



TO: All Humboldt County Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Staff, Subrecipients and Service Providers

FROM: Humboldt County Workforce Development Board

EFFECTIVE: August 14, 2020

SUBJECT: Supportive Services – Underserved COVID-19 Impacted Individuals and Disaster Recovery

REFERENCES: WIOA Law Title 1, Section 170, Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 12-19 – Guidance on National Dislocated Worker Grant Program, State of California Employment Development Department Information Notice WSIN 19-39, State of California Employment Development Department Workforce Services Directive WSD 19-06

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy addendum is to add exceptions and changes to the WIOA Supportive Services and Incentive Policy for enrolled Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) participants under the Adult and Dislocated Worker grants during the period of the novel-coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). This policy change will be in effect until the policy change has been rescinded.

BACKGROUND:

COVID-19 has created a stronger need for supportive service delivery as a result of multiple layoffs and social distancing requirements. The unique nature of the virus and the country's response necessitates changes to the Supportive Service delivery model of the Humboldt County Workforce Development Board (HC-WDB).

Policy changes are made to the supportive service eligibility, provision of supportive services, allowable supportive services, and limitations and payments sections. All other stipulations of the Supportive Services Policy not addressed in this Policy Change shall remain in effect.

POLICY:

WIOA requirements stipulate that staff must determine if supportive service assistance is available through other community service providers. In addition, WIOA requirements stipulate that staff must ensure that no other resource exists, that the resource is not readily available, or

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that the need is so urgent that referrals to other resources would delay the provision of the support service and create a hardship to the participant.

During the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and declared State of Emergency, many service providers are closed to the public and unable to provide the resources normally provided. In other cases, the waitlist for community resources has increased dramatically. As such, COVID-19 and the Shelter-in-Place orders currently in effect are allowable justification that resources are not readily available or that the need is so urgent that referrals to other resources would delay the provision of the support service.

Provision of Supportive Services

Eligibility

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the following individuals are eligible to receive additional Supportive Services:

1. Individuals enrolled in Title I Dislocated Worker services.
 - Individual must have a complete Title I application in CalJOBS with Dislocated Worker eligibility.
 - Dislocated Worker services can include any services with the following reporting categories (the reporting category can be found in Attachment 2 of [WSD 19-06: CalJOBS Activity Codes](#)):
 - Basic Career Service (Staff-Assisted)
 - Individualized Career Service
 - Training Service
2. Individuals whose household income are not above 400% of the federal poverty level (FPL) for the last six months prior to enrollment in the Underserved COVID-19 Impacted Individuals (UCII) grant.
3. Individuals must meet one of the following:
 - Laid off due to COVID-19.
 - Experienced a reduction in hours and/or pay due to COVID-19.
 - Unable to work for any of the following COVID-19 related reasons:
 - Subject to quarantine.
 - Caregiver for someone who is subject to quarantine.
 - Need to care for children because of school closure or closure of other childcare provider.
 - At higher risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19, or lives with someone at higher risk, as outlined on the California Department of Public Health COVID-19 website.
 - Required to telework, but does not have the necessary equipment.

Supportive services may be provided to impacted individuals, with an emphasis on providing supportive services to underserved populations, particularly participants in the English Language Learners (ELL) and ELL Navigator programs. If an individual is not eligible for the Dislocated Worker program, they can be enrolled into the Title I Adult program and provided services as long as they meet items 2 and 3 above.

If individuals are unable to provide standard eligibility documentation, staff may also accept verbal, emailed or written self-attestation from the individual. This form must be added to the

participant's file and the CalJOBS case notes must include documentation, including the date of enrollment, and how the individual's signature will be obtained once in-person services resume.

Supportive Services Assessment and Planning

During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff may use "Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a declared State of Emergency, and Shelter-in-Place orders, a general lack of community resources exist and a hardship to the participant without immediate supportive services would be imminent" as their explanation of a lack of community resources/urgency of supportive services in CalJOBS and in the participant file.

Requesting Supportive Services

Given the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, many supportive service plans initiated during the Individual Employment Plan/Individual Service Strategies will have changed as a result of the pandemic. Staff may reach out to participants to assess if new supportive service plans are needed during COVID-19.

Many training providers are closed during the COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place orders during. The requirement for participants in training to maintain good attendance in order to maintain supportive service delivery is waived if a participant's training provider is closed due to COVID-19.

Allowable Supportive Services

Emergency Assistance

Emergency assistance parameters for participants are modified during COVID-19. Due to the State of Emergency and Shelter-in-Place Orders, any participant unable to work during the Shelter-in-Place is eligible for emergency assistance if determined necessary and reasonable during the supportive services assessment. The following requirements for emergency supportive services are waived during COVID-19:

- Reasonable expectation that emergency assistance supportive services will resolve the situation and is not accessible via other community means;
- Individuals must apply for government or community benefits, since the need is so urgent during COVID-19 that referrals to other resources would delay the provision of the support service and create a hardship to the participant;
- Food assistance supportive service recipients must apply for CalFresh benefits before this emergency assistance is given;
- Housing emergency assistance recipients must have a plan for how they will fund the following month's housing; and

Employability and Training Assistance

WIOA requirements stipulate that there must be a reasonable expectation that the supportive service assistance will allow the participant to complete training and/or obtain employment. Under this addendum, participants enrolled in training before the Humboldt County Shelter-in-Place Order on March 19, 2020 can continue to receive supportive service assistance if needed to keep from dropping out of classes due to financial hardship. Dislocated Workers temporarily laid off from employment and who have a commitment from their employer to be rehired after the Shelter-in-Place orders are lifted may receive supportive services as part of employability and training assistance until ninety days of continuous employment.

Additional changes:

- Licensed childcare providers are preferred, and alternative childcare arrangements will be considered for supportive service funding on a case-by-case basis determined by need and other factors.
- Work/Training Cost limits are \$1,000 in order to include the cost of sanitation measures or remote service tools needed for work.
- Internet Service supportive services will be expanded to include internet or phone connectivity services in order to obtain or retain employment due to the remote nature of the community during COVID-19.

Limitations and Payments

During the COVID-19 pandemic, supportive services may include, but are not limited to, equipment necessary to telework (e.g. computer, internet, etc.), housing assistance including mortgage, but excluding interest, or rent payments, utility assistance, and transportation assistance.

Supportive services are available in two tiers:

1. Individuals receiving at least 50 percent of their previous wages either from their employer directly, or with Unemployment Insurance (UI) payments, may receive supportive services totaling \$400.
2. Individuals who are not receiving at least 50 percent of their wages from their employer directly, or with UI payments, may receive supportive services totaling \$800. If other funds such as existing WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker formula funds, or grant funds to provide supportive services, then those funds do not count towards the \$800 limit.

The Executive Director retains the authority to increase this limit on a case-by-case basis if an additional supportive services allocation would significantly benefit the participant's ability to continue and complete the program. Authorization to increase the limit beyond \$5,000 for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker supportive services must receive management approval and be documented in the participant's case notes in CalJOBS.

Reimbursement payments to participants during the time this addendum is in effect may be submitted with scanned sales receipts given that the receipts are legible. During COVID-19 and for this grant only, documentation through self-attestation under penalty of perjury regarding how the participants spent the money is also permissible. The self-attestation, whether provided over the phone, via email or in a written format, must be stored in the file and detailed in the CalJOBS case notes.

Disclaimer

This addendum is based on the current conditions relating to the COVID-19 virus and will remain in effect until further notice and will be reviewed and updated based on any additional federal or state guidance.

FORM(S): None

INQUIRIES:

Any questions regarding this policy may be directed to the Workforce Development Board

Director at 707-445-7745.

Humboldt County Workforce Development Board Approval Required? Yes No