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| Title: | Virginia Financial Success Network (VFSN) Supportive Service Policy | Policy #: | 22 |
| Effective Date: | September 20, 2018 | Revision Date: | January 17, 2019 |

References: Virginia Financial Success Network (WIF Grant) Supportive Services Guidelines

Background:

The Virginia Financial Success Network (VFSN) is a program that provides access to a full range of essential supports to help Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) eligible customers, age 18 or older, build self-sufficiency, stabilize their finances, and move ahead. VFSN has been made available to selected Virginia Career Works Centers to make it easier for eligible customers to tap into all the services and supports for which they qualify, filling in the gaps and helping them weather unexpected setbacks that can prevent them from meeting their economic and educational goals.

VFSN makes available three service delivery bundles:

- Education and Employment Services
- Work and Income Supports
- Financial and Asset Building Services

VFSN granted select local areas the authority to make policy and administrative decisions and the flexibility to tailor the workforce system to the needs of the local community. VFSN will allow supportive services to eligible participants, subject to the outlined duration and/or monetary limitations.

In most instances, it is desirable for the Supportive Service payment to be issued to the third party providing the Supportive Service, rather than to the participant (i.e. mechanic for car repairs, utility company).

For participating regions, needed supplements (Supportive Services) are not restricted to training activities. They are recognized as different from WIOA Title I supportive services.

Purpose:

This policy is to provide Piedmont Workforce Development Area One-Stop Operators and contracted services providers specific guidance and instruction in the provision of VFSN Supportive Services to WIOA eligible customers.

Policy:

In order to assist enrolled individuals to move from a state of crisis to stability, the VFSN offers supportive services to address the customer's emergency or unmet needs, such as the financial burdens associated with participating in activities, such as traveling to and from class, purchasing necessary books or testing fees, as well as providing a safe place for the care of their children while in training. The

use of the funds to provide supportive services must be in compliance with all applicable federal law, state policy, and guidance.

The following are processes and procedures that are in place to meet federal and state requirements.

Please note:

- A \$1000.00 cost limit is in place for supportive services paid under VFSN. If circumstances warrant an amount in excess of the limit, the area job coach must submit a written request to Piedmont Workforce Development Board staff (PWDB) for approval. The PWDB staff will then submit the locally approved request to the VFSN Project Director for state approval.
- State approval is needed for supportive services that are not listed in this policy. The area job coach must submit a written request to PWDB staff for approval. If approved, the PWDB staff will submit a request for state approval to the VFSN Project Director.
- Supportive Services neither trigger participation nor extend the date of participation (i.e., extend exit).
- Supportive services are not allowed for participants during follow-up and after exit from the VFSN program.

Documentation: Hard Copy File and Virginia Work Connection (VaWC)

- To provide a supportive service, staff must determine need; it must be decided that the supportive service aligns with the participant's career and training plan.
- Adequate documentation must be kept on site for each supportive service provided. A supportive services tracking sheet must be used to track expenditures. A supportive services verification form must be used to ensure that all documentation requirements are addressed.
- When available, original itemized receipts must be kept in the file to show actual expense.
- Before extending VFSN supportive services to participants, area job coaches and /or service providers must establish internal controls that result in equitable treatment, maximize the allocations, and ensure coordination with, and referral of participants and applicants to, other community resources. The Benefits Bank is a valuable asset for determining participant eligibility for community resources such as SNAP, TANF, etc.
- The Virginia Workforce Connection is the system of record for the WIOA program and services in Virginia, therefore, area job coaches are responsible for tracking services provided to customers and they must enter appropriate service codes in the VaWC. When adding service codes to the VaWC for support services, please do the following:
 - Use the VFSN service code titled **“W71 – Sign up for supportive services”** when adding data to the VaWC.

- Enter the begin and end dates to the service code as the date the customer actually received the service. Documentation signed by the customer to show receipt of the service must be in the file to validate the date of receipt.
- Use a separate service code to distinguish different supportive service items provided to the customer, e.g., transportation assistance and childcare assistance should be tracked as two separate W71 service codes in the VaWC.
- When adding service codes for supportive services, add a corresponding case note to the service code page before completing the entry in the VaWC; doing so will attach the case note directly to the code. The subject line should identify the item provided, e.g., Transportation Assistance or Childcare Assistance. The case note should contain information regarding the determination of the need for the supportive service as well as describing the details of what was provided, expected outcomes, and the receipt of the service.

Supportive Service Items covered by VFSN:

Transportation

Transportation support will be provided to participants who are in individualized career services including job search activities, full-time WIOA-funded training services or related vocational training through VFSN.

Transportation costs covered under this policy include:

- Public transportation: passes for the full length of the individual’s training or the full term in which the individual is actively participating in job search activities will be allowable.
- Tolls – Tolls may be paid on the participant’s behalf if required for participation in VFSN. Receipts must be collected, and Areas must use discretion determining the required need for toll payment based upon participant travel needs for VFSN.
- Parking – Parking may be paid on the participant’s behalf if required to attend training. Participants must produce receipts for reimbursement.
- Fuel expenses/mileage: Area job coaches will use an electronic mapping resource to estimate the miles traveled to and from activities. Gas gift card(s) may be allowable for the full length of the training or the participant’s active engagement in job search activities and during the first 2-4 weeks of employment. Additionally, it is recommended that a participant is given his or her transportation vouchers (passes/cards) on a bi-weekly or monthly basis when checking in with staff; receive mileage reimbursement based on calculated expenses, following the federal travel regulations for mileage cost reimbursement. The program will be responsible for tracking these expenditures in detail; this should include the participant’s name, amount provided, type of voucher provided, justification of costs (i.e. “\$25 in gas for traveling to and from interviews in a 50 mile radius over a 2-week period”), and any additional information that assists in tracking expenditures in the local area.

- Auto repairs: only allowed for a vehicle that is:
 - Owned by the participant,
 - The participant must submit proof of ownership (i.e. vehicle registration) and the bill/invoice from the auto repair business or mechanic that includes the participant's name and vehicle description.
 - A vehicle purchase, automobile insurance, taxes, and registration are not allowable expenses.
 - Must be used for transportation to and from training or work, and when a bus or public transportation has been deemed unavailable. This would apply to participants living in or traveling to rural areas or who have other barriers to public transportation. This should be documented in the Supportive Services Verification form.

Clothing

Limited to only those items which are required for participation in training and/or career services, including but not limited to uniforms, footwear, or business formal attire.

Certifications, Licensures, Examinations

VFSN will cover the fees associated with the cost of a single certification, license or examination for a specific occupation. The certification must be industry-recognized and earned through a professional society, university or private vendor. If a certification requires multiple exams or if there are extenuating circumstances, area job coaches should contact the VFSN Program Director prior to extending supportive services. If a certification, license, or examination is not attained on the first attempt, funds may be utilized for one re-test. However, the participant will be responsible for the cost of additional attempts.

Costs for certifications or examination will not be covered if the costs for such items are included in training or tuition.

Electronics and job-related tools

VFSN will cover the cost of the job- or training-related tools, such as laptops, which are shown to be in line with the participant's ITA, training or related vocational training. Also covered are protective gear or tools.

Other expenses

VFSN will offer supportive services for child care, dependent care, housing-related expenses or other permissible services.

- Child and Dependent Care: Care must be provided by a business or professional entity unrelated to the participant. Discretion should be used in assigning need on a case-by-case basis because funding may be quickly exhausted. Each child or dependent care request will be evaluated on an individual basis according to mitigating factors such as duration and cost.
- Housing-related expenses: supportive services covering rent payment should be used sparingly. If a participant is in need of rent assistance, he or she must provide a) evidence of a current lease in his or her name; b) a recent eviction notice; c) a discussion with VFSN staff regarding the participant's plan for payment of subsequent rent payments; and d) enough funds must be

remaining in the participant's account to obtain other supportive services needed for program completion. If a security deposit is requested (\$750 max), a new lease in the participant's name along with the security deposit request is required.

- Utility payments: utility payments will be considered for a participant who submits proof of property ownership/lease and documentation that the participant's name is on the utility bill. These documents must be accompanied with a notice from the utility provider that services will be disconnected/suspended or no longer available due to missed or late payments (and once the security deposit has been displaced for utility payments). The Service may be extended at the discretion of the area job coach, and the need for utility payment must connect directly to the participant's participation in VFSN.
- Eye exams and eyewear: if needed to participate to continue in training or for a new job, eye exams and glasses will be allowable. An invoice bearing the participant's name will be sent to the Area requesting payment.

Non-covered items

VFSN will not provide needs-related payments, defined as stipends or direct payments of cash to training service participants.

No funding will be extended for fines associated with the reinstatement of a Driver's License or court costs.

No funding will be provided for medical expenses, or state vehicle inspections