

Cattaraugus-Allegany Local Workforce Investment Area Transportation Assistance Program Policies & Procedures

PURPOSE

To provide One Stop Career Centers with a standardized system for providing customers with transportation assistance utilizing either a mileage reimbursement process or for customers who need advance assistance, the distribution of gas cards and to establish a uniform tracking system for accountability purposes. This program will be implemented as of March 2, 2009 and cease as of June 30, 2009 unless otherwise notified. Expenses shall not be incurred after June 30, 2009.

POLICY

The goal of CAWIB is to implement a transportation assistance program, through reimbursement of transportation costs or distribution of gas cards for eligible customers. This policy is established to ensure that this assistance program will be abuse-proof and easily tracked in its distribution, usage, and reconciliation. Mileage reimbursement referenced in this policy will be issued by the CAWIB office by check directly to the participant and gas cards will be issued by the One Stop Centers to participants as the need is identified by Career Counselors. One Stop Staff handling gas cards will treat each card as cash and assume the responsibility and accountability for their use within the parameters of this policy. Mileage reimbursement and gas cards will be issued to customers of the One Stop Career Center who require travel assistance in order to participate in approved training and employment activities as determined by a Career Counselor.

Transportation assistance may only be provided to individuals who are participating in intensive or training services through the WIA Title I Adult and/or Dislocated Worker programs or who are participating in the In-School or Out-of-School Youth program, and who are unable to obtain this type of supportive service through other programs. In addition, supportive services may only be provided when they are necessary (absolutely essential, indispensable) to enable individuals to participate in WIA Title I activities.

PROCEDURE

The Transportation Assistance Program will be explained to new customers during the UI Orientation program and/or upon their first staff-assisted service. Existing customers engaged in training programs or participating in intensive services will be notified by their Career Counselor during regular contact and/or by a mailed notification.

Referral to Transportation Assistance

Career Counselors will first refer individuals seeking transportation assistance to other programs that may provide this type of assistance. In circumstances where the WIA customer is in need of transportation assistance not available through referral, or when said resources are exhausted, or the timeframe for assistance distribution substantially hinders or precludes the participation in authorized WIA Title I activities, the Career Counselor may utilize WIA Title I funds. Comments must be included within the customer's OSOS case record that demonstrates services being provided with WIA funds were not available to the customer through other resources, or as established above.

The provision guidelines established above must be met prior to providing WIA funded transportation assistance. Failure to document the need for such services, and lack of availability through other community resources, may result in disallowed costs repayable to the CAWIB.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for Transportation Assistance, a customer must be enrolled in WIA Adult, Youth, or DW. The following service of priority will be followed in consideration of determining eligibility for assistance -

1. attending training services;
2. attending vocational educational training or other educational services;
3. participating full time in a subsidized or unsubsidized internship program or work experience;
4. working in full-time unsubsidized employment; or
5. searching for a job, which includes attending interviews and job fairs.

The Career Counselor is responsible to review the customer's service plan and circumstances to determine eligibility for transportation assistance using the attached form. Final approval is to be made by the One Stop Center Manager with a copy being forwarded to the CAWIB Office to ensure adequate funding. A customer will be notified of their eligibility determination including the amount of assistance available and the requirements for accepting such assistance by the completion of the WIA Supportive Services form, which they shall receive a copy of once approved by the One Stop Manager. Payments are based on the customer's service plan and may continue as long as the customer maintains satisfactory participation. The customer may not be paid for days not attended, for a disallowed activity, or when required customer activities are not completed.

Mileage Reimbursement

The Career Counselor will provide the customer with the standard One Stop mileage form and instruct the customer on how to complete the form. Customers will be responsible to obtain appropriate verification of attendance at allowable activities, which may include name, contact information, and signature of the instructor or supervisor. Customers will turn the mileage form into their Career Counselor at the end of every two weeks. The Career Counselor is responsible to review the mileage claimed, which includes ensuring that the purpose/activity is allowable, and verifying the customer's attendance and/or activity records. Once the Career Counselor has reviewed the mileage form, he/she shall sign off as "approved" and forward to the CAWIB Office who will issue payment directly to the customer via check.

The following formula applies to customers receiving mileage reimbursement. The rate is determined by calculating the one-way distance from the customer's residence to their place of work, training, or educational site. Mileage reimbursement shall be made by total number of miles times .25¢. The Career Counselor shall use this formula to calculate a maximum amount of assistance authorized for the time period that the customer is engaged in training or educational activities.

Mileage forms not submitted within 30 days of the end of each two-week period shall not be considered for payment.

Advance Transportation Assistance

Under extenuating circumstance, customers demonstrating special need may receive advance transportation expenses up to a maximum of \$20.00 per week for travel to participate in pre-approved WIA Title I activities. Each situation is assessed on an individual basis and requires the approval of the Career Counselor with appropriate documentation (comments) recorded in OSOS. The Career Counselor will use the same eligibility form and final approval is to be made by the One Stop Center Manager. The Career Counselor will determine the amount pre-authorized based on the mileage reimbursement formula. Advance transportation assistance will be provided in the form of a gas card.

Each customer receiving a gas card(s) for advance assistance must still provide a mileage log indicating the amount of miles traveled and for what specific WIA Title I activity. This mileage log shall be reviewed and approved by the Career Counselor, including taking any steps to verify attendance at approved activities. Any mileage expense above the gas card(s) amount issued will be reimbursed to the customer via check.

The CAWIB will purchase gas cards and provide them to the One Stop Career Centers for distribution for advance assistance as outlined below.

1. The CAWIB will issue a specified amount of pre-numbered gas cards to each One Stop Center. Gas cards will be distributed to the One Stop Manager, who will also assume responsibility for verifying the quantity received, safekeeping, and internal agency distribution and tracking. It is anticipated that the One Stop Managers will request additional gas cards on a monthly basis as needed. At the time of issuance, a Gas Card Receipt form must be completed.
2. Only a specified amount of pre-numbered cards will be issued at one time. The issuing party will enter the following information on the form –
 - the date of issue
 - the card numbers being issued
3. The receiving party will sign the form indicating receipt and responsibility for the cards as recorded.
4. The One Stop Managers will distribute the gas cards to the Career Counselors, as requested on behalf of the eligible customer, who will complete a Gas Card Log form. (copy attached) The Gas Card Log will be maintained by the One Stop Manager, or his/her designee, in order to track the distribution of the Gas Cards to eligible customers.
5. The Gas Card Log will be used for tracking purposes and the completed log will be submitted to CAWIB office no later than 10th of each month.
6. The gas card is redeemable at any participating gas station and cannot be exchanged for cash or other purchases. It is recommended that no more than two cards be issued to the customer at one time; however, it is at the discretion of the One Stop Manager to determine if this would adequately meet the customers need and requirements of the work or training activity.
7. If necessary, any unused returned cards will be logged by the returning party in the area designated for return on the Gas Card Receipt Form with the date returned and the card numbers being returned. The receiving party must sign to verify receipt/return of the cards as recorded on the log.

**WIA SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Customer Name: _____

NYOSOS ID# _____

Program Enrollment (check all applicable): Adult DW TRA Youth

Transportation Assistance

Assistance provided in the form of mileage reimbursement or advanced payment via gas card shall be based upon the total number of miles driven to participate in approved WIA Title I activities such as attending vocational or educational training, participation in a work experience, or unsubsidized employment. The assistance amount is based on the total number of miles from the customer's residence to the training/education facility or work site.

Start Date: _____ **End Date:** _____ **Total # of Weeks:** _____

Method of Assistance: Mileage Reimbursement Advance Assistance – Gas Card(s)

Check days customer is attending authorized activities:

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

Total # of Days _____ X _____ Miles from Residence to Site = _____ Miles/Week

Miles/Week _____ X _____ Number of Weeks = _____ Total Miles

Total Miles _____ X .25¢ Per Mile = \$ _____ **Total Amount of Assistance Authorized**

Career Counselor Signature: _____

Date: _____

One Stop Manager Signature: _____

Date: _____

By signing below, I hereby acknowledge and understand that in no way does this approval guarantee that the total amount of assistance authorized will be paid to me. I understand that this assistance is contingent upon available funding. I further acknowledge that I will be responsible to submit mileage forms detailing miles traveled and providing documentation of WIA Title I activities attended in the form of an instructor or supervisor signature, or other documentation as requested by my Career Counselor. I understand that I am responsible to submit my mileage form every 2 weeks and that if not submitted within 30 days of the last day of the 2 week period will not be considered for payment.

Customer Signature: _____

Date: _____

GAS CARD RECEIPT & RETURN FORM

CARDS DISTRIBUTED TO ONE-STOP SITE LOCATION: _____

ONE STOP MANAGER RECEIVING CARDS: _____

DATE ISSUED: _____ NUMBER OF CARDS ISSUED: _____

List Card Numbers Below:

Issuing Party Signature: _____

Date: _____

Receiving Party Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please fill out section below if cards are returned due to non-use.

ONE STOP MANAGER RETURNING CARDS: _____

DATE RETURNED: _____ NUMBER OF CARDS RETURNED: _____

List Card Numbers Below:

Returning Party Signature: _____

Date: _____

Receiving Party Signature: _____

Date: _____