



## **SUPPORTIVE SERVICE and NEEDS RELATED POLICY POLICY #: 3005 Revision 8**

Original Policy Date: 4/16/2012  
Effective Revision Date: 3/14/2023

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### **Purpose:**

Workforce Southwest Washington is issuing this policy to establish the principles and procedures for providing supportive services to participants enrolled in federally funded programs, including but not limited to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and other programs that allow participant supportive services. Additionally, WIOA calls for the Local Board, in partnership with the One-Stop partners and community service providers, to effectively coordinate resources and the provision of supportive services.

### **Background:**

[The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#), in Section 3 (59), generally define a supportive service as “services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, and housing, which are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under this Act.” [The Final Rules](#) take it one-step further to say supportive services may include the following:

- a) Assistance with transportation
- b) Assistance with childcare and dependent care
- c) Assistance with housing
- d) Needs-related payments (not allowable in our workforce development area)
- e) Assistance with educational testing
- f) Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities
- g) Legal aid services
- h) Referrals to health care
- i) Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear
- j) Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes and
- k) Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.

While this definition contains some illustrative examples, WSW will define the local expectations and requirements further in the policy.

### **Policy:**

Supportive services are one mechanism available to support participation in program services and/or activities to secure and retain employment or post-secondary education. Registration, pursuant to the provisions of the program of enrollment, is an absolute prerequisite to the delivery of supportive services.

For WIOA Title I youth participants, supportive services are among the 14 required program elements and must be available to all registered participants.

If the support is required to participate in training (occupational skills training), it is not considered a “supportive service” it is considered part of the ITA training cost. If it is not required for training, but necessary to continue training or gain employment it is considered a “supportive service”. If the support is a course requirement it must be written on the course syllabus or part of the registration paperwork for the training and a copy of the requirement documentation must be kept in the participant file as part of the supportive service records.

For work-based learning trainings (OJT, WEX, Internships, Apprenticeships), the items required to participate in the training are considered supportive services and should be charged accordingly.

Allowable training expenses affiliated with training paid by programs other than WIOA Title I (such as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), or community and technical colleges through Worker Retraining (WRT)) can be funded by WIOA Title I as a supportive service if:

- The participant is also eligible for and enrolled in a WIOA Title I program.
- A non-WIOA Title I program selected and is paying the tuition for the training.
- Costs for allowable training expenses are not covered by Pell, other financial aid programs or private scholarships.
- The WIOA Title I Program and case manager had no direct involvement in the process of selecting the training, which precludes the establishment of a WIOA-Funded ITA.

However, since supportive services do not trigger or extend participation for adults and dislocated workers, there must be an accompanying Title I-funded career service to trigger a participation episode.

Documentation of training-related expenses as supportive services through case notes prevent the appearance of duplicate spending between WIOA and other federally funded programs (see [WorkSource System Policy 1020, Rev 1, Section 1.3](#) on Case Note Guidance).

Supportive services are not entitlements and shall be provided based on a documented financial assessment and/or individual circumstances, the absence of other resources, and the availability of program funds. Reimbursement shall be for actual costs. Supportive services may be provided to a participant who meets the following requirements according to [final rule citation 680.910](#):

- 1) The participant is registered in a WIOA or other WSW Program that allows supportive services. For all Title I programs, the participant can also be receiving follow-up services and support is needed to obtain or retain employment or continue education; and
- 2) The participant is receiving career or training services as defined in WIOA secs. 134(c)(2) and (3). Supportive services cannot be provided as a stand-alone service; and
- 3) Supportive services are necessary to enable continued participation in career or training services; and
- 4) The participant is unable to obtain similar services from another source (non-WIOA). Research was done to show all other resources were exhausted; and

- 5) The participant has a documented financial assessment supported by the youth's ISS or adult employment plan (IEP).

Service providers must establish internal controls that result in equitable treatment, maximize allocations, documentation requirements, and ensure coordination with, and referral of participants and applicants to, other community resources.

As a part of the assessment, program staff will determine a participant's need for supportive services and appropriate resources. The Individual Service Strategy (ISS for WIOA Youth) or Individual Employment Plan (IEP for WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker) must document the supportive services needed to address barriers to a participant's employment goals and how they will be addressed.

Alternatives to WIOA supportive services must be sought prior to providing supportive services with WIOA funds. WSW service providers will ensure that supportive services are available as defined in this policy to all eligible participants. Prior to providing a supportive service, case managers must ascertain if community referrals were made, and all other resources were exhausted. This determination must be documented in case notes. In addition, it may also be documented on the hard copy supportive service form.

For categorizing and defining these participant supportive services, the WSW recognizes the following support:

#### **Career or Training Assistance**

A participant may receive Career or Training Assistance during program participation, provided that the support is determined necessary to: a) facilitate or continue participation; or b) maintain or increase employability by reducing barriers and establish employment eligibility. When assistance is provided, there must be a reasonable expectation that the assistance will resolve the situation; for example, if rent is paid for one month, there must be a reasonable expectation that the participant will obtain the resources to pay rent for the following months. Documentation of the barrier to participate in career or training services must be written in case notes. WSW approves the following supportive services; this list is intended to be an exclusive list, services outside of this list are disallowed:

- a) Assistance with childcare or dependent care (read additional section below for more information).
- b) Assistance with transportation costs (read additional section below for more information).
- c) Purchasing uniforms or other appropriate work-related attire or supplies, could include interviewing clothing or required clothing or supplies for employment such as protective eye wear, steel toe boots, business suit, work jeans, uniform, required tools, or items required by the employer for employment and allowable under this policy.
- d) Housing assistance could include one month's rent, referrals to housing agencies.
- e) Grooming supplies/services could include hair cut or personal hygiene items such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, or toothbrush.
- f) Translation assistance could include interpreting services or document translation services.
- g) Educational testing and accommodations could include GED testing fees.

- h) Reasonable accommodations for disabilities including learning disabilities.
- i) Legal aid could include referral to legal services, attorney down payment up to \$250, assistance/purchasing completion of legal forms up to \$100, or aid in expunging criminal records up to \$250. Total legal aid services not to exceed \$300 for each participant and must be documented as a career or training barrier. Legal aid must only be paid **once** per participant not to exceed a total of \$300 regardless of re-offense or legal aid service provided.
- j) Addressing debts or credit reporting issues, could include referral to credit reporting services or classes on personal finance.
- k) Aid in securing a first-time driver's license, could include Department of Licensing fees and/or driver's training fee total cost up to \$500 (training and fees must be paid directly to a state registered driving school). Fee will only be paid **one time** all reoccurrences of fees is the participant's responsibility.
- l) Aid in securing a Commercial Driver's License, could include Department of Licensing first time fees or renewal fee.
- m) Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes. All items must be listed on the course syllabus or college registration could also include post-secondary registration fee. Exceptions can be made for general school supplies. IE: notebooks, backpacks, pencils, etc. All other community and school resources should be exhausted prior to receiving general school support.
- n) Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications. Payments or fees could include fees for state registered occupations (i.e.: nurse, CNA, childcare, or other health care occupations) or other recognized certifications that require a fee. Fee will only be paid **one time** all reoccurrences of fees is the participant's responsibility.
- o) Assistance with health care services could include medical, dental, and optical services or referrals to such services. Payments not to exceed \$150 per participant and
- p) Other supportive services approved by the WSW Program Manager prior to expenditure.

#### **A. Child Care or Dependent Care Assistance**

Childcare or dependent care assistance is a supportive service provided to participants if it is determined that without it a participant will not be able to participate in career or training services or secure employment. Participants will be encouraged to make their own arrangements that they can afford when supportive services terminate. Case managers will document the after-assistance plan in case notes.

Childcare assistance may be provided to participants with children age twelve years or younger. Dependent care assistance may be provided to participants with a family member living in their household that requires adult supervision. Payment will be based on participant attendance; the applicable rate will be paid for each day of participation. Travel time may be added to the actual hours of participation, when necessary. If the participant is absent from training or a no-show to employment, care assistance will not be paid.

Care assistance may be provided as a direct payment to a licensed care provider. Care assistance will not be provided when a competent adult (over the age of 18 years) residing at the same address as the participant and is available to provide care.

Care assistance will be provided at no more than the rate charged by the provider subject to the following maximum rates. Full-time care is defined as five (5) or more hours per day, while part-time care is less than five (5) hours per day. Rates are established as maximums, and should be reduced to reflect the participant's circumstances, estimated needs, and other sources of support. Child/dependent care services shall be paid to a licensed provider. Exceptions can be made if it is clearly demonstrated that such care is not readily available due to the child's age or special needs or in instances when there is no appropriate care available in the area. Such exceptions are intended as a temporary measure to allow the participant to engage in career or training services until acceptable care can be found. Exception must be documented thoroughly in case notes.

Care agreements shall be authorized for a maximum of sixteen weeks; they can be renewable if needed (need must be documented in case notes) and no other support assistance is available.

Requests for care payments will coincide with the submission of attendance reports. Program staff will review and endorse timesheets to verify the accuracy of the participant's request for care payments for career and training activities.

#### **B. Transportation Assistance**

Southwest Washington is a mix of rural and suburban environments. This causes a variety of transportation problems for participants who do not own a vehicle or must travel great distances to and from work or training.

WSW service providers may provide transportation assistance in the form of bus passes, trip tickets, a fuel allowance, or personal vehicle repair/maintenance. Participants will be encouraged to use public transportation when available except when doing so will create more costly problems or major inconveniences and must be documented in case notes. Fuel vouchers must be used in lieu of direct payment to the participant.

Personal vehicle repair/maintenance is allowed when utilized for **participant's vehicle only**. The participant must be the registered owner of the vehicle in question of repair. Prior to approving expense, participant must provide a valid driver's license and vehicle registration to service provider. Vehicle repair/maintenance must not exceed \$500 per participant.

Fuel assistance is allowable if participant does not own a vehicle or driver's license but relies on a family member for assistance. If participant does not own the vehicle, it must be documented in case notes that an immediate family member provides transportation and public transportation is not available or feasible.

Participants may receive fuel assistance for the estimated number of miles driven each week necessary to participate. This rate is based upon an estimated average cost per gallon of gasoline in your area divided by an estimated average of 15 miles per gallon for participant vehicles. To find your average price per gallon for your area go to [AAA Gauge Report](#). This formula establishes a maximum weekly amount, which should be reduced to reflect the participant's circumstances, estimated needs, and other sources of support. Service Providers must record the formula used either in case notes or on

the signed supportive service form and cost per mile cannot exceed this rate. Fuel assistance may be provided for up to 30 days (4 weeks). Fuel assistance can not be provided past 30 days as it cannot be prepaid and must be reconciled.

### **C. Youth Incentives**

WSW service providers will not administer youth incentives without prior permission from WSW Program Manager. Service provider must submit a waiver request explaining circumstances for which youth incentives are needed.

### **Program Completion Assistance**

Program completion supportive services may be provided for up to one year following completion for all Title I program participants. Program completion supportive services must be related to obtaining or maintaining employment or post-secondary education. Service Providers cannot provide assistance related to any training activities including but not limited to work experience, on-the-job training, internship, or occupational skills training as paid training is disallowed as a follow up service. Any other allowable supportive service listed above is allowable in follow up and must be documented in case notes as why the support will help maintain or secure employment or post-secondary education. Supportive services provided during follow up must follow the same procedures as a current participant except for; the case manager must enter the service in ETO as a “post program supportive service” for Youth programs and “follow-up services-supportive assistance” for Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. For additional information see [Policy #3034 Follow Up Services for Adult and Dislocated Workers](#).

### **Procedures and Documentation**

The following procedures are provided to assist in administering supportive services:

- A. Service Providers are authorized to provide supportive services payments up to \$2,500 (including follow-up) enrollment maximum per participant. For participants who are co-enrolled (Adult and Youth), the maximum amount is \$2,500. Service Providers must work together to develop a supportive service plan on those co-enrolled. All individual supportive services caps still exist and must be included in the overall cap.

If a participant is exited from **all** programs and later returns months or years later to re-enroll in services, the enrollment period starts over and therefore the maximum amount starts over as well. The maximum amount is for the enrollment period in WIOA.

- B. An amount above the maximum for the participant must submit an [exception request](#) to the WSW Program Manager.
- C. Participant files must adequately document that all supportive services are allowable, reasonable, justified, and not otherwise available to the participant and show evidence of collaboration. The file must contain the following:
  - An assessment of the participant’s need for supportive services and must be documented in the IEP/ISS and
  - Documentation of participant’s personal budget ensuring participant does not currently have the financial resources to obtain the service and

- A determination must be made and documented whether other community resources are available to cover necessary expenses and show evidence of referrals to other resources, including, when feasible, outcome of the referral. Must be documented in case notes and
- Justification of purchase must be documented on the signed supportive service form or agency form. Form must include participant's name, seeker id, date of service, vendor's name, justification for the service, and must include signatures from both the participant and case manager and
- Evidence that other non-WIOA sources were explored and documented in case notes or on the supportive service form and
- A service/touchpoint must be added to the electronic file on the date the item was received by participant. Must include what was purchased and the amount expended and
- A case note must be entered giving a summary of all above, including but not limited to, the need/justification for why the item was purchased or given, describe other resources exhausted, and amount expended and
- Service provider must make available an itemized list of all supportive services provided to participant. The list must include each supportive service, the date of service, type of service, amount of the service, and a current total of supportive services spent to date.

Supportive services cannot be expended before a participant is enrolled in program. In addition, support may be provided as a follow-up service for up to 12 months after exit for youth programs only. Service Providers must follow the Post-Exit Assistance section above.

### **Disallowed Supportive Services**

Supportive service dollars **cannot** be used to pay for the following items for a participant that is either currently enrolled or in follow up of any WSW funded program.

- Support for expenses incurred prior to participant's enrollment in program. Participant must be enrolled before support can be provided. For example, service provider cannot pay for transportation assistance prior to date of enrollment.
- Fines and penalties such as traffic violations or other criminal related charges.
- Late finance charges, taxes, and interest payments.
- Child support payments.
- Bail or restitution.
- Entertainment - including but not limited to:
  - i. tips
  - ii. theater tickets
  - iii. restaurant gift cards
  - iv. sporting events or
  - v. other venue where entertainment is the sole purpose
- Pet food.
- Alcohol, marijuana, or tobacco products.
- Refundable deposits.
- Contributions or donations, federal funds cannot be used to donate or contribute to an organization on behalf of the participant.

- Items for family members or friends, federal funds cannot be used to purchase items for anyone other than the enrolled participant.
- Groceries\*
- On site meals during a training or education program.
- Vehicle payment or
- Out of state job search and relocation expenses that are paid for by the prospective employer.

\*Note: Before using Title I-B funds to provide **food** as a supportive service for Title I-B **youth** participants only, subrecipient must assess or establish partnerships with entities that can provide food to Title I-B youth participants and contact WSW Program Manager for prior approval. Food support is not allowed for other Title I-B programs.

If Title I-B funds are ultimately used to purchase food, case files must document:

- (1) Unsuccessful efforts to first secure food for the youth through federal, state, and community food assistance programs and services; and
- (2) The immediate need for Title I-B funds to be used to purchase food for the youth to enable effective participation in youth program activities.

### **Needs Related Payments**

Needs Related Payments (NRPs) are a form of supportive services available to eligible WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, and OSY 18-24 enrolled in training and intended for cash assistance. NRP **are not** authorized by Workforce Southwest Washington. Therefore, NRP's **are not allowable** in Southwest Workforce Development Area.

### **Right to Reduce or Eliminate Supportive Services:**

WSW reserves the right to reduce or eliminate supportive services in the event funding is reduced or other budgetary constraints exist. In such circumstances, WSW will work with service providers to determine equitable measures to affect the reduction or elimination, including sufficient prior notice for participants. In no event would a reduction or elimination of funded supportive services be retroactive.

### **Supportive Service Waiver Process**

In some unique circumstances, service providers may be unable to obtain receipts for goods or services. In such circumstances, staff shall investigate the circumstances and document in writing his/her findings and what, if any, corrective action is taken.

On an individual basis, limitations for supportive services may be waived by the WSW Program Manager or his/her designee. Consideration of waiver requests shall ensure to the extent possible that similarly situated participants receive similar payments. Copies of the approved waiver documenting the extraordinary circumstances that exist/existed will be maintained in the participant's file and in the fiscal records.

### **Definitions:**

Exhausted all Resources – a process in which the participant and case manager will research and document all other possibilities for receiving the requested support. Documentation must be written in case notes and hard copy supportive service form should include that all resources were exhausted prior to using WIOA or other federal funds.



Financial Assessment – an assessment recorded at the time of enrollment or shortly after registration of the participant’s budget often used to determine self-sufficiency and support needs. Providers can use the [Self-Sufficiency Calculator](#) or the Budget Calculator on the Job Match side of WorkSourceWA.

Needs-related Payments (NRPs) - Financial assistance to participants for the purpose of enabling them to participate in training and a supportive service authorized by WIOA Section 134(d)(3) for adults and dislocated workers and proposed 20 CFR 681.570 for youth. Unlike other supportive services, to qualify for needs-related payments, a participant must be enrolled in training. Based on approval established by LWDBs and is intended to provide cash assistance to participants [proposed 20 CFR 680.930]. NRP are **not allowable** in the Southwest Region.

Public Assistance – Federal, state, or local government cash payments for which eligibility is determined by a needs or income test. [WIOA Section 3(50)]

Supportive Services – Services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, tools, payment for employment and training-related applications, tests, certifications, books, fees, and school supplies, and NRPs necessary to enable individuals to participate in activities authorized under WIOA Title I. [WIOA Section 3(59)] Note: A housing-related supportive service can include assistance with mortgage payments.

Unemployed Individual – An individual who is without a job and wants and is available for work. The determination of whether an individual is without a job, for purposes of this paragraph, shall be made in accordance with the criteria used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor in defining individuals as unemployed. [WIOA Section 3(61)].

#### References:

- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014](#)
- [Department of Labor WIOA Final Rules](#)
- [Office of Management and Budget 2 CFR 200](#)
- [Employment Security Department Policy #5602 Rev 4](#)
- [WSW TA Memo #24 WIOA Services](#)
- [TEGL 19-16, Section 14 Guidance for Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs](#)
- [TEGL 21-16, Section 7 Guidance for Title I Youth Formula Program](#)

#### Supersedes:

- WSW Policy 3005 Rev 7 last revision date 8/25/2021
- WSW Policy 3005 Rev 6 last revision date 3/10/2021
- WSW Policy 3005 Rev 5 last revision date 9/23/2020
- WSW Policy 3005 Rev 4 last revision date 9/4/2018
- WSW Policy 3005 Rev 3 last revision date 2/15/2018
- WSW Policy 3005 Rev 2 last revision date 5/24/2017
- WSW Policy 3005 Rev 1 last revision date 10/31/2016
- SWWDC Policy #3021 last revision date 4/27/2016
- SWWDC Policy #3005 last revision date 4/16/2012
- SWWDC Policy #3010 Needs Related Payment

**Website:**

<http://workforcesw.org/providers#OperationsPolicies>