

Youth Employment Transportation Briefs



Brief #3: Federal Funding for Youth Employment-Related Transportation

December 2006

Compiled by April Kaplan on behalf of the Community Transportation Association of America

Several federal programs that promote youth employment readiness allow funds to be used for transportation, although under some programs the type of transportation expense is restricted. We have compiled a list of those programs and their relevant contact information below.

U.S. Department of Labor

Workforce Investment Act

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 replaced the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982. Under WIA, the federal government, states, and local communities join efforts to develop a system that provides workers with job search assistance, training, and advice. The Act emphasizes local involvement in the development of workforce training and employment programs, and thus gives states and communities flexibility in developing programs that meet the needs of their individual citizens. WIA also established the One Stop Center system, mandating that regional sites be set up in neighborhoods where customers can access employment, education, training, and information services they need in one location.

Specific to youth, the Act authorized the establishment of youth councils to guide the development and operation of youth programs as well as the provision of youth opportunity grants for high-poverty areas.

For further information on WIA, visit the program's website at www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The TANF program provides assistance and work opportunities to needy families by granting states the federal funds and flexibility to develop and implement their own welfare programs. The program, which became effective July 1, 1997, replaced two programs that were commonly known as welfare: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) programs.

TANF funds may be used for employment support services, such as transportation, provided the expenditure benefits TANF-eligible individuals and reasonably accomplishes the purposes of the TANF program.

TANF funds have also become a major source of matching funds for the Federal Transit Administration's Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program, which requires a 50% local match for operations and a 20% local match for capital projects; this match requirement

can be met with federal dollars, as long as the source of those funds is other than the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The TANF program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families (www.acf.hhs.gov).

Community Services Block Grants

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program provides funding to states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. territories, federal- and state-recognized Native American tribes and tribal organizations, community action agencies, state-designated migrant and seasonal farm worker, or related organizations to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities. The funds can be used to provide a range of services and activities to assist the needs of low-income individuals and migrant workers, including services and activities that address the following: employment, education, income management, housing, nutrition, emergency services, and health.

The CSBG program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families; more information is available at the program's website (www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/csbg).

Social Services Block Grant

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds are designed to enable each state to provide social services best suited to meet the needs of the individuals residing within the state. The covered services are wide ranging, but include day care for children or adults, special services for people with disabilities, counseling, case management, transportation, foster care for children or adults, independent/transitional living, special services for youth, employment services, and other social services found necessary by the state for its population.

The SSBG program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families; more information is available at the program's website at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/ssbg.

Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program

The primary goals of Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) are to prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families, improve the quality of care and services to children and their families, and ensure permanency for children by reuniting them with their parents or facilitating an adoption or other permanent living arrangement. The PSSF program provides states with grants to develop, establish, and expand coordinated programs of four types of community-based services: (1) family preservation services, (2) time-limited family reunification services, (3) community-based family support services, and (4) adoption promotion and support services. Funds go directly to child welfare agencies and eligible Indian tribes and have been used to support many innovative programs and services that local communities rely on for at-risk families.

The PSSF program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families; more information is available at the program's website at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/state_tribal/ss_act2.htm.

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (legislation passed in 1999) was designed to ease the transition of children raised in foster care into an independent living situation by providing them with life skills training, assistance obtaining a high school diploma and preparing

for higher level education, vocational training, job placement and retention, training in budgeting and financial management skills, substance abuse prevention, and preventive health activities.

Chafee Act funds can be used to support life skills activities such as transporting youth to groups and retreats; assisting them in touring colleges and vocational technical campuses; and aiding them in visiting potential work sites, apartment buildings, grocery stores, garage sales, thrift stores, workforce centers, libraries, and used car lots. Some of the ways in which states have used Chafee funds for transportation-related uses include 1) paying for driver's education and licensing fees for youth; 2) reimbursing volunteer peer youth drivers for gas or mileage; 3) purchasing a bicycle, car insurance, car maintenance, or car repairs to enable youth to travel to a job or postsecondary school; 4) reimbursing foster parents or volunteer drivers for expenses incurred in transporting youth to life skills group activities; and 5) funding agency-based staff vehicles or vans to transport youth; and 6) purchasing bus cards for youth.

The Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) program for Youths Aging out of Foster Care was added to the Chafee program in 2002. ETV provides resources specifically to meet the education and training needs of these youth. In addition, the law authorizes \$60 million for payments to states for post-secondary educational and training vouchers for youth who are likely to experience difficulty as they transition to adulthood after age 18 years. This program makes vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year per youth available for post-secondary education and training for eligible youth. Payments are made to eligible institutions to be used on behalf of the transitioning youths.

Transportation can be a major barrier for youth who are pursuing job skills education, because most of this type of education occurs in a technical college, community college, or other type of accredited trade school, very few of which have on-campus housing. There is no statutory definition of allowable transportation expenses. The institution may determine the amount of transportation expenses, if any, to allow in determining the cost of attendance. The state should consult with the institution to determine which expenses are allowable and appropriate.

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families; more information is available at the program's website at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/state_tribal/jh_chafee.htm.

Family Violence Programs

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Program provides grants to state agencies, territories, and Native American tribes for the provision of shelter to victims of family violence and their dependents, and for related services, such as emergency transportation and child care. These funds supplement many already-established community-based family violence prevention and services activities. They also allow recipients to expand current service programs and establish additional services in rural and underserved areas, on Native American reservations, and in Alaskan Native Villages.

The Family Violence program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families; more information is available at the program's website at: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/familyviolence/programs.htm.

National Youth Sports Program (NYSP)

NYSP grants, which are funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association, are given to selected institutions of higher education. The primary goal of the program is to provide youth

living in areas of urban and rural poverty with an opportunity to benefit from academic and sports skills instruction and sports competition, improve their physical fitness and health habits, and become acquainted with career and educational opportunities within a college or university environment. More information on the program is available at www.nyscorp.org/nysp/home.html.

Medicaid

Under the Medicaid Program, states are required to arrange for transportation of beneficiaries to and from medical care. Having access to proper medical care (e.g., eye examinations, counseling, pre-employment health screenings) can be essential for youth either seeking or attempting to maintain employment. Community school leaders receiving Medicaid funding may be able to use a portion of these funds to support transportation services for Medicaid-eligible children and youth to and from medical care.

U.S. Department of Education

21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides formula grants to states to support the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. These centers provide safe, drug free, supervised activities outside the regular school day or during periods when school is not in session. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. Under this program, transportation expenses may be covered as indirect expenses incurred by a school district, community-based organization, or other entity in administering or providing program services as long as these expenses are specifically included in the grant application.

The program is administered through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. The program contact is Peter Eldridge, 21stCCLC@ed.gov or peter.eldridge@ed.gov, tel. (202) 260-2514. The program's website is www.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The CDBG formula-based grants provide states and local jurisdictions with resources to address a wide range of community development needs, such as access to decent, affordable housing; services to the most vulnerable members of the community; and the creation of jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses. CDBG funds must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons.

Support for transportation costs can be found under at least two of the program's national objectives: promote activities that benefit low- and moderate-income individuals and support activities that address community development needs. In the regulations, transportation costs are specifically provided to owners of microenterprises and are more generally included under the category of employment-related public services.

Directly related to youth employment, CDBG grants support two work study programs. Under the Community Development Work Study Program, grants are made directly to institutions of higher education for the purpose of providing assistance to economically disadvantaged and minority students who participate in a work study program while enrolled in full-time graduate

programs in community and economic development, community planning, and community management. Within the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Work Study Program, grants are provided to public and private nonprofit Hispanic-serving institutions of higher education for the purpose of providing assistance to economically disadvantaged and minority students who participate in a work study program while enrolled in full-time community college programs in community building, and to provide entry to pre-professional careers in these fields.

The program is administered by the Community Planning/Development Office; more information on this program is available at www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs.

Supportive Housing Program

The Supportive Housing Program is authorized by Title IV, Subtitle C, of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, as amended. It is designed to promote, as part of a local continuum of care strategy, the development of supportive housing and supportive services to assist homeless persons to move into transitional housing and from transitional to permanent housing and to enable them to live as independently as possible. Among those support services is transportation.

The program is administered by the Community Planning/Development Office; the program's website is www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/programs/shp/.

U.S. Department of Justice

The Juvenile Accountability Block

The Juvenile Accountability Block Grants (JABG) program is administered by the State Relations and Assistance Division of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. JABG funds may be to transport youth to support services that will help them become employable. The program's website is <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jabg/>.

The Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative is a partnership of the Community Transportation Association, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration. Joblinks assists communities in addressing challenges associated with accessing affordable and reliable transportation to work and related destinations. For more information, visit www.ctaa.org/ntrc.

This publication was prepared pursuant to a cooperative agreement with the Employment and Training Administration. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the authors and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the federal government.