



TITLE: State EcSA (Economic Security for All) Incentive POLICY # 4.1.1-R1

Type: Program Policy

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Supersedes: PacMtn Policy 4.1.1

Purpose

In recognition of the work that Washington's workforce development system did to alleviate poverty through the original EcSA initiative, The state is making continued investments that are allocated to Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to expand on the work currently done by local EcSA programs funded by the Governor's WIOA statewide activities funds. Because this new allocation is state funded, these new resources provide an unprecedented opportunity to further expand the services provided by LWDBs to improve workforce outcomes and reduce poverty across Washington State.

Policy

PacMtn contractors are authorized to provide Participant Incentive Payments and Participant Cash Support Payments (Stipends) to individuals enrolled in the State-Funded Economic Security for All (EcSA) program. These payments must align with the individual's career plan and be based on demonstrated need.

State EcSA is a state-funded initiative established under RCW 43.164 and guided by State Policy 7000-1 and WIN 0129, Change 4. It is designed to improve workforce outcomes and reduce poverty by helping individuals reach 100% of their individualized household income adequacy, as measured by the University of Washington Self-Sufficiency Calculator.

Services and supports provided under this policy must reflect the holistic, equity-driven goals of the State EcSA program and must be delivered in a fair and equitable manner to individuals who meet eligibility requirements and are actively pursuing self-sufficiency.

Policy Guidelines

A. Eligibility Criteria

Participants must meet the following criteria at the time of enrollment:

State EcSA – People Experiencing Poverty: people with a household income that is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL):

- Be from a household below 200% of FPL. For example, a single parent with two children earning less than \$49,000 annually in 2025 would meet the below 200% FPL threshold.
- Meet eligibility requirements for any WIOA Title I-B formula program (excluding Selective Service registration).

Be from a household above 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, but below their self-sufficiency goal as determined by the UW Self-Sufficiency Calculator AND Require employment or training-related services to achieve self-sufficiency.

State EcSA – Participant Meets Both Categories: Some individuals may qualify under both categories due to fluctuations in income or life circumstances that place them near the 200% FPL threshold and below self-sufficiency. These participants often experience:

- Variable or inconsistent income, such as seasonal or gig work
- High regional cost of living that renders a slightly above-FPL income insufficient
- Multiple barriers to employment that compound financial strain
- Recent transition events (e.g., layoff, family separation, health crisis) that have altered financial standing

These participants remain economically vulnerable and require support to reach self-sufficiency.

Eligibility Determination:

Participants in this category may be enrolled under the financial need provision if they:

- Are slightly above or below the 200% FPL threshold. For example, a participant in a household of three earns \$52,000 annually, which is slightly above the 2025 estimated 200% FPL threshold of \$50,560 for a household of that size. Although this income exceeds the poverty threshold, the participant may still be eligible if they face ongoing financial hardship, such as:
 - Recently reduced work hours from full-time to part-time.
 - High out-of-pocket medical expenses.
 - Loss of childcare assistance that now impacts ability to work.
 - Imminent risk of eviction due to rent increases.
- Clearly demonstrate an ongoing need for employment-related services.

Documentation Requirements:

Program staff must clearly document:

- The participant's current income level
- Any relevant life circumstances or employment barriers
- A brief rationale for enrolling under the financial need category

Supporting documentation (e.g., pay stubs, termination letters, eviction notices, childcare waitlists, etc.)

This documentation must be retained in the participant’s file to demonstrate eligibility compliance.

Minimum Documentation Requirements for State EcSA Eligibility

Eligibility Element	Acceptable Documents
Proof of Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State-issued driver’s license or ID card • Passport • School ID with photograph • Tribal ID
Work Authorization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Birth Certificate • U.S. Passport • Social Security Card + State ID • Permanent Resident Card (Green Card) • Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth Certificate • Driver’s License or State ID • Passport • School records indicating date of birth
Income Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay stubs • UI Benefits documentation • Public assistance records (e.g., TANF, SNAP) • Signed income self-attestation (if no other documentation is available, per policy) • Tax return (most recent)

B. Incentives and Support Caps

- Participants below 200% FPL: No cap on participant cash supports or incentives.
- Participants above 200% FPL: Combined total for incentives and participant supports is capped at \$5,000.00 per participant. This cap excludes:
 - Staff support services
 - Career services
 - Training costs (e.g., tuition, certifications)

All financial supports must be based on **demonstrated need**, documented in the participant file. For example, if a participant is issued a \$150 gas card to attend training, the case file must include documentation such as the training location, participant’s transportation barrier, and a case note explaining how the gas card supports the individual's progress on their employment plan.

C. Allowable Incentive Milestones

Incentives may be issued to recognize meaningful progress on a participant’s career

plan. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Completion of Individual Employment Plan (IEP) & Self-Sufficiency Calculator
- Completion of Financial Plan & Bridge to Self-Sufficiency
- Achievement of a recognized credential
- Attainment of employment
- Job retention milestones
- Completion of a Washington State Certified Homeownership Class
- Increased credit score by 50+ points
- Decreased non-asset related debt by \$1,000 or more
- Monthly budget reviews
- Attendance at financial literacy, WorkSource workshops, or hiring events
- Completion of an employment portfolio
- Achievement of self-sufficiency goal (per calculator)

CI. Self-Sufficiency Determination

Self-Sufficiency is defined as attainment of 100% of individual household self-sufficiency, as measured by the University of Washington Self-Sufficiency Calculator.

Participants must:

- Be assessing using the UW calculator at intake and upon exit.
- Have calculator results documented in ETO and retained in participant file.

E. Tracking and Data Requirements

All enrollment and service data must be entered in ETO per the following:

- Services must be entered within fourteen (14) calendar days of delivery.
- A completed IEP and Self-Sufficiency Career Plan must be entered within 30 calendar days of enrollment.
- All stipends, incentives, and supports must be documented via the appropriate ETO touchpoint, including service type and amount.
- Late entries after fourteen (14) days require supervisory approval and a case note.

F. Equity and Outreach

Recruitment and service delivery must intentionally reach and engage:

- BIPOC individuals
- People experiencing homelessness
- Rural residents

Local programs must demonstrate ongoing efforts to increase participation from these communities.

G. Local Policy and Reporting Requirements

- PacMtn will maintain a local policy defining “at risk of poverty” for participants above 200% FPL.
- Local policy will include a fair and equitable cost cap structure based on overall allocation, client count, and individual need.
- Quarterly performance and spending reports will be submitted per contract with ESD.
- PacMtn is responsible for ensuring MOU and IFA participation if direct services are provided at AJCs.

Definition

- **At Risk of Falling into Poverty:** Participants above 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) who are experiencing or have recently experienced destabilizing events such as job loss, end of unemployment or public benefits, housing loss, or domestic violence, as defined by PacMtn’s local policy.
- **ETO (Efforts to Outcomes):** The State’s designated case management system for tracking enrollment, service delivery, financial supports, and outcomes for EcSA participants.
- **Income Adequacy:** The amount of income needed for a household to meet its basic needs (such as housing, food, childcare, transportation, and healthcare) without public or private assistance, based on location, household size, and composition.
- **Individual Employment Plan (IEP):** A customized career development plan created collaboratively between the participant and career coach that identifies employment goals, required training or education, support services, and steps to reach self-sufficiency.
- **Participant Cash Support Payments / Stipends:** Direct financial assistance (e.g., cash or gift cards) provided to a participant to support their engagement in program-related activities outlined in their IEP.
- **Participant Incentives:** Financial rewards provided to participants upon completion of defined and documented milestones toward career or self-sufficiency goals.
- **Self-Sufficiency:** A participant’s attainment of 100% of their individualized household income adequacy, as calculated using the University of Washington Self-Sufficiency Calculator.
- **University of Washington Self-Sufficiency Calculator:** A standardized tool used to determine income adequacy and assess a participant’s progress toward financial independence. Accessed at www.thecalculator.org.

References

- WIN 0129, Change 4: State Guidance for EcSA Program (03/13/2024)
- WA State Program Policy #7000 (Rev1): State Guidance and Instructions for the State Economic Security for All (EcSA) Program
- State Bill 5693, Section 225(25)
- UW Self-Sufficiency Calculator: www.thecalculator.org

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