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| Policy No. | **21** |
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| Approval | GNWDB |

**Supportive Service Policy**

**Reference**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) 134; 20 CFR §§ 680.900-680.970; TEGL 19-16, Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL) Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs Policy.

**Policy**

Supportive services are available for WIOA Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs. Supportive services are one of the 14 youth elements that must be made available to participants.

Supportive services are services that are reasonable and necessary to enable a participant to take part in career services, training services, or youth employment and training activities. Supportive services should not duplicate funds provided by another source. Participants in need of supportive services should be referred to other community resources before WIOA Title 1 funds the service. It may be applicable to cost share with other service providers.

The frequency and utilization of supportive services is determined on an individual basis based on the participant’s Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individual Service Strategy (ISS). Supportive service dollars are not guaranteed as they are based on availability of program funds.

Supportive services are not intended to meet every need of the participant. Rather, they provide temporary assistance. For this reason, staff should assist the participant in developing a plan to cover the supported cost once WIOA Title 1 funds are no longer appropriate for the individual.

**Payments are not allowed for:**

* Expenses incurred prior to enrollment in a WIOA program.
* Business start-up costs.
* Rental or utility deposits

**Supportive Services**

1. **Linkages to community services**

Assistance in providing linkages, referrals, and accurate information about the availability of supportive service assistance not provided or funded by WIOA. These services may include, but are not limited to Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program (SNAP) benefits, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), veteran’s assistance funds, financial assistance for education, county public assistance funds, etc.

1. **Assistance with transportation**

Transportation assistance may include, but is not limited to mileage reimbursement, auto repairs, vehicle liability insurance, bus, or other transportation fares.

Mileage reimbursement assistance may be provided to assist a participant that travels at least 15 miles one-way to get to employment, training, education, work experience, and/ or the local career center. Mileage reimbursement assistance has no cap limit besides the maximum transportation limit of $2500.

Gas vouchers may be provided to assist a participant that travels at least 15 miles one-way to get to employment, training, education, work experience, and/or the local career center. Gas voucher assistance has no cap besides the maximum transportation limit of $2500.

Vehicle liability insurance is limited to three months of liability insurance. Vehicle liability insurance is capped at $300.

Auto repair payments are limited to repairs of an immediate need. Normal vehicle maintenance costs are not allowed. Auto repairs (including towing) is capped at $800.

**Maximum limit:** Transportation limit per participant is $2500. This is not a minimum or flat funded amount, rather the amount of supportive services used are based on individual need.

1. **Assistance with child care and dependent care**

Child care and dependent care assistance may be utilized to help a participant meet their family care needs during WIOA Title I program participation. Dependent care service providers are selected by the participant. Child care and dependent care is only provided for children related by blood, marriage or decree of court, who are living in the participant’s residence. Child care and dependent providers must be licensed in order for direct payment or reimbursement. Participants who are employed or attending training and in need of dependent care, should be referred to community dependent care assistance program(s). Ensure WIOA Title I funds do not duplicate childcare assistance available from another source. Participants should be encouraged to take advantage of financial literacy services to assist them with an on-going plan to pay for their dependent care expenses.

**Determine allowed dependent care cost**

If a participant is receiving child care assistance from another agency, WIOA Title I will pay for the allowed dependent care costs after subtracting the received child care assistance amount. Supporting documentation in this instance must include verification of outside child care assistance.

**Maximum limit:** Child care and dependent care limit per participant is $1000. This is not a minimum or flat funded amount, rather the amount of supportive services used are based on individual need.

1. **Assistance with housing**

Housing assistance provided to participants allows participants to maintain or obtain adequate or temporary shelter while participating in WIOA Title I services. Housing assistance may include, but is not limited to the cost for rent, mortgage payment, temporary housing in a motel/hotel or apartment and utility payments. Housing assistance is an emergency intervention; a plan must be established to ensure the client will be able to meet long-term housing needs. Participants should be encouraged to take advantage of financial literacy services to assist them with an on-going plan to pay for their housing expenses.

**Maximum limit:** Housing limit per participant is $1000. This is not a minimum or flat funded amount, rather the amount of supportive services used are based on individual need.

1. **Assistance with relocation and pre-employment interviews**

Supportive service funds may be utilized to assist a participant with the cost of relocation and pre-employment interviews. Relocation and pre-employment interview assistance is limited to unemployed participants who cannot obtain employment within their commuting area (commute area is considered to be 50 miles) that meets their skill level and/or has a sufficient wage. The relocation or pre-employment interview must be located in Nebraska and for permanent employment. The participant must have secured self-sufficient, long-term employment that has been verified in writing outside their commuting area or have secured a pre-employment interview, documented by a letter from the prospective employer outside their commuting area. Relocation and pre-employment expenses may include:

1. Transportation and lodging for the participant’s pre-employment interview
2. Transportation for the participant to the relocation area
3. Lodging for the participant during the relocation transition
4. Transportation of household goods to the relocation area including the cost of renting a trailer, moving truck, or hiring a commercial carrier
5. Temporary storage (up to 60 days) of household effects

**Maximum limit:** Relocation and pre-employment interview limit per participant is $2000. This is not a minimum or flat funded amount, rather the amount of supportive services used are based on individual need

1. **Assistance with educational testing**

Supportive service funds may be utilized to assist a participant with the cost of an exam or educational test to enable them to advance along a career or educational pathway. Examples include but are not limited to ACT exams, high school equivalency exams, NCLEX exam, LPN exam, etc.

**Maximum limit:** There is no limit on educational testing besides the lifetime supportive service cap but must be based on individual need.

1. **Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.**

Supportive service funds may be utilized to assist a participant with the cost of employment and training-related applications, exams, or tests to enable them to advance along a career pathway. Examples include but are not limited to fees for post-secondary applications, re-licensing, driver’s licenses, background checks, finger printing, etc.

**Maximum limit:** Employment and training-related cost limit per participant is $1000. This is not a minimum or flat funded amount, rather the amount of supportive services used are based on individual need.

1. **Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities**

Support service funds may be utilized to assist a participant who needs workplace accommodations to enable them to participate in employment, training, education, work experience, career center services, or job searching.

**Maximum limit:** There is no limit on reasonable accommodations besides the lifetime supportive service cap but must be based on individual need.

1. **Legal aid services**

Assistance in providing linkages, referrals, and accurate information about the availability of legal aid services in Nebraska. This is a non-funded service.

1. **Referrals to health care**

Supportive service funds may be utilized to assist a participant with the cost of medical or counseling services. Examples include but are not limited to DOT physicals, drug screens, required immunizations, eyeglasses, etc.

Health care costs are limited to immediate or emergency needs. Routine doctor visit costs are not allowed.

Eyeglasses costs require administrative approval.

**Maximum limit:** Health care limit per participant is $800. This is not a minimum or flat funded amount, rather the amount of supportive services used are based on individual need.

1. **Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools**

Supportive service funds may be utilized to assist a participant in proper attire and work-related tools for obtaining or maintain employment and/ or training. Examples include but are not limited to scrubs, tools, boots, etc.

**Maximum limit:** Work attire and work-related tools limit per participant is $2000. This is not a minimum or flat funded amount, rather the amount of supportive services used are based on individual need.

1. **Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes**

Supportive service funds may be utilized to assist a participant attending a WIOA approved postsecondary education program with books, fees (non-education) and other necessary items related to their education. Examples include but are not limited to required books, campus parking permits, computer software (Adobe, Microsoft Office), etc.

Schools supplies are not allowed. These include flash drive, pens, notebooks, etc.

Computers may be purchased if it is determined that a personal computer is necessary to participate and complete an approved training program and the participant has no other reasonably available sources for computer access. Computer purchase approvals will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Administrative Entity.

**Maximum limit:** There is no other limit on books and supplies besides the lifetime supportive service cap and must be based on individual need.

1. **Needs-Related Payments**

Needs-related payments provide financial assistance to participants for the purpose of enabling them to participate in training. Unlike other supportive services, in order to qualify for needs related payments a participant MUST be enrolled in training.

**Eligibility requirements for Needs-Related Payments**

To receive needs-related payments a dislocated worker must meet criteria 1 or 2:

1. Be unemployed; and
   1. No longer qualifies for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment allowance under TAA; and
   2. Be enrolled in a program of training service by the end of the 13th week after the most recent layoff that resulted in a determination of the worker’s eligibility as a dislocated worker, or, if later, by the end of the 8th week after the worker is informed that a short-term layoff will exceed 6 months.
2. Be unemployed and does not qualify for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment assistance under TAA and enrolled in a program of training services.

**Payments**

Needs-related payments may be provided while a participant is waiting for training if the participant has been accepted in a training program that will begin within 30 calendar days.

1. Greater Nebraska does not authorize needs-related payments for Adults or Youth.
2. For dislocated workers, payments must not exceed the greater of either of the following levels:
3. The applicable weekly level of the unemployment compensation benefit, for participants who were eligible for unemployment compensation as a result of the qualifying dislocation; or
4. The poverty level for an equivalent period, for participants who did not qualify for unemployment compensation as a result of the qualifying layoff. The weekly payment level must be adjusted to reflect changes in total family income.

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| 2018 Poverty Guidelines/ Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) | | | |
| **Persons in Family/Household** | **Poverty Guideline** | **LLSIL** | **70% LLSIL** |
| 1 | $12,140 | 13,255 | 9,278 |
| 2 | 16,460 | 21,703 | 15,192 |
| 3 | 20,780 | 29,798 | 20,859 |
| 4 | 25,100 | 36,784 | 25,749 |
| 5 | 29,420 | 43,418 | 30,392 |
| 6 | 33,740 | 50,774 | 35,542 |
| 7 | 38,060 | 58,130 | 40,691 |
| 8 | 42,380 | 65,486 | 45,840 |

Poverty Guideline: For families/households with more than 8 persons, add $4,320 for each additional person.

LLSIL: For families with more than 8 persons, add $7,356 for each addition person.

The lower income level is used for determining weekly payment level.

Example: A family size of 1 would receive $178/ week for a maximum of eight weeks. ($9,278/52 weeks = $178.42)

**Maximum limit:** Needs-related payments limit per participant is the maximum weekly unemployment compensation benefit amount times eight and can be received for a maximum of eight weeks. (Example: $414\*8= $3312) This is not a minimum or flat funded amount, rather the amount of supportive services used are based on individual need.

**Maximum Payment**

Supportive services cannot exceed $4000 for the participant’s entire duration in the program and must follow the maximum payment limits set for specific services. Needs-related payments do not count towards the supportive service maximum and are in addition to life time limits. Supportive service costs are excluded as a part of the training costs.

**Documentation**

The participant need, necessity of the supportive service, and lack of similar services available in the community must be documented in a case note and be included in the IEP or ISS. A NEworks activity must also be opened.

When multiple options are available for receiving supportive services, documentation must show that a reasonable effort was made to determine the lowest competitive cost available was chosen. Example: Receiving at least two separate quotes for vehicle repairs.

**Disclaimer**

This policy is based on Greater Nebraska’s reading of the applicable statutes, regulations, rules and guidance released by the U.S. Government and the State of Nebraska. This policy is subject to change as revised or additional statutes, regulations, rules and guidance are issued.