



## **OneWorkSource Center Youth Incentives, Stipends, Support Services, and Wages Policy ADOPTED JUNE 7, 2019**

**Purpose:** To establish policy on the use of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds for stipends, incentives, support services and wages for youth participating in Title I Activities.

**Background:**

WIOA youth funds may be used to provide incentives, stipends, support services, and wages as an allowable expense for WIOA Title I Youth. They are intended to be used to encourage and motivate WIOA youth to reach specific goals and obtain positive outcomes. Incentive and stipend awards are not an entitlement. Incentive awards and stipends can be subject to review by the North Country Workforce Development Board (NCWDB) and the availability of WIOA Youth funds.

**Definitions:**

***Incentive:***

A payment to a WIOA youth participant for the successful participation and achievement of expected outcomes as defined in the youth's Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The incentive must be linked to an achievement and must be tied to training and education, work readiness skills and/or an occupational skills attainment goal as identified in the ISS. Such achievements must be documented in the participant's file as the basis for an incentive payment. Incentives are considered awards to WIOA youth for their achievement and participation in WIOA activities.

***Stipends:***

A fixed payment made to a WIOA youth participant during his/her enrollment to encourage the WIOA youth to participate in certain activities (seat/participation time payments). The stipend can be used for activities such as classroom instruction. Stipends may not exceed the Federal or New York minimum wage, whichever is higher. Stipends may be paid based on actual hours of attendance. Attendance in the activity must be documented as the basis of stipend payments. Stipends may be paid to participants for their successful participation in and completion of education or training services. Justification of need must be documented in the youth's ISS.

***Support Services:***

Assistance provided to a WIOA youth participant that is necessary to enable participation in activities as part of the WIOA youth program. Such services may include, but not limited to, assistance with transportation, child care, housing and assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work clothing and tools. A support service in excess of \$500 must be approved by the NCWDB Executive Director.

**Wages:**

Wages may be paid to WIOA youth participants enrolled in work experience activities. Wages should pay not less than Federal minimum wage and not more than other employees in a like position with similar training, experience, and skills. The wages may be paid from the WIOA youth program (contractor or WDB payroll) or through the employer with reimbursement of all or a portion of the wages from the WIOA youth program. Note: youth work experience should be designed to help youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment.

**Policy:**

Incentives, stipends, support services and wages are all allowable expenses for participants enrolled in WIOA funded youth programs. They are intended to encourage and motivate WIOA youth to reach goals outlined in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS); leading to successful completion and positive outcomes for the program. These payments are not entitlements and are subject to availability of WIOA youth funds.

Contractors who operate WIOA Title I funded youth programs must have Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), approved by the NCWDB Director or designee, outlining process for awarding support services, incentives, stipends, and wages for youth program participants. The SOP must include information on activities that qualify a youth to receive funds, the level of funding to be awarded for various activities / goals and process for disbursement of award to youth. SOPs must be submitted for NCWDB approval prior to receiving funds or as part of the RFP submission.

**Required Documentation to support payments:**

Appropriate documentation must be available to support payments of stipends, incentives, support services, and wages. The need for such services must be documented in the youth's Individual Service Strategy and/or OSOS. Expenditures must be reasonable, necessary and allocable. Records must be available to support the awarding or provision of services / expenditures. The following are provided as examples as to services delivered and appropriate documentation:

**Incentive for obtaining goal:**

Test results showing increase in basic skill levels, copy of the TABE and/or HSE tests, copy of credential or certificate, etc. Youth signature verifying receipt of incentive and a copy of the actual incentive (gas card, phone card, etc.) must be maintained in the participant's file.

**Support Services:**

Case notes verifying need for expenditure as part of youth's plan, need for clothing for work experience activity, assistance with testing as part of plan to attend post-secondary education, etc. Reimbursement documentation must be maintained in the participant's file along with a copy of the original invoice.

**Stipend:**

Documentation (sign in sheet, time sheet, etc.) need to show participation in specific activities. Records of the stipend received (gas card, etc.) should be maintained in participant's individual file. Classroom/instruction documentation should include: date, time, class name, student's and instructor signature.

**Wages:**

Time sheets with employer's signature verifying hours worked will be maintained in participant's file.

**NCWDB** authorizes the use of WIOA Youth funds, if available, for incentives, stipends, support services, and wages when appropriate and documented in OSOS and the ISS. Provision of support services, incentives, stipends, and / or wages without appropriate supporting documentation of need may be considered a disallowed cost.

This policy shall remain in effect until revised or canceled by the NCWDB.