

Youth Incentive Policy

Policy:

This policy provides guidance on administering incentive payments to eligible In-School Youth (ISY) and Out-of-School Youth (OSY) in the Northwest Pennsylvania Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). Incentives help encourage youth participants to achieve specific goals tied to training activities and work experiences.

Audience:

- Title I Staff
- TANF Youth Staff
- NWPA Job Connect Staff

Background:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) allows for the provision of incentives to youth participants as part of their Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The incentive must be linked to an achievement and must be related to a training and/or education activity specifically addressed by at least one of the fourteen (14) required Youth program elements. These achievements must be documented in the participants' ISS as a basis for the incentive payment.

It is important to note that incentives are not an entitlement. All incentive awards will be subject to availability and budgeting of WIOA Youth Program funds and applied at the discretion of NWPA Job Connect.. Incentives must not be issued as actual direct cash payments to youth participants.

Policy:

The following is a list of incentives that may be awarded at the discretion of NWPA Job Connect to youth participants based on funding availability:

Incentive	Amount	Required Documentation	Type of Incentive
Educational Function Level (EFL)	\$50.00	CASAS Test documentation and scores entered in CWDS	Education
High School Diploma	\$150.00	Copy of diploma Documentation on school letterhead	Education
GED Completion	\$150.00	Copy of GED entered into CWDS for MSG	Education

Post-Secondary Progress: 12 completed credit hours per semester for full-time student; a part-time student must have 12 completed credit hours, in total, over two consecutive semesters since enrollment	\$50.00	Post-secondary transcript or grades. Other official documentation from school or training provider	Education
Post-Secondary Degree or Certificate	\$150.00	Copy of diploma, certificate and/or transcripts	Education
Progress towards milestones: This can include completed stages of OJT; completion of benchmarks or milestones during an apprenticeship; or a report from an employer or training provider	\$50.00	Documentation from mid-point or end-point monitoring Copy of documentation for benchmark	Education/ Training
Passage of a knowledge based, state certification, or skill-based exam that is required for a particular occupation or that demonstrates progress in attaining technical or occupational skills	\$150.00	Copy of the results of the exam	Education/ Training
Successful mid-point monitoring of work experience	\$50.00	Mid-point monitoring form in file that shows participant scored proficient	Work Experience
Successful end-point monitoring of work experience	\$100.00	End-point monitoring form in file that show participant scored proficient	Work Experience
Completion of all allotted hours for On the Job Training	\$150.00	Completed end-point monitoring that shows participant finished hours and was retained by employer	Training
Obtaining or retained employment by 2nd quarter following exit	\$100.00	Retained employment position or gained employment during follow up by the 2 nd quarter after exit	Employment/Retention
Maximum amount of incentives per year: \$500.00			

TANF Youth Career Awareness Incentives:

- Participants can earn up to \$100 for completion of the TANF Youth Career Awareness Modules per program year (July 1st through June 30th).

ELIGIBILITY

Participants must meet eligibility requirements for a program before receiving gift card incentive payments purchased with the respective program funds. Eligibility requirements include:

- Participants must be a WIOA or TANF eligible youth participant.
- Participants must be active and in good standing with a program, including regular contact with youth program staff.
- Participants must have achieved an outcome listed as a goal within their Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

Each NWP Job Connect funded in-school youth and out-of-school youth program services contractor that utilizes incentives must maintain a clear and concise written incentive policy that outlines a uniform and consistent strategy for awarding incentives with NWP Job Connect funds.

At a minimum, the program service provider's incentive policy must include:

- The method and justification for the issuance of incentives.
- The method by which gift cards for incentives are purchased.
- The method by which gift cards for incentives are stored.
- The internal controls for incentive awards (e.g. number of signatures required).
- Compliance and alignment with WDB Incentive Policy #209.

Programs may not award direct cash payments to youth participants as part of an incentive strategy. A cap of \$150 in value per instance (e.g., attainment of a GED, placement in employment, retention of a job for 90 days) is required. Participants cannot receive multiple incentives for the same activity. A participant could receive up to a maximum of \$500 upon successful completion of benchmarks and documentation in the participant file.

- Incentives may not include entertainment costs, such as movie or event tickets or gift cards to movie theaters.
- Incentive payments may only be awarded in recognition of an achievement directly tied to training and work experience and must be tied to the goals of the program.
- Incentives must be administered in a manner that ensures all participants receive equal awards for equal achievements.
- At least three (3) individuals must sign off to indicate that an incentive has been awarded: a program services supervisor, a program services staff member, and the participant receiving the incentive.
- The program service contractor's written incentive policy must clearly describe this process.

Reports to the fiscal agent must be provided on the status of issuing incentives at least monthly.

REFERENCE

WIOA Section 129
20 CFR Part 681.640
2 CFR Part 200

HISTORY

Name	Date	Rev. Level	Description of Change	Effective Date
Deb O'Neil	03/13/2017	A	New policy per state	
Deb O'Neil	09/30/2017	B	Removed stipends from policy	10/13/2017
Susan Richmond		C	Changed TABE to CASAS; added an incentive category; updated post-secondary school incentive; added High School Diploma to 2 nd incentive category	07/14/2023
Susan Richmond	6/30/2025	D	Add TANF Youth Incentives and update dollar amounts	07/18/2025
Susan Richmond	6/3/2026	E	Update format/update TANF Youth piece	08/01/2026