



Economic Security for All – State Supportive Services Policy #3503

Effective Date: 12/10/2024

Purpose

Economic Security for All (EcSA), is an initiative intended to build on already existing programs to streamline access to existing services and benefits to help more low-income families move out of poverty in their pursuit of equity, dignity, and sustained self-sufficiency.

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) is issuing this policy to establish the principles and procedures for providing supportive services to participants enrolled in State Economic Security for All.

Background

The original grant for this program was funded using the Governor's WIOA Discretionary state activities, following WIOA eligibility rules. Additional funding was added from the state general fund to expand the services to more individuals. This expanded supportive service criteria is applicable when using state general funds. Notably, in early 2024, the state legislature passed a new law codifying the EcSA program.

Policy

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

- a) Assistance with childcare or dependent care (read the additional section below for more information).
- b) Assistance with transportation costs (read the additional section below for more information).
- c) Housing assistance can include one month's rent or mortgage payment, referrals to housing agencies.
- d) Assistance with groceries.
- e) Educational testing and accommodation can include GED testing fees.
- f) Reasonable accommodation for those with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities.
- g) Legal aid/services.
- h) Assistance with health care services can include medical, mental health, dental, hearing or optical services.

- i) Purchase uniforms or other appropriate work-related attire or supplies can 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.
- j) Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, technology, and other necessary items for students enrolled in post-secondary education classes. All items must be listed on the course syllabus or college registration can also include a post-secondary registration fee. Exceptions can be made to purchase general school supplies. IE: notebooks, backpacks, pencils, etc.
- k) Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.
- l) Personal care supplies/services can include hair cut or personal hygiene items such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, or toothbrush.
- m) Digital Support.
- n) Assistance with utilities, cell phone or broadband service that aid in obtaining or retaining employment.
- o) Translation assistance can include interpreting services or document translation services.
- p) Addressing debts or credit reporting issues can include credit reporting services or classes on personal finance.
- q) Aid in securing a first-time driver's license can include Department of Licensing fees and/or driver's training fees (training and fees must be paid directly to a state registered driving school).
- r) Aid in securing a Commercial Driver's License can include Department of Licensing first time fees or renewal fee.
- s) Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications. Payments or fees can 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 are the participant's responsibility.

While this definition contains some illustrative examples, WSW defines the expectations and requirements further in the 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 must be provided based on financial need and the availability of program funds. The support provided is for actual costs. This policy does not allow cash payments to participants, those are considered Incentives and as such the [Incentive Policy](#) must be followed in accordance with the funding.

Subrecipients must provide every EcSA participant with information about other workforce, education, and human services that may be of value to them by using the Bundled Services Desk Aid provided by the Employment Security Department. The participant's career plan must include references to any resource information or referral provided from the Bundled Services Desk Aid.

To be eligible for supportive services, the participant must:

- 1) Be enrolled in the **State EcSA Program**; and
- 2) Have a financial assessment and/or individual circumstances documented in the electronic file; and
- 3) Need a supportive service to enable continued participation in career or training services, or to obtain or retain employment.

Subrecipients 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 must determine a participant's need for supportive services and appropriate resources.

BFET Matched Support

If a participant is co-enrolled into the BFET program, the case manager(s) must collaborate to develop a supportive service plan that meets the policy requirements. The allowable supportive services exclusive to State EcSA that are limited due to BFET requirements include the following.

Allowable and **must be matched** with BFET.

Subrecipients must provide assistance in accordance with the BFET Provider Handbook.

- a) **Clothing**
- b) **Digital Support**
- c) **Educational & Credential Training**
- d) **Personal Hygiene**
- e) **Phone and Internet**
- f) **Transportation Assistance**

Allowed for State EcSA but must **not be matched** to BFET.

- a) **Food Assistance**
- b) **Childcare Assistance**
- c) **Housing/Rental Assistance**
- d) **Medical and Mental Health Care Assistance**

Currently **not available** for State EcSA and **must not be matched** to BFET.

- a) **Stipends/Participant Cash Support Payments**

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

There must be a reasonable expectation when assistance is provided 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 justifying the assistance must be documented in case notes in the MIS.

Other supports, outside of the list above, may be approved using the exception request process. Submit the Supportive Services Exception Request form to the appropriate WSW Program Manager for approval 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 must 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 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 must 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 maximum and need to be reduced to reflect the participant circumstances, estimated needs, and other sources of support. Child/dependent care services must be paid to a licensed provider. Exceptions can be made when 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. The exception must be documented thoroughly in case notes.

Care agreements will be authorized for a maximum of sixteen weeks; they can be renewed if needed (the need must be documented in case notes) when other support assistance is unavailable.

Requests for care payments need to coincide with the submission of attendance reports. Program staff must 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.

The participants will be encouraged to use public transportation when available except when doing so will create more costly problems or major inconveniences. Barriers and justification of exceptions must be documented in case notes. Fuel vouchers must be used in lieu of direct payment to the participant. Subrecipients must provide transportation assistance in accordance with the [BFET Provider Handbook](#).

Post-Exit Assistance

Post-exit supportive services are disallowed under State EcSA. However, if co-enrolled into a Title I program they may be provided for up to one year following exit and must follow the associated program policy.

Procedures and Documentation

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

- A. Subrecipients must work together to develop a supportive service plan for those co-enrolled. All coordinated program co-enrollment individual supportive services caps still

exist and must be included and considered in the overall cap. An exception request can be submitted if support is determined necessary beyond the cap.

- B. Electronic participant files must adequately document that all supportive services are allowable, reasonable, and justified. The file must contain the following:
- An assessment of the participant needs for supportive services and must be documented in the Career Plan and BFET IEP.
 - i. State EcSA requires the Career Plan to be documented in ETO using the “State Funded Development of Individual Employment Plan” touchpoint. This is to capture the specific State EcSA components even if the bulk of the plan is located elsewhere, including references to the completion of the Bundled Services Desk Aid and any resources to which the participant was provided information or referred.
 - ii. BFET IEP must be completed within ten business days of program enrollment, updated annually or with BFET component changes, and in accordance with the BFET Provider’s Handbook.
 - Supportive Services and Participant Reimbursement must be documented in appropriate MIS.
 - i. State Funded EcSA - Efforts to Outcomes (ETO)
 - a) The request and justification of purchase must be documented on the signed supportive service form or agency Subrecipient form. The form must include participant’s name, seeker id, date of service (a.k.a. the date the participant received the goods/service), vendor’s name, name of requested support, and justification for the service support. The form must include signatures from both the participant and case manager; and
 - b) A **State Funded Support Service touchpoint** must be entered into ETO at the point in time that the service is delivered. If services cannot be entered at the time they are delivered, State EcSA services must be entered within **fourteen** calendar days of service delivery, and the date entered must reflect the date the service was delivered.

Supportive Services provided for childcare, housing, auto repair, and transportation must be tracked. To facilitate this, additional options have been added to **State Funded Support Service touchpoints** in ETO. The Subrecipient must follow detailed method of recording services as outlined in the relevant version of ESD Policy 7000.
 - c) A **case note** must be entered detailing a summary of the coordinated supportive service, including but not limited to, the

need/justification for why the item was purchased or given, describe other resources exhausted, amount expended by program of enrollment and funding source used.

ii. BFET - eJAS

- a) If support is matched to BFET, a Participant Reimbursement (PR) must be added to eJAS documenting the date the service was provided.
- b) The PR must include documentation and data entry including notes of what was purchased, and the amount expended per guidance in the [BFET Provider's Handbook](#).

Participant reimbursements must be entered into eJAS within **seven** business days.

Disallowed Supportive Services

The following support **cannot** be provided to a participant or be matched to BFET.

- 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, illegal drugs, 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.
- Those items disallowed in accordance with the [BFET Handbook](#).

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 Subrecipients 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 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. If BFET matched, service providers must follow the [BFET Handbook](#).

On an individual basis, exceptions may be approved by the WSW Program Manager. 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 must be maintained in the participant's file and in the fiscal records.

Definitions

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 must use the [Self-Sufficiency Calculator](#).

Participant Reimbursement – Participant Reimbursements (PR) are BFET specific allocated funds to support approved activities. Support services are meant to offer a resource for participants who are actively engaged and may be provided to support the participant. PR must be reasonable and necessary to engage in a BFET activity and administered according to guidance in [BFET Provider's Handbook](#) and enter into eJAS.

Supportive Service – For the purposes of this policy, supportive services are defined as the provision of assistance and/or support to a participant to aid in the participation of programs established in the participant's individual employment plan. Items such as rental assistance or payments made on behalf of the participant are supportive services and must be recorded and reported in ETO as such.

Resources

- Washington State EcSA Program [Policy #7000 Rev 1](#)
- [BFET Provider Handbook](#)

Supersedes

- EcSA TA Memo #37 Rev 1

Website

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

Inquiries

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