

THE WORKFORCE BOARD OF NORTHERN COOK COUNTY

LOCAL AREA WIA Policy 2009 – Supportive Services Policy

TO: ALL WIA CONTRACTORS

FROM: _____
Jennifer Stasch
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Supportive Services Policy

DATE: July 1, 2009

Purpose: The purpose of this letter is to update and clarify the policy and procedures for Support Service for Contractors using WIA funds expended under The Workforce Board of Northern Cook County Workforce Investment Act (WIA) contracts.

References: WIA Legislation and Rules and Regulations
Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
DCEO WIA Policy Letter No. 07-PL-40

Background: The Workforce Board of Northern Cook County is releasing Supportive Services policy in order to ensure accountability and compliance that aligns with the Contractor's Agreement with the Workforce Board, DOL and DCEO policy, and the most recently adopted DCEO policy on training expenditure requirements; PL No. 07-PL-40; and other applicable rules and regulations.

Policy

Statement: In general, the Contractor will maintain accurate information about the availability of supportive services in the local area, as well as provide referral to such activities. Additionally to provide referrals to activities including but not limited to: child care, food pantries, mental health services, emergency and subsidized housing, food stamps, Medicaid, and children's health insurance.

Workforce Board Supportive Services Policy

The intent of supportive services is to enable a customer; adult, dislocated worker or youth, to participate in WIA funded activities and programs leading to employment and retention. This policy will define and limit support services allowable for WIA eligible adults, dislocated workers and youth enrolled in WIA training services.

- A.** Supportive services may only be provided to individuals who are registered in a WIA approved training service; and unable to obtain financial assistance and/or supportive services through other programs providing such services, (WIA sec.134 (e) (2) (A) and (B)).
- B.** Supportive services may only be funded through WIA when it is assessed as necessary to enable individuals to participate in Title I activities, (WIA sec. 101(46), part 663.805).
- C.** Supporting documentation must be kept on file for all supportive services issued to all participants.
- D.** Supportive services issued must be documented and a signed copy is to be placed in each individual participant file along with other supporting documentation. This shall include the amount and type of supportive service issued.
- E.** Supporting documentation for the supportive service **must** be submitted to The Workforce Board for reimbursement verification.
- F.** Based on individual assessment and availability of funds, supportive services may be granted to participants currently enrolled in WIA intensive (including self-directed job search and follow-up) after successful completion of training activities.
- G.** As a core service provided through the workforce system the most accurate and up to date support service policy and information will be made available to all WIA participants. As well as referrals to such activities including but not limited to child care, food pantries, mental health services, emergency and subsidized housing, food stamps, Medicaid, and children's health insurance.
- H.** The annual amount of support services for participants enrolled in training or in the twelve-month follow up period subsequent to placement will be determined individually based on an individual needs assessment documented in the customer file. The available amount includes all supportive services for the particular participant and is subject to approval and availability of other funding sources and resources. The Workforce Board will review supportive service allocations annually considering the local area allocation and budget for the fiscal year in question and the current local economy.
- I.** This policy assumes that participants will meet with their Career Advisors and Case Managers to determine how to best access support services throughout their training enrollment and follow-up.
- J.** Supportive Services allowable to participants enrolled in training or in the twelve month follow up period subsequent to placement under this policy include:
 - a. Child Care and dependent care costs;
 - b. Local transportation costs;

- c. Uniforms and required work attire;
- d. Tools required by the employer to carry-out job responsibilities;
- e. Work related licenses, permits and fees; and
- f. Partial rent assistance.

K. General Policies for Supportive Services and Payments:

a. Child Care

Customers who may be eligible for childcare services should be referred as appropriate to Action for Children for all childcare needs. Customers not qualified for Daycare Action Council services may be provided funding for supportive services under WIA programs. Funding will not be granted under this policy for relatives to provide childcare.

b. Transportation

Customers may be issued a monthly bus pass, weekly pass or ride pass for public transportation. Minor vehicle repairs may also be approved such as flat tire repair, serpentine belt replacement, and other repairs within the maximum yearly funding amount allotted locally. Authorization for transportation assistance may be extended after employment is obtained for up to 45 days or until the first paycheck is received. Situations beyond the time limit will be reviewed and granted on a case-by-case basis.

c. Gas Assistance/Car Insurance

Customers who drive may be provided with gas cards. Prior to receiving gas cards, customers must show proof of a valid driver's license. Limited payments of the monthly premium for car insurance may be paid up to the annual funding amount limit per participant.

d. Work Related Clothing /Tools

The items must be for a work related activity and required for the participant to obtain the job in question. If the item can be paid with the participants first pay check on the job, then WIA funding will not be granted for this purpose.

e. Required Training Supplies

Customers may be provided a supportive service payment for required training supplies when funding through an ITA has been exhausted or is near exhaustion and payment through an ITA would leave a tuition payment gap for the customer.

f. Licensing Exam Fees

Only industry approved licensing that is required for employment is allowable as a supportive service. Customers must show proof of such employment requirement to be an eligible supportive service recipient.

L. Supportive Services NOT allowed under this policy: Food costs; Out-of-State job search [except for TAA clients]; Relocation for a new job [except for TAA clients];

Traffic violations, fines, penalties; Interest payments, late finance charges; Refundable deposits, vehicle or mortgage payments; Alcohol, tobacco, entertainment costs; Pet food; and other costs that are not considered basic to training, seeking and obtaining employment.

M. Each Contractor will be required to maintain mechanisms and systems that capture individual supportive service payments per customer in addition to entering such activity in IWDS.

N. The Workforce Board reserves the right to deny any request for lack of funding or other good cause. This policy will be revised and reviewed periodically as local policy and funding dictates.

Action

Required: This information should be disseminated to Contractor and subcontractor career advisors and case managers.

Inquiries: Questions regarding any aspect of this policy should be directed to the Workforce Board's Executive Director.

Effective

Date: Immediately