



## CENTRAL WESTERN MAINE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD LOCAL AREA POLICY ISSUANCE

Policy: **SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

Effective Date: **12/22/2022**

Authority: **WIOA Sec. 134(d)(2)(H), 129(c)(2)(iv)(G), 20 CFR 680.900-910.20 CFR 681.570**

### **General Requirements for Provision of Supportive Services**

- Supportive services must be reasonable and necessary to support eligible participants in their active participation in career or training activities.
- Supportive services must only be provided to participants who are unable to obtain them through other programs providing such services and must not duplicate services they receive through other programs.
- Need for supportive services is identified through an initial and/or comprehensive assessment.
- In assessing appropriateness of supportive services, staff will refer participants to partner agencies and community resources that provide such services and coordinate cost-sharing on the participant's behalf with such agencies as applicable.
- Need for supportive services must be documented in the participant Employment/Training Plan.
- Staff must receive advance approval before committing to provision of supportive services.
- Supportive services are not intended to meet every need of the participant; staff should assist the participant in developing a plan to cover such costs once WIOA funds are no longer available or appropriate for the individual. Such plan must be documented in case notes in the participant file in Maine JobLink.

### **Approval and Payments Process**

- Supportive services payments must be approved through an authorization process in Maine JobLink.
- The authorization process must take place prior to provision of or payment of supportive services.
- Payments for supportive services typically go to the vendor, business, or agency providing the service, but may be paid directly to the participant in the form of a reimbursement, such as for mileage, or in the case of emergencies or exceptional circumstances – which must be documented in case notes.
- In certain exceptions or emergencies, authorization for payment of the emergency supportive service may take place after the services have been received.
- Payments will only be made when an invoice and/or supporting documentation is received from the participant or vendor.
- Approval of supportive services are done on an individual case-by-case basis. The specific circumstances of each participant are reviewed as part of the approval process.
- WIOA service providers are only to pay for the least expensive appropriate supportive service option accessible to the participant unless provided with justification for a specific provider. Exceptions must be documented in case notes in Maine JobLink.
- Budgets and subsequent payments for supportive services must be entered in Maine JobLink.

### **Availability of Supportive Services to Adult / Dislocated Workers versus Youth**

- Supportive services for Adults and Dislocated Workers are only available during active participation in career or training activities outlined in the Employment and Training Plan and cannot be provided after exit.
- Supportive services for Youth may be provided during active participation and during Follow-up after exit as appropriate and necessary. Such services must be documented in case notes.



## Guidelines on Supportive Services Amounts

The Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board (CWMWDB) has developed the following cost guidelines which are subject to change upon review by the program policy committee and CWMWDB.

- Any exception to these guidelines must be approved in writing by the Executive Director of CWMWDB. Other financial resources the participant is able to secure will be a factor in determining the amount of any such exception.
- CWMWDB has determined that the total of any/all supportive services received by an individual participant may not exceed \$3,000 per participant per (1) year at the date of receipt of first supportive service, with a limit of two (2) consecutive years.
- These guidelines also apply to participants of National Dislocated Worker Grants

## Supportive Service Categories

### Transportation:

1. Mileage: Service providers may use mileage reimbursement (signed travel sheets) or gas cards to support the cost of travel to training, employment, and/or specific job prospects (interview, testing, orientation, job shadowing, etc.). Provider policies on formula for issuance of gas cards or mileage reimbursement shall be evident and participant receipts shall be clearly documented in case files. Mileage will be reimbursed at the prevailing state rate.
2. Bus or Ferry Tickets: are allowable transportation costs.
3. Driver's License/Driver's Education (Class C): including driving time **must not exceed \$750**
4. Vehicle Repairs: Total expenses for vehicle repair may **not exceed \$1,000**. Repairs are only allowed for required correction/repair of vehicle deficiencies necessary to pass State Inspection (i.e.: failure of State Inspection) and/or ability to operate the vehicle. Only for the primary mode of transportation during the training period will be eligible for repairs. This policy may cover costs even if the primary customer is unable to drive but has retained a "driver" for the vehicle to be used for the purposes enumerated in 1.) above.
  - a. If tires are needed to pass inspection, only all-season tires will be allowed.
  - b. A minimum of one written itemized estimate/quote authorized with a mechanic's sign-off must be on file. The service provider may request a second quote if the costs are questionable.
5. Registration / Liability Insurance: Reimbursement is allowed for registration/liability insurance only if the participant provides proof of payment to WDS staff. Documentation of proof of payment must be uploaded to the participant file for reimbursement to take place. Registration reimbursement can be provided one time per participant for **up to \$300**.

### Childcare:

Childcare payment will be based on current DHHS guidelines. Due to the rural nature of the local area, payments can be made to a licensed and/or license exempt childcare provider. This includes a family member who is a licensed childcare provider operating a business with the approval of the CWMWDB Executive Director. Childcare payments will not be made when a member of the participants household is available to provide childcare during the hours the participant is engaged in training. **Payment amounts will be in accordance with the DHHS payment scale.**



### **Clothing / Uniforms:**

Such costs are allowable when noted as a need in the participant training/employment plan **not to exceed \$350**.

### **Safety Equipment:**

Such equipment may be covered if required by an employer or training provider to meet safety standards necessary to obtain and retain employment. Examples include Personal Protective Equipment, steel-toed boots, safety glasses, helmet, safety gloves, etc. Staff must only approve the lowest bid/costs which **cannot exceed \$500**. Staff must refer to the authorized vendor list, and document in Maine JobLink that they have prices with various vendors, as applicable to the request. If there is lack of product availability due to supply chain issues and/or the participant's access to available vendors is limited, an exception may be made. Justification for such must be identified in case notes. If employers, as part of the normal course of hiring, supply the safety equipment, then the equipment must not be purchased for the participant as they should be treated the same as other new hires.

### **Tools:**

Payment for tools is **capped at \$1,000**. If the employer requires applicants to have tools to obtain employment, a valid job offer from the employer must be verified prior to purchase. If employers usually supply tools, then they will not be purchased for the participant as they should be treated the same as other new hires. If tools are purchased for training, they must be required as part of the curriculum. If the training is not completed, every effort will be made to have the tools returned to the service provider.

### **Medical/Optical/Dental:**

1. Medical supportive services must be necessary to complete a training course, employment-related, or required for admission into training. Written documentation from a medical professional stating that an eye/hearing exam, glasses/hearing aid, dental work, or medical equipment is necessary for participation in training and/or employment will be sufficient proof of the need for these services. Documents must be recorded in case notes and/or the Employment/Training Plan. No-cost clinics, MaineCare, and General Assistance must be considered prior to expending funds on medical services. Support may include glasses, eye exams, physicals, inoculations, lab fees, drug testing, etc. Prescription drugs are **NOT** an allowable expense. Medical, dental, and optical services/equipment are limited to a **combined maximum of \$1200**.
2. Mental Health/Substance abuse treatments are **not covered**. Staff will make referrals to appropriate agencies.

### **Miscellaneous Emergency/Housing:**

Emergency needs are items not previously covered under this policy. Documentation supporting the need and establishing that the items or services are required to enable the participant to continue her/his activity in the program and/or to obtain or retain employment must be clear. Support items in this category shall **not exceed \$1,500**, which may include Housing Assistance. Examples this category may cover include items such as short-term housing (for purposes of emergency/safety) or reconnecting electrical power. Supportive Services under this category are based upon necessity for completion of employment, education, and training activities established in the participant's Employment/Training Plan, availability of funds, and are only for expenses not available from other sources such as General Assistance (GA), Refugee Assistance (RA), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), food pantries, etc. Insurance coverage costs are not allowed and may not be covered as an emergency cost.



### Occupational Licensing /Testing

Items covered may include applications, tests, and certification exams. Such items may **not exceed \$400** and must be documented as necessary to complete training or attain employment.

### Finger Printing and Criminal Background Checks

Such costs may be covered under supportive services if required and included in the participant training plan. Such costs **may not exceed \$100** and must be documented as required for attainment of employment.

### Technology

1. Computer/software: If a participant does not have reasonable access to a computer or software of sufficient capacity required for employment or training, then funds may be used to contribute up to \$600 for either the purchase of a new or refurbished computer, or to upgrade an old one, whichever is the least expensive method, or for required software to meet the employment or training need. The purchase, upgrade, or software must be a requirement for employment or training and documented in the participant's plan. A computer or software will not be purchased if the employer normally provides these items. A purchase, upgrade, or software will be provided one time only. Damaged, lost, or stolen computers or software will not be replaced. The cost for a computer/software or a combination of the two shall **not exceed \$600**.
2. Internet Access: Internet bills do qualify for a **maximum of \$50 per month**, only during the months the participant is enrolled in full-time (as consistent with the institution) remote learning, **for a maximum of \$600** every 12 months. Special equipment for internet access shall be covered by the section 1.) above.
3. Cell Phones: If a participant does not have reasonable access to a phone of sufficient capacity for job search, employment, or training, then funds can be used to contribute up to **\$100 toward the purchase of a new phone**. The phone must be purchased outright and not on a plan. The purchase must enable the participant to communicate with their WIOA workforce specialist or a be requirement for employment or training and must be documented in the participant's plan. Other options, such as SafeLink Wireless, must be pursued. A phone will not be purchased if the employer normally provides one to employees. A purchase will be provided one time only. If a computer and internet access has already been purchased for the participant, these can be used in lieu of a phone for job search or training. If a participant needs phone minutes and is unable to purchase them, then funds may be contributed **up to \$300** to buy such minutes. Minutes will be purchased in the most cost-effective increments during the time the participant is enrolled in the program and actively engaged in career/job search, training, or work-related activities.

### School Materials and Fees

Supplies required for students enrolled in approved occupational training and/or education may be purchased but must **not exceed \$500**. Required supplies must be listed as part of the course syllabus, school policy, or in a letter from the instructor, or supplies such as a backpack, notebooks, pencils, highlighters, etc., that may present a hardship for participants who cannot afford these items.

See Appendix A – for Supportive Service Cost Caps



## APPENDIX- A

Supportive Services are based upon necessity, availability of funds, and are for expenses not covered by insurance or another agency or grant. Supporting documentation must be uploaded to Maine JobLink. Supportive Services are limited to **\$3,000** per participant per year, starting at the date of the first supportive service(s) provided with a limit of two successive years.

### Allowable Maximum Amounts for Supportive Services

#### A. Transportation:

- Vehicle repairs \$1,000.00
- Transportation: mileage reimbursement Prevailing State rate
- Driver's Education (Class C license) \$750.00
- Transportation: liability insurance/registration \$300.00

#### B. Childcare

use current DHHS guidelines

#### C. Clothing/Uniforms

\$350.00

#### D. Safety Equipment

\$500.00

#### E. Tools

\$1,000.00

#### F. Medical/Dental/Optical: services/equipment and supplies

\$1200.00

#### G. Miscellaneous Emergency/Housing

\$1500.00

#### H. Licensing and Testing

\$400.00

#### I. Fingerprinting and Criminal Background Checks

\$100.00

#### J. Technology:

- Computer and/or Software \$600.00
- Internet Reimbursement \$50/month; \$600/12 months
- Phone \$100.00
- Phone minutes \$300.00

#### L. School Materials

\$500.00