

# Supportive Services Policy

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## Purpose Statement

In order to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers and to remain flexible, the Ozark Region Workforce Development Board is adopting a supportive service policy. The policy is subject to change as needs are identified.

According to the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA), Supportive Services can be defined as services necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA, Title I. This policy has been developed in accordance with DWD Issuance 13-2017, issued November 30, 2017. All Supportive Services are based upon available funding. As only one policy is allowed per WIOA Region, the following policy will be followed by:

- WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program
- WIOA Youth
- Other Special Programs

## I. Adult/Dislocated Worker Programs

### A. Local Process

Adult/Dislocated Worker program staff shall provide information on public assistance, food stamps, mental health services, childcare resources, transportation resources, health services, and other community resources. Staff shall assist participants in making application and setting appointments for such services, as needed. Participants limited to \$1,000 per program year in supportive services.

#### 1. Other Program Funding

If a participant is receiving assistance through another program, the specific program funding (such as Trade Act) **must** be utilized prior to WIOA funding. If the complete needs cannot be met under other program funding, the local policy shall be followed for the remaining amounts.

#### 2. Supportive Services will only be provided to participants who:

- Are enrolled in Career or Training services;
- Are unable to obtain said services through other resources or via their own support network
- Demonstrate the need for supportive services to enable him/her to participate in WIOA activities
- Require occupationally-specific clothing, tools, or other items as related to training; or
- Require occupationally-specific clothing, tools, or other items to obtain or maintain employment.

Supportive Service payments are initiated by an individual based upon established need. Because WIOA programs are not an entitlement, Supportive Service payments are made on a case-by-

case basis only when determined necessary and reasonable. With the exception of gas cards, participants may not directly receive payments for any supportive services. Payments shall be made directly to vendors on behalf of the participant. Due to funding limitations, WIOA Supportive Services are the last resort. Therefore, at a minimum, staff members must document the need in clear descriptive language in Service Notes. In addition, the service notes shall include:

- Type of Supportive Services
- Amount
- Timeframe
- Justification of need
- Lack of other resources

Other avenues must be explored such as the following community resources:

- Non-profit-organizations, examples include
  - Council of the Blind
  - CPO
  - Faith-based organizations
  - Goodwill
  - MCC Career Closet and other clothing banks
  - OACAC
  - One Door
  - Rare Breed
  - Salvation Army
  - Shelters
- Government Assurances such as
  - Family Support Division Child Care Assistance
  - Food Stamps & TANF
  - Health Departments
  - WIC
- Local transit services

In addition, the following will be required:

- Need for supportive services must be verified by staff and noted in service notes
- Participant must provide a “Required Articles to Begin Employment” list from Employer.
- All other possible resources must be pursued (and documented) prior to use of WIOA funds.
- The participant must sign the invoice showing receipt of item/s or supervisor or appointee can sign to show receipt

### **3. Employment Plan**

An Employment Plan will be developed with the participant. This plan will identify goals and objectives of the participant. Staff members are to ensure that the Employment Plan reflects the activities and services to achieve the employment goals and objectives. Any Supportive Services must be shown as necessary for the participant to meet the goals on the Employment Plan.

## 4. Pell Grant

According to DWD Issuance -18-2016, Regions must ensure coordination of all WIOA Titled 1-B programs with programs under Title IV. This includes the use of Pell Grants.

The Ozark Region shall adhere to this policy and examine the availability of Pell Grants when considering Supportive Services to ensure that duplicate payment shall not occur.

## 5. Region Crossover

If a program such as a Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) involves other Regions, a Supportive Services Policy shall be established based on the combined policies of the Regions to ensure non-duplication of supportive services.

Staff will assess individuals who have received Supportive Services from another region(s) to verify whether additional needs should be met at that time. Review of the MOJobs (statewide system) record in relationship to our Region's policy and the time frame in which it occurred will determine authorizing additional funding.

# B. Types of Supportive Services

## 1. General Services

Participants enrolled in the Adult and/or Dislocated Worker Programs, who are unable to obtain supportive services through other resources, may be provided but not limited to the following (per program year, based upon established and documented need, and based upon funding availability):

- Work-Related Clothing, Tools, and Equipment, not to exceed \$600
- Testing fees
- Documents needed for employment (e.g. birth certificate)
- Child care and dependent care
- Emergency housing
- Referrals to medical services
- Referrals to community services/resources
- Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Amounts for the above services without amounts listed will be considered on a case-by-case basis, based upon established and documented need.

## 2. Transportation

In lieu of mileage reimbursement, the Ozark Region has adopted a Gas Card policy to assist program participants in transportation-related expenses. In addition to the Gas Cards, bus passes may be issued under the respective program. Gas cards may be provided to those participating in job search, job readiness, training (including participants in DWG). Gas cards shall be issued in accordance with the local Gas Card policy, approved by the Department of Labor. Abuse of this policy may result in end of gas card eligibility. These are available per program year, based upon established and documented need, and based upon funding availability.

- Gas Cards, not to exceed \$300
- Bus Passes, not to exceed \$100

## **Private Service Providers**

Private service providers may be used when no transportation is accessible when it would normally be available (i.e. car breaking down, ride not available). It may only be used on an emergency basis, as means of last resort, for job or training related activities, and is primarily available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. The exception to this would be special programs that have staff available after hours. If possible, private service gift cards may be purchased for client on a case by case basis. In this case, supervisor approval must be obtained as soon as possible. Individuals must be enrolled in an activity to utilize the service.

Participants must be 18 and above to utilize certain services. There is a \$75 limit per participant per year. This may only be exceeded upon approval by the Director or their designee. A form must be completed by the Workforce Development Specialist/Case Manager indicating the reason, estimated mileage, activity, and whether the participant has received the service previously. No diversions from the route will be allowed, apart from taking a child to day care on the way to work/school. A service note must be entered documenting the need, the activity, the mileage, and cost. The form must be signed by the Specialist/case manager and the supervisor. The Specialist/case manager must review the policy with the client and the client must verbally accept prior to initiating the service. The policy is to be utilized only where service is available. The Job Center, City of Springfield, and the Workforce Development Board shall be held harmless from any liability stemming from any and all private service providers under this supportive service policy.

### **3. Emergency Aid**

Emergency Aid is a one-time (rare) expense paid to allow a participant to continue participating in a WIOA activity (i.e. Education/Training, Work Experience, OJT, etc.). Participants who indicate an emergency need will be provided information and assistance on budgeting, credit counseling, and available area resources. Upon the establishment of need, review of other resources, and determination that the request will allow the individual to pursue the established activity, a participant may be provided assistance (based upon available funding and per program year) with items such as but not limited to:

- Utility payments (electric, water, heating, etc.) are limited to one time per program year. Payments are limited to \$500 maximum amount per program year.
- Car insurance is limited to one month premium in accordance with state minimum insurance requirements.
- Rental/mortgage assistance is limited to one time per program year in the form of one month's rent (or mortgage payment) based on participant portion of lease agreement.
- Vehicle Repairs – Participant must provide proof of current insurance, valid driver's license, and clean title for the vehicle being utilized to allow the client to participate in WIOA activity.

### **Non-allowable costs (Including, but not limited to the following)**

- Rental Deposits
- Payment of Fines/Late Fees
- Utility Deposits
- Interest charges

- Pre-payment of premiums

#### 4. Needs Related Payments (Must be Enrolled)

##### *a. Adult Program*

Participant must:

- Be unemployed
- Not qualify for, or have ceased qualifying for, unemployment compensation.
- Be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA.

##### *b. Dislocated Worker Program*

Participant must:

- Be unemployed
- Not qualify for, or have ceased qualifying for, unemployment compensation; or Trade Readjustment Allowance under TAA.
- Be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA.

Payment levels for Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs must not exceed weekly level of what the participant was receiving as an unemployment compensation benefit.

“Other” qualifying emergencies will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by staff and must be approved by the Director, Supervisor, or a designee of the Adult/Dislocated Worker Program. These are available per program year, based upon established and documented need, and based upon funding availability.

## II. Youth Program

In all cases, an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) must contain the need for, and extent of, supportive services, as well as case note documentation of the linkage of payment for the supportive service to an authorized activity. Temporary suspension of supportive services can be approved at the Program Coordinator’s discretion based on individual lack of participation.

Per local WDB policy, participants are limited to a maximum of \$1,000 in supportive services per program year. Supportive Services are available to participants during their active participation in the program or during the 12 month follow up period (WIOA Regulations; 20 CFR Part 664.450). No supportive services should be paid after the 12 month follow up period. Due to availability of funds, supportive service amounts may vary throughout a program year.

Participants **may not be directly reimbursed** for any supportive services. Payments should be made directly to vendors on the behalf of the participant.

#### **Supportive Services will only be provided to participants who**

- Are enrolled in Career or Training services;
- Are unable to obtain said services through other resources or via their own support network
- Demonstrate the need for supportive services to enable he/she to participate in WIOA activities

Supportive Service payments are initiated by an individual based upon established need. Because WIOA programs are not an entitlement, Supportive Service payments are made on a case-by-case basis only when determined necessary and reasonable. Due to funding limitations, WIOA Supportive Services are the last resort. Therefore, at a minimum, staff members must document the need in clear descriptive language in Service Notes. In addition, the service notes shall include:

- Type of Supportive Services
- Amount
- Timeframe
- Justification of need
- Lack of other resources

Other avenues must be explored such as the following community resources:

- Non-profit-organizations, examples include
  - Council of the Blind
  - CPO
  - Faith-based organizations
  - Goodwill
  - MCC Career Closet and other clothing banks
  - OACAC
  - One Door
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  - Health Departments
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- Local transit services

## **Employment Plan**

An Employment Plan will be developed with the participant. This plan will identify goals and objectives of the participant. Staff members are to ensure that the Employment Plan reflects the activities and services to achieve the employment goals and objectives. Any Supportive Services must be shown as necessary for the participant to meet the goals on the Employment Plan.

## **Emergency Aid**

Emergency Aid is a one time or rare expense paid to allow a participant to continue participating in WIOA activities such as school, work experience, etc. Participants who indicate an emergency need will be provided information and assistance on budgeting, credit counseling, and available area resources. Upon the establishment of need, review of other resources, and determination that the request will allow the individual to pursue the established activity, a participant may be provided assistance (based upon available funding) with items such as and with guidelines for emergency aid as follows:

- Utility payments (electric, water, heating, etc.) are limited to one time per program year. Payments are limited to \$500 maximum amount per program year.
- Car insurance is limited to one month premium in accordance with state minimum insurance requirements.
- Rental/mortgage assistance is limited to one time per program year in the form of one month's rent (or mortgage payment) based on participant portion of lease agreement.
- Vehicle Repairs – Participant must provide proof of current insurance, valid driver's license, and clean title for the vehicle being utilized to allow the client to participate in WIOA activity.

**Non-allowable costs (Including, but not limited to the following)**

- Rental Deposits
- Payment of Fines/Late Fees
- Utility Deposits
- Interest charges
- Pre-payment of premiums

**Transportation Assistance**

In lieu of mileage reimbursement, the Ozark Region has adopted a Gas Card policy to assist program participants in transportation-related expenses. Transportation assistance is available in the form of gas cards and bus passes. Both forms of transportation assistance are available to participants and are designed to cover transportations needs for five days of travel in one week. If the client travels a distance greater than 45 miles one way to the approved activity, 5 days in a week, then multiple cards may be issued. Transportation assistance should not extend beyond 30 days of full time, unsubsidized employment.

**Private Service Providers**

Private service providers may be used when no transportation is accessible when it would normally be available (i.e. car breaking down, ride not available). It may only be used on an emergency basis, as means of last resort, for job or training related activities, and is primarily available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. The exception to this would be special programs that have staff available after hours. If possible, private service gift cards may be purchased for client on a case by case basis. In this case, supervisor approval must be obtained as soon as possible. Individuals must be enrolled in an activity to utilize the service.

Participants must be 18 and above to utilize certain services. There is a \$75 limit per participant per year. This may only be exceeded upon approval by the Director or their designee. A form must be completed by the Workforce Development Specialist/Case Manager indicating the reason, estimated mileage, activity, and whether the participant has received the service previously. No diversions from the route will be allowed, apart from taking a child to day care on the way to work/school. A service note must be entered documenting the need, the activity, the mileage, and cost. The form must be signed by the Specialist/case manager and the supervisor. The Specialist/case manager must review the policy with the client and the client must verbally accept prior to initiating the service. The policy is to be utilized only where service is available. The Job Center, City of

Springfield, and the Workforce Development Board shall be held harmless from any liability stemming from any and all private service providers under this supportive service policy.

### **Childcare Costs**

Childcare costs are payable at 100%. Participant must apply for FSD childcare assistance and then supply the program subcontractor with the determination letter. Any balance amount unpaid by FSD will be paid for by the program subcontractor. If the participant is found ineligible for FSD childcare assistance, the full amount will be paid for by the program subcontractor. Documentation of need and linkage to authorized activity must be in a case note.

Child care providers must be licensed to receive payment. If a family member wishes to provide child care for a participant, they must be certified through FSD's process to become an approved provider.

### **Direct Work and School Related Expenses**

Direct work and school related expenses such as tools, equipment, work/school attire, uniforms, testing fees, reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, etc. are allowed.

### **Needs-Related Payments**

Needs-related payments for young adults will be allowable based on available funding for enrolled youth based upon established and documented need. Payments must be approved by the Program Director or designee.

### **Other Program Funding**

If a participant is receiving assistance through another program, the specific program funding (such as Trade Act) *must* be utilized prior to WIOA funding. If the complete needs cannot be met under other program funding, the local policy shall be followed for the remaining amounts.

### **Pell Grant**

According to DWD Issuance 18-2016, Regions must ensure coordination of all WIOA Titled 1-B programs with programs under Title IV. This includes the use of Pell Grants.

The Ozark Region shall adhere to this policy and examine the availability of Pell Grants when considering Supportive Services to ensure that duplicate payment shall not occur.

### **Region Crossover**

If a program such as a Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) involves other Regions, a Supportive Services Policy shall be established based on the combined policies of the Regions to ensure non-duplication of supportive services.

Staff will assess individuals who have received Supportive Services from another region(s) to verify whether additional needs should be met at that time. Review of the MOJobs (statewide system) record in relationship to our Region's policy and the time frame in which it occurred will determine authorizing additional funding.



### **III. Other Special Programs**

As other special programs become available, the Ozark Region will incorporate the program into the local policy. Such programs could include the Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG), METP, or other programs. As funding from non-WIOA sources are secured, supportive services amounts will be based on the specific scope of work and allowable costs of the project.

### **IV. Exceptions**

Requests for payments above the amounts in this policy due to extenuating circumstances must be approved by the Director or designee.

Approved by the WDB 4-3-19, by the CLEO 6-26-19.