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QUEST BULLETIN NO. 05-23, Change 1

TO: QUEST Partners
FROM: Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, Administrator
Workforce Development Division
SUBJECT: Supportive Services in QUEST

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bulletin is to update QUEST Bulletin No. 05-23 to increase the maximum amount of supportive services for QUEST participants from the amount originally established in QUEST Bulletin No. 05-23.

BACKGROUND

QUEST Bulletin No. 05-23, Supportive Services in QUEST, established guidance on supportive services provided under the QUEST grant to ensure equity among participants served by different QUEST service providers Statewide.

As stated in that bulletin, supportive services for adults and dislocated workers are services that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized by WIOA § 134(c)(2) and (3). These services may include, but are not limited to:

- Linkages to community services
- Assistance with transportation
- Assistance with childcare and dependent care
- Assistance with housing

- Needs related payments, as described at § 680.930, 680.940, 680.950, 680.960, and 680.970
- Assistance with educational testing
- Legal aid services
- Referrals to health care
- Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear
- Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes
- Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications

Supportive services may only be provided to individuals who are participating in career or training services as defined in WIOA § 134(c)(2) and (3); and unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services.

After QUEST Bulletin No. 05-23 was issued, it became evident that the \$200.00 ceiling of supportive services cost per QUEST participant was too low to adequately support QUEST participants during their career services, including internships. Also, experience has begun to reveal that not as many QUEST participants as anticipated qualify for WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs from which more supportive services may be provided.

After discussions with local areas and QUEST providers and reviewing their comments on a draft QUEST Bulletin No. 05-23, Change 1, this bulletin was finalized. The guidance provided in the original bulletin is repeated in this Change 1 for convenient reference by staff. This bulletin also adds clarifications and emphasizes the need for careful monitoring of expenditures.

POLICY

For each QUEST participant, the maximum amount for supportive services that may be provided is \$1,000.00. Having an increased supportive services cost ceiling for a participant provides greater flexibility for the local area to adequately address the participant's barriers to successful participation in career services or training.

However, note that the *total amount to be spent on supportive services cannot contribute toward total expenditures of a provider that exceed the total budget of that provider and/or local area.* Depending on costs incurred and savings from other cost item budgets, it may be that not all participants throughout the duration of the grant will have access to the same amount of supportive services as participants who preceded them. For that reason, it is essential that expenditures and projected expenses be closely monitored to make use of all funds available without exceeding the total budget and to ensure that supportive services are available to as many participants as possible. All expenditures should be monitored to ensure that the amounts spent do not exceed the maximum deviations allowed for each cost category without requiring an amended budget being submitted and approved.

Any of the allowable services listed above, in any combination, up to the maximum per participant, may be provided. The exception to the limit is work clothes or uniforms, for which the limit is \$350.00, or cost of three (3) sets of work clothes, whichever is lower. The \$350.00 limit does not apply to safety equipment such as steel-toed shoes or boots.

As stated in QUEST Bulletin No. 05-23, if childcare is needed, it will be limited to childcare services provided or contracted by the State Department of Education, such as their after-school program. Childcare centers licensed by the Hawaii State Department of Human Services or licensed Group Center-Based providers with accreditations from either the National Association for the Education of Young Children or the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation are also added. Refer to the PATCH Hawaii website for more information and a directory of licensed or accredited childcare providers in Hawaii: <https://www.patchhawaii.org/find-child-care/>. Note that users should contact PATCH Hawaii to ensure the website information for a particular provider is current. A copy of the list and documentation of this contact should be maintained in the case file.

Assistance with housing includes rent, maintenance fees, utility costs, and/or mortgage payments, both due or overdue. Security deposits are not included but exceptions may be requested from the State with justification. If approved, it will include a requirement that the participant return any security deposits paid by QUEST and refunded after the participant vacates the rental unit, even after the QUEST grant ends and the participant exits from QUEST.

Legal fees cannot include any costs to address or resolve fines or penalties, and QUEST funds cannot be used to pay fines or penalties. However, legal aid services under 20 CFR § 680.900 may be provided to address barriers to employment such as expunging or sealing old criminal records and resolving credit report problems. As required for all supportive services, case notes must identify the employment barrier being addressed.

As with any purchase, procurement of supportive services must follow federal, State, and local procurement requirements with the necessary justification and documentation. Payment can be made through reimbursement to the participant or directly to the provider of the supportive service.

Justification for the supportive service with a record of how other programs were unable to provide the supportive services should be maintained in the participant file. If other sources are not available, in some cases it may be appropriate and advantageous to co-enroll the individual in another program for which the individual is eligible and can benefit if the need for supportive services exceeds the QUEST limit and the other program is able to cover the cost. As with any co-enrollment, staff of participating programs, i.e., QUEST and another program, must coordinate plans and services for the participant.

INQUIRIES

Inquiries regarding this bulletin may be directed to Ms. Carol Kanayama by email at Carol.H.Kanayama@hawaii.gov or Ms. Leila Shar at Leila.N.Shar@hawaii.gov.

REFERENCES

- 20 CFR § 680.900 – 920
- QUEST Bulletin No. 05-23, Supportive Services in QUEST