

**KERN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION MEMORANDUM NO. 08-32**

DATE : August 1, 2008
RE : Welfare-to-Work Supportive Service Guidelines for
Transportation Costs

Purpose: This Memorandum provides guidelines for Employment Social Service Workers (SSW) to issue transportation supportive services to CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work individuals participating in assigned activities and/or employment.

I. CalWORKs Transportation Policies

- A. Transportation assistance is available to help CalWORKs individuals participate in the Welfare-to-Work (WTW) program. Transportation costs are paid for travel to and from approved activities, including employment. Transportation to and from child care providers may be paid (Section I-D).

Transportation Assistance:

- Orientation and Appraisal
- Job Readiness Workshops and Job Search Activities
- Assessment
- Self-Initiated Program (SIP)

- Assigned WTW Activities

- Full-Time or Part-Time Employment

- Participants Approved for Retention Services

- Job Interviews (in another county or out-of-state)
 - Supervisor approval must be obtained.
 - The Program Director or designee must approve out-of-state transportation expenses.

- B. Least Costly Method for Providing Assistance with Transportation Costs

Participants choose which type of transportation to use; however, participants will be paid for the least costly form of transportation that is reasonably available. Reasonably available is defined as:

1. The transportation method must be available during the hours of the WTW activity and/or the hours of employment.

2. If there is no public transportation available or the round-trip travel time using public transportation exceeds a total of two hours (not including the time necessary to transport children to and from school and/or a child care provider), the participant is reimbursed for using a private vehicle.
3. More than one of type of transportation may be used to meet the participant's needs.

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C. Evaluate Each Participant's Transportation Needs

It is important for the SSW to evaluate each participant's transportation needs to ensure they are receiving the transportation services necessary to successfully participate in approved WTW activities and employment.

The SSW discusses transportation arrangements with the participant during the initial assignment to a WTW activity and each time there is a change in activity assignments. Participants are informed of the least costly method for paying transportation costs and the options available for transportation. Back-up transportation plans are discussed with each participant.

D. Transporting Children to Meet Child Care Needs

1. Transportation reimbursement is provided for transporting children to and from the child care provider in order for parents to participate in assigned WTW activities and/or employment.
2. Transportation arrangements are discussed with the participant when WTW activities change, the participant has a new child care provider, and/or hours of child care change due to school breaks, holidays and summer vacation.
3. The participant is reimbursed for the miles driven to transport children to and from child care (whenever this mileage exceeds the round-trip mileage between the participant's home and the assigned WTW activity or place of employment).
4. Transportation by child care providers:
 - a. If the child care provider charges separately for providing transportation services to or from school or other child care providers, reimbursement can be provided if it is determined that the transportation is necessary for the parent to participate in WTW activities. Verification of the cost must be provided.

- b. If the child care provider includes transportation to or from school or other child care providers as part of the child care rate, the transportation is covered by the CalWORKs child care payment. If the cost of child care and transportation exceeds the approved child care rate, the parent is responsible for the difference.
- 5. Justification to allow transportation expenses for children receiving child care is documented in the case narrative.

II. Assistance – Riding the Bus

- A. All offices are able to issue bus passes to the participant
- B. If the participant purchases his/her own bus pass, the SSW reimburses the cost of the bus pass.
 - Payments should be processed within five working days.
 - The participant may request an advance payment.
- C. If a bus pass is issued for a child to help meet the family's transportation needs, the bus pass is issued to the parent.

III. Assistance - Driving a Vehicle

- Participants are reimbursed a standard rate per mile for vehicle operating costs. Operating costs include gas, oil, routine maintenance and tires.
 - The standard mileage reimbursement rate does not include ownership costs. Assistance is available to help with car insurance, license fees, registration, and taxes for participants who own their car or are purchasing a car.
- A. Mileage Reimbursement
 - 1. Effective with the payment month of July 2008, participants who drive their own vehicle or a vehicle belonging to someone else are reimbursed twenty-seven cents (\$0.27) per mile
 - 2. Participants submit a monthly mileage claim form to their SSW for mileage reimbursement.
 - 3. Participants are advised to submit the claim form by the fifth day of the month for transportation costs incurred the prior month.
 - Payments should be processed within five working days.

- When the mileage claim does not seem reasonable, the SSW is responsible for reviewing the Mileage Record with the participant.
- 4. Advance Payments: Advance payments may be issued if necessary for the individual to participate in an activity timely and to avoid using personal funds. A mileage claim form is required for the period covered by the advance payment.
- 5. Parking approved by the SSW is reimbursed at actual cost and receipts must be provided.

B. Assistance with Ownership Costs

1. Assistance with ownership costs is available to participants who own their cars or have purchased a car and are making payments. Verification of car registration or payment agreement is required.
2. Maximum Reimbursement Amounts
 - a. For participants who are employed, the maximum reimbursement is \$200.00 per year.
 - b. For participants who are not employed, the amount reimbursed is limited to a one-time payment of \$200.00.
3. Payments may be made to assist with an unusual circumstance when approved by the Supervisor.
4. Participants are counseled to understand that car maintenance and normal repairs are their responsibility.

IV. Assistance with Car Repairs for Employed Participants

- A. Car repairs are authorized when the car repair will enable the vehicle to meet the transportation needs of the family when the participant is employed.
- B. Ancillary services for car repairs can only be authorized under the following conditions:
 1. The participant owns the car or has purchased the car and is making payments. Verification of the car registration and/or payment agreement is required.
 2. There are no alternative transportation arrangements.

3. To determine if the car repair is appropriate and will meet the participant's needs, the SSW follows established guidelines.

Decision questions include:

- What is the current condition of the car?
- What car repairs have been previously made?
- What repairs will be needed in the future?
- Will the car repair enable the vehicle to be used to meet the transportation needs of the family?
- What alternative forms of transportation are available to meet the transportation needs of the family?

4. Supervisor approval is required.

C. The maximum reimbursement amount for car repairs is \$500.00 per vehicle.

1. Three (3) estimates are required. Each estimate must be in writing, itemized and signed.
2. Payment will be authorized for the lowest amount. The participant chooses where to have the vehicle repaired and then pays any difference between the amount authorized and the actual cost.
3. If the cost exceeds \$500.00, the participant needs to provide a reasonable explanation of how the difference will be paid.

V. Assistance with Car Pool Costs

Effective with the payment month of July 2008, a participant in a car pool who drives on a rotational basis will be reimbursed twenty-seven cents (\$0.27) per mile for the days the participant drives his or her vehicle.

VI. Assistance to Purchase a Bicycle

Bicycles can be purchased for participants when the distance to reach an employment site or other assigned activity is reasonable. Remember to consider the family's need to transport children when discussing if a bicycle will meet the needs of the participant.

- This is a one-time only benefit.
- Supervisor approval is required.
- To help ensure bicycle safety, the following types of items can be purchased: bicycle helmet, light, lock, and repair kit.

- When the purchase of the bicycle is completed, a receipt with make, color and other identifying information is included in the case. This information is also included in the case narrative.

VII. Notices of Action

Transportation Notices of Action shall be issued timely.

A 10-day notice is required if the transportation payment will be decreased or terminated.