



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR NONFEDERAL FUNDS POLICY #: 3035 Rev 1

Effective Date: 9/9/2020

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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 nonfederal workforce development programs.

Background:

Generally, a supportive service is defined as supports which are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized by a funding source. Supportive services may include the following:

- a) Assistance with transportation
- b) Assistance with childcare and dependent care
- c) Assistance with housing
- d) Assistance with groceries
- e) Assistance with educational testing
- f) Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities
- g) Legal aid services
- h) Assistance with 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 items necessary to obtain or retain employment
- k) Assistance with items necessary for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes or
- l) Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.

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

Policy:

Supportive services are one mechanism available to support participation in program services and/or activities to obtain 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.

Supportive services are not entitlements and shall be provided on the basis of 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. This policy does not allow cash payments to participants, those would be documented as Incentives and as such the Incentive policy must be followed in accordance with the funding.

- 1) The participant is registered in a WSW Program that allows supportive services. and
- 2) The participant is receiving career, training, or follow up service; and
- 3) Supportive services are necessary to enable continued participation in career or training services or support is needed to obtain or retain employment; and
- 4) The participant is unable to obtain similar services from another community resource. Research was done to show all other resources were researched,

Service providers must establish internal controls that result in equitable treatment, maximize allocations, 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.

To 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; or c) retain employment. 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 documented in case notes or MIS. WSW approves the following supportive supports. This list is not intended to be an exclusive list of allowable supports, any necessary supports outside of this list may be approved using the exception request process:

- 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 of uniforms or other appropriate work-related attire or supplies, could include interviewing clothing or required clothing or supplies for employment or to retain 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 or mortgage payment, referrals to housing agencies.
- e) Personal care 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 those with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities.
- i) Assistance with purchasing of groceries, excluding alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco products.
- j) Legal aid/services.
- k) Addressing debts or credit reporting issues, could include credit reporting services or classes on personal finance.
- l) Aid in securing a first-time driver's license, could include Department of Licensing fees and/or driver's training fee (training and fees must be paid directly to a state registered driving school).
- m) Aid in securing a Commercial Driver's License, could include Department of Licensing first time fees or renewal fee.
- n) Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, technology, 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.
- o) Assistance with utilities, cell phone, or broadband services that aid in obtaining or retaining employment.
- p) Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications. Payments or fees could include fees for state registered occupations (IE: 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.
- q) Assistance with health care services could include medical, mental health, dental, or optical services.
- r) Other supportive services deemed necessary and approved by the WSW Program Manager prior to expenditure.

A. Childcare 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 aged 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/licensing fees are allowed when the vehicle is necessary to participate in offered services, attend post-secondary courses, or retain employment. Prior to approving expense, participant must provide documentation for why the need for repair to participate and who is the registered owner of the vehicle and how they relate to the participant. Associated vehicle costs are only allowed if the participant, immediate family member, or partner is the registered owner.

Fuel assistance is allowable if the participant does not own a vehicle or driver's license but relies on a family member for assistance. If a 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 cannot be provided past 30 days as it cannot be prepaid and must be reconciled.

Post-Exit Assistance

Post-exit supportive services may be provided for up to one year following exit. Post-exit supportive services must be related to obtaining or maintaining employment or post-secondary education. Supportive services provided during follow-up must follow the same procedures as a current participant.

Procedures and Documentation

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

- A. Service Providers must work together to develop a supportive service plan for those co-enrolled. All individual supportive services caps still exist and must be included in the overall cap. An exception request can be submitted if support is determined necessary beyond the cap.
- B. 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/IDP; 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
 - A service/touchpoint must be added to the MIS on the date the service was provided. It must include documentation and notes of what was purchased, the amount expended; and Must be associated with the program of enrollment and funding source used.
 - 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.

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.

- 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
- Alcohol, marijuana, or tobacco products
- Refundable deposits

- Contributions or donations, funds cannot be used to donate or contribute to an organization on behalf of the participant
- Items for family members or friends, funds cannot be used to purchase items for anyone other than the enrolled participant, except if it is for an approved vehicle repair/maintenance expense.
- Out of state job search and relocation expenses that are paid for by the prospective employer.

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, exceptions may be made by the WSW Program Manager or their 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.

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](#).

Supersedes:

- **WSW Policy 3035 last revision date 9/9/2020**

Website:

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

Inquiries:

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