COMMUNITY JOBS

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I. BACKGROUND

The Washington State Legislature established the Community Jobs program in WAC 338-310-1300. This legislation authorizes the Department of Commerce (Commerce) to administer Community Jobs as a part of Washington State's WorkFirst Program.

The Community Jobs program helps WorkFirst participants who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants gain work skills and experience by enrolling them in a temporary subsidized job. Participants will also receive other services and support to help them move into unsubsidized employment as quickly as possible.

II. POLICY

Community Jobs (CJ) is a WorkFirst activity that provides TANF participants with up to nine (9) months of paid, temporary employment at a non-profit organization, government, or tribal agency combined with intensive case management to resolve employment barriers. CJ allows TANF recipients to gain experience in an employment setting while increasing their income, skills, and self-confidence. It also provides opportunities to build references, develop networking connections, and demonstrate their work skills while working in their field of interest.

There are three (3) options for the Community Jobs Program:

1. Full-time CJ
    - Subsidized employment at 20 hours per week.
    - Wages are at the state or local minimum wage, whichever is highest.
    - Issue resolution (barriers) from two (2) to ten (10) hours per week that may or may not be coded.
    - A minimum of one case-managed barrier is open throughout the program. Barriers may change depending on the participant's goals and needs.
    - Documented twice monthly contact required.
    - Stacked activities coded from 10 to 18 hours per week. The combination of barrier removal and stacked activities cannot exceed 20 hours per week.
    - Worksites must be at a non-profit, tribal, or public entity.

- CJ participation can combine with unsubsidized employment, not to exceed 20 hours of employment.

2. Part-time CJ
    - Available to single parents with a child under six (6).
        - When the child reaches the age of six (6), contact DSHS to determine the next appropriate activity.
    - Subsidized employment at 20 hours per week.
    - Wages are at the state or local minimum wage, whichever is highest.
    - A minimum of one case-managed barrier is open throughout the program. Barriers may change depending on the participant's goals and needs.
    - Documented twice monthly contact required.
    - Stacked activities coded at a minimum of three (3) hours per week can be one of the following or a combination of both:
        - Stacked Activity
            1. Note: The participant should start in Life Skills (LS) unless case notes document why LS is not the most appropriate activity.
        - Coded barrier removal (such as mental or physical health, chemical dependency, and family violence)
    - Worksites must be at a non-profit, tribal, or public entity.
    - CJ participation can combine with unsubsidized employment, not to exceed 20 hours of employment.
3. Career Jump
    - The intent is to transition the participant onto the employer's payroll.
        - Participants can transition to the Career Jump program at any time, even if they have already engaged in the full-time CJ, part-time CJ, or Community Works (WC) Programs.
        - If the IDP goes beyond 9 months, please contact the Board for a new IDP.
    - Provides up to 433 hours of subsidized wages before the CJ employee transitions to the employer's payroll. That's about:
        - 21 weeks at 20 hours per week.
        - 10 weeks at 40 hours per week.
    - Wages are at the state or local minimum wage, whichever is highest.
    - Full-time participation is required, and stacked activities may be needed.
    - Worksites can be at for-profit, non-profit, tribal, or public entities.
    - If the participant switches from a Career Jump to a CJ, the days spent in Career Jump will count against the CJ time limit.
    - If the participant is terminated from a Career Jump site and then placed at a new Career Jump site, the hours spent in the initial Career Jump will be subtracted from the 433-hour limit.
    - If the participant switches from a CJ to a Career Jump, the days spent in the CJ will not count against the Career Jump time limit.

- If the participant terminates their Career Jump worksite before transitioning to the employers' payroll, Contractors must complete a Continuous Activity Planning (CAP) meeting with DSHS to review appropriate next steps for the participant.
- WorkFirst requirements state that participants can only refuse work for specific reasons and quitting a Career Jump may start the sanction process.

When unsubsidized employment is 15 hours or less per week, and career progression is unlikely, participation in CJ is allowed. The combination of CJ worksite hours and unsubsidized employment hours must not exceed 20 hours per week.

Community Jobs participants can remain with the same employer for both unsubsidized employment and CJ employment if the work schedule, job duties, and supervisor are different. There must be a clear separation of the two positions to avoid complications with wage and L&I premiums.

If the TANF grant status is Denied or Closed, the participant is not eligible to participate in Commerce WorkFirst Programs until the status is Open. If TANF is showing in eJAS as Pending, contact DSHS to determine when the TANF will be approved. If approval is expected within a reasonably short timeframe, enter a case note documenting the conversation with DSHS, leave the referral on the caseload screen until the TANF status is open, and then proceed as usual. Community Jobs can be used to cure an open WorkFirst sanction but cannot be used to cure a Non-Compliant Sanction (NCS) that has closed a participant's TANF.

Prior Commerce Program: Upon receipt of a referral, if a previous Commerce Program Individual Development Plan (IDP) or Career Plan has been created, Contractors must obtain approval from the Board to re-enroll the participant. Upon the 3rd plan created for any combination of programs within the same fiscal year must be sent to the Board for Commerce approval. If a participant changes programs but stays at the same worksite in the same position, the Board will not pay the Program Start Date pay point again. If the participant changes programs but stays at the same worksite in a different position, the Board will pay the Program Start Date pay point. If a participant changes programs and switches worksites, the Board will pay the Program Start Date pay point.

Orientations: An orientation of Community Jobs will be provided to all Community Jobs participants that will include, but not be limited to, an overview of program policies, expectations, including wages, and TANF disregards.

An orientation of Community Jobs will be provided to the Worksite, which will include, but is not limited to, an overview of program policies and expectations.

Compensation: Community Jobs participants will be paid at the minimum wage rate (state or local, whichever is higher), for all hours worked. A Community Jobs participant may be compensated for scheduled holidays and sick leave from their respective worksite.

Attendance Records/Logs: Attendance records/logs must be reviewed to ensure the accuracy

of countable activities, information, and hours. Case managers must sign and date each attendance record/log indicating a complete review. Absences, excused and unexcused, and Holiday hours will be accurately recorded in the Monthly Participation screen. Any absences reported in the Client Monthly Participation Screen must have a coinciding case note documenting the reason for the excused/unexcused absence. Reporting of Actual Hours must be entered in 'one week' timeframes with weeks starting on a Sunday and ending on a Saturday.

Immediate Notify: Should be used after two absences in one calendar month, per the requirements of the WorkFirst Handbook. In the immediate notify case note, document what, if any, action is needed by DSHS.

Monthly Contact with Worksite Supervisor: Monthly contact with the worksite supervisor is required. Contact can include in-person conversations, worksite visits, email, or over the phone. Documentation must include the method of contact and a summary of the conversation. Monthly contact should also include follow-up on any issues identified in the worksite evaluation.

On-Going Case Management: Participant contact should occur a minimum of twice per month for the duration of the program. Contact with the participant is defined as an interaction; an opportunity to dialogue. It can be in person, an email, or over the phone. Monthly case notes will document contact with the participant and entries should include a summary of all contact, conversation, worksite visits, emails, or phone calls.

Sick Leave: All employers are required to provide a minimum rate of one hour for every 40 hours worked of sick leave. This includes part-time and seasonal workers.

Emergency/Personal Leave: Emergency/Personal Leave will not be available to Community Jobs participants. Any missed work must be reported to DSHS in eJAS as soon as possible.

Unscheduled Worksite Closure: If a worksite experiences an unscheduled closure (for example, closure due to inclement weather, power failure, natural disaster, etc.), Community Jobs participants should be paid for the hours they are scheduled to work that day. Timesheets must indicate the number of hours scheduled with a notation describing why the business was closed. Participants would not have to make up hours missed for an unscheduled worksite closure.

Scheduled Worksite Closure: If there is a scheduled worksite closure (i.e., construction), the participant should work with the worksite supervisor and case manager to make up for the time missed.

Holiday Pay: Holiday pay is not allowable and participants are not allowed to work on Washington State Legal Holidays, even if the Holiday falls on a day the participant is typically scheduled to work. The participant will be paid for the hours they are typically scheduled to work that day. Hours should be recorded as "Holiday" on the timesheet.

The following are legal state holidays:

- New Year's Day: The first day of January.

- Martin Luther King's Birthday: The third Monday of January.
- Presidents' Day: The third Monday of February.
- Memorial Day: The last Monday of May.
- Juneteenth: The nineteenth day of June.
- Independence Day: The fourth day of July.
- Labor Day: The first Monday in September.
- Veterans' Day: The eleventh day of November.
- Thanksgiving Day: The fourth Thursday in November.
- The day immediately following Thanksgiving Day.
- Christmas Day: The twenty-fifth day of December.

For state holidays that fall on a weekend:

- Whenever any legal holiday falls upon a Sunday, the following Monday shall be the legal holiday.
- Whenever any legal holiday falls upon a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be the legal holiday.

Worksite Placement: Worksite placements must increase skills and employability towards the participant's employment goal or support their education pathway. Worksites accomplish this by providing an opportunity for participants to learn and practice the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce.

- Worksites must be in a non-profit, tribal, or public entity.
- Only Career Jump participants can work at a for-profit agency, in addition to non-profit, tribal, and public entities.

The Community Jobs Non-Profit Worksite Contract (Attachment 1) shall be used for Community Jobs placements. The Career Jump Placement (Attachment 4) shall be used for Career Jump placements.

Hold: If a participant starts on the Community Jobs worksite and a situation arises that requires them to be temporarily removed from the Community Jobs Program, a case staffing should be held with the WorkFirst partners. Contractors will complete the hold section of the IDP, close the employment screen, enter the termination date as the last day the participant worked at the worksite, close out the IDP, and refer the participant back on the Contractor caseload screen.

Reasons for a temporary hold could include:

- Child Care
- Drug & Alcohol Assessment/Short Term
- DSHS Requested
- Emergency Travel
- Family Emergency

- Homeless/Housing Needs
- Legal Issues – Other, including Jury Duty
- Legal Issues – Short-Term Incarceration
- Long-Term Jury Duty
- Medical Illness
- Pending Assessment
- Pregnancy
- Temporary Unsubsidized Employment

Once the hold issue has been resolved, the participant should resume their Community Jobs Program. Contact the Board to have the IDP re-opened.

Support Services: Contractors may provide support services related to work activities. Prior to authorizing support services, Contractors must review the eJAS Payment History to ensure the guidelines for the category have not been exceeded.

II. STACKED ACTIVITIES

During the Community Jobs Program, the Contractors will arrange for stacked activities. The Contractor will work with the participant to identify appropriate stacked activities. A minimum of 10 hours per week for full-time CJ and 3 hours minimum per week for part-time CJ must be in education (GE or JT), life skills (LS), job readiness (JS), or community services (XS) activities. Contractors have up to 10 business days upon acceptance of a CJ referral to place a participant in a stacked activity. If the most meaningful stacked activity is not available within those 10 business days, stack the participant with an alternate stacked activity until the other is available. Contractors may utilize Attachment 5, Stacked Activity Participation Log to document attendance. The Stacked Activity Participation Log may be revised provided the content is not altered.

Job Skills Training (JT) must provide job skills tied to the participant with the ability to obtain employment or to advance in the workplace. Job skills training can include training to meet the needs of a specific employer, or it can be general training that prepares a participant for employment. It can include:

- Training to enhance job skills, such as computer classes, classes to learn software applications, CPR/basic first aid training, or flagger training;
- Literacy or language instruction when it is explicitly focused on skills needed for employment or combined with job training;
- Developmental education or prerequisites required for a vocational certificate; or
- Any education and training required by an employer or to provide a person with the ability to obtain employment, to advance or adapt to the changing demands of the workplace including part-time vocational education classes.

The following outlines the conditions of Job Skills Training (JT) activities for Community Jobs participants:

- When available, education components can be co-enrolled with the local community or technical college.
- In the event JT classes are not available through the college system, Contractors may directly provide such services or contract for JT classes.
- If a non-WorkFirst-funded agency is offering the same activities that are already provided by the local community or technical college approval by the Board is required.

General Education Training (GE) are part-time educational activities that assist the participant in attaining basic education skills such as General Education Diploma (GED), high school equivalency, English as a Second Language (ESL) and should be a local community and technical college when applicable.

If the educational activity is not provided by a community or technical college or other eJAS partner, Contractors will be the "Contractor of record" for eJAS coding, will need to make arrangements with the provider to be supplied with attendance information, and will be responsible for documenting actual hours of participation for this activity.

Life Skills Training (LS) is training that prepares participants to meet the demands of everyday life and employment. It may or may not be employment-related and is not intended to completely address and resolve family issues. It is intended to be an up-front introduction that helps prepare individuals to participate in activities effectively.

Life Skills Training may include such topics as:

- Self-awareness;
- Attitude;
- Balancing work and personal life;
- Money management;
- Stress and anger management;
- Time management;
- Communication skills; and
- Appropriate standards for dress and participation.

Job Readiness Training (JS) is training that prepares participants for an effective job hunting experience. Job Search Logs must be kept verifying actual hours of participation (Attachment 2).

Job Readiness training may include such topics as:

- Resume development;
- Interviewing techniques;
- Contractor directed job hunting;
- Scheduled job club meetings; and/or
- Peer and professional mentoring activities.

If the educational activity is not provided by a community or technical college or other eJAS partner, Contractors will be the "Contractor of record" for eJAS coding, will need to make arrangements with the provider to be supplied with attendance information, and will be responsible for documenting actual hours of participation for this activity.

Washington State's Work Verification Plan requires the Contractor to verify 1% of job search activities. The 1% applies to the Contractor's entire job search caseload. If 1% of the Contractor's caseload is less than one (1), the Contractor will review a minimum of one (1) participant's Job Search activities.

Contractors are required to have written policies and procedures to verify clients' participation and conduct random monthly reviews. Documentation of completed reviews must be maintained on file. Methods used to verify job search efforts can include, but are not limited to:

- Review completed applications.
- Evidence provided that an interview took place.
- Electronic acknowledgments from an online application.

If entries cannot be verified, the Contractor will try to verify an additional five (5) entries, then have the Contractor discuss with the participant the unverified entries. The Contractor would not report participation hours for the activities that could not be verified.

Community Service (XS) is an opportunity for CJ participants to volunteer in "family-centered" activities (can only be with a non-profit, government, or tribal agency) with their child's school, childcare, HeadStart, ECEAP, Boys & Girls clubs, adult care facility, etc. Court-ordered community service also qualifies as long as it is unrelated to the CJ worksite job.

Community service hours can be up to 10 hours a week and cannot exceed the maximum allowed under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and must be supervised daily with attendance records maintained. Contractors will be the "Contractor of record" for eJAS coding and will be responsible for documenting actual hours of participation in the Community Service activity.

When stacked activities are identified or changed, initiate contact with DSHS to create the appropriate activity component referrals. DSHS will need to know the service provider, start and end dates, and the number of hours per week the participant will be enrolled in the activity to create the eJAS component. If the service provider is not a DSHS partner, the contractor will be the designated service provider for the activity.

Contractors may leverage or provide any of these services when such services are not available through the community and technical college system. Tracking hours of attendance will be required in the participant's paper file. Training must be supervised.

At any time, the Contractor determines that a participant is within four (4) weeks of being job ready, the participant can be stacked with a part-time job search component coded to ESD. The Contractor will notify the DSHS WorkFirst Program Specialist when a participant is ready to be

stacked with a part-time job search with ESD so a new IRP can be completed and the end date of the CJ changed to end within four weeks if needed.

- The Contractor will determine the hours of the part-time job search, between 10-15 hours per week so the DSHS WorkFirst Program Specialist can create the referral.
- The Contractor will update the IDP with the specific Job Search participation requirements.
- At the end of the four (4) weeks of part-time job search, the participant will transition to full-time job search if they have not obtained unsubsidized employment.
- If during the fourth week of the part-time job search it does not appear the participant is ready to accept employment, a Continuous Activity Planning (CAP) meeting can be done to identify a different activity or to continue in Community Jobs if the participant has not already completed the full nine (9) months of the program.

The remaining 10 hours per week will focus on employment barriers and activities to assist participants in obtaining unsubsidized employment. These activities are not coded as eJAS components; they are requirements within the participant's IDP.

All education/training components must be supervised daily and attendance records must be maintained. If the education/training co-enrollment is provided by a WorkFirst partner, the appropriate component must be coded with the provider's Contractor code. That provider is responsible for reporting participation and progress in eJAS.

III. EXITS FROM PROGRAM

Required Documentation for Exits: Staff must notify the DSHS WorkFirst Program Specialist/Social Worker via eJAS at the completion of the program or anytime the participant is referred back and enters a case note documenting the reason the participant is leaving the program as well as their suggestions for the next steps for the participant.

When the participant is no longer involved in the program, staff must complete the Exit Program Date, Reason Code, and Narrative sections in the IDP. The Exit Narrative should include a summary of the participants' CJ Program including the status on non-special records barriers, skills gained, the participant's future goals, the last day the participant worked at the worksite, and any transition services and/or referrals. Only include applicable information in the Exit Narrative that is useful for the next partner serving the participant.

- Exit date is the last date on the worksite unless there is a clear case note documenting communication with the participant to place at a new worksite.

If a participant leaves the program due to unsubsidized employment, the Contractor will create the unsubsidized employment screen in eJAS.

If the CJ component is closed out by DSHS prior to the case manager having the opportunity to refer the component back, a case note will be entered that states the participant is no longer in the CJ program and will also include the date the participant was last engaged in the program.

Part-Time Unsubsidized Employment: Part-time unsubsidized employment is 20-31 hours per week or the income equivalent (monthly wages equivalent to 20 hours per week, times current Washington state/local minimum wage, times 4.3 weeks). Participants must retain the Unsubsidized Employment for a minimum of 10 business days before the Contractor can submit for payment.

Full-Time Unsubsidized Employment: Full-Time unsubsidized employment is 32-40 hours per week or the income equivalent (monthly wages equivalent to 32 hours per week, times current Washington state/local minimum wage, times 4.3 weeks). Participants must retain Unsubsidized Employment for a minimum of 10 business days.

Employment Verification is required to be on file and must include:

- Income verification in the form of a paystub from the participant, or
- Employer verified employment using the Commerce Income Verification Form (see Administrative Bulletin 254 Billing Procedures Attachment 1).

If the employment verification crosses over into more than one month, Contractors will submit the billing request for the month that the 14th calendar day fell on.

Seasonal/Temporary Unsubsidized Employment: UE payment points may be claimed for participants who maintain seasonal or temporary employment or non-permanent employment if the position is maintained for 90 days and the position meets all other UE payment point criteria.

UE Payment Points may not be claimed for the following:

- Government subsidized training/volunteer programs with no intent to hire at the end of the service.

If a parent obtains a UE prior to being placed on a CJ worksite, the following documentation is required:

- Timesheets documenting a minimum of 5 hours of a stacked activity.
- If stacked with JS:
    - JS component with documented actual hours.
    - A Job Readiness section detailing specific activities the participant was engaged in. Mere completion of a stacked activity or program orientation will not satisfy the necessary level of participant-specific documentation.
        - Completed exit narrative that includes all exit narrative requirements including documentation of the specific activities that were provided to the participant by the Contractor that helped the participant obtain the UE.
- If stacked with other activities:
    - At the minimum, a completed exit narrative that includes all exit narrative requirements including documentation of the specific activities that were provided to the participant by the Contractor that helped the participant obtain the UE.

Support Services: Support services can be issued to participants who exit the program to Unsubsidized Employment up to 14 days after the last day on the worksite if their TANF grant is still open.

IV. RESUME AND COMPLETE

A resume and complete only apply if the participant is returning to the same provider, the participant is going to a new provider within the same consortium, and/or if it has been six (6) months or less since the participant left the program and there are at least three (3) months remaining in the program. Contractors are required to contact the Board to request the IDP to be reopened.

If a participant obtained unsubsidized employment prior to completing the nine (9) month CJ Program and loses the unsubsidized employment, and it is determined that resuming the CJ program would be beneficial, the UE payment point may be required to be repaid.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Community Jobs Worksite Contract
- Attachment 2: Job Search Log
- Attachment 3: Community Service Worksite Contract
- Attachment 4: Career Jump Placement Form
- Attachment 5: Stacked Activity Participation Log
- Attachment 6: Community Jobs Worksite Timesheet