

MISSISSIPPI
State Policy Number 28
Supportive Services Policy for
National Emergency Grant Participants
Workforce Investment Act

I. INTRODUCTION

Section 134(e)(2) of the Workforce Investment Act and the Hurricane Katrina National Emergency Grant (NEG) allow funds to be used for the provision of supportive services. Further, the Workforce Investment Act recognizes the need to assist participants in obtaining services and training and retaining employment. Consequently, NEG funds may be used to provide needed supportive services to NEG eligible participants when the needed assistance is not available through non-NEG sources. Supportive services include assistance with transportation, child or dependent care, housing, and other necessities required for participation in NEG services and employment retention.

II. SPECIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS

A. Determination of Supportive Services Needs

In section 101(46), WIA identifies supportive services as services "...that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under this title." At WIA registration and at regular intervals thereafter, WIN Job Center or other appropriate staff shall review the participant's needs to determine whether supportive services are necessary. The first option shall always be to refer the participant to other agencies or programs providing the needed services through non-WIA sources.

B. Eligibility for Supportive Services

NEG funded supportive services shall be available to participants while enrolled and on a limited basis as a follow-up service for up to one year after exit.

C. Supportive Services

NEG funded supportive services shall be limited to the following:

1. **Fees:** Test fees or costs related to licensure and/or certification resulting from completion of an approved training program.
2. **Cash Financial Assistance Supportive Service Payments:** Hurricane Katrina National Emergency Grant participants who are in school-based training and not receiving a wage may receive a cash financial assistance supportive service payment equivalent to \$2.00 per hour for each hour of documented actual participation. Such assistance is deemed necessary to assist with incidental costs of attending the skills training such as housing or food. Participants shall not receive payments for any hours in which they do not actually participate.
3. **Training Transportation Assistance:** Hurricane Katrina NEG participants enrolled in the training may receive pre-paid gas cards based on the following schedule:

| Weekly Commuting Distance | Weekly Value of Pre-Paid Card |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 0-200 miles | \$50 |
| 200 - 299 miles | \$100 |
| 300 - 499 miles | \$150 |
| 500 or more miles | \$200 |

Transportation assistance for the purpose of attending approved training will not exceed a maximum of 26 (twenty-six) weeks of training.

Employment Transportation Assistance: NEG participants may receive pre-paid gas cards for the purpose of commuting to and from work to retain employment based on the transportation schedule described above.

NEG participants may also participate in commuter transportation programs for the purpose of travel to and from work to retain employment. Van pool operators will be reimbursed based on its established monthly rate not to exceed \$100 per week per participant.

Transportation assistance for the purpose of commuting to and from work will not exceed a maximum of 26 (twenty-six) weeks.

4. **Child Care Expenses:** Hurricane Katrina NEG participants who need assistance with child care expenses in order to participate an NEG program may receive a weekly NEG child care voucher or payment as follows:

| Number of Children | Weekly Reimbursement |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | \$75 |
| 2 | \$125 |
| 3 | \$175 |
| 4 or more | \$200 |

Child Care assistance for the purpose of attending approved training will not exceed a maximum of 26 (twenty-six) weeks of training.

5. **Clothing, Equipment, and Supplies:** Hurricane Katrina NEG participants who require specific work-related clothing, equipment, tools, supplies or other necessary items in order to accept a valid job offer or to establish legitimate self-employment may be provided with the required items or reimbursed for the cost of such items up to a maximum of \$1,000.

A valid job offer is defined as a legitimate offer of employment verifiable through verbal or written communication with the prospective employer. Contact with the employer verifying the offer of employment shall be documented in the participant's file. Legitimate self-employment is defined

as the establishment of a legitimate and legal business by an individual. Proof shall be provided by the participant that he/she intends to operate a legitimate and legal business, evidenced by a federal tax identification number or other verification of the establishment of the business. Individuals are required to successfully complete Entrepreneurial Skills Training. A certificate or other proof of completion of the training shall be documented in the participant's file.

6. **Supportive Services are not an entitlement.** Prior to the provision of any Supportive Services, justification of need must be documented and included in the participant file. All Supportive Services will be fully coordinated with services available from non-NEG sources. Provision of Supportive Services is contingent upon availability of NEG funds and may be based on "most-in-need" criteria. The menu of Supportive Services may be limited based on availability of funds.

III. DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Documentation shall be maintained in individual participant files to support the provision of supportive services. All other reasonably available sources must be exhausted prior to any expenditure of NEG funds. At a minimum, participant files shall include the following types of documentation:

- Staff notes determining individual need for all supportive services; and
- Staff notes showing why non-WIA resources are unable or insufficient to meet the participant's need; and
- A log tracking disbursement of all non-cash supportive services; and
- Records for all cash financial assistance supportive services payments.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective April 1, 2006.

Wanda Land, Director
Office of Grants Management