Workforce System Technical Assistance

Entering Stipends and Incentives into EmployOklahoma

Effective Date of Policy: 2/05/2025   **Policy Number:** WSTA #03-2025
Rescissions: N/A   **Approved By:** Trae Rahill, Chief Executive Officer

STAKEHOLDERS:

- Workforce Development Board Staff
- Designated Fiscal Agent Staff
- Service Provider Career Navigators

REFERENCES:

- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)
- [WSD 12-2024](#)

PURPOSE:

The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) as the Governor's chosen Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) administrative entity provides this issuance as guidance for local workforce development boards to ensure compliance and uniformity with entering incentives and stipends for WIOA youth participants in EmployOklahoma.

MESSAGE:

Stipends and incentives are not to be reported as a service. When an employer-employee relationship does not exist, a stipend may be used as an allowable payment for participation in activities such as occupational skills training or classroom activities, including high school equivalency preparation, work readiness, or employability skills training. Incentive payments to youth participants are permitted for recognition and achievement directly tied to training activities and work experiences.

Key Requirements (Per WSD 12-2024 – WIOA Title I Youth Program Guidance):

- Must be tied to 1 of the fourteen WIOA Youth Program Elements
- Must be planned and documented in the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) before provision.
- The budget must be accounted for <u>before</u> providing incentives or stipends. This should be planned out with the training budget in mind.

- Documentation must be uploaded prior to disbursement

Data Entry Process for Entering Incentives and Stipends in EmployOklahoma
1. *Included in the ISS:*
    o Before an incentive or stipend can be issued, it **must** be planned and documented in the Individual Service Strategy.
    o Enter the incentive/stipend details in the ISS section of the system, specifying:
        ▪ **Purpose:** Why the incentive/stipend is being provided (e.g., completion of a work experience, earning a credential).
        ▪ **Program Element:** The specific element it supports.
        ▪ **Amount and Frequency:** Whether it's a one-time payment or recurring.
    o The Individual Service Strategy must be signed whenever the plan is modified, including during the initial planning phase and any time an incentive or stipend is distributed upon the participant meeting the planned goal.

2. *Add the Incentive/Stipend Amount to the Budget Section:*
    The total incentive/stipend amount must be recorded in the Budget Section under the service cost of the specific Enrollment Service for which the incentive is being provided.

3. *Upload Documentation:*
    When providing the incentive or stipend, upload supporting documentation in the applicable "Enrollment Service" document section. Required documents include:
    o **Proof of goal achievement or participation** (e.g., certificate, attendance record, employer verification).
    o **Proof of incentive/stipend payment** All expenses must be supported by clear, complete, and detailed documentation.

4. *Enter the Payment in the Enrollment Service Funding Distribution Section:*
    Once the incentive amount is added to the budget and the incentive/stipend goal has been completed, the payment details must be entered into the Enrollment Service Funding Distribution Section in the system. Ensure that the participant signs the ISS once the incentive/stipend has been provided.

5. *Enter Financial Details in Enrollment Service Note*
    Enter an "Incentive Note" in the enrollment service documenting the incentive/stipend financial details listed below. Utilize the "Add to Records" button and relate the note to the Participation Period
    o Date of disbursement.
    o Amount provided.
    o Reason for disbursement (linked to ISS and program element).
    o Reference to uploaded documentation.

ACTION REQUIRED: This WSTA is to become a part of the permanent records of all local Workforce Development Boards and be shared with all appropriate staff.

INQUIRIES: If you have any questions or concerns regarding this technical assistance, please email WorkforceServices.Inquiry@oesc.ok.gov.