461-190-0211 **Effective 10-1-26**

Standards for Support Services Payments; JOBS, Pre-TANF, SFPSS, TANF

In the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS), Pre-Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Pre-TANF), State Family Pre-SSI/SSDI (SFPSS), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs, notwithstanding any other administrative rule in chapter 461 and subject to the availability of state and federal funding, the following special provisions apply:

(1) *Support services* (see OAR 461-001-0025) payments are available to:

(a) An individual who is an adult parent, needy *caretaker relative* (see OAR 461-001-0000), *teen parent* (see OAR 461-001-0000), or a *minor parent* (see OAR 461-001-0000) who is head of household; in the TANF *filing group* (see OAR 461-110-0330) and is not otherwise *exempt* (see OAR 461-130-0305) and in accordance with participation requirements in OAR 461-130-0310.

(b) An individual who is a recipient of Pre-TANF or SFPSS programs.

(2) Pursuant to the reasonable cost requirements in 2 CFR 200.404, in approving *support services* payments, the Department (see OAR 461-001-0000) must consider lower cost alternatives. This rule is not intended to supplant Department funding with other funding that is available in the community. The expectation of the Department is that Department staff and individuals work collaboratively to seek resources that are reasonably available to the individual in order to participate in activities.

(3) Payments for *support services* are provided when:

(a) Necessary to participate in an approved *activity* (see OAR 461-001-0025) specified in the individual's *case plan*;

(b) Authorized in advance;

(c) The payment meets one of the four federal purposes of TANF identified in 45 CFR 260.20; and

(d) All other provisions of this rule are met.

(4) A Department approved *activity* is eligible for *support services* payments, except for the following activities:

(a) Family Support & Connections,

(b) Retention services, and

(c) *Microenterprise* (see OAR 461-190-0197).

(5) In the JOBS, Pre-TANF, SFPSS, and TANF programs, the *Department* may provide payments for *support services* for *eligible* (see OAR 461-130-0310) individuals engaged in an approved *activity* specified in the individual's *case plan,* subject to provisions in subsections (1)(a) and (1)(b) of this rule. *Support services* payment types are subject to the following limitations:

(a) Auto Insurance: Payments for auto insurance to support the goals specified in the individual's *case plan*. Payments for auto insurance are limited to no more than two months in a *12-month rolling period* (see OAR 461-001-0025).

(b) Eyeglasses: Effective July 19, 2023, payments for eyeglasses (does not include contacts) when necessary to remove a barrier towards gaining employment. Requests for eyeglasses above $50 shall require verification of the need from a qualified and appropriate professional. Payments for eyeglasses are limited to individuals who are not:

(A) Under the age of 21;

(B) A pregnant adult; or

(C) Within the last day of the twelfth month following the month in which the individual gave birth.

(c) Housing and Utilities: Payments for housing and utilities are limited to nonrecurrent short-term payments to address a specific crisis or episode of need and are not intended to meet ongoing needs. Payments are further limited to:

(A) Up to four months of payments within a *12-month rolling period*; and

(B) $3,500 per TANF *filing group* within a *12-month rolling period*.

(d) Professional fees: Payments for professional fees are limited to:

(A) Application fees for housing;

(B) Auto insurance as described in subsection (5)(a) of this rule, and Driver and Motor Vehicle Services (DMV) fees for vehicles owned by a member of the TANF *filing group*;

(C) Background checks and fingerprinting for employment and training purposes;

(D) Educational costs related to *Adult Basic Education, English Language Learner*, and *High School or GED Completion Attendance activities* (see OAR 461-001-0025);

(E) Identity related documentation; and

(F) Required certifications, licenses, tests or professional registrations related to employment.

(e) Science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM): Payments for science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics are limited to educational purposes including but not limited to family passes to museums, Oregon State Parks, and marine or natural science centers. Individuals must continue to meet all other provisions of this rule and payment is limited to activities in which the eligible individual and their TANF *filing group* can participate together.

(f) Self-employment expenses are limited to items or expenses that do not create or enhance long-term business value, ownership, or equity. These are limited to:

(A) Training, licensing, compliance, and insurance costs;

(B) Required clothing or safety gear; and

(C) Marketing and outreach materials or fees.

(g) Tax Preparation Services: Payments for personal tax preparation services are limited to payments for the current tax year and can only be accessed from January 1 through Tax Day in April, in situations where no free community resources are available.

(h) Tuition payments:

(A) Tuition payments for a *vocational training activity* or a *jobs skills training activity* (see OAR 461-001-0025) are limited to single payments by session as defined by the educational or vocational training entity, such as a term, semester, or quarter.

(B) Tuition payments for a *self-initiated training activity* shall be limited to no more than a twelve-month period per individual and shall be reviewed on a term-by-term basis. Individuals must show that they are making *satisfactory progress* (see OAR 461-001-0025) in their program and working towards receiving or clearing their standing to receive financial aid.

(C) Lower cost alternatives, as described in section (2) of this rule, must be explored, including the individual pursuing financial aid and other sources of assistance.

(i) Vehicle repairs: Payments for vehicle repairs are limited to situations where the TANF *filing group* resides in the vehicle only and are subject to all housing and utility payment limitations described in subsection (5)(c) of this rule.

(j) None of the following are allowed for payment by the Department:

(A) Alcohol and drug treatment services.

(B) Animal related costs.

(C) Any payments described in this rule for individuals employed in, seeking employment in, or engaged in an *illegal activity* (see OAR 461-120-0215).

(D) Auto expenses outside of subsection (5)(i) of this rule, this includes vehicle loan payments, vehicle repairs, maintenance, and tires.

(E) Child-care, including registration fees and ERDC co-payments.

(F) Credit card debt, lines of credit, or other debt payments excluding mortgages.

(G) Entertainment services, including but not limited to amusement parks, digital streaming services or applications, or movie theaters.

(H) Eviction related expenses that do not result in the dismissal of the eviction

(I) Expenses in the collection process.

(J) Expenses with a due date in a future benefit month.

(K) Legal fines, restitution, legal or civil fees (including attorney fees and expungement), court costs, or other costs associated with a legal penalty.

(L) Medical Assistance or medical services, including but not limited to dental services, eye exams, urinalysis and other medical screenings, or substance use testing.

(M) Mental health services.

(N) Purchase of a car, recreational vehicle, or motor home.

(O) Purchase of a firearm or other items intended to be used as self-defense or as a weapon.

(6) The Department may require an individual to provide verification of a need for, or costs associated with, *support services* prior to approval and issuance of payments if verification is reasonably available.

(7) The Department may reduce, close, or deny in whole or in part a request for *support services* payments in the following circumstances:

(a) The purpose for the payments is not related to the individual's *case plan*.

(b) The individual is failing to comply with the *case plan* or disqualified, unless the payments in question are necessary for the individual to demonstrate cooperation with the individual's *case plan*.

(c) The individual disagrees with *support services* payments offered or made by the Department as outlined in the individual's *case plan*.

(d) The payment does not relate to one of the four federal purposes of TANF in 45 CFR 260.20

(e) The payment does not comply with the reasonable cost requirements in 2 CFR 200.404 or lower cost alternatives are available.

Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 409.050, 411.060, 411.070, 411.121, 412.006, 412.009, 412.014, 412.049
Statutes/Other Implemented: ORS 291.003, 409.010, 409.040, 411.060, 411.070, 411.121, 412.001, 412.006, 412.009, 412.014, 412.049, 2 CFR 200.404, 45 CFR 260.20, 45 CFR 260.31(b)(1)

Previous Rules

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