

Food Assistance Program (FAP) Employment & Training (E&T) Provider's Handbook

**Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
Community Services Division (CSD)
Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA)**

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Introduction

The purpose of the State Food Assistance Program (FAP) Employment & Training (E&T) Program is to assist FAP recipients in gaining the skills, training, work, or experience that will increase their ability to obtain regular employment. The program offers job readiness training, education, job search assistance, and other activities to help participants gain the skills needed to secure employment. The FAP E&T Program is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA).

The FAP E&T Provider’s Handbook details a standard set of policies and guidelines for delivering services under the FAP E&T program. This handbook may be updated on an ongoing basis, and distributed to providers after each update. Providers are responsible for using the most updated version of the FAP E&T Provider’s Handbook.

Acronyms

ABAWD - Able Bodied Adults without Dependents
BFET - Basic Food Employment and Training Program
BVS - Benefit Verification System
CASAS - Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System
CSO - Community Services Office
DSHS - Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
EBT - Electronic Benefits Transfer
ETR - Exception to the Rule
FAP - State Food Assistance Program
FAP E&T - State Food Assistance Employment & Training Program
FLSA - Fair Labor Standards Act
IEP - Individual Employment Plan
LEP - Limited English Proficiency
LMI - Labor Market Information
MCR - Monthly Caseload Report
ORIA - Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance
PR - Participant Reimbursement
SFA - State Family Assistance
SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TANF - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

State Food Assistance Program (FAP)

Overview

FAP is the state food assistance program that provides benefits to legal immigrants who are not eligible for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), called Basic Food in Washington, solely because of immigration status.

Some recipients must register for work, unless otherwise exempt. There are clients, such as Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD), who have additional work requirements in order to stay eligible for FAP. However, Washington State’s FAP E&T Program is voluntary; there are no mandatory participation requirements.

Applying for FAP

DSHS is committed to providing FAP benefits to all potentially eligible people who want to receive them. An individual can apply for FAP assistance:

- Online at www.washingtonconnection.org

- In person at the local DSHS Community Service Office (CSO)
- By phone through the Customer Service Contact Center at 877-501-2233

Program Framework

Outreach

Outreach and marketing is important and a required activity for contracted service providers, especially since there is not yet a system in place for referrals from local DSHS CSOs. Promoting the FAP E&T program increases participant enrollment and connects services to communities. Marketing and outreach may vary depending on your agency's approach.

Forms

The following forms cannot be altered:

- A-19 1-A
- Monthly Caseload Report (MCR)
- Quarterly Performance Report

A written request to alter the following forms can be made to DSHS:

- FAP E&T Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
- FAP E&T Participant Reimbursement Request Form

Alternative Forms

All requests to use alternative forms must be approved annually by DSHS at the onset of each contract year. Submit all form revision requests to McKenzie Nassiri at McKenzie.Nassiri@dshs.wa.gov for approval.

If your agency utilizes an approved alternate form, your agency must maintain documentation of FAP E&T Program Manager approval and provide to DSHS for review during the monitoring visit.

Secure Email Communication

DSHS uses the Office 365 Exchange Secure Email. Encrypted emails originating from DSHS will include [Secure] or [DSHS Secure] in the subject line. This will encrypt the email in transit.

When DSHS uses [Secure] in the subject line:

- If the encrypted email is going to a Microsoft-based email (Exchange, outlook.com, Hotmail.com, etc.), it will open as if it was not encrypted even though it is. This is because Microsoft can authenticate the receiver. If it goes to any other email provider, the provider will get the log-on link.
- Attachments are also encrypted and will restrict what the receiver can do with the document depending on what restrictions are set on the document.
- Replies to the email are encrypted.

When DSHS uses [DSHS Secure] in the subject line:

- The email is only encrypted in transport.
- The attachments are unrestricted for the provider.
- Replies to the email are not encrypted. Sender must use their own encryption.

Providers can use their own email encryption when emailing DSHS.

FAP E&T Eligibility

Eligibility

FAP follows the same eligibility rules as federally-funded Basic Food, except for rules related to alien status (WAC 388-400-0050).

An individual may qualify for FAP E&T if they receive FAP benefits and meet the following requirements:

- Are at least 16 years old
- Not receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or State Family Assistance (SFA)

Although households can receive a mix of FAP and SNAP benefits depending on the citizenship or the alien status of each person in the home, only FAP recipients may participate in FAP E&T.

Verification of FAP Benefits

Providers must verify each individual's FAP benefits before completing their enrollment in the FAP E&T program. Individuals eligible for FAP may be eligible for FAP E&T services regardless of their benefit amount.

Providers may use the DSHS Benefit Verification System (BVS) to verify receipt of food assistance. DSHS makes BVS available to partners and other Washington state agencies with an approved Data Share Agreement to verify a client's receipt of DSHS benefits, including food assistance. However, BVS does not distinguish between SNAP and FAP benefits. Providers may request that the FAP E&T Program Manager determine which food assistance program the client participates in by securely emailing the client's DSHS ID, or first and last name and date of birth, to McKenzie.Nassiri@dshs.wa.gov.

Alternatively, the provider may rely on the FAP E&T Program Manager to verify FAP benefits without using BVS. After the provider has confirmed that the individual receives food assistance, they may securely email the client's DSHS ID, or first and last name and date of birth, to McKenzie.Nassiri@dshs.wa.gov. The FAP E&T Program Manager will determine whether the food assistance is federally-funded SNAP or FAP, and inform the provider. Before contacting the FAP E&T Program Manager, the provider may confirm that the individual receives food assistance by reviewing one of the following documents from the potentially eligible individual:

- Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card
- DSHS Approval Letter for Benefits
- DSHS Benefit Change Letter

Your agency must maintain documentation verifying receipt of FAP benefits from the FAP E&T Program Manager in the participant's file. Refer to the [Participant File](#) section of this FAP E&T Handbook for additional information.

The FAP E&T Program Manager will continue to verify receipt of FAP benefits for each client when the provider submits the MCR listing all active participants. If FAP E&T Program Manager observes that a participant's benefits have closed, they will notify the provider. Refer to the [FAP E&T Reports – Monthly Caseload Report \(MCR\)](#) section of this FAP E&T Provider's Handbook for additional information.

If a participant obtains employment and their earned income will put them over the FAP income limit, they may continue to receive services from FAP E&T for a maximum of 275 days. Refer to the [Service Activities – Job Retention Services](#) section of this FAP E&T Provider's Handbook for additional information.

If a participant is approved for federal food benefits, they may continue to receive services from the FAP E&T program for a maximum of sixty (60) days. Providers are encouraged to connect a participant with another program they may qualify for if services are still needed, such as the Basic Food Employment and Training Program (BFET). Similarly, if a participant is approved for TANF/SFA, they may continue to receive services from the FAP E&T program for a maximum of sixty (60) days. Again, providers are encouraged to make every effort to connect a participant with alternative programs they may qualify for, such as the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathway program.

If a participant's FAP benefits have closed for reasons other than those previously described, they may continue to receive services from FAP E&T for a maximum of ninety (90) days.

Individuals may re-enroll in FAP E&T services if they are recertified for FAP.

Enrollment

Consent Form

A Consent form is used as a release of information. Participants must complete, sign, and submit the DSHS Consent Form 14-012 before providers can access the participant's information. The Consent Form includes the participant identification number, contracted provider name, and length consent is valid for date. The Consent form cannot be pre-filled with the provider's information.

Intake and Assessment

An intake and assessment is required to ensure the FAP E&T program is a good fit and the most appropriate service. All intake documents must be completed and maintained by the provider.

The intake and assessment can be completed before or after determining FAP E&T eligibility. However, the intake and assessment must be completed before enrolling an individual into a FAP E&T activity. In addition, not all potential FAP E&T participants will have employment authorization. Providers will need to determine whether or not a participant is employment-authorized prior to selecting FAP E&T

activities. Not all service activities are appropriate for participants without employment authorization (e.g. job search assistance).

Individual Employment Plan (IEP)

The IEP is an individualized plan that is developed jointly by the participant and the FAP E&T case manager. The IEP should outline incremental steps to help participants overcome all identified barriers and achieve their employment-related goals.

The IEP should be completed after the intake and assessment. The participant must complete and sign the IEP within ten (10) calendar days of program enrollment.

The IEP must be updated annually, and when the participant's circumstances or FAP E&T activities change. For example:

- When a participant's employment barriers change
- When a participant adds, completes or discontinues an activity
- When a participant becomes employment-authorized
- When a participant obtains employment

All versions of the IEP should be maintained in the participant file.

Collaboration and Referrals

Co-enrollment

A participant may not receive services from more than one FAP E&T provider at the same time. If a participant chooses to transition to a different provider, the current provider must notify the FAP E&T Program Manager. Although participants cannot engage with multiple FAP E&T providers at once, co-enrollment with other employment and training programs is allowed and encouraged in order to enhance service delivery.

Service Activities

Job Readiness Training (JRT)

Job readiness training improves the job readiness of participants by teaching job seeking techniques and setting goals. Work readiness activities and general skills building are part of job readiness training.

Services may include but are not limited to:

- Job seeking skills instruction
- Resume writing
- Interview preparation
- Coaching
- Financial literacy
- Soft skills training

Career Counseling (CC) and Career Pathway Development (CPD)

Career counseling assists participants in making informed decisions about their education and career paths. Career counseling may include:

- Career assessment
- Guidance on different industries and job roles
- Providing up-to-date and relevant labor market information (LMI)
- Facilitating job shadowing opportunities

Career pathway development goes beyond career counseling by actively guiding participants toward or along a specific career path. Career pathway development typically involves long-term education and career planning alongside working toward immediate job goals.

Job Search Assistance (JSA)

Job search activities include activities in which a participant is actively searching for employment.

Services may include but are not limited to:

- Searching job listings
- Job referrals
- Job applications
- Job clubs
- Direct job placement assistance

Job Skills Training (JST)

Job skills training provides participants with the knowledge and abilities needed to begin a particular job through hands-on training and support. Training may cover technical skills, soft skills and/or industry-specific knowledge. Technical skills may involve operations, safety procedures, equipment use or machinery, while soft skills can include effective communication, teamwork or problem solving.

Training methods may include workshops, short-term courses or on-the-job training. Job skills training may or may not lead to credentials (e.g. degrees, certificates or certifications).

Basic Education (BE)

Basic education includes education provided to participants to increase employability. Services may include but are not limited to:

- High School Equivalency or GED preparation
- Education in basic computer skills
- Adult education
- Literacy or math training

English Language Acquisition (ELA)

ELA assists individuals who are English language learners improve skills in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language that leads to:

- Attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; or
- Transition to postsecondary education and training; or

- Improved employability; or
- Employment; or
- Increased community engagement

Providers should follow these requirements in order to provide ELA to FAP E&T participants:

- Determine the recipient's initial ELA level by administering the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) or another ORIA-approved competency-based assessment system for reading and listening, and ORIA-approved assessments for writing and speaking, and
- Qualified staff that have knowledge and experience in applying Washington ELA Adult Learning Standards skill indicators for writing and speaking testing must perform the ELA assessment scoring.

ELA instructors must have the following:

- A Bachelor's degree in Linguistics, Education or related field, Liberal Studies or Liberal Arts, with certification or endorsement in (TESOL/TESL/TEFL); and/or a minimum of three years teaching ELA to adults; or have a combination of credentials and experience that are approved by the community college or by the FAP E&T Program Manager.

Providers must:

- Provide ELA Classroom instruction and document weekly class attendance.
- Provide ELA classroom instructional services in an appropriate teaching and learning environment.
- Utilize the CASAS or another ORIA-approved competency-based assessment system as the basis for learning goals and measures.
- Utilize curriculum that incorporates content and language to prepare participants for the workforce.

Nonpaid Work Experience (NWE)

Nonpaid work experience is a nonpaid opportunity for participants to practice or expand their work skills in a supportive environment. Providers may partner with a local government or non-profit organization to create a structured, experiential learning opportunity for the participant. The experience should be part-time and suit the participant's career goals and interests.

Providers will need to comply with the applicable state and federal employment laws related to nonpaid work opportunities, and track hours of participation to ensure that the individual does not engage in nonpaid work for more hours than their monthly food assistance amount divided by the state or local minimum wage, whichever is higher. In addition, nonpaid work placements must:

- Provide supervision and skills training for the participant
- Comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements
- Provide industrial insurance for medical aid benefits (RCW 51.12.035)

Providers should work with the participant and the organization to develop a work experience agreement. The agreement should specify the location, time, and who the participant will report to for

the work experience activity, as well as skills to be learned. The organization must also agree to the following:

- The participant will not work for more hours than their monthly food assistance amount divided by the state or local minimum wage, whichever is higher.
- The participant shall not displace any regular employees from their jobs, including those who are involved in a labor dispute.
- The participant will not be subject to discrimination because of race, color, creed, age, sex, national origin, marital status, or presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability.
- The organization will not have working hours and other conditions which interfere with the participant's bona fide religious beliefs or observations.
- The participant's training will be supervised and adhere to health and safety standards that affect the participant's welfare while on the training site.
- The participant will be provided with the necessary tools and equipment required to perform the work experience activity.
- The working conditions are not in violation of federal, state or tribal health and safety standards or employment laws.
- Industrial insurance (L&) or comparable coverage will be provided to the participant.

Work experience agreements must be signed by the participant and the organization prior to the start of the placement.

Self-Employment Training (SET)

Self-employment training improves the employability of participants by training them to design and operate a small business or another self-employment venture. Services may include but are not limited to:

- Providing assistance in conducting market research and developing business plans
- Teaching participants how to access small business grants and other business support services
- Providing information around small business management and operation, and coaching

Self-employment training may also cover nontraditional paths, such as how to succeed as an independent contractor in the gig economy.

Case Management (CM)

Case management involves assessing the barriers, strengths, skills, and interests of the participant to develop an individualized plan. It includes ongoing assessment, adjustment, and continued barrier removal throughout participation in FAP E&T as the participant is connected to needed resources and providers.

Job Retention Services (JRS)

Job retention services provide assistance and support to employed participants so they may achieve satisfactory job performance and increased earnings over time. Services may include but are not limited to:

- Counseling
- Coaching
- Conflict resolution
- Mediation

Job retention may also include job advancement services, or helping participants move on to a higher level of employment and/or increase their income. Providers may help participants accomplish this by identifying workplace opportunities for skill building, cross-training, or by referring to other resources.

Participants are eligible to receive retention services from FAP E&T for up to 275 days, along with any other FAP E&T services, except for support services, which are limited to ninety (90) days from the start date of full-time employment. The case manager should check in with the participant every ninety (90) days to determine if services are still needed.

Support Services

Support services are goods and/or services purchased to help clients participate in FAP E&T activities. Support services should be reasonable and necessary to engage in a FAP E&T activity. A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which a prudent person would pay under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur this cost. Necessary costs are incurred to carry out essential functions, cannot be avoided without adversely affecting participant outcomes, and do not duplicate existing efforts.

Suggested questions to ask when considering the issuance and level of support service include the following:

- Is the support service reasonable and necessary for participation in the FAP E&T activity?
- What resources does the participant have available?
- Are there other resources in the community that can help with this cost?
- Is there a lower-cost alternative available?

All support services must be tracked using the FAP E&T Participant Reimbursement Request Form. Depending on the support service type, the provider may provide the support service to the participant in advance (e.g. bus pass) or require that participants return receipts. The signed FAP E&T Participant Reimbursement Request Form and the receipt must be kept in the participant file. Cash must not be given directly to participants.

Eligibility

All FAP E&T participants are eligible to receive support services each month in which they participate in an approved FAP E&T activity.

Eligible participants who are employed full-time can receive support services for up to ninety (90) days from the start date of full-time employment. Participants who are employed on a part-time basis are also eligible for support services as long as they continue to participate in an approved FAP E&T activity.

However, if the part-time employed participant chooses not to participate in any other activity other than continued employment, he/she would not be eligible for any support services.

Limits

There is a \$2,000 limit per participant per contract year. The amount of support services issued should be based on a participant's need and must stay within program limits. Exceptions to this limit may be approved through an Exception to the Rule (ETR) Request, as described below.

If a participant need exceeds the stated limit, providers can submit an ETR Request. To submit an ETR Request, the provider should securely email the FAP E&T Program Manager the following information:

- Participant name
- DSHS ID
- Support services type
- Amount of request
- Amount by which request exceeds maximum limit
- Justification

The request must be approved by the FAP E&T Program Manager prior to issuance. Decisions on these requests are made on a case-by-case basis and may require additional documentation and time for review.

Support Services Directory

Support Service Type	Details
Transportation	Includes public transportation, fuel cards, bike repair, and auto repair and insurance.
Educational Expenses	Includes assistance with tuition, course registration fees, testing fees, and other education or training-related costs necessary for participation in a FAP E&T activity.
ID/Licenses/Fees	Includes driver's license testing and standard issuance fees, Washington State ID, CDL, Food Worker Card, etc.
Computer Equipment	Includes laptop computer, mouse, headset, software required for training, etc.
Tools	Includes tools such as steel toe protective boots, safety glasses, gloves, etc.; supplies; books; or training materials.
Clothing	Includes work appropriate clothing, interview clothing, uniforms, and other apparel.
Hygiene	Includes hygiene items needed to maintain personal appearance and grooming such as soap, shampoo, deodorant, shaving supplies, feminine hygiene supplies, laundry supplies, haircut, etc.
Medical	Includes medical fees and supplies, such as minor dental work, eye examinations, eye glasses, hearing aids/batteries, etc., after

	exhausting all other resources, including coverage through the Affordable Care Act.
Phone/Internet	Includes phone and Internet services if required to participate in FAP E&T activity.
Housing/Utilities	Includes emergent rental and/or utility expenses (e.g. electricity, gas, water and sewer), with plan for participant to pay moving forward. Ongoing expenses are not allowed.
Other	Any support services not specified above. Must receive prior approval by FAP E&T Program Manager.

Bulk Purchases for Support Services

Examples of bulk purchases, include, but not limited to: fuel cards, gift cards, personal hygiene items, and tools.

Custody

For each bulk purchase, an agency staff representative must be the designated custodian of the items. One or two staff backups may be designated. The provider's internal controls must clearly designate the custodian and backups. The custodian is responsible for ensuring that all purchasing, security, dispensing, tracking, and replenishing procedures are followed.

Security

All purchased bulk items must be secured at all times, i.e., in a locked box inside a locked cabinet or drawer accessible only by the custodian and designated backup, and identified as FAP E&T items.

Issuance Receipts

All distributions from the bulk items issued should be documented in a log (spreadsheet) or in a standard (pre-numbered) receipt book. The log must uniquely identify each payment receipt in order to document the appropriate use of the card or item for audit purposes.

Inventory Log

The custodian must also keep an inventory log (e.g., a spreadsheet) of fuel/gift card bulk purchases and disbursements for audit purposes.

The log should identify the type of card, the entire card number, the date cards were received, or list the bulk item, and a way to identify who the card/item was issued to, and by whom. A reconciliation of fuel/gift cards should be conducted whenever gift cards are purchased, or at least quarterly. This reconciliation should consist of verifying that the number of cards purchased minus the number of cards disbursed agrees with the number of cards on hand. In addition, the value of the cards purchased should agree with the amount recorded in the general ledger. The inventory reconciliation needs to be performed by an individual who is not responsible for the issuance or custody of the fuel/gift cards (preferably the department approver) and in the presence of the custodian.

Invoicing Support Services

All support services payments shall be made to the provider as cost reimbursement. The provider cannot invoice support services until the FAP E&T participant has received the goods or services for the invoice month and provided a receipt or other type of verification. Once all supporting documentation is received, reimbursement for the support service is allowed.

The provider cannot invoice bulk purchases (e.g. bus passes) until the FAP E&T Participant Reimbursement Request Form has been completed and the support service issued to the participant. Since receipts of bulk purchases cannot be added to individual PR forms, the provider may document the issuance receipt information on the FAP E&T Participant Reimbursement Request Form. The receipt for the bulk purchase will be requested and reviewed at the time of monitoring.

Reimbursement for support services is payable only when all conditions included in this Handbook and the FAP E&T contract are met. ORIA may at its sole discretion withhold payment claimed by the provider for reimbursements if the provider fails to comply with any term or condition of the FAP E&T contract and this handbook. ORIA reserves the right to request additional documentation necessary to make reimbursement decisions.

Documentation

Participant files must include the following documentation of support services payments:

- Completed FAP E&T Participant Reimbursement Form
- Receipts or other types of verification for payment for all support services submitted for reimbursement

For auto repair, in addition to the completed FAP E&T Participant Reimbursement Form:

- Copy of current registration showing vehicle ownership
- A minimum of two written repair estimates
- Receipt verifying auto repair has been completed by a licensed business

Missing Receipts

A receipt is considered missing when a monetary value is exchanged for goods and/or services and a receipt was requested and failed to be returned. If a participant fails to submit a receipt, providers must document the attempts that were made to get the participant to return the receipt, and a Lost/Stolen Receipt affidavit kept in the participant's file. If a participant fails to return two receipts, support services can no longer be issued to that participant.

Participant File

Files must be kept for all FAP E&T participants. Files can be kept in paper or electronic formats or a combination of paper and electronic.

Participant files must contain the following information:

- Intake and assessment

- DSHS Consent Form (DSHS 14-012)
- Documentation verifying receipt of FAP benefits
- FAP E&T IEP
- Back-up documentation to support the provision of FAP E&T services (e.g. certificates received or obtained), as applicable
- Referrals to job openings and/or job applications, as applicable
- Documentation of all support services payments, including the FAP E&T Participant Reimbursement Form and receipts, as applicable
- Case notes documenting intake and enrollment, participation in FAP E&T activities, referrals, employment verification, and anything else that the Contractor has assisted the participant with while enrolled in the FAP E&T program
- Verification of ninety days (90) of employment for part or full-time employment, as applicable

FAP E&T Reports

Monthly Caseload Report (MCR)

The MCR lists participant demographics and services received, including support services, as well as employment, retention and exit information. Refer to the sections below for additional information on procedures.

Support Services

Providers must list all support services, including the support service type (e.g. transportation, clothing, etc.), amount of the support service, and issue date. Refer to the [Invoicing Support Services](#) section of this FAP E&T Provider's Handbook for additional information.

Employment Verification

Providers must verify when participants obtain employment using the MCR. Verification must consist of the following:

- Employer name
- Start date
- Average number of hours worked per week
- Hourly wage

90-Day Employment Retention Verification

Providers must verify ninety (90) days of employment for part or full-time employment using the MCR.

Acceptable verification includes:

- Calling the employer to verify employment status
- Pay stubs
- Employment verification letter

Exit Date and Reason

Providers must provide the exit date and reason for each participant leaving the FAP E&T program. The exit date is calculated as the last date of the last month that the participant engaged in FAP E&T activities. Exit reasons include:

- Participant satisfactorily completed activities and no longer requires services.
- Participant entered employment.
- Participant retained employment.
- Participant withdrew from program before completing activities.
- Participant moved outside service area.
- Lost contact with participant.

The MCR should be included with the invoice voucher and submitted to the FAP E&T Program Manager on a monthly basis. Refer to the [Fiscal - Invoices](#) section of this FAP E&T Provider's Handbook for additional information.

Quarterly Performance Report

Providers must complete the quarterly report, describing outreach activities, participant activities, accomplishments, challenges, and plans for the upcoming quarter.

Quarterly reports should be submitted to the FAP E&T Program Manager.

Fiscal

Invoices

Invoices are submitted monthly in accordance with the terms of the contract. Invoices must be received by ORIA no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the last day of the service month. A completed invoice voucher submitted for payment must include:

- Signed A19-1A
- Contract Summary Report
- MCR

If invoices are returned for additional information or clarification, providers will receive an email describing the required information. Invoices are processed in the order received, including resubmitted invoices. The provider will consider payment timely if made by DSHS within thirty (30) days after receipt and acceptance of a properly completed invoice.