



## **Policy and Procedure**

<b>Title:</b>	Youth Incentive Policy	<b>Number:</b>	OP 14-01
<b>Effective Date:</b>	September 18, 2014	<b>Revisions:</b>	May 21, 2026

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to establish guidelines for providing incentives to youth for recognition and achievement of goals tied to training activities and Work Experiences.

### **Reference**

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Sec. 129 (c)
- Title 20 CFR, Chapter V, Part 681, Subpart C, §681.640
- Title 2 CFR, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200, Subpart D, §200.302 Financial Management, (b) (3-4) and §200.303
- Title 2, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200, Subpart E, §200.438 Entertainment and Prizes
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter 21-16: WIOA Title I Youth Program Guidance

### **Definition:**

Incentives: payments awarded to youth participants for recognition and achievement, directly tied to training activities and work experiences. The motivation must be linked to the achievement of a milestone and related to training and education, Measurable Skill Gains, or employment goals as identified in the Individual Service Strategy. All incentives must be earned and paid during the Youth participation period. Incentives do not include supportive services items such as childcare, transportation, or reimbursement of work-related expenses.

### **Policy:**

The Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board permits incentive payments to youth participants for recognition and achievement directly tied to training activities and work experiences. Incentive payments are to be tied to the goals of the specific program, outlined in writing before the commencement of the program that may provide incentive payments, align with this policy, and be in accordance with the requirements contained in 2 CFR part 200, which emphasizes that while incentive payments are allowable under WIOA, the incentives must comply with the Cost Principles in 2 CFR part 200. For example, Federal funds must not be spent on entertainment costs. Therefore, incentives must not include entertainment, such as movie or sporting event tickets or gift cards to movie theaters or other venues whose sole purpose is entertainment.

Incentive payments are not to be used as a motivator for various activities such as recruitment, submitting eligibility documentation, and participation in the program. Incentives paid for with WIOA funds must be connected to recognition of achievement of milestones in the program, tied to work experience, education, or training. Such incentives for achievement could include improvements marked by the acquisition of a credential or other successful outcomes.

Incentives will be provided through the issuance of a debit card; participants may not receive cash under any circumstances. These rewards aim to motivate youth to continue participating in activities by recognizing good performance or attendance.

### **Procedure**

Eligible goals for incentives must relate to achievements in training, employment, work-readiness skills, occupational skills, or basic skill attainment. The expected achievement must be documented in writing in the participant's ISS before starting the program activity and approved by the Program Director. At a minimum, the ISS should include the guidelines outlined in this policy and specify the award amount for each related activity. Career Coaches are strongly encouraged to strategically develop incentive plans for youth to maximize the effective use of funds within the budget constraints.

While providing incentives is an option, it is not mandatory unless the SVWDB requires it for a specific program.

Depending on funding availability, incentives can be awarded up to the amounts specified for each goal achieved. If there are any questions about funding availability, please contact the SVWDB Finance Director to discuss them. If the Finance Director and the Program Director jointly determine that funding is unavailable, they will inform program staff that incentives are on hold until further notice.

Examples of goal achievements eligible for an incentive payment include, but are not limited to:

1. Secondary school completion or completion of Adult Education; Attainment of a high school diploma or GED: \$100.
2. Participation in services that provide labor market information, such as completing planned career exploration activities: \$25
3. Leadership Development activities, such as completing community service projects: \$50.
4. Participation in Work Experience activities, such as completing WEX preparation activities, job shadowing, academic and occupational education components, etc.: \$50
5. Occupational skills training completion and licensing: \$100
6. Completion of basic skills training and a post-test demonstrating gains in literacy and numeracy: \$25 per post-test
7. Obtain a post-secondary credential (occupational certificate, diploma, or degree):\$100.

Youth incentive awards are limited to a lifetime amount of \$500.00 maximum per eligible youth. The SVWDB Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may grant exceptions. Requests for a waiver must be submitted in writing and clearly state why an exception should be made for that particular participant. Approved waivers must be in place prior to the exception activity.

#### **Documentation for any program**

Attainment of goals identified in the ISS must also be clearly documented in the participant's file and in the Virginia Workforce Connection System. An Incentive Tracking Log must be maintained and list all incentives awarded to each youth; the SVWDB provides the log. Incentive awards shall be made in a uniform and consistent manner, as explained in this policy and procedure, to ensure all participants receive equal rewards for equal achievement.

The participant's receipt of incentive payments shall be acknowledged by signing the Participant Receipt Form. The Incentive Tracking Log shall include, at a minimum, the participant's name, VaWC State ID number, funding stream, the specific goal being rewarded, and the amount and type of incentive. The Incentive Tracking Log shall be maintained in the participant's file, with a copy submitted for reimbursement.

**Revisions:** November 19, 2015  
April 11, 2019  
October 10, 2019  
May 21, 2026

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