Hennepin-Carver
Workforce Development Board

Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board
Action Request: 2026-9
Topic: Local Youth Support Service Policy
Board Meeting Date: November 13th, 2026

Item Description
Revised policy governing access to support services and Needs-Related Payments that follow federal regulations and state statutes and provides guidance on the issuance of support services and relative funding limits for WIOA Youth and Minnesota Youth Program eligible participants.

Action Needed
A motion (and second) to approve additional language and revisions to the Local Youth Support Services Policy related to the provision of Needs-Related Payments.

Background
Per the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), local workforce development areas are required to maintain a local policy governing the provision of supportive services to program participants. Workforce Development Area (WDA) 09 (Hennepin-Carver) currently has a Local Youth Support Services Policy in place that applies to the WIOA Youth, Minnesota Youth, and Youth at Work programs operating within the local area.

The proposed revision includes additional guidance related to Needs-Related Payments (NRPs) for WIOA Youth participants. The need for this clarification was identified during the 2026 program monitoring process, and DEED recommended that local area staff develop policy language to establish clear parameters for the administration of Needs-Related Payments by WIOA Youth service providers.

All WIOA Youth service providers within Hennepin-Carver WDA 09 are required to administer supportive services in accordance with the requirements and parameters outlined in this policy.

Staff Recommendation
Adopt the additional language and revisions to the Local Youth Support Services Policy related to the provision of Needs-Related Payments.

Attachments
Draft Policy: Local Youth Support Services Policy with amended language highlighted

Hennepin-Carver
Workforce Development Board

Policy: Local Youth Support Services

Effective Date: XX/XX/XXXX Last Reviewed Date: 05/19/2026

Summary

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) allows eligible program participants of WIOA Title I-B Youth to access supportive services that ensure resource and service coordination in the local area. Supportive services may be provided to participants that are unable to obtain similar or equivalent supportive services through other programs or resources; and supportive services may be provided at any point during a participant's time in the program, including during enrollment and follow-up services.

The Minnesota Youth Program does not require grantees to offer or provide supportive services to youth participants. However, it is generally a best practice to offer supportive services to youth participants to help ensure successful completion of programming. Per MN Statute 116L.561, Supportive services include items that are necessary for a youth to participate in the program, such as transportation, clothing, tools, childcare, housing/rental assistance, school-related expenses, etc.
These expenses may be paid directly to the youth or to a third-party vendor or may be provided through referral to another organization.

The Youth at Work Competitive Grant program does not require grantees to offer or provide support services to youth participants. However, it is generally a best practice to offer supportive services to youth participants to help ensure successful completion of programming. Per MN Statute 116L.562, items that are necessary for a youth to participate in the program, such as transportation, clothing, tools, childcare, housing/rental assistance, school-related expenses, etc. These expenses may be paid directly to the youth or to a third-party vendor.

Relevant Laws, Rules, or Policies

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), §3(59) and 134(d)(2) and (3) 20 CFR 680 Subpart G 20 CFR 681 Subpart C §681.570
TEGL 19-16
DEED's Financial Assistance for Computer Hardware and Similar Technology Policy TEGL 09-22
TEN No. 12 - 21
MN Statute 116L.561
MN Statute 116L.562

Purpose

This policy outlines the allowable Support Services and funding limits for the **WIOA Youth, Minnesota Youth, and Youth at Work programs.** Individuals who are eligible for and are enrolled in the WIOA Youth, Minnesota Youth, and Youth at Work programs may be eligible to receive Support Services so long as they meet the criteria outlined in DEED's policies pertaining to allowable activities for each of the respective programs. This policy includes additional criteria that has been established by the Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Area (WDA).

This policy also serves as guidance to govern the use of support service and/or training service dollars to fund purchases of computer hardware or similar technology (i.e. software purchases, repairs, etc.) for the Hennepin-Carver Workforce Area per the requirement in DEED's Financial Assistance for Computer Hardware and Similar Technology policy.

Additionally, this policy serves as guidance to govern the use of support service dollars to provide food for program participants for the Hennepin-Carver Workforce Area per the requirement in DEED's WIOA Youth Policy Chapter 11: Program Elements and in

accordance with Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200.40).

This policy amends the prior policy issued by Hennepin-Carver WDA, titled "Policy: Local Youth Support Services" effective 11/12/2025.

Hennepin-Carver subgrantees' internal Support Service policies may vary based on special circumstances. Any deviation from the standards established by this Local Policy must be submitted in writing and approved by the appropriate staff at Hennepin County prior to the policy being implemented.

Policy

Support Services

An employment counselor must determine eligibility for support services when it is identified that a program participant requires additional assistance outside of career and training services in taking the necessary steps towards self-sufficiency. Eligibility and the need for support services must be documented in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individual Service Strategy (ISS) and signed by both the program participant & employment counselor prior to obligating support services.

Support Services are subject to the following conditions and must be documented in the participant record:

1. Employment counselors must coordinate with community resources to provide linkage to community services in the local area to ensure that any services that are available are used before program funds. Program resources may not be used unless no other available resources can be secured and attempts to secure other available resources are documented in the case notes of the participant's file.
2. If unable to obtain support services through other community resources providing such services, support services may only be provided when necessary to enable the individual to actively participate in career or training activities;
3. Delivery of support services must be documented in the participant case file/Workforce One (WF1) record. Copies of receipts or expenditure back-up documentation must also be maintained in the participant file.
4. Support service transactions must also be included in the Support Services tab and case notes (the support service type, amount, participant needs identified, and expenditure rationale described) in WF1.
5. Support services may be included in WIOA Youth follow-up services and must be coded as follow-up services post exit in WF1 when provided as such.
6. Support service payments should be made directly to the vendor (i.e. car repair shop, property owner, utility company, bookstore, clothing store, etc.). On rare occasions, participants may be reimbursed if the expense is clearly tied back to the participant and valid documentation (i.e. receipt, invoice, notice of payment due) is provided. It is best practice to encourage support service expenses to be pre-approved by service provider.
7. If there is uncertainty about whether a purchase can be made using support services funds, contact the Youth Program Manager with the Hennepin County Department of Workforce Development.
8. Support services are not an entitlement and may be offered at the discretion of the employment counselor and funding is subject to availability of funds and limited ***up to*** the following maximums per program year or to the discretion of the service provider(s) of the Hennepin-Carver WDA:

Participants receiving Training and/or Work Experience services:	$2,000.00
Participants NOT receiving Training and/or Work Experience services:	$1,500.00

Exceptions to these limits may be at the discretion of the service provider(s) of the Hennepin-Carver WDA on a case-by-case basis for participants who are most in need. To consider exceeding the limits, the participant's specific exceptional needs and/or barriers must be identified in the IEP and case notes. Requests for exceptions must be submitted in writing by the employment counselor and are subject to review and approval by the supervisor of that agency. If, after supervisory review, there is any question about the provision of a particular request, the service provider will consult with the appropriate program staff at Hennepin County Workforce Development. If an exception to these limits is approved, it must be documented in the participant's case notes.

DOL ETA has determined that support services that enable WIOA Youth participants to participate in training may count toward training expenditures. The chart below outlines support services that may be considered an allowable training cost.

Allowable Support Services	***Allowable Training Cost?**	**Funding Limit Per Participant**
Books, Fees, and Supplies for Post-Secondary Students	Y	Funding limits are to the discretion of the service provider(s) of the Hennepin-Carver WDA based on availability of funding and determined on a case-by-case basis and must supply an internal policy that references funding limits for each category. The total funding limits by Program Year cannot exceed the amounts set forth this policy- the only exception is the case-by-case determination of a participant's exceptional need that has been clearly documented in the participant's WorkforceOne record, as described above. Hennepin County maintains the right to require service providers to pay back funds that are determined unallowable per the law and policies referenced above and/or due to the lack of justification for an amount that exceeds the established funding limits set in this policy or the service providers' internal policies.
Child & Dependent Care	N	
Transportation	N	
Counseling – Personal, Financial & Legal	N	
Dental	N	
Drug & Alcohol Counseling	N	
Educational Testing	Y	
Employment and Training – Related Fees	Y	
Emergency Financial Assistance	N	
Emergency Health Insurance	N	
Health Care	N	
Housing or Rental Assistance	N	
Out-of-Area Job Search	N	
Professional Membership	Y	
Reasonable Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities	Y	
Relocation	N	
Tools & Clothing	Y	
Financial Assistance for Computer Hardware and Related Technology	Y	To qualify for financial assistance for computer hardware and related technology, a participant must meet the following requirements and the file must contain supporting documentation for the need: 1) The participant must be enrolled in a training program that requires specific use of a computer/technology 2) The computer/technology should be required to complete training or successfully participate in the participant's Work Experience. 3) There must be specific supporting documentation that the use of particular technology is needed to complete the training or Work Experience Activity. 4) Documentation should be from the school/training vendor or Employer/Site Supervisor evidencing the technology is required and how the student will use the technology 5) There must be documentation that the participant does not own or have reasonable access to the technology required

		• This can be documented in writing by the participant stating that they do not have access to the technology required to meet training or Work Experience requirements. **Not owning a computer is not sufficient basis alone as schools generally provide access to technology as well as libraries, CareerForce centers, etc.** 6) Documentation should support evidence that the cost is the lowest, reasonable price that still meets the needs of the technology required (accessing refurbished technology is preferred if available). 7) All documentation should be submitted to designated service provider and stored in the participant file. 8) All computer/technology purchases must be submitted for agency supervisor review and approval prior to purchasing or obligation to purchase technology for the participant. 9) All computer/technology purchases as support service expenses must meet the conditions outlined in this policy as well as requirements 5-8 above. **Funding limit for computer hardware and related technology up to: $750.00 per participant**
Food as a Support Service	N	Training and Employment Guidance Letter 09-22 (TEGL 09-22) states that on a limited basis and in certain situations, food, at a reasonable cost, may be provided to WIOA Youth program participants as a supportive service.** Food may be provided to WIOA youth participants when it will assist or enable the participant to participate in youth program activities and to reach their employment and training goals, thereby achieving the program's overall performance goals. To qualify as a support services, the following requirements must be met and documented in the participant case file: 1) Program should provide food directly to youth during a program activity. Sign-in attendance sheets, agendas, timecards should document that the food was provided during a program activity. 2) Support Service funds may not be used to purchase or provide food for any one other than the enrolled individual. 3) Original receipts or invoices for the food purchase must be included in the participant file. 4) Food may NOT be provided for celebrations, graduation ceremonies, or events. Food should only be provided to WIOA Youth participants to enable program participation. 5) There must be documentation that the participant does not have reasonable access to the food necessary to participate in program activities. This may be self-attested by the participant. All documentation should be submitted to designated service provider and included in the participant's case file/Workforce One Record. **Food may be provided as a supportive service when program services occur over a mealtime or when program services are of a duration greater than three (3) hours. Organizations should adhere to the following limits on expenditures per meal per participant:** • **Breakfast $10.00** • **Lunch $13.00** • **Dinner $19.00**

* To establish whether a service can be covered by training funds, the file must contain documentation that indicates the equipment, materials, tools, additional fees and/or exams are a necessity and are required in order for an individual to successfully complete the training correlated with said items.

** **TEGL 09-22 has been rescinded.** DOL is expected to be issuing replacement guidance in the coming months. In the meantime, DOL has clarified that food provided in the context of program activities is still allowable in certain situations, consistent with the conditions outlined in this policy.

Needs-Related Payments (NRPs)

Needs-Based Payments (NRPs) may be provided to WIOA Youth program participants when financial assistance is necessary to support their participation in allowable program activities and to help them meet basic needs that would otherwise prevent engagement or successful completion of services. NRPs are a type of supportive service and differ from other forms of support in that they provide direct financial assistance to address a participant's essential needs.

Purpose:

NRPs are intended to offer short-term financial support to Youth participants who face barriers that affect their ability to fully participate in WIOA Youth services or activities. These payments may include, but are not limited to, assistance with food, transportation, personal essentials, or other needs that allow the participant to maintain consistent program engagement.

Eligibility:

To receive NRPs, the following conditions must be met:

- The individual must be an eligible, enrolled WIOA Youth participant;
- A demonstrated need for financial support must be clearly documented;
- The need must be linked to participation in allowable WIOA Youth activities or progress toward the goals outlined in the participant's Individual Service Strategy (ISS);
- Eligibility must be documented in the ISS and include a clear explanation of the need, attempts to secure alternative resources (if applicable), and how the payment will support participation or goal attainment.

Conditions for Issuing NRPs

- NRPs may be issued in the form of gift cards, cash cards, or other cash-equivalent mechanisms, provided they comply with federal, state, and local fiscal controls.
- NRPs must be reasonable, necessary, and tied to a documented participant need.
- NRPs may be issued at any point during program participation, including follow-up services, when justified by need.
- All NRPs must be recorded in Workforce One (WF1) under the Support Services tab. Accompanying documentation must include:
    - Type of NRP
    - Amount
    - Justification and identified need
    - Documentation of the participant's receipt (when applicable)
- Bulk purchases of gift cards, cash cards, and/or gas cards (as support services) cannot be submitted for reimbursement requests at the time of purchase.
- Reimbursement requests must be made after the service (gift, cash or gas card) is provided to the individual participant.
- Needs-Based Payments are subject to the overall Support Services funding limits established in this policy and count toward the participant's total Support Services allocation.

Prohibited Uses

NRPs may not be used for:

- Payments that constitute wages or stipends
- Any unallowable WIOA cost
- Purchases unrelated to participation in Youth program activities
- Payments for fines, penalties, or legal obligations
- Support for individuals other than the enrolled participant

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