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## SUPPORTIVE SERVICE POLICY & DIRECTIVE

### POLICY #: 3005

Original Policy Date: 6/13/2001  
Effective Date:

Current Revision Date: / /2012

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#### **Purpose:**

The Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC) is issuing this policy is to establish the principles and procedures for providing supportive services to Adult and Dislocated Worker participants enrolled in, or applicants for, WIA-funded programs. Additionally, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) calls for the Local Board, in partnership with the One-Stop partners and community service providers, to more effectively coordinate resources and the provision of supportive services.

#### **Background:**

The Workforce Investment Act, in Section 101 (46), defines supportive services as: “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 this title, consistent with the provisions of this title.” While this definition contains some illustrative examples, such examples are not intended to comprise an exhaustive or exclusive list of such services. Under WIA, rules governing the permissible and/or mandatory provision of supportive services vary by funding stream (adult and dislocated worker).

#### **Policy:**

Supportive services are one mechanism available to assist customers to participate in WIA program services and/or activities to secure and retain employment. Supportive services are not a participant entitlement. Registration, pursuant to the provisions of the WIA, is an absolute prerequisite to the provision of supportive services.

For adult and dislocated worker participants under WIA Title I-B, supportive services may be provided, within the constraints established by the Workforce Investment Act and regulations, to participants in need of financial assistance when:

- 1) the customer is receiving WIA Title I-B core, intensive, or training services; and
- 2) supportive services are necessary to enable participation in core, intensive or training services; and
- 3) the customer is unable to obtain similar services from another source.

Service providers must establish internal controls that result in equitable treatment, maximize allocations, and ensure coordination with, and referral of participants and applications to, other community resources.

As a part of assessment, program staff will determine a customer’s need for supportive services and appropriate resources. The employment plan must document supportive services needed to address barriers to the customer’s employment goals and how they

will be accessed. Alternatives to WIA-funded supportive services will be sought prior to providing supportive services with WIA funds.

For the purpose of categorizing and defining customer supportive service limitations, the SWWDC recognizes the following four types of support:

### **1. Employability and Emergency Assistance**

A customer may receive Employability and Emergency Assistance during program participation, provided that the support is determined necessary to: a) facilitate or continue participation; b) maintain or increase employability; and/or c) assist with meeting emergency needs. When emergency assistance is provided, there must be a reasonable expectation that the assistance will resolve the situation; for example, if rent is paid for one month, there must be a reasonable expectation that the individual will obtain the resources to pay rent for the following months. Assistance may include, but is not limited to, clothing, food, and housing assistance; grooming supplies/services; personal vehicle repair/maintenance; and medical, dental, and optical services.

In most instances, it is desirable for the supportive service payment to be issued to the party providing the supportive service, rather than to the customer. When customers receive cash payments for employability and emergency assistance, receipts will be required to verify that the payments were used for their intended purpose. Customers are permitted to receive up to \$50 in employability and emergency assistance without requirement of receipts every six months at a maximum. Non-receipted support services must be in the form of gift cards subject to usual gift card controls and procedures of the contractor.

### **2. Child Care Assistance**

Child care assistance is a supportive service provided to customers if it is determined that without it a customer will not be able to participate or transition to employment. Customers will be encouraged to make child care arrangements that they can afford when supportive services terminate.

Childcare assistance may be provided to customers with children age twelve years or younger. Payment will be based on customer 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 customer is absent, childcare assistance will not be paid.

Childcare assistance may be provided as a reimbursement to the customer or a direct payment to a licensed child care provider. Childcare assistance will not be provided when a competent adult (over the age of 18 years) residing at the same address as the customer is available to provide childcare.

Childcare assistance will be provided at no more than the rate charged by the provider subject to the maximum allowable rates. Full-time childcare is defined as five (5) or more hours per day; while part-time childcare is less than five (5) hours per day. The established rates are maximums, which should be reduced to reflect the participant's circumstances, estimated needs, and other sources of support. Child/dependent care services shall be paid to a licensed vendor unless the vendor is providing services in the customer's home. Exceptions can be made if it is clearly

demonstrated that such care is not readily available due to the child's/parent'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 program activities until acceptable care can be found.

Childcare agreements shall be authorized for a maximum of sixteen weeks; they can be renewable if needed (the need must be documented in SKIES case notes) and no other support assistance is available.

Requests for childcare payments will coincide with the submission of attendance reports. Program staff will review and endorse timesheets to verify the accuracy of the customer's request for childcare payments for training and work-based activities.

### **3. 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.

SWWDC service providers may provide transportation assistance in the form of bus passes, trip tickets, or a gasoline allowance. Customers will be encouraged to use public transportation when available except when doing so will create more costly problems or major inconveniences. Gasoline vouchers will be used in lieu of direct payment to the participant, except when doing so will create more costly problems or major inconveniences.

If public transportation is not available or feasible, customers may receive transportation assistance not to exceed 23¢ per mile for the estimated number of miles driven each week necessary to participate. (This rate is based upon an estimated average cost per gallon of gasoline of \$3.48 divided by an estimated average of 15 miles per gallon for participant vehicles.) This formula establishes a maximum weekly amount, which should be reduced to reflect the participant's circumstances, estimated needs, and other sources of support.

### **4. Post-Exit Assistance**

Post-exit supportive services may be provided for up to one year following exit. In most instances, it is desirable for the supportive service payment to be issued to the party providing the supportive service rather than to the participant. When the customers receive cash payments for post-exit assistance, receipts will be required to verify that the payments were used for their intended purpose. Post-exit supportive services may include, but are not limited to medical and dental services, childcare, transportation and clothing.

## **LIMITATIONS AND GUIDELINES**

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

- A. Contractors are authorized to provide supportive services payments up to \$2,500 (including follow-up) per Adult and Dislocated Worker participant per twelve months, calculated from the date of initial registration,. For customers who are co-enrolled (Adult and Dislocated Worker, Adult and Youth, etc.), the maximum amount is \$2,500.

- B. An amount above the maximum for the program enrollment must submit an exception request to the SWWDC Program Manager.
- C. Customer files must adequately document that all supportive services are allowable, reasonable, justified, and not otherwise available to the customer and show evidence of collaboration, when feasible. Assessment of the customer's need for supportive services must also be documented in SKIES case notes.
- D. Supportive services cannot be expended before a customer is registered and may be provided as a core follow-up service for up to 12 months after exit.
- E. Supportive services cannot be used to pay customer's fines, penalties, taxes, interest, child support, parking/moving violations, bail, restitution, entertainment, pet food, or used towards the purchase or improvement of an asset (car payment, mortgage, etc.).

**Right to Reduce or Eliminate Supportive Services:**

The SWWDC reserves the right to reduce or eliminate WIA-funded supportive services in the event funding is reduced or other budgetary constraints exist. In such circumstances, the SWWDC would work with its service providers to determine equitable measures to effect the reduction or elimination, including sufficient prior notice for customers. In no event would a reduction or elimination of WIA-funded supportive services be retroactive.

**SUPPORTIVE SERVICES WAIVER PROCESS:**

In some 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.

On an individual basis, limitations for supportive services may be waived by the SWWDC Program Manager or his/her designee. Consideration of waiver requests shall ensure to the extent possible that similarly-situated customers receive similar payments. Copies of the approved waiver documenting the extraordinary circumstances that exist/existed will be maintained in the customer's master record and in the fiscal records.

**Other Related SWWDC Policies**

Please refer to the SWWDC Needs Related Payments and the Youth Support Services policies for further information on these topics.

**Definitions:**

**Needs-related Payments**—Provide financial assistance to customers for the purpose of enabling customers to participate in training and are one of the supportive services authorized by WIA section 134(e) (3). NRPs are based on payment levels established by the WDC and are intended to provide cash assistance to customers.

**Public Assistance**—Means federal, state, or local government cash payments for which eligibility is determined by a needs or income test.

**Supportive Services**—Means services such as transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments that are necessary to enable a customer to participate in activities authorized under WIA Title I. Aside from needs-related

payments, supportive services are usually provided through a voucher system (transportation, food) or payments made directly to a vendor (clothes, rent, utilities).

**Unemployed**—An individual is "unemployed" in any week during which the individual performs no services and with respect to which no remuneration is payable to the individual. (See RCW 50.04.310 for complete definition.)

**References/Resources:**

- Workforce Investment Act of 1998
- Federal Register 20 CFR 663 et al
- Washington State Policy #3695 Rev 1: Supportive Services and Needs-related Payments under WIA Title 1-B and ARRA of 2009
- Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council Policy #3021 Youth Supportive Services
- Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council Policy #3010 Needs Related Payments

**Attachments:**

- WIA Supportive Services Request for Exception to Limit Form