



**Buffalo and Erie County
Workforce Investment Board, Inc.**

LOCAL POLICY BULLETIN

BECWIB Bulletin # 4-17

Date: April 20, 2017

TO: Lavon Stephens, Administrative Director, WDC

FROM: Heather Gresham, Executive Director, WIB 

SUBJECT: Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG)
Supportive Services Policy

Effective Date: IMMEDIATELY

On April 20, 2017, the Buffalo & Erie County Workforce Investment Board ratified the HPOG Supportive Services Policy. The Policy now includes a gas allowance for participants in their first four weeks of employment.

1. Childcare

It is the policy of the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board, Inc. (WIB) to assist in the provision of childcare for programs funded under the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Profession Opportunity Grant. The provision of childcare assistance is designed to ensure that the parent(s) / legal guardian(s) of children are able to participate in health related classroom training programs and transition into employment. Further, this policy is intended to allow the parent(s) / guardian(s) to participate in health related classroom training and transition into employment with the confidence that their child(ren) are being cared for in a safe and wholesome environment.

Eligibility for Childcare Assistance

To be eligible for consideration of childcare assistance under HPOG a participant must be:

- (1) a TANF recipient or individual who is from a family living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines and

(2) enrolled and actively engaged in HPOG Buffalo sponsored, WIB approved, classroom training program where the scheduled duration of the entire training program is more than 24 hours;

OR

employed full time as a new hire in training related employment as a result of a HPOG sponsored training program.

Childcare Cap Amount

The maximum amount for childcare assistance will be \$12,000. On a case-by case basis, and at the discretion of the WIB Executive Director, additional funding, up to \$2,500 may be provided where evidence demonstrates that the participant is at or near completion of a training program, and, without additional childcare assistance, the completion of training would be jeopardized.

Childcare Assistance Duration

Childcare assistance shall be given to those eligible individuals who are enrolled in HPOG Buffalo sponsored, WIB approved, classroom training for the duration of the program, and, if needed, for a period of 30 days after the individual has been hired, fulltime, into training related employment, provided that the placement is within 6 months of the completion of the program.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy:

- (1) Full time employment shall be employment of at least 30 hours per week
- (2) A child is defined as an individual age 12 years or younger. However, in the event that a special need is identified and documented, this definition may be waived by the WIB.
- (3) A childcare provider is defined as a New York State regulated legal provider of childcare services eligible for childcare reimbursement through the Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS).

General Provision for Childcare Assistance

Childcare assistance will be provided through a childcare provider only for a child(ren) for whom a participant is legally responsible; and only when a participant can establish need for childcare assistance. Need for childcare assistance is established when:

- (1) it is determined that family income does not exceed 200% of the Federal poverty level; and
- (2) the parent(s) legal guardian(s) can demonstrate that there is no other

responsible family member or adult in the household available to care for the child(ren) during the hours of the program; or

- (3) it can be documented that special needs of the child(ren) cannot be met by a responsible adult in the household.

Once a participant's eligibility and need for childcare assistance are established, the case manager must contact the Support Service Coordinator. The Support Service Coordinator is responsible for the execution of childcare assistance. The case manager staff shall notify the Support Service Coordinator immediately in the event the participant does not begin training, stops attending training or is terminated from training.

Approved / Regulated Childcare Providers

Staff should use the regulated/contracted childcare providers that the WIB can approve for services for our customers. These providers are State regulated and also under contract with ECDSS.

2. Transportation

Individuals enrolled in HPOG Buffalo sponsored, WIB approved, classroom training programs are eligible for a transportation allowance in one of the following forms: for public transportation, a Niagara Frontier Transit Authority (NFTA) monthly bus pass; for private transportation, a bi-weekly check in the amount of \$5.00 per scheduled training day actually attended in the previous bi-weekly period. Documentation is required for transportation reimbursement. Instructor signed, participant timesheets, are proof of the participant's attendance.

If requested within 6 months of the completion of training and documented to be financially necessary, **an individual may be provided a transportation allowance in one of the following forms, 1) an NFTA one-month bus pass, OR, 2) for private transportation, for a period of 4 weeks, a bi-weekly check in the amount of \$5.00 per day actually worked in the previous bi-weekly period**, when the participant is first placed and engaged in unsubsidized employment in a training-related occupation consisting of 30 or more hours per week. **Maximum bi-weekly check is \$50. The maximum overall for the 4-week period of employment is \$100.**

3. Self-Sufficiency Fund

Self-Sufficiency Funds are funds for services that address the needs individuals may have that aren't covered by other means. These services may include, but are not limited to: assistance with obtaining a driver's license, car repairs, a one-time car insurance payment, or a one-time rental payment. Self-Sufficiency funds are limited to the Health Profession Opportunity Grant and are only available when there are ample funds in the grant for this activity.

Eligibility

Individual must be an enrollee of a HPOG Buffalo sponsored, WIB approved, classroom-training program.

Policy

Self-Sufficiency Funds must be necessary for a given participant consistent with his/her objective assessment and individual service strategy and be beyond his/her ability to pay. Self-Sufficiency Funds are not entitlements and shall be approved for a given participant on the basis of documented financial assessment, individual circumstances, the absence of other resources, and funding limits.

Self-Sufficiency Funds will be awarded on a one-time basis.

Housing

Rental payments may be paid to a participant's landlord for one month when such payment is needed to prevent homelessness. Payment shall not include late fees. In instances when housing assistance is provided, there must be a reasonable expectation that assistance will resolve the situation; for example, if rent is paid for one month, there must be a reasonable expectation that the participant will obtain resources to pay rent for the the following months. Back up documentation must include a copy of the lease, phone verification of the name on the lease by the landlord, the name and contact information of the landlord and the amount of rent and the date rent is due. When a lease is not involved, a verified letter from the landlord may suffice.

Other Self-Sufficiency funded Services

Other self-sufficiency funded services may include payments for obtaining a driver's license, car repairs, and a one-time car insurance payment. Each situation will be evaluated on an individual basis. In every instance, there must be a reasonable expectation that the assistance will resolve the situation for the foreseeable future. The maximum allowance for these one-time payments shall be \$500.00

Payment

Self-Sufficiency Funds will not be paid directly to the participant. All payments will be made directly to the vendor/payee upon receiving an invoice on letterhead stating the exact amount to be paid.

:MGC/bhs

C: Leslie Ayer, Ella Holloway, Terry Krzyminski, Eilizabeth Rivera, Khalidah Sabir, Russell Sferlazza, Paige Taylor, Patricia Williams, Mary Zerpa & WIB staff