HENNEPIN COUNTY
MINNESOTA

MFIP Support Services Policy October 2026

This policy outlines requirements and best practices associated with issuing MFIP support services to enrolled program participants.

The information provided is designed to help you address most types of support requests. However, families experience unique and challenging situations that will require professional discretion at the agency level. When approving supports, agencies must consider the total amount of funding available to ensure allocated funds are spent according to contractual expectations, but also budget so that supports are available to participants during all 12 months of the year.

Agency Policy for Support Services

All ESPs must document their agency's policies and procedures for the approval of support services. Written policies and procedures may be updated as needed but should always remain readily available to program staff to ensure standard service to Hennepin County residents. Agency procedures must correspond with State and County policy.

At a minimum, agencies must specify the following items in writing to ensure consistent processing and approval of requests:

- The process for approving participant requests.
- Who is authorized to approve different categories of support.
- Standard approval amounts by request type, if more than one person within the agency will review and approve requests.
- The process for completing a payment according to the agency's accounting procedures. (For example, check requests, authorization to use credit cards, use of stored value cards, etc.)
- Any additional documentation that the agency requires beyond the items listed in this policy.
- Guidelines for issuance amounts of bus and gas cards.
- The agency level process for mailing support services.

Access to Support Funds

- To access support services funds, the participant must be enrolled with a Hennepin County Employment Services Provider.
- During regular MFIP enrollment, participants may receive both Assistance and Non-Assistance Supports.
- During Transition Services, participants may only receive Non-Assistance Supports. Do not issue Assistance supports during Transition Services.

Written Request for Support

- For many types of support, Hennepin County requires that agencies obtain a written request for support from the participant. The written request must be added to the case file.
- The written request satisfies several purposes:
    - It documents the reason support is needed. For many support types, approval is based on resolving an episode of need and the "why" should be reflected in the written request. This also reduces the need for certain verifications that have historically been requested to confirm the details of the request.
    - It ensures that the participant has actively requested the support. Though staff routinely advertise the resources that are available to participants, the support services process begins when a participant initiates a request.

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    - It confirms the participant and the agency are both clear on the details of the request. Examples of details may include: the date the request was submitted, the total amount needed and by when, how the payment should be made.
- Some participants may face barriers to writing out a statement on their own. In these instances, it is acceptable for the agency staff member to verbally confirm the details of the request, write them out, and have the participant acknowledge the statement by signing the prepared document or providing their written agreement after reviewing it. Upload signed statements into WF1 EDS.
- Written requests may come in the form of email if the email address used is listed in the case file. Copy the email requesting the support, including the email address, into the WF1 case notes.
- Written requests may come in the form of a text message. Upload a screenshot of the message or save a copy of the text message requesting the support, including the sender's phone number and confirming their identify, into the WF1 case record.

Recipient of Funds

- Issue support services funds directly to the business or service provider on behalf of participants.
- Do not issue support funds to participants in the form of cash or Visa/Mastercard gift cards.
- In extreme cases, if there is no other alternative and the participant has paid a pre-authorized expense, agencies may reimburse participants directly if approved by the program manager. Always require proof of the amount and date paid prior to approving reimbursement. Consult with your assigned Hennepin County Program Coordinator if additional guidance is needed.

Mailing Support Services

In situations where it is not possible to provide the support in person, Program Managers may authorize releasing support services cards via mail. The following steps replace the need to obtain a signature from the participant.

- Case note the reason for the participant’s request to receive the card by mail.
- Case note a confirmation of the current address.
- Case note the Program Manager’s approval.
- Give the participant the agency program manager’s contact information in case the card does not arrive.
- Keep a copy of the mailed card in the case file.

Tracking

- For all support services, upload all supporting documentation as required per the MFIP Support Services Policy into the WF1 electronic document system (EDS).
    - Examples of required verifications include any documents that fall under the "Required Documentation" area in this document.
- All support services must be entered into WF1 under the Support Service tab by the end of the month in which the service was provided. The date of the service should be the date the payment was made.
- Refer to the “Funding Type & Tracking” section on the tables below for the appropriate Support Services type in WF1. This information will be used to track Assistance and Non-Assistance spending amounts.
- When entering the support service in WF1, include context in “Additional Information” and select option to “Copy Additional Information Into Case Note” for all supports.
    - Include details of the request and approval process, including the intended types of items to be purchased using the support.
    - Include the words “Transition Services” for all supports issued during the transition period. Do not abbreviate the words. This case note will be used to monitor spending during Transition Services.

- Agencies occasionally support participants with purchases not funded by the MFIP grant. Purchases not funded by MFIP should not be entered into WF1 under the Support Services tab. Case noting that the agency supported the participant is still encouraged. The case note should specify that the purchase was made using other agency funding.

Accounting Guidelines

- Do not approve requests for expenses incurred prior to a participant's WF1 enrollment start date.
- Invoices received by the ESP after the enrollment has ended may be paid if the expense was approved prior to program exit and took place during the participant's enrollment sequence.
- Invoices must be itemized, dated, and include the date(s) of service.
- Support services expenses should be paid within the budget year that the cost was incurred.
- Proof of payment is required for all support services. This may be in the form of a receipt or paid invoice for payments to third parties, or a participant signature to acknowledge the receipt of a stored value card from the agency's inventory, such as a previously purchased bus card.
- When purchasing an inventory of stored value cards in advance, the agency must not include the expense on their Hennepin County invoice until the card has been issued to an enrolled MFIP participant.
- The WF1 Support Service Summary and Support Service Detail reports are important tools to help agencies verify that staff have entered the correct dollar amounts, WF1 Support Type, and Case Note before submitting your monthly invoice to Hennepin County.
- The following table summarizes which WF1 Support Service Categories correspond with each Hennepin County invoice category.
- Agencies commonly order gift cards for support services in bulk. Bulk orders are often purchased at a discount, allowing support service dollars to serve more residents. Hennepin County reimburses agencies at the amount the agency paid for the cards, and not the full value of the gift card. When tracking discounted gift cards, the amount tracked in WF1 should reflect the discounted price the card was purchased for.
    - This guidance also applies to discounted fare Metro Transit bus passes. Hennepin County recommends agencies to establish an account with Metro Transit to purchase discounted fares for residents.

WF1 Categories for Non-Assistance Supports	**Invoice Template Category, Non-Assistance section**
Auto Insurance	Transportation
Driver's License Fees	Transportation
Auto Repair	Transportation
Transportation	Transportation
Clothing	Employment Related
Other Services	Employment Related
Training	Education/Training
Drivers Ed Classes	Education/Training
Emergency Financial Assistance	Housing and Basic Needs
Child and Dependent Care	Child Care
Incentives	Incentives

WF1 Categories for Assistance Supports	**Invoice Template Category, Assistance section**
Other Transportation	Transportation
Needs Related Payments	Housing and Basic Needs

TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT SERVICES

Best Practices for All Transportation Support Services

- Discuss transportation needs with the participant and document in the Employment Plan.
- Provide transportation support services to support participants in completing activities and goals listed in their Employment Plan.
- Discuss how to budget for transportation expenses when MFIP ends. Financial literacy coaching may assist the participant in budgeting for future expenses related to transportation, including car repair or replacement.
- Follow agency policy for transportation assistance amounts.

Prohibited Transportation Expenses

- Penalties and fines associated with reinstatement of driver's license or cited violations
- Purchase of vehicle, new or used
- Loan or lease payments for vehicles

Transportation Supports				
Type	**Policy**	**Required Documentation**	**Funding Type & Tracking**	**Best Practices & Examples**
Auto Insurance and Registration	If the participant's vehicle is used to complete activities or make progress towards goals in their Employment Plan, the agency may cover short term, non-recurring costs of: • auto insurance • vehicle registration (tabs/fees) • obtaining a copy of vehicle title	• Valid EP on file. • A written request for the support from the participant. • Copy of valid driver's license. • Proof of vehicle ownership. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice). • Vendor or payee information.	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: • "Auto Insurance" for insurance payments • "Driver's License Fees" for tabs/DMV costs	• Approval and amount are based on the Program Manager's assessment of the participant's need and available funds. • Limit support with auto insurance and registration costs to once within a 12-month period. • Discuss the participant's ability to cover the ongoing costs of owning and operating a vehicle.

Auto Repair and Maintenance	If the participant's vehicle is used to complete activities or make progress towards goals in their Employment Plan, the agency may cover short term, non-recurring costs of: • Auto repair and maintenance. • Towing service if needed as part of the auto repair, and not covered by the participant's auto insurance. Only cover costs required to keep the vehicle operational and safe to drive. Do not approve optional services or work including cosmetic autobody damage, warranties, supplies, optional repairs, or upgrades.	• Valid EP on file. • A written request for the support from the participant. • Copy of valid driver's license. • Proof of vehicle ownership. • Proof of insurance. • Estimate of cost for repairs. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice). • Vendor or payee information.	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Auto Repair"	• Approval and amount are based on the Program Manager's assessment of the participant's need and available funds. • Hennepin County recommends approving up to $1500 for auto repair within a 12-month period year. • Review estimates for legitimacy, reasonability, and urgency of the repair. If the estimate is unclear, unreasonable, incomplete, or priced higher than expected, the participant may be asked to submit additional estimate(s). • Coach participants on practical approaches to getting a car repaired and when it might not be reasonable to do so. • Many repair shops provide estimates for free, and participants may be advised to avoid paying for estimates.
Driver's License	If obtaining a driver's license will support the participant to complete activities or make progress towards goals in their Employment Plan, the agency may cover short term, non-recurring costs of: • Administrative fees required to have a license granted, renewed, or reinstated. • Endorsement fees to upgrade a license if needed for employment.	• Valid EP on file. • A written request for the support from the participant. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice). • Vendor or payee information.	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Driver's License Fees"	• Since support services cannot cover fines or penalties associated with driver's license reinstatement, advise the participant to explore other options and resources that may assist such as legal aid, the MN Drivers Diversion program, or others.

Gas Vouchers **Bus Fare** (Monthly Pass, Stored Value, Go-To, TAP cards, and tokens)	If assistance with transportation costs will support the participant to complete activities or make progress towards goals in their Employment Plan, the agency may: • Issue cards according to agency Support Services policy . • Do not issue replacement cards more than once in a 12-month rolling cycle. Monthly bus passes may be issued for children on the case, but only in situations where Metro busses are the only reasonable mode of transport to and from the childcare provider. The program manager must approve the issuance of bus cards to minors. Do not give gas vouchers to self-employed drivers if business-related driving costs are claimed as a business expense.	For all: • Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support given. • Participant signature to acknowledge receipt. • See page 2 of this policy for the steps required before mailing a card. If all steps have been completed, no signature is needed. For gas cards: • A copy of the participant's valid driver's license. • Proof of insurance.	**Non-Assistance:** • If the participant is working. OR • If the participant is NOT working but the transportation support is provided as a short-term, non-recurring benefit meant to deal with a specific crisis, situation, or episode of need that is not expected to extend beyond four months. WF1 Support Service Category: "Transportation" **Assistance:** • If the participant is not working AND the support is given to support a chronic need. • May not be issued during Transition Services. WF1 Support Service Category: "Other Transportation"	• Transportation assistance may be needed before the initial EP has been written. Provide the minimum amount of support necessary to complete required actions prior to the initial EP meeting. • Transportation assistance may be needed to help a participant come back into compliance. Do not withhold transportation support as a punitive measure. • Limited ride bus cards may be an appropriate alternative to providing monthly bus passes for participants who are required to check in weekly, are disengaged, or in the process of completing overdue items. • If providing a replacement card, clearly document in case notes. • Encourage participants to register their bus pass online with Metro Transit. By registering the card's serial number, Metro Transit may be able to assist participants in resolving problems due to a lost, damaged, or stolen card. • When using a common log for tracking card issuance, maintain data privacy standards by covering the names of other program participants. • Use professional judgment to determine how soon to issue the next month's transportation card. In some cases, it may be appropriate to issue the following month's supports before the full month has passed.

Taxis and Ride Services	Use taxi and app-based ride services (including Lyft and Uber) as a last resort in situations where all other forms of transportation are unavailable or unreasonable, but transportation is needed to maintain employment or avoid an emergency. Issue support in the form of a prepaid card (Uber/Lyft/etc.) for anticipated, documented transportation expenses, if no other option exists to resolve and episode of need that is not expected to extend beyond four months. Agencies may consider direct participant reimbursements for qualifying transportation expenses, if the participant has paid and verified the amount.	• Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support given. • Participant signature to acknowledge receipt. For reimbursement: • A written request for the support from the participant. • Verification of the amount paid, when, and what activity required the unapproved expense	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Transportation"	• Approval and amount are based on the Program Manager's assessment of the participant's need and available funds. • Consider all other possibilities before a taxi or app-based service is used. • Do not replace monthly bus or gas vouchers for ride services or taxis as a primary method of transportation. • If ride services/taxis are the only option available, work with the participant to develop a solution for long term transportation beyond the current episode of need.

Other Transportation Supports	If other transportation supports will support the participant to complete activities or make progress towards goals in their Employment Plan, the agency may cover other short term, non-recurring costs.
	
	For questions about transportation support service requests not covered in this policy, and not explicitly prohibited, contact your assigned coordinator.
		• Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support requested.
		• A written request for the support from the participant that includes the intended types of items to be purchased using the support.
		• Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).
		• Other verifications may be needed based on the specific request.
			Non-Assistance
			
			WF1 Support Service Category: "Transportation"
				• Examples of other transportation-related support services include:
				  ○ Parking costs
				  ○ Carpooling
				  ○ Mileage reimbursement
				  ○ Nice Ride subscriptions
				• Bike repair

EMPLOYMENT RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES

Best Practices for all Employment Related Supports

- Employment related supports should connect directly with the participant's current employment activities and ultimately, long-term career goals.
- Participants may not automatically know which clothing, supplies, or items will support their success in a given employment activity. Coach participants on fundamental concepts (for example appropriate clothing for job interviews), but also support them with industry specific research to ensure they are well prepared for employment (for example the specific supply requirements of a trade job).
- Consider if any other resources are readily available prior to approving support requests.

Prohibited Employment Related Expenses

- Self-Employment related expenses that are or may be claimed as a business expense by the participant.

Employment Related Supports

Type	Policy	Required Documentation	Funding Type & Tracking	Best Practices & Examples
Clothing for Employment	If clothing is needed for the participant to successfully complete employment related activities, the agency may help to resolve an episode of need by covering non-recurring costs of: • Professional clothing for job interviews • Work appropriate clothing for employment • Specific uniforms and required attire if not covered by the employer • Industry appropriate special clothing, safety equipment, and footwear • Costs to launder clothing the participant already owns	• Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support requested. • A written request for the support from the participant that includes the intended types of items to be purchased using the support. • Vendor or payee information. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Clothing"	• Approval and amount are based on the Program Manager's assessment of the participant's need and available funds. • Coach participants on appropriate attire for job interviews and different types of employment. • If the request for employment related support services aligns logically with the participant's type of employment, the agency should accept the participant's written statement that the item is needed; do not require additional verifications. • Consider the practical needs of the participant when approving the amount of support services. For example, while a participant may theoretically wear the same uniform every day, supplying multiple uniforms would support a more professional appearance.

Technology for Job Search and Career Planning	In order to support a participant's success in employment activities in their Employment Plan, the agency may cover the costs of the following items: • Laptops • Tablets • Phones • Wi-Fi or phone service for up to four months. • Necessary electronic accessories (including chargers, batteries) Agencies may not purchase technology for children or other household members.	• Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support given. • A written request for the support from the participant that includes the intended types of items to be purchased using the support. • Vendor or payee information. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Other Services" For Technology related to education and training activities, see Education and Training Supports section.	• Approval is based on Program Manager's assessment of the need and funding available. • Before approving technology support requests, review other available options that might cover costs or meet short term technology needs. This may include other funding streams, community resources, computer lab access, or loaner devices.
Other Employment Related Expenses and Work Supports	If other work supports will help the participant to complete employment related activities, the agency may help to resolve an episode of need by covering other non-recurring costs. For questions about employment related support service requests not covered in this policy, and not explicitly prohibited, contact your assigned coordinator.	• Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support requested. • A written request for the support from the participant that includes the intended types of items to be purchased using the support. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice). • Other verifications may be needed based on the specific request.	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Other Services"	• Approval is based on Program Manager's assessment of the need and funding available. • Examples of other employment related support services include: o Personal hygiene costs including personal care items or a haircut. o Specific supplies or tools required by an employer at a participant's expense. o Administrative fees related to obtaining a State Identification card. o Administrative fees related to professional licensure, testing, or reinstatement of credentials. o A portfolio for job interviewing. o Costs to support self-employment business plan development.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING SUPPORT SERVICES

Best Practices for All Education Support Services

- Discuss the participant's education plans and how they relate to long term career goals.
- Participants can choose to enroll in an education or training program offered by your agency. Do not require participants to participate in your agency's educational programs.
- Do not deny a participant access to a program at another agency. When choosing between a variety of available programs, document why the selected provider was chosen as best fit to reach the participant's goals.
- Do not issue support services towards education costs before verifying the participant's eligibility for Financial Aid. MFIP Support Services should not be used when financial aid is available to cover an education related expense.
- If a participant receives ongoing support services for education and training, regularly monitor for satisfactory progress.
- Discuss the financial component of education plans, including the participant's ability to contribute towards educational costs, to budget for future expenses when MFIP ends, and if applicable, to pay off future loans.

Prohibited Education and Training Expenses

- Payments on student loans.
- Education costs that can be covered by financial aid.

Financial Aid

Many individuals may be eligible to receive financial aid in the form of grants, loans, scholarships, and/or work study awards. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, determines the person's eligibility for federal, state, and institutional education assistance. Eligible students may request financial aid to cover tuition as well as costs associated with attending school (including room and board, books, and supplies). The participant must complete the FAFSA and utilize resources awarded to them through financial assistance before accessing MFIP support services for education.

Education and Training Supports

Type	Policy	Required Documentation	Funding Type & Tracking	Best Practices & Examples
Application Fees	Agencies may use support services to pay application fees required to register for education and training programs that will support the participant's progress towards goals in their Employment Plan.	• Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support requested. • A written request for the support from the participant. • Vendor or payee information. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Training"	• Application fees may be paid prior to including education and training in the employment plan. • If application fees can be covered by another program, MFIP support service funds may not be necessary.

Books	Agencies may use support services to purchase books required to complete an education activity in the participant's Employment Plan.	• Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support given. • A written request for the support from the participant. • Itemized bill or statement of amount requested. • Vendor or payee information. • Proof of payment • (invoice or receipt).	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Training"	• Verify that books are required for courses prior to issuing support. Some schools have a search engine that lists required books for each course. • Discuss the option of buying used books if they are available, cost-effective, and meet course requirements. • Books may be purchased from an individual (such as a former student) if all required information is provided.
Driver's Education	If obtaining a driver's license will support the participant to complete activities or make progress towards goals in their Employment Plan, the agency may cover the cost of Driver's Education.	• Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support requested. • A written request for the support from the participant. • Vendor or payee information. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Driver's Education Classes"	• Prior to approval, discuss the participant's goals to understand how obtaining a driver's license would support future activities and goals. • Discuss the timeline of the process and if the participant has access to a vehicle for behind the wheel sessions and to practice for their driving test. It may be appropriate to postpone Driver's Education until the participant has access to a vehicle. However, do not automatically deny a request from a participant who does not have a vehicle. • Consider the participant's language needs when searching for Driver's Education providers. Some driving schools offer behind the wheel in languages besides English which may increase the participant's ability to learn.
Supplies	Agencies may use support services to purchase supplies required to complete an education activity in the participant's Employment Plan. This may include: • Backpacks • Clothing • Required tools	• Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support given. • A written request for the support from the participant. • Itemized bill list of required supplies. • Vendor or payee information. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Training"	• A participant can receive up to $300 for training related expenses such as clothing or shoes. • A participant can receive up to $500 for tools required for hands-on training programs. • Approval is based on need and available funds. There is no guarantee an individual will receive the maximum amount. • Supplies for education and training are typically one-time purchases per household adult participant.

Technology for Education and Training	In order to support a participant's success in education and training activities in their Employment Plan, the agency may cover the costs of the following items: • Laptops • Tablets • Phones • Wi-Fi or phone service for up to four months. • Necessary electronic accessories (including chargers, batteries) Agencies may not purchase technology for children or other household members.	• Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support given. • A written request for the support from the participant that includes the intended types of items to be purchased using the support. • Vendor or payee information. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Training" For Technology related to employment activities, see Employment Related Supports section.	• Approval is based on Program Manager's assessment of the need and funding available. • Before approving technology support requests, review other available options that might cover costs or meet short term technology needs. This may include other funding streams, community resources, computer lab access, or loaner devices. • Purchase affordable technology through local programs, initiatives, and businesses.
Training Program Costs	In order to support a participant's education and training goals, the agency may cover the costs of: • Short term trainings • Credentialed pathway programs • Vocational training programs	• Valid EP on file which includes the training activity and education and training goals. • A written request for the support from the participant. • Vendor or payee information. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Training"	• When considering training program and provider options, use professional judgement to assess what is realistically accessible for a participant. For example, even if a free option exists for a certain training, it may not be a viable option if it is offered at a place or time that the participant cannot attend. • Education and training activities should support future career goals and lead to long term economic self-sufficiency.

College	When financial aid is unavailable, agencies may use support service funds to help cover the cost of college tuition. Support is reserved for cases where the funds provided would lead to degree completion within one year.	• Valid EP on file which includes the training activity and education and training goals. • A written request for the support from the participant. • Verification that financial aid is unavailable. • Vendor or payee information. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Training"	• Approval is based on Program Manager's assessment of the need and funding available.
Testing Fees	Agencies may use support service funds to pay the cost of tests related to an education or training activity in the Employment Plan.	• Valid EP on file which includes activities and goals that correspond with the support given. • A written request for the support from the participant. • Vendor or payee information. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Training"	• The Program Manager may decide if it is appropriate to cover costs for a participant to retaking a required test. Review individual circumstances and consider the likelihood of success due to length of time between tests, the participant's study plans, results of the previous test, and resources available.

HOUSING AND BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT SERVICES

Best Practices for All Housing and Basic Needs Support Services

- Stability and wellbeing are the foundations of economic self-sufficiency and MFIP support services may be used to help meet the basic needs of participants when no other resources are available. Due to limitations in funding, it is important to explore all other available resources when reviewing requests for Housing and Basic Needs support.
- Most of the supports in this section are meant to resolve a specific crisis or episode of need. In some cases, it is appropriate to respond proactively to an episode of need before it becomes a full-on emergency for the household. Using funds to efficiently respond to an episode of need limits the negative impact on the household and is often more cost effective.
- When reviewing requests for support, it is important to think about long term stability. Before making a payment towards a participant's monthly expense (such as rent or utilities), make sure that the cost is affordable in the household's future budget. Rather than using support funds to delay the inevitable, it is best to work with the participant to find alternative solutions up front.
- When determining the amount to approve, consider what is required to truly resolve the participant's need. Approving a partial payment that doesn't resolve the episode of need satisfactorily may be less cost effective than approving a higher amount that results in a better outcome.
- Before making a payment towards a participant's monthly expense (such as rent or utilities), verify that the participant's name is on the supporting documentation (such as the lease, utility bill or invoice) as a responsible party.

Prohibited Expenses

- Housing or utility costs for participants who are staying in a Hennepin County funded shelter.

Housing and Basic Needs Related Supports

Type	Policy	Required Documentation	Funding Type & Tracking	Best Practices & Examples

Housing Costs	Agencies may use support services funds to cover the cost of housing in order to resolve a crisis situation or episode of need that is not expected to extend beyond four months.
	
	Before approving housing support services confirm that the housing is affordable for the family and that issuing the funds will resolve the need.
		• Valid EP on file.
		• A written request for the support from the participant including:
		  ○ the amount needed
		  ○ a description of the emergency or episode of need
		  ○ how expense will be covered in the future.
		• Supporting documentation that confirms the amount requested.
		• Vendor or payee information
		• Proof of payment (receipt or invoice).
			Non-Assistance
			
			WF1 Support Service Category: "Emergency Financial Assistance"
				• Approval is based on Program Manager's assessment of the need and funding available.
				• Hennepin County recommends that a participant may receive assistance for:
				  ○ Existing housing costs for up to two months of rental or mortgage costs within a 12-month period.
				  ○ Costs to secure new housing up to two months of rent or one month plus damage deposit within a 12-month period.
				• Examples of supporting documentation that confirms the requested amount:
				  ○ Copy of the lease agreement
				  ○ Rent ledger indicating amount due
				  ○ Statement from a landlord indicating the amount due

Other Housing Expenses	Agencies may use support services funds to cover the short term, non-recurring costs of other necessary expenses related to a participant's housing stability or necessary move.
	
	For questions about other housing support service requests not covered in this policy, and not explicitly prohibited, contact your assigned coordinator.
		• Valid EP on file.
		• A written request for the support from the participant that includes a description of the support requested and episode of need it will resolve.
		• Vendor or payee information.
		• Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).
			Non-Assistance
			
			WF1 Support Service Category: "Emergency Financial Assistance"
				• Approval is based on Program Manager's assessment of the need and funding available.
				• Examples of other housing expense support services include:
				  ○ Rental application fees
				  ○ The cost of a storage unit
				  ○ Short term hotel stays while in transition or fleeing domestic violence
				  ○ Cost to rent a moving truck
				• For rental application fees:
				  ○ Discuss rental criteria and if participant has any barriers that may hinder application approval (for example the agency might help the participant pull a free credit report).
				  ○ Have the participant request a copy of the report if the application is denied. Review and discuss denial reason for future planning.

Utilities	Agencies may use support services funds to cover the cost of utilities in order to resolve a crisis situation or episode of need that is not expected to extend beyond four months.	• Valid EP on file.
		• A written request for the support from the participant.
		• Supporting documentation that confirms the amount requested.
		• Vendor or payee information
		• Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).
			Non-Assistance
			
			WF1 Support Service Category: "Emergency Financial Assistance"
				• Approval is based on Program Manager's assessment of the need and funding available.
				• Hennepin County recommends that a participant may receive utility assistance for up to two months of utility costs within a 12-month period.
				• Provide resources for cost savings programs such as Energy Assistance.
				• Examples of supporting documentation that confirms the requested amount:
				  ○ Copy of utility bill in the participant's name
				  ○ Statement from utility provider indicating amount due
				  ○ Online account summary and/or transaction history

Basic Needs	Agencies may use support services funds to cover the cost of basic needs to resolve a short-term episode of need that will last fewer than four months.
	• Essential goods required for daily living but not required to be purchased recurringly
	• Clothing
	• Emergency Food
		• Valid EP on file.
		• A written request for the support from the participant that includes a description of the support requested and episode of need it will resolve.
		• If issuing a check or paying with credit card: Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).
		• If providing a stored value card: Participant signature to acknowledge receipt.
		• See page 2 of this policy for the steps required before mailing a card. If all steps have been completed, no signature is needed.
			Non-Assistance
			
			WF1 Support Service Category: "Emergency Financial Assistance"
				• Approval is based on Program Manager's assessment of the need and funding available.
				• Because Basic Needs are Non-Assistance expenses, an episode of need must be identified as part of the approval. If the need will not be resolved by approval of the support or is expected to last longer than four months, connect the participant to external resources for ongoing assistance.
				• Examples of household goods:
				  ○ Pots, pans, and dishes
				  ○ Cooking utensils
				  ○ Bed sheets or blankets
				• Household tools

Ongoing Personal Care Items	Agencies may use support services funds to cover the cost of ongoing personal care items to meet a chronic need. MFIP must be active at time of issuance. These supports are not available to participants during Transition Services.
	
	Support services to pay for food as a chronic need are not an allowable expense. See "Basic Needs" above for support requests to pay for emergency food.
		• Valid EP on file.
		• WF1 case note specifying what support has been issued and the intended types of items to be purchased using the support.
		• If issuing a check or paying with credit card: Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).
		• If providing a stored value card: Participant signature to acknowledge receipt.
		  ○ See page 2 of this policy for the steps required before mailing a card. If all steps have been completed, no signature is needed.
			Assistance
			
			WF1 Support Service Category: "Needs Related Payments"
				• Approval is based on Program Manager's assessment of the need and funding available.
				• Supports should be approved on an individual basis. Agencies should not use support services to purchase basic personal care items for *all* participants.
				• Hennepin County recommends that a participant may receive up to $100 in a month to help cover chronic costs of personal care items.
				• Examples of personal care items:
				  ○ Toilet paper
				  ○ Diapers and wipes
				  ○ Hygiene items
				  ○ Cleaning supplies
				• Case note example: "Participant requested a Cub card to purchase hygiene items and diapers. Issued $50 Cub card"

CHILDCARE SUPPORT SERVICES

Best Practices for All Housing and Basic Needs Support Services

- Prioritize completing all necessary steps to get CCAP approved quickly after a new enrollment or when it is needed for a new activity.
- Work with your agency's assigned Childcare Assistance Worker to resolve issues on peng applications.

Prohibited Expenses

- Childcare Assistance Co-Pays

Childcare Support				
Type	**Policy**	**Required Documentation**	**Funding Type & Tracking**	**Best Practices & Examples**
Childcare	Agencies may use support services funds to cover short-term, non-recurring childcare costs meant to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need that will end when CCAP is approved and that isn't expected to extend beyond four months. Do not use funds to cover the cost of childcare if the participant has refused to complete a CCAP application or for times when a second parent on the case is available to provide care.	• Valid EP on file. • A completed CCAP application including the participant's choice of provider. • A written request for the support from the participant. • Vendor or payee information. • Proof of payment (receipt or paid invoice).	Non-Assistance WF1 Support Service Category: "Child and Dependent Care"	• Approval is based on Program Manager's assessment of the need and funding available. • When reviewing a request for childcare support, consider the urgency of the need and all other options available to the participant. MFIP support services funds should be used as a last resort to cover childcare costs. • Do not approve childcare supports requested so that the participant can attend a scheduled Employment Services meeting.