



WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS of the Coastal Bend

POLICY

CATEGORY:	Workforce Programs-General	No: 4.0.100.04
TITLE:	Incentives/Stipends	
SUPERSEDES:	4.0.100.03, dtd April 27, 2007	
EFFECTIVE:	June 29, 2012	
BOARD APPROVAL:	June 28, 2012 Board of Directors' Meeting	
DATE REVIEWED:	May 10, 2012	

I. PURPOSE:

This policy clarifies disbursement of incentives or stipends to eligible customers participating in Workforce Programs.

II. DEFINITIONS:

Incentive – A Tangible award that stimulates one to take action and/or work harder.

Stipend – A fixed non-cash or cash payment amount provided at regular intervals.

III. POLICY STATEMENT:

General

Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend may provide incentives or stipends to participants under special circumstances, when approved by the Board's President/CEO, stipulated in a special initiative contract or as stipulated in this policy.

Incentive and stipend programs shall be fiscally sound and support the overall success of the participants. Sufficient funds must be budgeted from available resources to support this policy, particularly as it applies to participants who choose to target long-term achievements.

For incentive and stipend programs that are not specifically identified in this policy, the service provider must implement a system to collect data that will demonstrate the effectiveness of the incentive program. The service provider must also analyze the effectiveness of the incentive or stipend program every six (6) months and submit supporting data to the Board's President/CEO for reauthorization.

Incentives shall be disbursed only to individuals that exceed the minimum requirements of a program, employer, educational institution, or training provider. For example, nonmonetary incentives can be awarded for the following:

- Job retention, wage gains, and career progression

- Successful completion of training services
- Attainment of educational goals
- Participation in workforce services by individuals not required to comply with program provisions

Incentives or stipends shall not be disbursed until the participant meets all stipulated requirements and service provider staff verifies the attainment of the program outcome(s).

Incentive payments will be awarded using nonmonetary incentives such as gift cards or pre-purchased items. Incentives offering cash or check incentives to eligible customers are prohibited.

The value of nonmonetary incentives must be:

- Tied to the size and nature of the achievement for which they are awarded; and
- Scaled to inspire participants to work toward the associated achievements.

For example:

- Participants who remain in continuous full-time employment for 90 days receive a \$50 prepaid gas card.
- Exempt Choices participants who participate in an identified core activity for 30 days or more receive a coupon or gift certificate worth up to \$25.

Unless specified in a special initiative, contract stipend payments will be awarded using gift cards or pre-purchased items.

Except where specified in this policy or designated within a special initiative, incentives/stipends shall not be disbursed for more than \$50.00 in value.

Approval for incentives/stipends to eligible customers, other than as stipulated in this policy or in a specific contract, shall be obtained prior to disbursement of incentive.

Participants must provide documented evidence of attainment of an incentive goal within thirty (30) days of the attainment to claim the incentive.

Justification for issuance of incentive/stipend awards will be verified and documented in the customer file.

Data entry of incentive/stipend disbursements shall be entered in TWIST under the Service Tracking menu, Support Services -code 219-incentives in a timely manner. Coding information will be entered into TWIST as per WD Letter 27-08, Change 1, page 5.

Incentives/stipends shall not be disbursed to customers participating in a Workforce Program that does not allow incentives to be granted.

Incentives/Stipends for customers are allowable as short-term, non-recurrent benefits and are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs.

Incentive/stipends may only be earned under one initiative at a time. The initiative paying the highest payment will be utilized whenever possible.

Unless specified by a special initiative, work related incentive/stipend payments may be awarded to participants for retaining of employment per the following payment points:

- 3 months - \$100.00
- 6 months - \$150.00
- 9 months - \$200.00

In the case of an individual losing employment based on good reasons, retention will remain in effect as long as the individual regains employment within 4 weeks of job loss. Pattern of job loss may result in non payment of incentives.

WIA Youth

Service provider staff may implement a Youth Incentive Program at anytime if there are sufficient funds included in their contract budget for the awarding incentive.

Incentive disbursements may be made only if the participant achieved the program outcome as a result of program participation.

Incentive disbursements to WIA Youth may only be made utilizing the Incentive Guidelines for WIA Youth provided in this policy.

IV. PROCEDURES:

Service providers must develop internal procedures for the provision of incentives/stipends. Procedures must contain adequate controls for authorization of incentives.

V. RELATED POLICY INFORMATION:

Federal Register, Title 20, Volume 65, Part 652 and Parts 660 through 671;

Workforce Investment Act of 1998;

40 TAC, Chapter 811

Wagner-Peyser Act; 2003 Amended Rules for Food Stamps Employment and Training

WD 27-08, Change 1, dtd 06/18/2010

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES:

Board staff shall ensure that all service provider staff are aware of and comply with this policy.

The Board Monitor shall provide oversight and evaluation of the service provider's disbursement of incentives and stipends to eligible customers.

Service providers shall ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented and that relevant staff receive training regarding the requirements of this policy.

VII. FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS:
Incentive Guidelines for WIA Youth

VIII. DISTRIBUTION:

Board of Directors

Board Staff

Service Provider Staff

IX. SIGNATURES:

Reviewed by EO Officer

Date

President/CEO

Date

Incentive Guidelines for WIA Youth

Description of Award	Eligible Population	Incentive Award	Time Frames	Documentation Required
Successful Achievement of Grade Level Increases.	WIA Eligible Youth Participants who are basic skills deficient in reading, language, or math, and/or do not possess a GED or High School Diploma.	For each Educational Function Level (EFL) increase, a participant may earn a gift certificate equal to \$25.00. Total amount earned may not exceed a maximum of \$100.00.	30 days to 1 year	Pre and Post Tests
Successful Completion of one or more Sections of the General Educational Development (GED) Exam.	WIA Eligible Youth Participants needing a GED as stated on the Individual Service Strategy.	Participants may earn a gift certificate equal to \$25.00 for each section passed. Total amount earned may not exceed a maximum of \$100.00.	30 days to 1 year	Official GED Test Scores
Successful Completion of a High School Diploma or its Equivalent.	WIA Eligible Youth Participants needing a GED or H.S. Diploma as stated on ISS. Participants must have been enrolled with WIA at least a semester <u>prior</u> to H.S. graduation and 30 days <u>prior</u> to date GED is taken.	Participants may earn a gift certificate equal to \$100.00 for successfully completing all requirements for the attainment of a GED or High School Diploma.	30 days to 5 years	Official Letter from GED Test Center or School Transcripts
Successful Completion of Designated Workshop, Project or Activity (e.g., Pre-Employment Training/Job Readiness Class, Project Related to Program Goals).	WIA Eligible Youth Participants enrolled in an approved training workshop, project, or activity related to program goals as stated on ISS.	Participants may earn a gift certificate of no more than \$30 for successfully completing the project, activity, or class. Service provider can determine the amount awarded based on the time spent and competencies learned from the project, activity, or class.	Immediate	Attendance Records or Certificate of Completion
Successful Completion of Summer School or a Required Basic Course in English, Math or Language Arts (subject area) that Leads to the Attainment of School Credit(s) Toward a High School Diploma. Passing the state mandated test may also be used for awarding incentives.	WIA Eligible Youth Participants requiring basic course(s) for attainment of school credits or passing the state mandated test as stated on ISS.	Participants may earn a gift certificate equal to \$25.00 for successfully completing summer school or for each basic course passed or for successfully passing the state mandated test.	30 to 120 days	Passing Scores or Grades as recorded in the Official School Record or Report Card

Description of Award	Eligible Population	Incentive Award	Time Frames	Documentation Required
Attainment of Positive Outcome and Compliance with Post-Program Follow-up Retention Requirements.	WIA Eligible Youth Participants who have been determined to be in need of program services as stated on ISS and exited the program.	<p>Participants may earn a gift certificate equal to \$300.00 for attaining a positive outcome in the first quarter after exit and complying with required monthly contacts during the follow-up retention period. The incentive award will be issued in two separate installments. The first installment, a gift card equal to \$100.00, may be earned when youth were found in one of the following categories in the first quarter following exit:</p> <p>Younger Youth: Unsubsidized employment Post secondary education Advanced training Military service Qualified apprenticeships</p> <p>Older Youth: Unsubsidized employment Post-secondary education Advance training</p> <p>The second installment, a gift card equal to \$200.00, may be earned when a youth complies with required monthly contacts during the follow-up retention period, i.e., through the end of the third quarter after exit.</p>	30 days to 1 year	Case Management and TWIST records that support and verify attainment of positive outcome in the first quarter after exit and compliance with required monthly contacts during follow-up retention period.