



Supportive Services Policy

According to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Supportive Services can be defined as services necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIA, Title I. This policy has been developed in accordance with DWD Issuance 12-2010, issued May 20, 2011. As only one policy is allowed per WIA Region, the following policy will be followed by:

- WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program
 - Including participants in Rapid Response
- National Emergency Grant (NEG)
- WIA Youth

With the exception of gas cards, participants may not be directly reimbursed for any supportive services. Payments shall be made directly to vendors on behalf of the participant.

Supportive Services will only be provided to participants who

- Are enrolled in Core, Intensive, 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 WIA activities

Supportive Service payments are initiated by an individual based upon established need. Because WIA 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, WIA Supportive Services are the last resort. Therefore, at a minimum, staff members must document the need in clear descriptive language in Service Notes. It is recommended that staff utilize system resources to document, such as the current system "Financial Needs" tab. 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
 - MCC Career Closet and other clothing banks
 - OACAC
 - CPO

- Salvation Army
- Goodwill
- Council of the Blind
- Shelters
- Rare Breed
- Faith-based organizations
- Government Assistancess such as
 - Health Departments
 - WIC
 - Food Stamps & TANF
 - Family Support Division Child Care Assistance
- 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 in order for the participant to meet the goals on the Employment Plan.

Transportation

In lieu of mileage reimbursement, the Ozark Region has adopted a Gas Card policy to assist program participants in transportation-related expenses. The amounts allowed are delineated under the program-specific areas of this policy. In addition to the Gas Cards, bus passes may be issued under the respective program.

Needs-Related Payments

Needs-Related Payments are addressed under the Adult/Dislocated Worker and NEG sections of this policy. WIA does not allow for Needs-related payments to Youth as part of Supportive Services.

Emergency Aid

Emergency Aid is a one-time (rare) expense paid to allow a participant to continue participating in a WIA 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) with items such as:

- Utility payments
- Car insurance
- Rental assistance

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 WIA funding. If the complete needs cannot be met under other program funding, the local policy shall be followed for the remaining amounts.

Region Crossover

If a program such as a National Emergency Grant (NEG) 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. *Please see the NEG section for further clarification.*

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 Toolbox (statewide system) record in relationship to our Region's policy and the time frame in which it occurred will determine authorizing additional funding.

Pell Grant

According to DWD Issuance 12-1999, Regions must ensure coordination of all WIA 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.

Local Plan-Program-Specific

Adult/Dislocated Worker Programs

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 enrolled in the Adult and/or Dislocated Worker Programs, who are unable to obtain supportive services through other resources, may be provided (per program year) the following (based upon funding availability):

- Work-Related Clothing, Tools, and Equipment, not to exceed \$350
- Emergency Gas Cards, not to exceed \$320
- Bus Passes, not to exceed \$100

Staff must document through service notes attempts to obtain supportive services through other resources/agencies.

Other services that may be considered include:

- Testing fees
- Child care and dependent care
- Emergency housing
- Referrals to medical services
- Referrals to community services/resources

Amounts for above services will be considered on a case-by-case basis, based upon established and documented need.

Obtaining Services

In order to obtain Supportive Services, an individual must:

- Be enrolled; and
- Require occupationally-specific clothing, tools, or other items as a pre-cursor to training; or
- Require occupationally-specific clothing, tools, or other items in order to obtain or maintain employment.

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 WIA funds.
- Staff will submit all required documents to Finance Department staff. Upon approval and receipt of Purchase Order #, staff will notify participant.
- Items must be purchased at an approved vendor using a City’s procurement process. No substitutions will be allowed.
- The participant must sign the invoice showing receipt of item/s.

Gas Cards

Gas cards may be provided to those participating in job search, job readiness, training (including participants in NEG). 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.

Enrolled Pre-Vocational and AEL Students

- Must be attending pre-vocational or AEL classes and unable to obtain assistance elsewhere; and
- Must be enrolled in 20 hours per week or full time, if less than 20 hours per week is offered, and achieve 95% attendance of scheduled classes.

Attendance shall be verified by staff. A maximum of **\$25 per week** may be provided for a maximum of eight weeks.

Enrolled Job Search Participants

- Must achieve 100% attendance of Job Seekers Workshop
Attendance shall be verified by staff. A maximum of **\$25** may be provided for attending Job Seekers Workshop.
- Must complete one week intensive job search after completion of Job Seekers Workshop
Job search activity will be monitored closely and documented by staff. A maximum of **\$25** for intensive job search may be provided for a maximum of one week activity.

Needs Related Payments (Must be Enrolled)

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 WIA.

Dislocated Worker Program

Participant must:

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

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

Students Experiencing Unexpected Financial Hardship

- Participant must be enrolled in training or job search activity; and
- Must be experiencing a financial hardship(s)

“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.

Exceptions to Policy

While this policy is in place to give staff guidance, special or extenuating circumstances may be considered with Director or Supervisor approval.

National Emergency Grant (NEG)

NEGs provide supplemental dislocated worker funds to respond to the needs of dislocated workers and communities affected by major economic dislocation and disaster events which cannot be met with formula allotments. Since NEGs serve a specific layoff or group of related layoffs, only one Supportive Service Policy is allowed per NEG. Therefore, if there are multiple regions within the same NEG, only one Supportive Service Policy will be submitted that will be based upon the

combined policies of affected local areas to ensure equitable services. This Policy will be an attachment to other planning documents during the “Project Planning Period” of the NEG.

Supportive Services may include transportation, child care, dependent care, needs-related payments and emergency housing. Assistive technology/equipment may be included in this definition if staff document the customer needs this technology/equipment in order to participate in the WIA activity and are unable to obtain it from other resources. The extent of Supportive Services provided will vary based on the customer’s needs and the Region’s availability of funds and resources.

Supportive Services are only to be provided to DRJP participants who meet all of the following:

- Are in a temporary job assignment or have successfully completed the temporary job assignment and are receiving other services through the grant;
- Are unable to obtain Supportive Services themselves or via their support network;
- Are unable to obtain Supportive Services through other programs including community agencies that provide these services; and
- Demonstrate a need for assistance to enable him/her to participate in Title I activities.

Supportive Services payments are authorized based on available funding and are limited to **\$1,800** per participant. If a DRJP participant’s need is above the maximum limit, an additional amount must be approved by the DWD. These requests are first reviewed by the Region to verify it is acceptable and then emailed to the State NEG Coordinator. **No Supportive Services can be authorized until (s)he has obtained employment and each Supportive Service payment must be individually documented in Toolbox. This must include justification, reason, date and amount of the payment.** Provision of services is subject to availability of funding. Eligibility criteria Disaster Recovery Jobs Program supportive services are listed below. **The maximum dollar amount for all supportive services combined per Disaster Recovery Job Program participant will be \$1800.00 per DRJP enrollment.**

Work-Related Clothing, Tools, and Equipment

Items purchased for the participant that are considered expendable and are for use on actual NEG projects shall not count toward the participant’s \$1,800 limit. These items must be tracked and listed in service notes as such. (These are not entered on the Supportive Service tab in Toolbox.)

Gas Cards

Gas cards may be provided to those participating in a NEG. 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. A maximum of \$50 per week may be provided during full-time participation in the NEG.

Child Care

Childcare is permissible for DRJP participants after a needs-based analysis and justification is completed. This Supportive Service is only available for participants not eligible for assistance through the Family Support Division (FSD). Childcare must be provided from a State Approved

Day Care. If a family member wishes to provide childcare for a participant, this individual must obtain FSD approval. The DRJP participant must provide documentation that FSD would not pay the childcare expenses.

If FSD requires a co-payment, Supportive Services may be used to pay this expense. Child care referrals and payments are available to NEG/WIA participants with children under thirteen (13) years of age, children incapable of self-care, and/or children under court order who need care while participant is attending his/her authorized NEG/WIA activity. Verification of emotional, mental or physical incapacity or court order must be provided if child is over 13 years of age. This verification must be kept in a separate secure location.

NEG/WIA payment for child care is based on the Regional Market Rates (RMR) provided by Department of Social Services (DSS) found at <https://dssapp.dss.mo.gov/ccrate/report.asp?county=049>.

Emergency Aid

Emergency Aid is a one time or rare expense paid to allow a DRJP participant to participate in NEG/WIA allowable activities. If the customer is having extreme financial difficulty, staff must be assisting him/her with needed financial information (development of a budget, credit counseling, debt management, etc.). Emergency aid payments must be well documented in Service Notes:

- Payment of utility bills (electric, water, heating, etc.);
- A car insurance payment;
- A rent payment; and
- Vehicle repairs.

Vehicle repairs can only be provided on the vehicle used as the primary transportation for the participant to take part in allowable NEG/WIA activities. The participant must provide appropriate documentation for proof of ownership or a service note must be entered in Toolbox by the Functional Leader documenting approval. Any and all documentation must be kept in participant's file. Repair costs must be directly linked to an authorized activity. The vendor is to be paid directly for the repair, not the participant.

As with all other NEG/WIA funding, all other options must be sought first.

Needs Related Payments

Participant must:

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

These payments are equal to \$175 a week or the previous amount of unemployment compensation, whichever is less. If there is no previous unemployment compensation, the amount is equal to the

\$175 as this is below the poverty level analysis. These payments do not count toward the participant's \$1,800 Supportive Service limit and are not entered on the Supportive Service tab.

Students Experiencing Unexpected Financial Hardship

- Participant must be enrolled in training or job search activity; and
- Must be experiencing a financial hardship(s)

“Other” qualifying emergencies will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by staff and must be approved by the Director of Workforce Development or Supervisor of Disaster Recovery Jobs Program.

Exceptions to Policy

While this policy is in place to give staff guidance, special or extenuating circumstances may be considered with Director or Supervisor approval.

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 WIB policy, participants are limited to a maximum of \$500 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 (WIA 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.

Emergency Aid

Emergency Aid is a one time or rare expense paid to allow a participant to continue participating in WIA activities such as school, work experience, etc. Guidelines for emergency aid are as follows:

- Rent assistance is limited to one time per program year in the form of the first month's rent as well as delinquent rent. **Deposits are not allowable.** Payment of late fees or interest charges are not allowable.
- Gas and Electric utilities are limited to one time per program year. Deposits or start up costs are not acceptable. Payment of late fees or interest charges are not allowable.
- Car insurance is limited to the start-up cost and per month premium. No pre-payment of premiums are allowable. Payment of late fees or interest charges are not allowable.

Transportation Assistance

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 transportation needs for five days of travel in one week. If the client travels a distance greater than 45 miles one way to and from 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.

Childcare Costs

Childcare costs are payable at 100%. Participant must provide proof that they were determined ineligible by FSD's childcare assistance program. 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. Documentation of need and linkage to authorized activity must be in a case note.

Direct Work and School Related Expenses

Direct work and school related expenses such as tools, equipment, work/school attire, uniforms, etc. are allowed.

Exceptions to Policy

Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Director of Workforce Development and the current Sub-contractor Director, based upon a written justification from the participant.