Economic Security for All – Career Accelerator INCENTIVES
POLICY #3502 Rev 2

Date of Original Policy: 03/12/2024
Revision Date: 10/16/2024

PURPOSE
To provide guidance and procedures to utilize Department of Commerce's (DOC) Community Reinvestment Funds (CRF) in a fair and equitable manner. These incentives are also known as Career Accelerator Incentives in which Subrecipient(s) will issue Incentives for enrolled State Economic Security for All participants, whose household is making satisfactory progress in State EcSA services and activities. The goal for providing the incentive is to retain the participant in EcSA activities and/or cover expenses which may deter retention or successful completion of the training and/or assist in attainment of income adequacy.

BACKGROUND
EcSA is a poverty reduction model that coordinates existing programs to increase their collective ability to support low-income Washingtonians in their pursuit of equity, dignity, and sustained self-sufficiency. In 2022, the Washington State Legislature set aside 200 million dollars to create the Community Reinvestment Account. This fund was designated to address racial, economic, and social disparities created by the historic design. 10 million dollars of CRF is dedicated to *EcSA Career Accelerator Incentives Fund,* a program to provide financial support payments of $1,000 per month in incentives to individuals receiving career development assistance from the State EcSA program to aid them in achieving suitable employment that provides a self-sufficient wage.

POLICY
Only participants enrolled in State EcSA are eligible for EcSA Incentives. All State EcSA participants receiving funding must be determined eligible based on the guidelines outlined and must be enrolled as participants in the State-funded Economic Security for All (EcSA) program in the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) management system. All participant services received must be documented in ETO or its successor. All funds used must comply with the applicable state regulations, any additional guidance must be followed as it becomes available.

State EcSA participants may receive a $1,000/month incentive cash payment for meaningful progress made on their career plans each month, as determined by their case manager. Participants must continue to receive an incentive payment monthly while meeting eligibility requirements for as long as they are enrolled in the program and funding is available.

A. Participant Eligibility
To be eligible for EcSA Incentives, an individual must:
1. Be eligible for and fully enrolled in the State-funded Economic Security for All (EcSA) above or below 200% program,

2. Develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) with their case manager,
3. Meet at least monthly with their case manager to monitor their progress in training or job search,
4. If applicable, meet with external benefits manager to calculate impact of incentives,
5. Complete additional monthly EcSA activities outlined in their IEP.

B. Incentive Payments

Incentives must meet the following requirements:

1. Incentives must be included as part of the career plan of the participant who would receive them.
2. Participants must be making satisfactory progress in carrying out the career plan developed with their case manager at the time of enrollment, as determined and recorded by the case manager in case notes.
3. Incentive payments provided by the EcSA Career Accelerator must be in the amount of $1,000 per month.
4. There is no time limit on how many months participants may receive incentives.
5. Incentives provided by the Career Accelerator Incentives Fund do not count toward the $5,000 cap for participants enrolled in EcSA who are over 200% of the FPL.
6. Upon receiving an initial EcSA Career Accelerator Incentive, participants must continue to receive them monthly while meeting eligibility requirements for as long as they are enrolled in the program, making suitable progress toward their career plan as documented by their Case Manager each month, and so long as funding is available for the EcSA Career Accelerator Incentives. Any gaps in receipt of incentives must be tracked in ETO with an explanation for the break in service.
7. Participants may decline incentive payments at any time and for any reason. Participants who previously received incentive payments and decided to stop payments may begin receiving incentives again after a break upon their request, provided they are still eligible.
8. Incentives must be paid by check, direct deposit, or via a prepaid card capable of being used in a manner similar to a debit card. The method of payment must be included in the touchpoint tracking the incentive. Gift cards are not an acceptable form of payment.
9. Case managers must take steps while working with participants to access other benefits received and determine what impact, if any, receipt of EcSA Career Accelerator incentives will have on those benefits. After identifying any potential issues, participants and case managers should engage in discussion to determine how to address any conflicts and assist participants in making informed decisions.
10. Incentives received under the EcSA Career Accelerator program do not have any impact on eligibility for any other incentives, EcSA or otherwise. Participants may still receive incentive payments from State EcSA if they are eligible for them as part of their career plan.

PROCEDURES

Receiving EcSA Incentives does not negate the participant's ability to receive Program Support Services. Items such as rental assistance or other support made on behalf of the participant are supportive services, and therefore must be recorded and reported as such.

EcSA participants will be required to sign an acknowledgement form detailing the incentive program while developing their Individual IEP with their case manager. The form will be developed by the provider and will need to describe the potential impact to the participant's State and Federal assistance. Signed Form must be uploaded into ETO.

Documentation of the delivery and receipt of the incentive payment in the state MIS (ETO) is required.
1. Record eligibility with documentation in case notes.
2. Use "**Community Reinvestment Financial Support Payments**" touchpoint to record EcSA Incentive amount received and note progress made towards achievement of IEP.
   a. Note - this service will only be visible and selectable when the State EcSA Program is selected.
3. Select associated outcomes with supporting documents of attainment (copy of the credential/certificate/license, test scores/grades, case note, etc.) in "Community Reinvestment Financial Support Payments" touchpoint if applicable per participants IEP goals.

Any participant receiving an EcSA Incentive must accurately complete a W-9 form before incentive payments are made. Participants receiving more than $599.99 in incentive payments in one calendar year will be issued an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 1099-MISC by January 31 for the prior calendar year in which incentives were provided for tax reporting purposes. Incentives are taxable miscellaneous income.

DEFINITIONS
EcSA Career Accelerator Incentives - The provision of financial support payments of $1,000 per month in EcSA Career Accelerator Incentives to individuals receiving career development assistance from the State EcSA program to aid them in achieving suitable employment that provides a self-sufficient wage.

REFERENCES/RESOURCES
- IRS - About Form 1099-MISC, Miscellaneous Information
- IRS - About Form W-9
- WorkSource Information Notice (WIN) 0129 Change 2 – State Guidance and Instructions for the State Economic Security for All (EcSA) Program
- ESD Community Reinvestment Fund Policy #7005

WEBSITE
http://workforcesw.org/providers#OperationsPolicies

SUPERSEDES
- **WSW Thrive – Incentives Policy #3502 effective 03/12/2024**
- **WSW EcSA – Career Accelerator Incentives Policy #3502 Rev 1 effective 07/29/2024**

INQUIRIES
Please contact Mando Antonio mantonio@workforcesw.org (360) 567-3185 for questions.