



EARN Incentive Services Policy and Procedure

Eligibility

Incentive Services are designed to meet the overall program goals of employment and self-sufficiency. To be eligible for an incentive, an EARN participant must be enrolled and be in compliance with required hours and ACR, and be meeting other program expectations, including expectations regarding conduct and active involvement in activities.

There are two types of incentives available to participants who are in compliance: those available based on individual need and those available for maintaining compliance in a federal calendar month.

Incentives based on need are available immediately to those who are in compliance and throughout the entire enrollment. Each individual EARN participant must be notified incentives based on need are immediately available.

Incentives available for maintaining compliance for a federal calendar month are available after the first full federal calendar month of enrollment. Unexcused absences and tardiness according to the Attendance Sheet will disqualify someone from eligibility for that month's incentive unless the time was made-up within the federal month.

Compliance during Retention includes the participant providing timesheet verification in accordance with established timelines and in advance of incentive award dates.

Funding

This Policy may be put on hold or terminated at any time due to lack of funding. EARN cost reimbursement funds can be used for incentives for active individuals whose TANF case is not closed as long as the funding is included in the EARN budget. Incentives are allowable costs for Retention participants only when using performance-based funds; the regular allocation must not be used for incentives for Retention participants.

Incentives Based on Individual Need

Incentives Based on Individual Need are available to EARN TANF participants throughout enrollment, including after the TANF benefits close, for up to 12-months of Retention. Incentives are as follow.

1. A total of \$200 for the following allowable incentives will be available for each participant throughout a program year to help cover necessary expenses for which there is a need:
 - Driver's Permit and/or License Fees
 - Gas cards
 - Pre-requisite Clearances and Background Checks
 - Tools
 - Personal Hygiene

- Uniforms and other Necessary Attire
 - Childcare
 - Certification/Testing Fees
 - Car Insurance Premiums (not to exceed 3 months and only if the request is submitted 7 days in advance of payment due date)
2. A total equivalent to the cost of the GED® or HiSET® exam or make-up exams for individual test areas as needed will be made available for each participant as a one-time only incentive. The incentive used to cover the exam fees will not reduce the \$200 available above.
 3. A total of \$200 will be available for each participant as a one-time only incentive to cover the cost of a bicycle with helmet and, if needed, a bicycle lock if the participant has a transportation barrier and agrees to use a bicycle to attend EARN programming and/or get to employment.
 - Bicycle with helmet and lock
 4. A total of \$700 will be available for each participant as a one-time only incentive to cover the cost of Driver's Education.
 - Driver's Education

Credentialing Incentives

Designed to help motivate participants in expanding their career options via training, Credentialing Incentives are payable via gift card. Credentialing Incentives are available throughout enrollment until the TANF benefits close; they are not available for TANF participants in Retention.

1. TANF EARN participants who do not have their high school diploma or equivalency are eligible for a one-time incentive of \$150 after they pass the GED® or HiSET® exam earning their equivalency diploma.
2. TANF EARN participants are also eligible for an additional incentive in the amount of \$150 each following the completion of up to two (2) DHS approved credentialing activities upon receipt of their diploma or training certificate, or successful referral to KEYS.

Family Incentives

TANF EARN participants are eligible to earn Family Incentives for one-month intervals of compliance. Incentives are designed to encourage both performance and positive family interactions by engaging parents and their children in fun, safe activities they might not otherwise be able to experience while on TANF or at the start of their career paths.

In advance of each new program year, the EARN provider will put forth a proposed schedule of incentives based on philosophies of the 2-Gen model and insight from EARN participants along with anticipated costs for CWPDC review and approval. The EARN provider will proactively seek donations to minimize EARN performance funds expenditures so that the incentives are within budget. Incentives must never be entertainment based per the Uniform Guidance.

EARN participants must be notified incentives for compliance are available and must be made aware of the anticipated incentive for the current month and the next month of participation (that is, they will know what they can expect for the current month and the month thereafter).

Incentives available for meeting compliance may be discontinued at any time due to lack of funding to support the continuation of the incentive program.

Family Incentives are available throughout enrollment until the TANF benefits close; they are not available for TANF participants in Retention.

Retention Incentives

Participants in Retention are eligible for incentives starting with the first full month of Retention through the twelfth month of Retention as verified by timely and valid pay documentation each month. A total of \$1,400 in gift cards will be earned for meeting the full 12 months of Retention payable via gift card according to the following schedule:

Retention Month (verified by documentation)	Gift Card Amount
Month 1	\$100
Month 2	\$100
Month 3	\$100
Month 4	\$100
Month 5	\$100
Month 6	\$200
Month 7	\$100
Month 8	\$100
Month 9	\$100
Month 10	\$100
Month 11	\$100
Month 12	\$200

Gift cards should be issued within 15 days of receipt of timely and valid pay documentation.

Last Resort

Incentives are not duplicative. Requests for incentives that are available as special allowances through the CAO should be submitted to the CAO accordingly. Communication with the CAO is required prior to authorization to ensure the special allowance has not already been provided and to ensure the CAO knows it will be provided by the program. Incentives may supplement the CAO allowances if there is a need.

Community programs and all other resources should be explored and exhausted prior to issuing an incentive.

Incentives based on need are not provided according to a guaranteed level of funding per person and should not be approached as such. It is the responsibility of the Workforce Specialist to review individual participant need and employer identified requirements for employment.

Documentation

Incentives Based on Individual Need

EARN program staff are responsible for determining the incentives that are needed to resolve barriers to successful placements and retentions in employment and for processing and issuing the payments. The incentive provided should be for the least costly and most practical item or service that will meet the need.

The EARN Incentive Form must be used to document need, actual cost, CAO notification, approval status, date of issue and relevant comments. A CWDS case note titled "Incentive Service" must be entered on CWDS and provide narrative to further document the support, including the need, the compliance with hours and the overall program, and how the need was met.

Date of approval/denial and payment issuance must be within 10 calendar days of the date requested and/or in advance of the need.

Requests will be completed on the appropriate request for payment form used by the subcontractor agency and will be submitted to the designated person of the subcontractor for approval. All requests require justification or verification documents to be attached, and included in the case file. Receipts will also be included in the case file.

Participation and Compliance Incentives

Family Incentives, Credentialing Incentives and Retention Incentives can be awarded for continued participation and meeting program and compliance goals.

The EARN service provider must maintain a list of all participation and compliance incentives issued that includes at a minimum the following information: amount and type of incentive issued, name of individual receiving incentive, date issued and reason for issuance of incentive. All incentives given to a participant should also be recorded in the CWDS case narrative.

Family Incentives

Family incentives are positive reinforcements to reward participation without a need involved. Evidence of meeting hours, attendance, and participation requirements must be documented via valid methods used for performance validation according to DHS and/or using other CPWDC approved documentation methods for the month Family Incentives are being awarded prior to awarding a monthly Family Incentive.

Credentialing Incentives

The diploma, certificate, or referral to KEYS must be documented in the case file and properly data entered into CWDS prior to awarding an incentive.

Retention Incentives

Evidence of meeting Retention must be documented via valid methods used for performance validation according to DHS. Documentation must be received timely, i.e. the timelines set by

DHS to submit documentation in order to both complete data entry each month and to meet Retention for performance at 6 and 12 months. Per the current EARN Manual, the unsubsidized work activity must be entered by the 15th of the month after the month of participation. Attendance hours must be entered/updated by the last day of the month, two months after the month of participation; e.g., July hours must be entered by September 30. The activity end date must be entered by the last day of the month after the month of participation. EARN participants must provide valid documentation of their employment for the month by the end of the month after participation to be considered timely and eligible for a Retention Incentive.

This policy is not all inclusive and additional requests based on need may be considered on an individual basis.