

## Workforce Solutions

### POLICY

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| <b>CATEGORY:</b>   | <b>Skills Solutions</b>    | <b>No.: 002.11</b> |
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>    | <b>Supportive Services</b> |                    |
| <b>SUPERSEDES:</b> | <b>002.10</b>              |                    |
| <b>EFFECTIVE:</b>  | <b>July 3, 2017</b>        |                    |
| <b>RE-ADOPT:</b>   |                            |                    |
| <b>REVISE:</b>     | <b>June 25, 2020</b>       |                    |
| <b>RESCIND:</b>    |                            |                    |

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### POLICY

Supportive services shall be provided as needed to program customers to remove barriers from participation in skills development services or training, subject to availability of resources and funding, and in which it has been determined that other funds are not available. All expenses must be reasonable and necessary to assist a customer in achieving the goals of his or her Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Family Employment Plan (FEP).

The Board has set the maximum allowable cost for each specific supportive service. Any costs that exceed the maximum allowable cost will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If deemed appropriate and reasonable and documentation is provided, the Contractor shall be reimbursed for the costs in excess of the maximum, subject to the availability of resources and funding. Career Counselors will use the appropriate fund code for program customers that are accessing supportive services.

The Board, in consultation with the Contractor and other community service providers, will ensure resource and service coordination in the Board area to avoid duplication of services and ensure maximization of funds.

Note: The supportive service categories below include “caps” or maximum dollar amounts for which customers may receive supportive services. These caps are in place for one calendar year beginning with the date of the issuance of the first supportive service payment in the category (i.e., emergency utility assistance, transportation assistance). Caps apply to the supportive service received. For example, if a customer receives emergency utility assistance under “training related expenses” and hits the cap of \$400 per year, the customer will NOT qualify for an additional \$400 of emergency utility assistance under “work-related” expenses for that year.

The Contractor must provide supportive services timely. Child care and transportation must be arranged prior to a customer’s participation in an activity, such as an Employment Planning Session (EPS), if lack of supportive services will cause a customer to be unable to participate in a mandatory activity. If not requested prior to participation, childcare and

transportation assistance should be provided on the first day of participation if the need is assessed. Work-related expenses must be provided as soon as possible so as not to prevent or delay the customer's participation.

The Contractor will develop a system which ensures the timely provision of supportive services. Where Board fiscal staff may be required to issue supportive service payments by check, a written process will be jointly developed and agreed to by the Contractor and Board staff.

Supportive services should only be provided to customers who are participating in appropriate activities as planned and documented in the customer's employment plan. If a customer fails to participate, supportive services may be discontinued.

### **Related Party Transactions**

It is permissible for supportive services to be paid for a program customer when the name of the customer is not listed as the owner/responsible party (on the vehicle title/lease/mortgage/utility account) but the customer directly benefits from that service (i.e., customer uses the vehicle, lives at the residence). In these situations, a signed statement indicating that the customer resides at the address where support services are needed (i.e., rent/mortgage/utility assistance) and a copy of the lease/mortgage/utility bill must be provided. See Transportation Expenses below for requirements when a vehicle in need of repair is owned by someone other than the customer.

Receipts for all supportive services purchases are required and must be filed in the customer's case file. Exceptions: In the event that the customer fails to provide the purchase receipt, appropriate documentation in the TWIST counselor notes is required.

The Contractor, on a case-by-case basis, shall evaluate payments in excess of stated limits. Documentation in the customer's file must be evident to determine reasonableness of cost. Signatures are required from both Center Management and the Contractor's Fiscal department.

### **Reimbursements**

Supportive services in the form of reimbursement shall be provided to eligible participants under the SNAP E&T program following program guidelines and to program customers as an alternative means of supportive services. The contractor shall identify the type of supportive services that can be reimbursed and procedures in which reimbursements shall be provided. Receipts for all approved reimbursable supportive services are required.

### **Transportation Expenses**

Transportation assistance shall be provided, if needed, to enable a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) applicant/recipient or program customers to participate in

employment or training activities if alternative transportation resources are not available to the customer.

1. Personal transportation assistance may be provided to customers who need such assistance at a rate that is consistent with the approved state rate for mileage reimbursement up to \$200 per month.
2. Contractor will adjust planned transportation assistance as needed, if customer did not participate during the period for which the transportation assistance was provided.

Personal Transportation Assistance: includes bus passes, gas cards, mileage reimbursement for transportation expenses.

Vehicle-related Transportation Assistance: includes car repairs, car insurance, driver's license fees (including renewals), auto inspection, auto registration fees, consumables (e.g., tires) and license plate registration.

1. Prepayment for a customer's vehicle repairs is prohibited. Larger and more involved expenses will require bids and are payable directly to the vendor after completion of repairs and receipt of invoice.
2. Payments for car insurance, tires, registration, and other transportation-related expenses other than repairs also are payable directly to the vendor after receipt of invoice.
3. Customers must demonstrate ownership of a vehicle before any payment of expenses for repairs, insurance, or registration.
  - a. If the vehicle is owned by an individual other than the customer, the following steps must be followed:
    - i. Before inclusion of the vehicle's use in an IEP or FEP, a signed statement indicating that the customer has use of the vehicle for employment-related purposes, along with a copy of supporting ownership documentation, must be provided; and
    - ii. Before repairing a third-party vehicle, a hold harmless agreement or other protection is signed by the vehicle owner and maintained in the customer's case file.

## **Work-Related Expenses**

If other resources are not available, work-related expenses necessary for a TANF applicant/recipient or a program customer to accept or retain a specific and verified job offer paying at least the federal minimum wage may be provided or reimbursed for a program customer. Work-related expenses may include but are not limited to, uniforms, clothing for work, equipment, transportation, car repairs, housing expenses, and the cost of employment required examinations or certificates. SNAP E&T customers who have secured employment may also receive assistance with work related expenses for up to 90 days according to the terms outlined in the SNAP guide, Section B-115. The following vehicle-related transportation assistance will only be provided to mandatory work registrants:

- car repairs;
- purchase of automobile tires; and

- purchase of automobile batteries.

SNAP E&T funding cannot be used to pay for the following transportation-related expenses:

- automobile insurance
- vehicle inspection
- vehicle registration

As a general rule, the Board will reimburse the Contractor for work-related expenses up to \$400 per year. Exceptions to the limit include:

1. Vehicle-related Transportation Assistance up to \$800 per customer per year.\*
2. Emergency Utility Assistance up to \$200 per month and up to \$400 per year. These payments are limited to water, light, gas and phone service (this may include cell phone service only if this is the customer's primary phone and the customer does not have access to alternate phone service in their primary residence). \*\*
3. Emergency Housing Assistance up to 3 months and not to exceed \$600 per year.

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### **Training-Related Expenses**

If other resources are inadequate or not available, training-related expenses necessary for a program customer to continue participation in training programs may be provided. Training-related expenses may include, but are not limited to: tools, uniforms, required clothing, equipment, transportation, car repairs, housing expenses, and the cost of vocationally required examinations or certificates. Training-related assistance may also include payment of a short-term training or class which completes a gap in baseline knowledge for a given industry sector including OSHA Safety training; Texas Food Handler training; and Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) training. As a general rule, the Board will reimburse the Contractor for training-related expenses up to \$400 per customer per year. Exceptions to this limit include:

1. Vehicle-related Transportation Assistance up to \$800 per customer per year.\*
  2. Emergency Utility Assistance up to \$200 per month and up to \$400 per year. These payments are limited to water, electricity, gas, and phone service (this may include cell phone service only if this is the customer's primary phone and the customer does not have access to alternate phone service in their primary residence). \*\*
  3. Emergency Housing Assistance up to 3 months and not to exceed \$600 per year.
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4. School required fees for training related expenses such as, but not limited to tools, equipment, uniforms/clothing, books and supplies, and testing fees.\*\*\*

### **Notes:**

- \* Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) customers may be eligible for TAA-funded transportation and subsistence payments not subject to any caps; but must not be used

for expenses such as vehicle repairs, car insurance, registration, or consumables. Refer to TAA guidelines to determine whether an approved training location is within the TAA customer's local commuting area.

**\*\* SNAP Customers:** Section B-205 of TWC's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Guide requires that housing assistance such as rent or utility payments can be provided:

- For SNAP recipients participating in regular SNAP E&T activities for no more than two months in a 12 calendar month period; and
- After a SNAP recipient has entered full-time employment for no more than two occurrences in a 90-day period.

**\*\*\*TAA Customers:** Any training expense required by the training provider for every student enrolled in a course must be included in the TAA-funded Reemployment Plan, and will not be payable as a supportive service through WIOA.

### **GED Testing Payments**

The Board shall reimburse the Contractor the cost of GED testing and a maximum of one (1) retest per subject according to the vendor's published prices, or according to the terms of any valid agreement the Board may have entered into with the vendor, if applicable.

### **Child Care Services**

Child care services will be provided in accordance with the Texas Workforce Commission Child Care Services Rules, chapter 809.

## **PROCEDURES**

The Contractor will establish procedures for the provision of supportive services in accordance with this policy and all applicable program rules and regulations.

## **REFERENCE**

SNAP E&T Guide, Section B-200: Support Services  
WD Letter 06-17  
WD Letter 07-17  
Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletin 178, Change 3

## **INTENT**

To ensure the provision of supportive services as required in the above reference regulations and to provide appropriate oversight of customer services and funds utilization.