

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES POLICY

The St. Charles Region defines Supportive Services as those services necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) and administered through the St. Charles County Workforce Development Board. This policy provides guidelines for administering local Supportive Service which can be provided, when funds are available, to enable individuals to participate in WIOA activities.

Supportive Service payments can be requested on an individual basis for specific needs. Because WIOA programs are not an entitlement, Supportive Service payments are made on a case-by-case basis and only when determined necessary and reasonable. Payments will not be made for non-WIOA activities or for items that are not necessary for participation in a WIOA activity.

Supportive Services

When funding permits, the Region may pay the following types of supportive service:

- Transportation
- Needs-related payments
- Work attire
- Work-related tools
- Testing fees
- Emergency aid
- Other assistance approved on a case by case basis to allow program participation

The extent of Supportive Services provided will vary based on the customer's needs, and the region's availability of funds and resources. All Supportive Services will be approved on a case by case basis.

Eligibility

In order to receive supportive service, an individual must be:

- Participating in a locally administered WIOA activity
- Unable to obtain Supportive Services themselves or via their support network
- Unable to obtain Supportive Services through other programs such as community agencies, religious entities or other resources that may provide such services; and
- Demonstrate a need for assistance to enable him/her to participate.

Documentation

A statement that a customer "needs" a Supportive Service will not justify the payment of these expenses. The determination of financial need will be documented through the case management system's Service Notes.

The 'Financial Needs' tab in the case management system will begin determining customer need. The tab has a 'List of Values' for the types of "Monthly Household Resources" and "Monthly Household Expenditures". These resources and expenditures are automatically calculated and the "Net Difference" between the two displayed. This will only determine customer need, the staff and customer must seek all other resources and assistance to fulfill this need before WIOA supportive service can be considered.

Due to funding limitations, WIOA Supportive Service is the last resource to be used. All attempts to find other supportive service funding and the reasons for needing WIOA funding will be documented in the case management system's Service Notes. The availability of community resources vary. The region will keep a listing of these resources.

Examples of possible community resources:

- Faith-based organizations;
- Non-profit organizations;
- Women's shelters;
- Clothes closets;
- Pro bono medical, dental, and legal services (may or may not need to be accessed through an organization);
- Government assistance such as: local health departments, WIC, assistive technology reimbursement programs, MO HealthNet, etc.;
- Local transportation programs; and
- Statewide and nationwide organizations such as: United Way, Goodwill, Salvation Army, etc.

All Supportive Service payments will be documented in the case management system. This allows Regions to determine the overall amount of supportive service paid to any one individual participant.

Employment Plan (EP)

The EP is an ongoing strategy, jointly developed by the customer and staff, that identifies the customer's employment goals; the appropriate achievement objective(s); and the appropriate combination of services to achieve the employment goals. A supportive service must be necessary for the customer to achieve the goals outlined in the EP. Therefore, it is imperative the goals listed on the EP are consistent with what the customer intends to achieve.

Caps

The Region will cap the following specific supportive services:

Transportation – Mileage

If/when the region pays mileage; it will pay a flat rate of \$10 per day for every day the participant is to attend the WIOA activity.

Other Transportation costs

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) mileage reimbursement includes direct and indirect vehicle expenses. Before the region pays other transportation costs when the participant is also receiving mileage, staff will determine if the mileage being paid is equivalent to the IRS mileage reimbursement. If it is, no other direct or indirect transportation costs will be paid to that participant. If mileage is not equivalent to the IRS mileage reimbursement, other transportation cost may be provided up to the full IRS mileage equivalent. However, the other vehicle expenses will only be paid if it is determined and documented by staff to be reasonable and necessary to participate in the WIOA activity leading to the goals of the EP.

Needs-Related Payments (NRP)

When funding allows, NRPs may be provided to enable participation in training. NRP will be paid at \$25 per day for every day the participant is scheduled to attend training.

Annual Cap of combined supportive service

Each supportive service will continue as long as all original eligibility requirements remain in place. (e.g., continued participation in a WIOA activity, continued demonstrated need, etc) However, the Region may stop or reduce supportive service payments due to limited local funds or a change in the participant's need.

The Region will cap the annual dollar amount that can be paid to any individual participant for all supportive services to no more than \$8,500 per year per participant.

In rare instances, this cap may be waived by the Director of the local WIOA Region.

The procedure to pay supportive services beyond the capped amount includes the participant submitting a written statement that would justify such a waiver. The participant must be making progress in the program and maintain regular contact with their designated case manager. Once the written statement is received the director must ensure the availability of funds before approval of the requested waiver. The waiver will be approved for a specific time period or dollar amount.

Supportive Service paid by other Regions

Staff will review the customer's Supportive Service payments in the case management system. All Supportive Service payments will be calculated prior to authorizing additional funding, regardless of the Region making the payments. Prior supportive service will be used to determine local funding limits.

WIOA activities eligible for Supportive Service

Individuals may receive supportive services when enrolled in the following WIOA training activities:

Classroom Training
Apprenticeship Training
AEL testing

On the Job Training
Work Experience

Overpayment and Repayment

In the event of overpayment, said overpayment may be recovered by offsetting any future payments under the WIOA to which the participant may become entitled or repayment will be sought from the participant.

Pell Grants

Pell grants may be issued to the participant to use for living expenses in lieu of Need Related Payments. A need must be documented on the Needs Related Payment Determination Form.

Emergency Aid

Emergency Aid is a one time or rare expense paid to allow a customer to continue participating in WIOA activities such as school, work experience, OJT, etc. If the customer encounters extreme financial difficulty, staff will assist him/her with needed financial information (development of a budget, credit counseling, debt management, etc.). Emergency aid payments will only be paid if funds are available for supportive service and there no other resources are available to the participant. Such aid will be well documented in the case management system. If there is confidential information, Service Notes should refer to the "hard" file.

As with other supportive service, all other options will be sought first. For example, heating and cooling assistance could be pursued through resources such as: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Salvation Army's "Heat Share", local programs (e.g., Ameren UE's "Dollar More," Kansas City Power & Light's "Dollar Aide," etc.), and faith-based organizations.

Coordinating with Trade Act Funding

If a customer is enrolled in Trade Act, this funding source will be utilized prior to WIOA funding. If the customer needs resources not covered by Trade Act, local policy will be followed to provide these wrap-around services.

Coordinating with Dislocated Worker Grants (DWG)

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

Responsibilities

It will be the responsibility of staff to provide accurate information to the customer including:

- If supportive services are requested or determined necessary, if he/she is eligible
- If he/she has is no longer eligible to receive the supportive service for any reason (i.e. cap met, no longer has a need, etc.)
- The requirements (e.g., paperwork, attending classes, etc.) to receive the Supportive Service.

Continued Eligibility for Supportive Service

Participants may periodically be asked to submit documentation of need to continue receiving Supportive Service. This will be requested when a case manager has reason to suspect a change in financial circumstance or on an annual basis.

Participants may request and be determined in need of Supportive Service at any point in their training participation should the need arise.