discuss your schooling options at any time. Our school offers training as follows: *Fall Semester* [September - January], *Winter Semester* [February - June], and *Summer Session* [July - August]. Ideally your start date will be at the beginning of one of the semesters/sessions, but late intake dates are available [e.g. October 1 start date for Fall Semester, or March 1 for Winter Semester].

What will training cost me, at the First Step Adult Education Center?

See page 1 "[Tuition](#)" of our policies for more information about our school's fees. You may be eligible for grants and bursaries through the Alberta Works Learner Benefits [Full Time], and Skills Investment Bursary [Part Time], depending on whether you are eligible for these programs. See: <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/AWonline/ETS/3849.html> for eligibility criteria for academic upgrading programs [*Learner Benefits* for Full Time and *Skills Investment Bursary* for Part Time learners].

What happens if I have to drop a course [or would like to add a course] after I've started my training program?

Any changes need to be immediately reported to Alberta Works, on a "Change In Circumstances" form. Changes such as contact information, marital status, family composition, training program changes, changes in assets or earnings - all require a Change In Circumstances form to be submitted. The First Step Center has electronic copies of this form when needed.

Would I be eligible for government funding to pay for my schooling?

See: <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/AWonline/IS/5014.html> for full time eligibility criteria under the Alberta Works program. See <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/AWonline/ETS/4370.html> for part time training eligibility criteria. Funding takes from 6-8 weeks to go through the approval process. Feel free to contact someone from the Alberta Works Program: 1-800-222-6485 for more information.

Full Time = 3 or more [5 credit] courses to be covered by AB Works [through their Learner Benefits program] as a full time student. 18-24 hours / week required for full time students.
Part Time = 1-2 [5 credit] courses [less than 60% of full time course load] to be covered by Alberta Works [through their Student Investment Bursary], subject to your previous year's income.

Does the funding I receive for my schooling affect my taxable income for the year?

Yes - Alberta Works will mail a T4A to you in February each year, with the amount of Learner Benefits you received the previous year for your schooling at the First Step Center. The benefits you receive from Alberta Works are considered to be taxable income, so you may want to consult with a tax professional to see how the additional income affects your specific tax situation. See Alberta Works Fact Sheet on [“Tax Information For Training Programs”](#) for more information. We are also frequently asked about the T2202A form [Canada Revenue Agency form “Tuition, Education and Textbook Amounts” certificate] - the First Step Center is not funded [by Alberta Education], so CRA has deemed the funding to be a gift to students, and to be taxable income. The First Step Center therefore does not supply this form to students.

How does AB Works process payments?

All payments are processed at the end of each month, for the following month [e.g. end of July for August training]. Sometime around the second last working day of each month. For the summer months, there would be no payments at all, unless you are a summer student with July/August training dates.

Employment Insurance & AB Works—how do they affect each other?

NO Claim currently:

If you have recently been employed, with more than 500 hours worked in the last 52 weeks, you will be required to apply for EI benefits prior to making application for learner benefits through AB Works. You will be expected to confirm that you will be actively looking for work, up to two weeks before the start of your academic upgrading program at the First Step Center.

[Active EI Claim]:

EI - must pre-approve learning plan [4-6 weeks to process]. If you are on an active EI claim, you are expected to continue to look for work, up to two weeks before the start of your academic upgrading program. If you accept employment and can't work it around your academic schedule, we will be required to submit a withdrawal. You can however, work part time while going to school - but must continue to submit your earnings to EI. EI will not fund part time academic upgrading, unless the training you will be taking leads directly to employment. You may also be eligible for learner benefits if you have “Reachback” status—see http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/AWonline/documents/helpers_guide_learners_ei.pdf for more information.

[Active EI Claim] FEE PAYERS:

If you are receiving regular EI benefits, and wish to access training from the First Step Center at your own expense, you will need to have a referral from Alberta Works in order to continue receiving EI benefits. Assuming you are approved by Alberta Works, you will be designated as a “Fee Payer.” Referrals may be provided for full-time training, subject to eligibility criteria defined by Alberta Works. You will need to contact your local Alberta Works centre to make application. See <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/AWonline/ETS/4425.html> for more information.

“Special” EI Benefits (continued from previous page):

If you are in receipt of “SPECIAL” EI benefits [e.g. medical claim, maternity leave], you would not be eligible to receive any funding from AB Works for training. If you wish to take courses at the First Step Center, it would be at your own expense.

Do I have to attend all classes?

At intake, you will agree to a specific training plan, including the required class and kiosk time. Attendance expectations for full-time, funded [by Alberta Works] students are much higher: Five unexcused/undocumented absences may result in withdrawal from the course. See the section in policies, which refers to “Attendance Expectations.”

Can I bring my baby/children to classes?

Bottom line: no. We are an adult learning center, and cannot guarantee a safe environment for babies and children. As a student of the First Step Center, you will be expected to ensure appropriate child-care is in place, both before and after school, for their safety and an uninterrupted learning environment for other students.

Do you offer ESL Courses?

The First Step Adult Education Center does not offer English as a Second Language courses at this time - please see the [eCampus Alberta](#) web site for more information and other locations to take ESL training.

Do you have a question that hasn’t been addressed here?

Feel free to contact us {[click here](#)}, and pass on your suggestion!

