

- Mandatory
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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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Topic: TAA Job Search Allowance Definitions and Calculations

Purpose: The purpose of this communication is to provide formal guidance on the eligibility requirements for TAA Job Search Allowances. New TAA regulations published in the Federal Register August 21, 2020 have broadened the definition of a “job search” activity, which results in a higher level of participation under the Job Search Allowance benefit.

Content

Background

Job Search Allowance

New TAA Regulations (20CFR618) became effective September 21, 2020. New regulation requirements allow for individuals who attend a job search activity outside of their commuting area to be eligible to receive transportation (mileage) and/or subsistence (lodging/per diem) payments. Deadlines to apply for the Job Search Allowance benefit are 365 days from the participant’s TAA certification date, or 365 days from their separation date, whichever is later. The Job Search Allowance benefit reimburses a participant 90% of the allowable costs to travel roundtrip to a job search activity.

Definition of a Job Search Activity

Effective September 21, 2020, the following activities may qualify for reimbursement of costs under the Job Search Allowance benefit:

- Attending a job fair
- Attending prevocational workshop(s)
- In-person visit to employer(s) to complete applications or attend a job interview
- Travelling to a local WorkOne, copy shop, Post Office, etc. to print/copy/fax resume or application
- Travelling to local WorkOne, public library, etc. to use online job matching systems
- Attending a professional association meeting for networking

The State must verify attendance and/or completion of the job search activity. In order to complete this required verification, acceptable documentation for the above named activities are as follows:

Type of Job Search Activity	Activity Description	Documentation Requirements
Job Fair	WorkOne and privately help job fair events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ copy of job fair flyer or announcement with <u>one</u> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Sign-in sheet containing the participant name, title of job fair, and date along with staff contact name that can verify attendance</i> ▪ <i>Business card, email, or other employer provided documentation verifying the customer met with and discussed employment opportunities</i> ▪ <i>Job offer letter</i>
Pre-Vocational Workshop	WorkOne or Partner Service workshops (i.e. resume building, interview skills, networking, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ copy of workshop schedule or announcement with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Sign-in sheet containing the participant name, title of workshop, and date along with staff contact name that can verify attendance</i>
Employer Visit	To complete employment application or attend an interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must be verified by <u>one</u> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Copy of letter or email from employer representative verifying the scheduled interview</i> ▪ <i>Business card from employer representative the customer met with to interview or complete application</i> ▪ <i>Copy of completed employment application</i> ▪ <i>Job offer letter</i>
Local WorkOne, public library, Post Office, copy shop, etc.	Print/copy/fax resume or employment application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If using WorkOne: Case notes entered into the case management system detailing/verifying <u>all</u> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Appointment was scheduled in advance (see Pre-Notification section of this guidance)</i> ▪ <i>What resources (copy machine, computer/internet, etc.) were used by the participant while in the office</i> ▪ <i>Job vacancy notice of the position for which the participant submitted their application and/or resume (scanned into client documents)</i> ▪ <i>Verification that the customer does not have adequate resources at their home to complete the job search activity or that the customer has a significant technological barrier that requires intensive staff assistance (self-attestation is acceptable)</i> ▪ <i>Job offer letter</i> ▪ If using another source (Post Office, copy shop, etc.): must obtain <u>all</u> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Dated receipt from the location showing the service provided</i> ▪ <i>Copy of the application or resume</i> ▪ <i>Job vacancy notice of the position for which the participant submitted their application and/or resume</i> ▪ <i>Job offer letter</i>

Type of Job Search Activity	Activity Description	Documentation Requirements
Local WorkOne or public library	Use of online job matching system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If using WorkOne: Case notes entered into the case management system detailing/verifying <u>all</u> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Appointment was scheduled in advance (see Pre-Notification section of this guidance)</i> ▪ <i>What activities were conducted on state job matching system (ICC)</i> ▪ <i>ICC Job Order/job vacancy notice of the position for which the participant applied or submitted their resume</i> ▪ <i>Verification that the customer does not have adequate resources (internet and computer) at their home to complete the job search activity or that the customer has a significant technological barrier that requires intensive staff assistance (self-attestation is acceptable)</i> ▪ If using another source (i.e., public library): must obtain <u>all</u> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Business card, email, or other staff provided documentation verifying the customer met with and discussed employment opportunities</i> ▪ <i>ICC Job Order/job vacancy notice of the position for which the participant applied or submitted their resume</i> ▪ <i>Verification that the customer does not have adequate resources (internet and computer) at their home to complete the job search activity or that the customer has a significant technological barrier that requires intensive staff assistance (self-attestation is acceptable)</i>
Professional Association Meeting	Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ must be verified with <u>one</u> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Job offer letter</i> ▪ <i>Copy of flyer, announcement, or email communication verifying the event</i> ▪ <i>Sign-in sheet containing the participant name, title of meeting, and date along with staff contact name that can verify attendance</i> ▪ <i>Business card from professional association contact that can verify attendance</i>

Prior Notification Requirements

In order to receive reimbursement for the attendance of any of the above activities, the individual must be travelling outside of their commuting area, and it is required that the participant provide prior-notification to their TAA case manager before travelling to the job search activity. Prior Notification requirements include all of the following:

- Participant must notify the TAA Case Manager in writing (email) or verbally (in-person, phone/ voicemail, virtual platform, etc.) of their intent to begin a job search activity prior to leaving for the job search activity, and
- Participant must provide their full name, last four of SSN, and the date, time, and location of their job search activity, and
- TAA Case Manager must document the prior notification in the case management system (ICC) using the Job Search Allowance Prior Notification case note template.

Allowable Miles (Job Search Allowance)

If an individual qualifies for transportation (mileage), the participant may only be paid for miles that occur over the state commuting area. Each one-way daily commute will be reduced by the state commuting area, five (5) miles, in order to determine the reimbursable mileage that exceeds the state commuting

area. Therefore, each roundtrip commute will be reduced by 10 miles (5 miles for the trip there and 5 miles for the returning trip) to accommodate this new requirement.

Example: A job search participant is travelling 75 miles to a job fair and 75 miles on the return trip home. The payable mileage for this example would be a total of 140 miles (70 miles to school and 70 miles on the return trip) since the distance within the commuting area cannot be reimbursed.

Individual Eligibility (Job Search Allowance)




For consideration of eligibility, an individual is required to provide pre-notification to their TAA case manager of travel to a job search event that occurs outside of their commuting area. Once an individual returns from the allowable job search activity, the case manager will work with the customer to submit all necessary documentation needed to reimburse the customer for the allowable expenses.

Allowable expenses for job search may include:

- **Transportation (mileage).** The participant's allowable travel expenses may not exceed 90 percent of the prevailing cost per mile by privately owned vehicle rate established yearly by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) at www.gsa.gov/mileage, though other forms of transportation may be utilized.
- **Subsistence (Lodging and Per Diem).** The participant's allowable lodging and meals costs cannot exceed the lesser of:
 - The actual costs for lodging and meals while engaged in the job search, or
 - 50 percent of the prevailing per diem rate for the zip code/city in which the job search activity occurs as established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) at www.gsa.gov/perdiem.

Example: Customer A is travelling 84 miles roundtrip to attend a job fair in Indianapolis, IN. This individual will not have an overnight stay.

Subsistence Calculation for Indianapolis (zip code 46208):

Primary Destination 	County 	M&IE Total	Continental Breakfast/Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental Expenses	First & Last Day of Travel 
Indianapolis / Carmel	Marion / Hamilton	\$56	\$13	\$15	\$23	\$5	\$42.00

Using the above information obtained from the GSA website, the subsistence calculation would be the following:

$$(\$56.00 \text{ [per diem]} \times 1 \text{ day} \times 50\% \text{ prevailing rate}) \times 90\% \text{ reimbursement rate} = \$25.20$$

Transportation (mileage) payments are calculated using the federal mileage rate established yearly by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) at www.gsa.gov/mileage.

Modes of Transportation	Effective/Applicability Date	Rate per mile
Airplane*	January 1, 2020	\$1.27
If use of privately owned automobile is authorized or if no Government-furnished automobile is available	January 1, 2020	\$0.575
If Government-furnished automobile is available	January 1, 2020	\$0.17
Motorcycle	January 1, 2020	\$0.545

Continuing with the above example: *Customer A is travelling 84 miles roundtrip to attend a job fair in Indianapolis, IN. Customer A would have their roundtrip total (84 miles) reduced by the distance within the commuting area (10 miles).*

If Customer A is using their privately owned vehicle, the following calculation would be used:

$$84 \text{ miles round trip} - 10 \text{ miles (roundtrip miles within the commuting area)} = 74 \text{ miles/day}$$

$$74 \text{ (miles)} \times 1 \text{ trip} \times 0.575 \text{ (federal mileage rate)} \times 90\% \text{ reimbursement rate} = \$38.29$$

For the example of Customer A, they would receive the subsistence (per diem) calculation of \$25.20 because it is the lesser of the two calculations.

Purchased Transportation

Individuals may elect to use a method of transportation other than a personal vehicle (i.e. taxi service, train, bus, etc.); however, **only the cheaper of the two modes of transportation will be considered.**

Example: Customer C travels to a job interview in Chicago, Illinois travelling 364 miles roundtrip. The customer takes the Amtrak train service to the train station and then gets a taxi to the site of the interview.

To calculate the most reasonable cost for purchased transportation, The below calculations would be used to determine the qualifying transportation (mileage) by calculating the federal rate for a personal vehicle or purchased transportation:

Modes of Transportation	Effective/Applicability Date	Rate per mile
Airplane*	January 1, 2020	\$1.27
If use of privately owned automobile is authorized or if no Government-furnished automobile is available	January 1, 2020	\$0.575
If Government-furnished automobile is available	January 1, 2020	\$0.17
Motorcycle	January 1, 2020	\$0.545

Personal Vehicle: 364 miles x 1 days x .575 x 90% prevailing rate = \$188.37
Purchased Transportation: Amtrak (\$29.00 ticket x 2 [roundtrip]) + Taxi Service (\$14.00 to site of interview; \$14.00 trip to the Amtrak station) = \$86.00

For the example of Customer C, the purchased transportation calculation of \$86.00 would be used to calculate the transportation (mileage) cost because it is the lesser of the two calculations.

There is no requirement on the selection of the mode of transportation a customer must use to conduct a job search activity. A customer may use their personal vehicle to conduct the job search activity and receive the transportation calculation, although a cheaper mode of transportation is available. The above calculation is only to be used if the participant elects to use an alternative means of transportation (i.e. taxi service, airplane, train etc.) other than their personal vehicle.

TAA participants are required to supply copies of receipts for all lodging and meal costs incurred during the job search activity, so the case manager can calculate the appropriate reimbursement rates. The Job Search Allowance maximum is \$1,250.00, no matter how many job search activities the worker undertakes.

Submitting Reimbursements (Job Search Allowance)

Case Managers are required to complete the Job Search Allowance Application to submit to the TAA Unit for formal determination. The Job Search Application must include:

- Complete Request for Job Search Allowance application
- Copies of all lodging and meal receipts
- Verification of attendance to the job search activity
- Copy of Google Maps from the participant residence to the location of the job search activity
- IRS W-9 form
- Direct Deposit form

All reimbursements will be paid 35 days in arrears. The Request for Job Search Allowance form can be found on the WorkOne Staff Portal at <https://www.in.gov/dwd/workonestaff/site/2612.htm>.

Effective Date: September 22, 2020. This guidance formally rescinds previous guidance released in Technical Guidance DWU 2016-01.

Please direct all questions and clarification to the TAATrainingPlans@dwd.in.gov inbox.