COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT FUND
EcSA CAREER ACCELERATOR INCENTIVES

Policy Number: 231, Revision 3
Effective Date: July 1, 2019
Revision Date: July 30, 2026

I. PURPOSE

To ensure South Central Workforce (SCW) policy compliance set forth in Washington State Policy 7005 for Community Reinvestment Plan, which communicates guidance and instruction for the Economic Security for All (EcSA) Career Accelerator Incentives Fund established under the state Community Reinvestment Plan (CRP).

II. BACKGROUND

In 2022, the Washington State Legislature established the $200 million Community Reinvestment Account in the State Treasury. The funds are designed to address racial, economic, and social disparities created by the historic design and enforcement of state and federal criminal laws and penalties for drug possession (otherwise known as “The War on Drugs”).

- In 2025, the Washington State Legislature designated $60 million to continue the programs as established in the Community Reinvestment Plan. The state Department of Commerce allocated $14.475 million in partnership with EcSA, which broke out as follows. $10,110,000 of this fund is dedicated to the EcSA Career Accelerator Incentives Fund (hereafter EcSA Career Accelerator) and Matched Investment Savings Accounts to provide financial support payments of $1,000 per month in incentives to individuals making progress toward their career plan and matched investment savings accounts at a match rate of 1:1 for up to $10,000 to participants in matched savings. Please refer to State Policy 7010 for guidance.

- $4,365,000 of the fund is dedicated to EcSA Business Support to provide business navigator services and business grants to support business startup, recovery, and growth.

III. POLICY

The EcSA Career Accelerator Incentives Fund program is dedicated to increasing equity by placing a focus on assisting historically underserved communities. The program has a specific emphasis on serving EcSA participants from the Governor's WIOA priority populations and ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households, with particular focus on Black, Tribal, Latine, Asian, Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Washingtonians. This policy provides guidance for the planning and implementation of these funds.

Outlined below are the definitions and criteria for EcSA Career Accelerator Incentive Funds.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

To receive monthly incentive payments through the EcSA Career Accelerator, participants must be eligible for and enrolled in the State EcSA or Federal EcSA program prior to receipt of any payment. Participants may receive incentives from the EcSA Career Accelerator when State or Federal EcSA-enrolled, whether they are above or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line.

The EcSA Career Accelerator's focus supports Black, Tribal, Latine, Asian, Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities and Contractors should implement outreach strategies to reach these populations. However, anyone who is eligible may be enrolled in State or Federal EcSA and receive incentives from the EcSA Career Accelerator.

Contractors should be aware that the number of customers served from these target populations is being tracked through regular reports to the Washington State Department of Commerce and the Governor's Office of Equity, which expect to see significant growth in the number of people served by these target populations. Because of this, effective recruiting strategies and proper data entry concerning customer demographics (including participant completion of a WorkSourceWA.com account) are especially vital for this program.

V. INCENTIVE PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Incentive payments may only be provided to individuals who are enrolled in the State or Federal EcSA program.
- Payments must be tracked in the State MIS database system using the applicable service.
- Incentives must be included as part of the career plan of the participant who will receive them.
- Incentive payments provided by the EcSA Career Accelerator must not exceed $1000 per month per participant. Participants are capped at up to $10,000 in total incentive payments.
- There is no time limit on how many months a participant may receive incentives.

- Provision of the incentive payments must follow the milestone-based incentive structure found in Attachment 2 EcSA CRP Incentive Guidance. Participants must complete defined activities and/or outcomes, as part of their career plan developed with their case manager, to receive the incentive payment(s) up to a maximum of $1000 per month.

- Participants who received career accelerator incentives prior to July 1, 2025, may continue to receive incentives via completion of activities defined in Attachment 2 EcSA CRP Incentive Guidance. Incentives received after July 1, 2025, cannot exceed $10,000 cap per participant.

- Participants may decline incentive payments at any time and for any reason. Participants who previously received incentive payments and decided to stop payments may begin receiving incentives again after a break upon their request, provided they are still eligible.

- Incentives must be paid by check, direct deposit, or via a prepaid card capable of being used in a manner like a debit card. Gift cards are not an acceptable form of payment.

- Case managers must take steps while working with participants to assess other benefits received and determine what impact, if any, receipt of EcSA Career Accelerator incentives will have on those benefits. After identifying potential issues, participants and case managers should engage in discussion to determine how to address any conflicts and assist participants in making informed decisions.

- Incentives received under the EcSA Career Accelerator program do not have any impact on eligibility for any other incentives, EcSA or otherwise. Participants may still receive incentive payments from State EcSA if they are eligible for them as part of their career plan and the LWDB offers them.

VI. IMPACT OF PAYMENTS

Provision of incentive payments under this program may cause additional requirements on Contractors concerning the provision of tax forms. Because of this, it is recommended that Contractors understand their responsibilities and the implications of such services for the purposes of participant tax reporting and the receipt of other benefits from the system.

VII. IMPORTANT COMPONENTS

- Incentives count as income against SNAP and other benefits:
    - Incentives will count as income for SNAP. For other benefits, Contractors are encouraged to use the Atlanta Federal Reserve's tool for predicting such impacts.

    - Customers should consider how much SNAP they will lose versus how much incentive they will gain. For example, a customer might decide that getting a $1000 incentive is still worth it, even if they lose $250 in SNAP benefits. It is vital for Contractors to work with participants to determine potential issues and plan accordingly.

- Participants can receive incentives for the entire period that they are enrolled in State EcSA and successfully working towards their career goals, as funding allows. There is no time limit.

- EcSA Career Accelerator (CRP) Incentive payments <u>DO NOT COUNT</u> as income for the self-sufficiency calculator.

- Underage youth can receive EcSA Career Accelerator (CRP) incentive payment.
    - Parent or guardian consent is required unless the minor is legally emancipated, and the parent or guardian must have the opportunity to consider the impacts on other benefits the household may be receiving, as discussed above. Parents or guardians may be invited to take part in EcSA along with their child, as well, if eligible.

REFERENCES

- Washington State Policy 7000 – State Guidance and Instructions for the State Economic Security for All Program
- Washington State Policy 7005 – Community Reinvestment Plan, Revision 3
- WIOA Title I-B Policy 5625 – State Guidance for the Federal Economic Security for All Program

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Attachment 2 – EcSA CRP Incentive Guidance