

## 2.2.1 What are Support Services?

Support services are goods and services purchased to help parents/caregivers to participate in required WorkFirst activities, attend WorkFirst Orientation, or needs for emergency situations. We offer support services when there is no other way to meet a family's essential needs while using sound judgment to determine what is reasonable. This may require using non-traditional or alternative means to meet the family's goals or needs. For example, a participant starting work may need alternative transportation to work if their work schedule starts before the morning bus line and a bicycle and helmet may be appropriate to approve.

We offer temporary and targeted supports a participant needs to work, look for work, prepare for work, or to participate in required WorkFirst activities. Support services are available, as needed, throughout a participant's time on WorkFirst cash assistance.

Support services are also available to:

- Allow applicants to attend and complete a WorkFirst Orientation prior to TANF/SFA approval.
- Participants who are curing sanction.
- Ineligible minor parents who are working with the social service specialist to either enroll in school as required or move to an acceptable living arrangement.
- Teens 17 and 18 years old in a WorkFirst [aActivity](#) (school clothes are not a needed item for support services).

See [Social Services Manual \(Pregnant and Participating Minors\)](#)

Some WorkFirst participants may not be eligible for support services but need assistance to continue to live independently, Case Managers should consider Ongoing Additional Requirements for these families. See the [Social Service Manual \(OAR\)](#) for more information.

[CSD WorkFirst Program Specialists staff](#), [ESD Career Coaches](#), [Community Colleges](#), [Job Services Specialists](#) and Community Jobs (CJ) contractors can authorize support services.

## 2.2.4 What is Post-TANF Employment Transportation Support Services (PETSS)?

PETSS provides transportation-related support services in the three months after TANF closes, for participants who are exiting TANF/SFA and have verified unsubsidized employment of 15+ hours per week. The purpose is to help mitigate the cliff effect that often happens for families when they start new employment and are over-income for TANF/SFA. **Households that closed due to Non-Compliance Sanction are not eligible for PETSS.**

[The WFPS/WFSSS WorkFirst staff:](#)

1. Reviews case and determines if there are needed transportation-related support services:
  - a. Is the TANF/SFA closed?
    - i. If yes, did the TANF/SFA AU close, less than 3 months ago?
    - ii. If yes, is there **verified** unsubsidized employment of 15+ hours per week?
    - iii. Documents actions taken and support services needed in eJAS notes.
2. Issues the support services following the instructions in [2.2.10 Support Services - Step-by-Step Guide](#).

See the [PETSS Desk Aid](#), for more details on how to issue support services after an AU is closed

## 2.2.9 How do I request an Exception to Rule?

When necessary, you can request an exception to rule (ETR) to exceed the support services annual limit or when a need is outside the written policy limitations. This is a formal exception request process where headquarters staff make the decision. State office may approve these exceptions when the participant's situation differs from the majority and has a significant impairment or limitation that isn't addressed by current limits. Explain to the participant, when you submit these requests, there is no guarantee state office will approve them.

To request an exception to rule, [WorkFirst staff](#) ~~the WFPS/SS~~ must complete the Barcode ETR request process. For complete instructions on processing an ETR the EA-Z Manual provides more [details](#).

When a participant has an emergency situation that seriously jeopardizes family health or safety, ask your supervisor to request emergency supports to exceed the annual limit. This option is reserved for families who face imminent harm and need active crisis intervention, like covering gas and relocation costs for a family actively fleeing domestic violence. Your supervisor will be able to call in these emergency requests to state office for immediate decisions.

## 2.2.10 Support Services - Step-by-Step Guide

For complete eJAS directions, click "Help" on the eJAS page when help is needed. Note: ~~WF~~CSD staff can utilize the [Determining and Authorizing Support Services Flowchart](#).

1. [WorkFirst staff](#) ~~The WFPS/WFSSS~~ or ESD Career Scope Coach:
  - a. Determines needed support services based on the activities in the IRP, to attend WorkFirst Orientation, or for emergency situations.
    - i. Discusses the best option with the participant to provide services and vendors, and whether a voucher or fuel card, better fits their needs (based

on the determined need, explain the process of how the services will be issued; i.e., card or voucher).

- ii. Reviews past support services authorized by DSHS, Commerce, ESD, or SBCTC to ensure no duplication of supports.
  - iii. Determines the best and/or lowest-cost alternative (for example, request two estimates for car repair).
  - iv. Determines how participant chooses to receive (direct issuance, by mail or pick-up at local office).
- b. Authorizes and issues support services, following local office procedure, including:
- i. Creating voucher/s:
    - A. Enters detailed information on the voucher, outlining what's being purchased and the cost of each participant item (e.g. "Car repair - For repair of the transmission on 2010 Ford Escape not to exceed \$XXX).
    - B. Prints and signs the voucher. Obtains embossing of WorkFirst seal and signature from a supervisor or designated staff for all vouchers, which validates to the vendor the document is an original. The voucher is "invalid unless embossed." The only exception is direct payment vouchers.
  - ii. Issuing fuel cards, bus passes or bus tickets. \*Follow the Support Services Negotiables Internal Controls & Purchasing Manual - 1.4.2.1 - now located on the WorkFirst SharePoint Site.

Please note: Cancel pending requests if the fuel card isn't picked up within 10 business days from the authorization date.

c. Documents in eJAS support services notes the reasons for selecting and authorizing support services and answers the following:

1. What resources are currently available or quickly obtained?
    2. How much do they need to reserve to cover their on-going needs?
    3. What lower cost alternative are available, if any?
    4. How do they plan to take over ongoing costs in the future?
- Guidance for signing vouchers can be found in the [Supervisor Review Reference Guide](#).
  - For ESD, please refer to the Internal Controls Manual.
  - Commerce Program providers, refer to your Commerce WorkFirst Contract.

## 2.2.16 Special Instructions - Inpatient Treatment

This process outlines the steps staff should take when a participant is in an inpatient treatment facility and requests support services from a CSO outside their originating CSO's catchment area. The steps only apply to participants planning to return to their originating CSO after treatment:

### 1. The originating CSO:

- a. Discusses necessary support services with participant for inpatient treatment.
- b. Issues support services at the time of setting up the IRP with inpatient treatment activity.
  - i. Updates the mailing address to the treatment facility address and documents the change in ACES and eJAS
- c. Reviews support service procedures if additional support services are requested while in inpatient treatment to determine if the participant meets support service criteria in this chapter.

**Note:** Many treatment centers offer supports including diapers, personal hygiene products and transportation if the participant can't afford these items.

### 2. When a participant is in inpatient treatment and goes into a local CSO for support services, the CSO:

- a. Coordinates with the [WFPS/SSS WorkFirst staff](#) of record to follow the above process.
- b. Determines that a support service is appropriate if unable to make contact with the [WFPS/SSS WorkFirst staff](#) of record.
- c. Transfers the case record to the CSO near the treatment facility to create and issue the support service.
- d. [WFPS/SSS](#) transfers the case record back to the originating CSO for continued case management.

## Resources

### Related WorkFirst Handbook Sections

- [2.1 Supports - Overview](#)
- [6.1 Resolving Issues](#)
- [8.1 Paid & Unpaid Employment](#)
- [Support Services Directory](#)

- [Payment Schedule for Medical Exams/Services](#)
- [Support Services Log](#)

## Forms & Other Resources

- [Determining and Authorizing Support Services Flowchart](#)
- [DSHS 05-010\(X\), Exception to Rule](#)
- [DSHS 07-073\(X\), WorkFirst Travel and Attendance](#)
- [DSHS 07-110, Vehicle Licensing Fees Checklist](#)
- [PETSS Desk Aid](#)
- [Voucher Signing - Supervisor Review Reference Guide](#)
- ~~[WorkFirst Support Services Review](#)~~