

DSHS Support Services for WorkFirst Participants

What are DSHS support services?

They are goods and services DSHS buys for WorkFirst participants that helps you look for work, get ready to go to work, or keep work. **DSHS will only pay for a support service when DSHS decides that the service is absolutely necessary to help you to participate in the WorkFirst job activity that is on your IRP.**

Who can get support services?

- WorkFirst participants;
- sanctioned participants during the two-weeks after they begin to participate again;
- unmarried or pregnant minors eligible for TANF and living in a department approved living situation, and/or meeting school requirements;
- unmarried or pregnant minors not in an approved living situation or attending school but working with a social worker to remove barriers to meeting those requirements;
- former WorkFirst recipients who are working at least 20 hours or more per week for up to one year, if they need support services to meet a temporary emergency. This can include up to four weeks of support services if they lose a job and are looking for another one.
- American Indians who receive a TANF/SFA cash grant and have identified specific needs due to location or employment.

What kinds of support services does DSHS pay for? How much does it pay for each service?

This chart shows a list of support services available to WorkFirst participants and the limits that apply. There is a \$3,000 limit per person, per program year (July 1st to June 30th). Remember:

- Just because a support service is available to you, that does not mean you will automatically receive it. DSHS must believe that the support service is directly related to your success in WorkFirst activities.
- The amounts given below are maximum amounts that DSHS may authorize to pay for a support service. Please keep in mind that DSHS may pay less than the maximum for a service.
- **DSHS is currently experiencing a lack of funds for support services.** WorkFirst case managers and social workers will have to limit approval for support services. Each Community Service Office will determine how they will handle this lack of funds. Some will stop providing vouchers for diapers and personal hygiene or cut back on clothing vouchers. High cost items like car repairs are less likely to be approved, especially if public transportation is available to meet your needs.
- **Although money is limited and more requests for support services will be denied, the rules have not changed.** If you are denied a support

service that you believe is essential to your participation, ask to speak with a supervisor. You have the right

to ask for a fair hearing if you are not satisfied with the response.

SUPPORT SERVICE	DETAILS	MAX. AMOUNT DSHS WILL PAY
Reasonable Accommodation for Employment	Specialized equipment for persons with disabilities.	\$1000 per request, does not count toward yearly maximum.
Car Repair	Necessary to work or participate in WorkFirst activity. Exception to policy required for tune-ups, studded tires, towing.	\$250 per program year (July 1 through June 30).
Child care	See our publication called Working Connections Child Care	varies
SUPPORT SERVICE	DETAILS	MAX. AMOUNT DSHS WILL PAY
Clothing or uniforms for adult participant	Clothing, undergarments, shoes, or other apparel necessary for job search or job retention	\$75 adult per program year.
Counseling	Includes professional counseling and classes such as anger management and self-esteem.	No limit – does not count toward yearly limit.
Diapers per child	Diapers for child to attend day care, permitting the child’s parent to seek or retain activity	\$50 per month
Education expenses	All expenses related to training or education. Must be in your IRP. Other sources of payment must be looked at first (examples: grants, work-based tuition assistance). Class must not be offered for free in community or tech colleges. Covers tuition books, GED tests, uniforms and specialized clothing, tutoring.	\$300 per request
Haircut/Styling	Limited to work. Only for needed cut or to return hair to natural color.	\$40 for each request
License/Fee/Liability Insurance	Driver’s license (not outstanding warrants, traffic tickets or fines), commercial, and business licenses appropriate to employment, tabs, title transfer, emissions testing, all costs necessary to license a vehicle, liability insurance in limited cases.	\$130 per program year.
Lunch	Purchase of your lunch at all-day DSHS- or ESD-sponsored events such as a job fair; must be a working lunch for all participants.	State employee rate.
Medical services or exams necessary to accept employment or participate in WorkFirst activities	Services beyond a physical and not available with a medical coupon or offered at free clinics; may include standard fees charged for medical records/reports; Example: medical exam required for a commercial driver’s license.	\$150 per exam May include diagnostics to identify medical/psychological barriers

Mileage reimbursement	For use of privately owned vehicle during job search, first 30 days of employment, or during other WorkFirst participation.	State employee rate.
Personal hygiene	Personal hygiene products not covered by grant like soap, shampoo, deodorant, laundry detergent, shaving supplies, feminine hygiene and so on.	\$50 per adult, per year.
Professional, trade assoc., union dues, bonds, certification costs, license and fees.	Union dues first month only. Additional months require exception to policy. Testing necessary to acquire trade license or certification.	\$300 each fee.
Public transportation costs	Includes bus, van pool, train, ferry, and so on when public transportation is more economical than use of own vehicle or when participant does not have own vehicle. For the first 30 days after employment starts. May be longer on a case-by-case basis if needed to keep a job.	\$150 per month
Relocation fees	Expenses necessary to enable a participant to accept or maintain full-time unsubsidized employment at a wage enabling the participant to be independent of TANF Requires written confirmation of start date and wages from employer	\$1000 per program year may include commercial carrier, rental truck, fuel, cost of rent and deposit.
Short-term lodging, meals, and/or travel expenses	Required non-recurring expenses happening when participant is required to travel for work to a site that is beyond normal commuting distance	Same rate as State employee.
Testing - diagnostic	Not provided by WorkFirst or available from free or low-cost services; Includes literacy level, aptitude, and skills proficiency tests.	\$200 each
Tools or equipment required by an employer or institutional training program	Required to accept a bona fide offer of employment, to participate in work activity or maintain employment. All other students or employees must have the same requirement for tools.	\$500 per program year.

How do I get the support services I need?

Sometimes case managers will forget to mention that you can get these services. You must ask the case manager specifically for what you think you need.

- Contact your case manager and tell him/her the specific problem or need

that will help you get or keep a job. Ask to discuss the support services that you believe are right for you. Ask that your case manager include important support services on your Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP). Some support services are now listed on the back of the IRP.

- The case manager may ask you for proof of your need. Example: if you need a car repair, the case manager may ask you to

give him/her two car repair estimates in writing. Additionally, if your car is inoperable, DSHS may pay for either towing to get a repair estimate or for a mobile repair service to come to you. Do not get the car repaired and then ask DSHS to pay the bill!

- When the case manager receives the verification he/she needs from you, DSHS will decide whether the support service is needed.
- If DSHS authorizes payment of your support services, DSHS may pay the provider directly or DSHS may issue you a payment voucher. Some support services require your case manager to ask for an exception to policy. This may take a little longer.
- If you do not receive notification of whether DSHS will pay for the support service within a reasonable amount of time, contact your case manager and ask about it.
- If there is still no response from your case manager, then ask for a fair hearing on the failure to provide needed support services. You may also ask to speak to your case manager's **lead worker** or **supervisor**. See below on how to ask for a fair hearing.

Is there a limit on how much DSHS will pay in total support services for me?

DSHS has a limit of \$3,000 each year on services for each family. The year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30.

What if the support services I need cost more than the DSHS cost limits?

It is possible for DSHS to pay for more than the recommended amount per service or per year. This requires the approval of the State Office in Olympia. If your case manager says at first that the support service you need is too expensive, ask him/her to ask for an **exception to policy**.

What cannot be covered by support services funds?

- Employment placement fees.
- Services normally provided by state employees.
- Weapons.
- Purchase of a motor vehicle.
- Court-imposed fines
- Installment payments, such as loan payments.

What if DSHS refuses to pay for the support service or services that I believe I need?

- Contact your case manager's lead worker or supervisor about it.
- If you do not receive a satisfactory response from that contact, ask for a fair hearing.
- To do this, fill out a Fair Hearing Request at your local DSHS office or write to Office of Administrative Hearings, P.O. Box 42488, Olympia, WA 98504. You can also request a fair hearing verbally by telling your case manager or the Fair Hearing Coordinator in the local DSHS office that you want a fair hearing.

- For more information about fair hearings, see the publication titled

[Representing Yourself at a Fair Hearing.](#)

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