



**Workforce
Development
Council**

**Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

**Subject: Supportive Services and Needs-Related
Payments Policy**

Policy No: 2015-02

Effective Date: 11/06/2015

Revisions: 04/06/2016, 01/05/2017, 03/02/2017

1. Purpose:

This policy addresses the use of WIOA Title I funds for supportive services and needs related payments (NRPs) to support adults, dislocated workers, and youth participating in WIOA Title I activities.

2. Background:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides program guidelines for supportive services for adults and dislocated workers defined in WIOA Sections 3(59) and 134 (d)(2) and (3). These include services such as transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs related payments, that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA secs. 134(c)(2) and (3). These include services such as assistance with uniforms and other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eye glasses and protective eye wear, and NRPs to enable individuals to participate in WIOA Title I activities. Supportive services for youth as defined in WIOA Section 129(c)(2)(G) can additionally include assistance with educational testing, reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities, and referrals to health care.

Supportive services are specifically provided to enable a participant to participate in WIOA program activities such as school, work experience, job search and to get to and from work (typically until the first paycheck is received). Supportive services may not be provided to pay for the participant's family members needs such as clothing, medical, school supplies, etc. However, in some cases the family members may also benefit when the participant is provided supportive services for things such as food, hygiene, supplies, dependent care, housing and utilities.

Operational Procedure

A. Identification of and Linkages to Supportive Service Programs and Work Supports

WorkSource Columbia Basin partners and other community service providers shall identify and develop linkages with a variety of supportive services programs available in the local area. Accurate and up-to-date community resource information shall be available on the Washington Information Network 2-1-1, www.211.org or by dialing 211 on the telephone.

B. Customer Access and Referral

The network of community resource programs shall be easily and readily accessible to adults, dislocated workers and youth through the One-Stop delivery system. Adults, dislocated workers and youth shall be provided referral assistance to these activities as part of career services.

C. Provision of Services to Participants

Supportive services are not entitlements and shall be provided on the basis of a documented financial assessment, individual circumstances, the absence of other resources, and funding limits. Reimbursement shall be for actual costs.

1. Supportive services may only be provided to individuals who are:
 - a) Participating in career and training services as defined in WIOA sec. 134(c) (2)(3) and 20 CFR 680.910; and
 - b) Unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services (WIOA sec.134 (d)(2)(B)).
2. Supportive services are not allowed as a component of follow-up services provided after exit for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker participants.
3. Follow-up services for youth may include supportive services per 20 CFR 681.580(b).
4. Supportive services may only be provided when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate in Title I activities (WIOA sec. 124(d) (2) (A) and WIOA sec. 3 (59)).

D. Educating Participants about Support Services

Participants need to understand that support services are not meant to be provided as an ongoing service and that they can only be provided when funding is available. Support services are allowed to enable them to participate in the program; therefore,

bills/invoices must be in their name. If not, they must provide information about the person named on the bill (relative, roommate, significant other, etc.)

Participants need to be informed of any known resource(s) in the community that may be able to help them with their needs. It may be helpful at the beginning of their participation to inform them of community resources before s/he has a need arise. Participants should be informed that they are responsible for applying for other community resources to assist them with their needs before WIOA support services are used.

Participants should be informed that although a support service may be allowable, the WIOA program may not be able to commit to paying for the entire cost of a support service. In some cases, a participant may need to make arrangements to pay for costs above the amount the WIOA program can provide.

The service provider must strive to be equitable in providing supportive services to all of the participants in a program. Because each participant's individual situation is taken into account when determining the need for support services, the amount of support services provided will not always be the same. Participants have been known to share information about the type and amount of support services they have received through the WIOA program to other participants. Should a participant express their belief that they are entitled to the same type and/or amount of support service that the WIOA program provided to another participant, they need to be educated to the fact that:

1. The WIOA program is not an entitlement program, therefore they are not guaranteed any specific amount or type of support service will be provided.
2. The WIOA program will provide them with support services based upon an examination of their individual situation and their needs to be able to participate in the program.
3. Support services are dependent upon the funding available in the WIOA program at any given time and this may change throughout the program year.

*Upon enrollment the employment specialist must document educating the participant about support services.

E. Documentation

Appropriate documentation must be maintained by services providers to verify eligibility to participate in WIOA and justify the types and duration of services provided to participants. The following documents are required in all participant files:

1. Determination of participant's request for supportive services in case notes stating the reason services are necessary;
2. Documentation in case notes of the participants request for support services prior to the participant actually incurring the expenditure;
3. Case notes documenting the service providers efforts to use other community resources before WIOA supportive service dollars were authorized;

4. Purchase Orders must be in participants file;
5. Supporting documentation such as receipts to verify the goods or services were purchased must be in the participant files.
6. Exception - Direct vendor payments must have supporting documentation available.

F. Types of Supportive Services

Certification, Screening and Testing Fees

Employment-related fees including but not limited to testing fees, drug screening, background checks, food handlers permits, Washington State Driver's Licenses and Identification Cards, security clearance, first aid/CPR certification or finger printing; commercial and business licenses; and/or other fees if required by law and/or not paid for by employer to accept or maintain employment or participate in a WIOA activity.

Childcare

It is allowable to provide support service to ensure proper care of children to enable the participant to participate in a WIOA funded program activity. However, WIOA programs will not have sufficient funding to pay for day care on an ongoing basis; therefore, participants should be informed of any other known resources for child care. Participants should also be encouraged to develop a long-term plan for childcare that includes a back-up plan for emergencies.

Childcare providers must be certified by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. This will ensure that childcare providers are providing safe and adequate services at the lowest cost.

Clothing

Assistance is available when a participant:

1. Begins a job search and/or secures an interview
2. Begins classroom training or a work experience
3. Starts a job

Work clothing, including uniforms required by employers, may be purchased if necessary for a participant to obtain and/or retain employment.

Dental

Support service is allowable when a service provider determines that a dental condition is a severe barrier to employment. It is not allowable to provide support service for on-going dental maintenance such as cleaning.

Driver's License or State Picture Identification

Reimbursements may be made to participants if the expenditure is requested by the participant and approved by the employment specialist before the purchase and the receipt is attached to the support service voucher.

Equipment/Tools

Equipment and tools may be paid for when they are required during training or for a job. A request must be accompanied by an employer hire letter, intent to hire or school record, along with a requested tool list.

Food

Food requests may include basic food staples. Participants must be informed of and use other resources such as food stamps, WIC and food banks. Pet food/supplies, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes and tobacco are not allowable expenditures.

Employment Specialist shall discuss with participant appropriateness of food purchases. Excessive or costly food purchases beyond normal dietary needs are not an allowable expense.

Hygiene

Personal hygiene items are allowable if needed for the participant to participate in the program, obtain or maintain employment.

Medical Services

In all cases of providing support services for health/medical care, the service provider must determine if the participant has other insurance benefits available such as health insurance of a spouse, WA Basic Health, or through Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Mortgage Assistance

Home mortgage payments are not an allowable expenditure.

Optical

It is allowable to provide support services for eye exams and prescription glasses that are necessary for a participant to be able to accept or keep a job.

Rental Assistance

The request for rental assistance must be for the current month and does not include back rent, deposits, cleaning fees or late fees. Documentation must show the participant as a tenant of the premises. The following documents should be included with the request:

1. Copy of the Rent/Lease Agreement listing the customer as a tenant.
2. W-9 (if required)

Rental assistance is not provided when a family member (related by blood, marriage, or adoption) of the participant is the landlord.

School Books

A book order list should be attached to the request.

Transportation

1. Gas assistance requires proof of valid driver's license and current auto insurance prior to approval.
2. Car insurance requires documentation showing the participant as a covered driver.
3. Car repairs may be approved for safety and reliability issues only. The participant must obtain written estimates from at least three licensed businesses. The vehicle must be the participant's only mode of transportation to attend school, get to work or participate in job search. The participant must provide a valid driver's license and current auto insurance. The vehicle must be registered in the participant's name. If the participant is a youth under the age of 18 and not the registered owner of the vehicle, the service provider must obtain documentation identifying parents or legal guardian (as supported by court documentation) as the vehicle's registered owners and case note that if the vehicle is repaired it will be available to the participant during their program participation.
4. Vehicle payments are not an allowable expenditure.

Utilities (Heat/Water/Phone/Internet)

Assistance must be for the current month and cannot include expenses incurred prior to enrollment or past due amounts. Cell phone assistance is covered if it is the only phone the customer has to contact/receive calls from employers. Cable service is not an allowable expenditure.

G. Additional Limitations

Supportive services funds are not allowed for refundable deposits, tips for services, fines, contributions/donations, entertainment, interest payments, legal expenses, installment loan payments, home insurance and membership fees.

Other similar types of requests may be approved or denied on a case-by -case basis and the intent of WIOA regulations.

H. Limitations on Duration of Funds

The funding level and duration for program participants utilizing supportive services shall be on a case-by-case basis. Duration of funds will be identified on each individual participant voucher.

I. Disallowed Costs

Service Providers, under contract with the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC), are required to be in compliance with the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development policies, WIOA, and applicable federal, state, local laws, regulations, rules, policies and procedures pertaining to obligation for or expenditure of supportive services funds. Service Providers shall bear the responsibility of repayment of said funds upon determination of any disallowed cost(s).

J. Needs Related Payments

BFWDC will not utilize needs-related payments.

K. Definitions

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, child care, dependent care, housing, and NRPs necessary to enable individuals to participate in activities authorized under WIOA Title I. Aside from NRPs, supportive services are usually provided through a voucher system (e.g., transportation or food) or payments made directly to vendors (i.e., clothes, rent, or utilities).

Unemployed Individual - An individual who is without a job and who 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)).