

2.2 Support Services

Revised ~~May 3, 2024~~ October 18, 2024

Legal References:

- [RCW 74.08.090 & 74.04.050](#)
- [WAC 388-310-0800](#)
- *Public Law 104-193 Sec. 407*

The Support Services section includes:

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2.2.2 What is the purpose of Support Services?

The purpose of WorkFirst support services is to offer a resource for participants who are **actively** engaged in ~~job search or work~~ activities. Some support services are also available to participants if they have a need while they are participating in other activities, ~~(such as completion of the WorkFirst Orientation), with the main focus of employment or advancing in employment.~~ The ~~support service chart in WAC 388-310-0800 shows the support services categories and when they can be offered.~~

Support services should be provided based on the **immediate** needs of the participant. ~~The category recommendations should not be considered an entitled amount, but as the suggested limits the program can provide in any given category of support service. Do not automatically issue the maximum dollar amount for the support service. Issue the least amount needed to meet the participants need.~~ The main focus of support services is to subsidize participants' efforts toward finding ~~employment, remaining employed, or advancing into better employment.~~ economic stability.

As shown on the chart below, the types of services you can authorize also vary depending on the person's WorkFirst status.

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<u>Authorizing Support Services</u>	
<u>WorkFirst Applicants</u>	<p><u>Supports that enable the participant who may be in pending status but appear to be eligible for WorkFirst to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Attend WorkFirst Orientation;</u> • <u>Cure sanction;</u> • <u>Have an emergency situation;</u> • <u>Continue to look for, prepare for, or obtain work;</u> <u>or</u> • <u>Provide verification/documentation for Time Limit Extension</u>
<u>WorkFirst Recipients</u>	<p><u>Authorize support services the participant needs to help them continue to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Look for, prepare for, or obtain work; or</u> • <u>Progress toward self-sufficiencyeconomic stability</u>

<u>Authorizing Support Services</u>	
	<u>Examples include meeting the initial costs of employment, transportation, barrier removal, or skills training</u>
<u>Post-TANF Employment Transportation Support Services (PETSS)</u>	= <u>Authorize transportation-related services the participant needs help to maintain their employment of at least 15 hours/week for up to 3 months after TANF closes.</u>

2.2.3 What are the Support Services limits?

There is a \$5,000 yearly limit for each WorkFirst participant in the family. Some services don't count towards the yearly limit, such as childcare and accommodations. ~~There are hard edits in eJAS for the annual limit, meaning~~ the eJAS system is designed to not allow support service payments exceeding this limit.

Activity categories include:

- ~~**Work-related:** working, looking for work, work-like activities~~
- ~~**Safety-related:** meeting significant or emergency family safety needs such as family violence~~
- ~~**Other activities:** any other activity contained in the participant's IRP~~

The amount of support services authorized must be based on the participant's needs and must stay within the program limits. The only ~~possible~~ exceptions to the limit are when a participant has a crisis situation (such as fleeing domestic violence) or a unique and justifiable need that can be approved through the formal exception to rule process. The process for requesting an exception to rule is described ~~in its own subsection~~ below ([Exception to Rule](#)).

The [Support Services Directory](#) lists the “suggested limit” as guidance for starting a discussion with a participant. All support services issuances should be based on the individual needs of the participant.

~~use and dollar limits for each service.~~

2.2.5 Are there any restrictions on support services?

Some items can never be purchased with Support Services. They include:

- Weapons,
- Motor vehicles,
- Court-imposed fines,
- Loan payments,
- Services normally provided by state employees such as job placement, or
- Items that the participant's Washington Apple Health benefits will cover.

~~As shown on the chart below, the types of services you can authorize also vary depending on the person's WorkFirst status:~~

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<i>Authorizing Support Services</i>	
<i>WorkFirst Applicants</i>	<p>Supports that enable the participant who may be in pending status but appear to be eligible for WorkFirst to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend WorkFirst Orientation; • Cure sanction; • Have an emergency situation; • Continue to look for, prepare for, or obtain work; or • Provide verification/documentation for Time Limit Extension
<i>WorkFirst Recipients</i>	<p>Authorize support services the participant needs to help them continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for, prepare for, or obtain work; or • Progress toward self-sufficiency <p>Examples include meeting the initial costs of employment, transportation, barrier removal, or skills training</p>
<i>Post-TANF Employment Transportation Support Services (PETSS)</i>	<p>=</p> <p>Authorize transportation-related services the participant needs help to maintain their employment of at least 15 hours/week for up to 3 months after TANF closes.</p>

2.2.17 End of the State Fiscal Year Process?

As we approach the end of the state fiscal year, follow the instruction below:

1. Before or on June 30:

Vouchers

- Advise the participant to use voucher prior to June 30.
- Receive the purchase or service.

Bulk Purchases

Until further notice, bulk purchases may not be made by any office or region without approval through ETR from HQ. The only exception is transportation bulk purchases, which require approval from Regional Coordinators.

The following is the approval process for CSO transportation bulk purchases:

- CSO submits the request to the Regional WorkFirst Coordinator for WorkFirst Support Services, and/or the Social Services Coordinator for ABD or MCS with the following information:
 - Program (e.g. WorkFirst or ABD or MCS)
 - Type of the bulk purchase (e.g. bus passes or tickets)
 - Item amount of the purchase (e.g. number of passes or tickets)
- The Regional Coordinator makes the determination and notifies the appropriate CSO of the approval or denial of the purchase.

After the CSO has received approval, the CSO uses support services log when issuing bus tickets, bus passes and other transportation negotiable to a participant. The support services log needs to be included with the monthly CSO Negotiable Inventory Reports sent to ESA HQ Fiscal.

- Create voucher for purchase.
- Receive the bulk purchase merchandise.

Mileage reimbursement

- Obligate mileage reimbursement to the participant if the mileage form is returned.
- If the reimbursement form is turned in after June 30, process the payment for the previous program year.

Payments

- ~~Process as usual~~
 - ~~No payments are authorized the last four working days of the month.~~
- ~~All payments use the current allocation year.~~

2. After June 30:

Vouchers

- ~~If the participant did not use the voucher until July~~
 - ~~Create a new voucher for the new program year.~~
 - ~~Attach the returned voucher for payment to the new voucher.~~

Bulk Purchases

- ~~If bulk purchases are received after July 1, deobligate and reissue the voucher in new program year.~~

Payments

- ~~If the service or purchase were done before July 1, process the payment using the year the voucher was obligated in.~~

Allocation

- ~~Regions should add \$10,000 to each offices allocation for the new program year.~~

2.2.18-17 What are the Supervisor Tools?

2.2.1817.1 How do supervisors navigate the Financial Reporting System in eJAS?

eJAS contains many tools to help supervisors track support services expenditures. From the eJAS Home page menu there are a variety of “paths” a supervisor can take to review vouchers, fuel cards and other support services and the issues they may have.

Financial Reporting - Supervisors use the Financial Reporting page to:

- View a specific voucher or batch header.
- View payments to a specific vendor.

- Print reports of unpaid vouchers, outstanding obligations for the office, or payments made to a specific client or vendor.

Payment Maintenance - Supervisors use the Payment Maintenance page to:

- Create a Bulk Purchase Voucher.
- Transportation Reimbursement.
- Voucher Maintenance.
- Access the Pre-created Support Services tool.
 - Pre-Created Reports for Support Services allows supervisors to inquire on the support services expenditures at CSO, or worker level as close to real time as possible. Pre-Created Reports for Support Services is useful for:
 - Monitoring spending at CSOs
 - Reviewing outstanding vouchers
 - Reviewing the types of support services issued by workers and the office. This can help a supervisor see if their office is using all support services available to participants.

Note: When using Pre-Created Reports for Support Services, the WorkFirst Project Code is 2471.

2.2.1817.2 How do supervisors monitor and transfer funds for their local office?

Each region receives funding, determined and distributed by the Program Administrator, at the beginning of each state fiscal year (SFY) to distribute to the CSOs to provide support services to WorkFirst participants. These are placed into an “account” for each CSO by the regional WorkFirst Coordinator and are referred to as Allocations. To learn more about what decisions go into determining how money is allocated to your CSO, or how to have more funds made available for your CSO, contact your regional WorkFirst Coordinator.

Support services allocations for each CSO can be found under “Allocations” from the eJAS Home page. On that page, you can see:

- **Support Service Max** – Shows you how much money has been budgeted for a particular CSO, for the current state fiscal year, and shows a percentage of remaining money compared to how much has been obligated. The dollar amount can change during the year, speak to your local regional WorkFirst Coordinator about the amount there and if more funds are available.
 - **Allocation** – Shows how much funding is currently available to the CSO for support services. Supervisors can move these funds around to the appropriate field, depending on how they decide to monitor the budget.

- **Allocation Balance** – Shows how much money is available to be used by WorkFirst staff to create/issue vouchers and fuel cards for participants. If there is not enough funding available, eJAS will not allow the voucher or fuel card to be created/issued.
- **Obligation Total** – Shows how much funding has been issued in vouchers/fuel cards/bulk purchases.
- **Payments** – Shows how much funding has been processed and paid to the vendor.
- **Obligation Balance** – Shows how much funding is still outstanding and has not been processed for payment. Vouchers take time to get to the vendor, and then back to DSHS for payment. Note: When vouchers are canceled, the funding moves from this column, back to Allocation Balance.
- **Early Exit** – No longer used.

2.2.1817.3 When, why and where do supervisors audit support services?

Audits are an important tool for a variety of reasons:

- Ensure workers are making the best possible, and equitable, decisions when issuing support services, as well as documenting the approval, issuance, and denial of support services.
 - Find areas of:
 - Improvement needed by staff, which could include under or overuse. Improvement cannot happen if we don't know where we excel and where we need to make some adjustments.
 - Successes and best practices achieved by staff. We should acknowledge and celebrate them. Audits are not just meant to find problems, but also to find where we do our best work. Morale is improved for everyone when we get to commend someone on a job well done!
 - Policies and procedures that are not working as intended.
- Support services audits are completed monthly, for the previous month, for support services issued to WorkFirst participants. It's important to complete audits timely so any feedback given is relevant to everyone's current work and corrections can be made quickly and successes can be built upon.
 - The current expectation is 10% of the total support services issued each month.
 - All support services audits are completed in COACH.