

WS 15-08 Managing Financial Assistance

Questions and Answers

April 2015

Q1. Reference Page 3

“Substantial assistance for work search and education is *not* a one-time grant of financial support to an individual or family with whom we are not engaged in career planning or extended, intensive work search activities.”

Does this mean we will not provide substantial assistance for work search and education for customers who do not have an employment plan and are not working with us on a continual and intensive basis?

A. Yes. Workforce funds are limited and are not “public assistance”. Customers must meet fund eligibility and be actively working with Workforce Solutions to attain an employment goal. All support is focused on helping the customer meet the expectations of the employers in our region.

Q2. Reference Page 5

“Substantial Assistance” The issuance states customers tagged in TWIST as TANF/Choices, NCP, or SNAP E&T should complete a Financial Aid Application and an Addendum by the end of the first month working with Workforce Solutions.

Does this mean if the customer does not complete a financial aid application within the first month, they cannot receive Substantial Assistance if they need it later?

A. No. As long as the customer is receiving and meeting participation requirements, all support services are available. However, if a customer loses these benefits, continued assistance could depend on the customer qualifying for assistance under other funding. There may be a delay during the time the customer is completing the application and staff are determining if the customer meets eligibility for additional funds. This recommendation is designed to prevent any unplanned interruption in our ability to assist the customer meet her employment goals.

Q3. Reference Page 6

“Before authorizing financial assistance for a customer, we assess the customer’s current situation and assess the need for the requested assistance and determine how the assistance

will help the customer get a job, keep a job or get a better job. 'This initial assessment* is critical to helping the customer identify employment goals and figure out how Workforce Solutions can help the customer achieve those goals.'

When does this initial assessment happen?

If the customer submits an application directly to the Call Center, will the Call Center notify the customer she is eligible for financial assistance without some evidence of an initial assessment with the Career Office?

- A. The Call Center determines eligibility for funding a request for financial assistance. The customer must have discussed the request with Career Office staff and there should be support for the financial assistance in Counselor Notes. The Call Center must review Counselor Notes to identify support for the customer's request for financial assistance. The Call Center will not process an application for financial assistance without the evidence the Career Office supports the request. (Financial aid applications for assistance with child care excepted)
- The customer requests financial assistance through the Career Office and the Workforce Professionals work with the customer and conduct the initial assessment before the customer submits the financial aid application.

Q4. Reference Page 4

Financial Aid Limits Chart. Personal Transportation Expenses.

Substantial assistance is limited to \$600 in a 12 month period. What do we do about current customers who have been receiving personal transportation support based on calculated mileage?

- A. We need to transition our support to our current customers. You may continue the personal transportation assistance we've been providing through the end of the current training period. Reassess transportation assistance with the customer. Explain the new rules and work a new transportation assistance plan with the customer.
- If the customer already exceeded the \$600 per year limit, you can begin a new year effective April 1, 2015 or when developing a new transportation assistance plan.
- Note: We built in the ability for office managers to authorize exceptions to the financial aid limits.
- Some customers will be able to adjust to the new rules and others may require assistance beyond the stated limits. As we develop training plans with new customers, the ability to travel to training is one part of the discussion regarding selection of training program and training provider.

Q5. Does day labor or employment with a staffing agency constitute a job or a job offer?
A. Yes. If the customer requests assistance, we can provide it according to the established guidelines and limits.

Q6. Is short term assistance limited to one time in a 12 month period unless the manager allows an exception based on extenuating circumstances?

A. Short-term assistance for personal transportation expenses is limited to a one-time assistance in a 12 month period. Other categories of short-term assistance are limited to a maximum dollar amount in a 12 month period

Q7. Previously on 12-06 it directed us to use the mileage chart to determine how much transportation assistance to issue a customer. Are we now going to eliminate the mileage chart and only provide \$20 a week up to \$600 in a calendar year?

Example: Nursing student scheduled for multiple clinical sites would incur more costs than the \$20 a week could provide. In the old issuance we would provide the assistance based on the mileage.

Does the \$600.00 transportation limit apply to current training customers if not having transportation assistance stands in the way of them completing training? Particularly those customers that drive long distances to training and have no other resources. Are we going to consider grandfathering those customers?

We have customers that are still in training and would have long ago gone over \$600. Are we to instruct staff to give notification to these customer that transportation assistance is no longer available due to limited funds?

A. See Q4 above.

Q8. Does the 600.00 limit for transportation assistance apply to TANF/SNAP customers who are required to participate? Does this limit apply to all training customers across the board?

A. The limit applies to all Workforce Solutions customers.

Q9. So, we are no longer providing rental assistance to working, training and/or snap/choices customers such as: Housing Support including mortgage, rent payments, and utilities?

A. That is correct.

Q10.

1. Are we now assisting customers up to \$500 towards car repairs if they are required to participate through the snap/choices program, working, and/or attending training only?
2. If the customers do not meet any of the three options, will the office manager still be able to make an exception to this policy by entering a twist note? For example: Customer is determined eligible for dislocated worker funding and is requesting assistance with car repairs in order to start a new job in 2 weeks. Would we assist this customer based on policy since he/she isn't actually working at time of request?

A1 and A2. The Workforce Solutions Funding Alert states:

Workforce Solutions **no longer provides financial aid for housing and automotive expenses.** This includes:

- Housing Support including mortgage, rent payments, and utilities
 - Automotive expenses including car repairs, maintenance, safety inspections, insurance and registrations
- Note: Office managers have the authority to authorize automotive expenses on a limited basis to customers
- Engaged with Workforce Solutions to meet participation requirements
 - Supported by Workforce Solutions with scholarship assistance

We will update the Workforce Solutions Funding Alert when we determine we have funds to assist with requests for automotive expenses.

Q11. Reference Page 3

“Short-term assistance is available for an immediate need, usually for a quick entry or return to work. Short-term financial assistance is associated with a referral to an open job, an existing job offer or pending entry into a job, or an exigent need for continuing in a job.”

Does this mean any customer who has received a job referral from a Workforce Solutions Workforce Professional is eligible to receive short-term assistance?

- A. At this time and until further notice - We provide short-term assistance for personal transportation only to customers who have a job or job offer and need the assistance to work and to customers who are required to work with us in order to maintain a benefit such as TANF or SNAP.

Q12. Do we assist with driver's licenses and/or ID's? (new or renewals)

- A. Yes, that would be covered under the Documents category.

Q13. If a customer is requesting laptops, computers and printers for training, does this have to be listed on the Cost of Obligation form in order for the Call Center to process the request? If the school doesn't require these items, are we still assisting the customer based on the ETPS limits and including these costs?

Scenario: Customer submits price quote from Best Buy requesting a laptop for training but the laptop isn't a requirement for the training program based on the ETPS website for the vendor and requested program.

A. Guidance states:

“Supplies required by the school of all students in a like curriculum including: paper, pens, internet access, computer/laptop, printer, etc.”

Q14. If a customer received more than \$200 in financial assistance in the last 12 month and is requesting scholarship assistance and other substantial assistance (testing), can we provide the assistance for testing since it is less than \$200? Customer is only eligible for WIA adult funds.

A. The Workforce Solutions Funding Alert establishes a registry for customers requesting substantial assistance who are only eligible for the WIA adult fund. Since the customer already received more than \$200 financial assistance in the last 12 months, the customer can be placed on the registry for scholarship assistance and for the substantial assistance she is requesting.