TANF Analyst Hour

11/15/22

Topic: JOBS Support Services

Q: How will a family coach know what purchases are covered with JOBS funds, what funds are covered with general funds and where would they get that information?

A: General funds can also be JOBS funds. The JOBS Support Services budget is a mix of federal and general funds. Have a conversation with your local leadership. They should know what funds were utilized. If JOBS funding is utilized, then that needs to be entered into ONE.

Q: Checks are combining behind the scenes. For example, we paid two months of rent to a landlord, the amount was over the $999 so the correct amount was sent. But because of that the landlord was waiting for an additional check even though they got their full payment. We didn't know it was being combined. Is that something new?

A: No, it's not new. It's the way it has always been done. The accounting system can combine checks on the backend, but they are not able to do that with revolving fund checks. Cassy will send the case she mentioned to Miguel so he can check it for accuracy.

Q: Case in point from chat talked about a parent who has a CH step and a MH step. Her children attend head start but no transportation is provided and there are no alternative options for transportation. She has requested gas support monthly until the children are out of school in May. The understanding is that support payments are not to be ongoing. Do you have any direction on gas support in this situation? Cassy added a scenario where the family has been engaged for 3 months but for one month, they don't contact the Department and they cannot be reach or found. Does the Department still send that support check or wait to hear from them before issuing payment?

A: Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis based on the family's circumstances. If the family is no longer engaged with no communication whatsoever, then ending the support service is appropriate. TANF cannot pay for glasses because it is a medical expense, our federal partners don't allow it.

Monthly requests for gas and bus payments can be entered. Wait until after there has been a discussion with the Oregonian, narrate the contact in TRACS, update attendance, and then put in the transportation request.

Q: Can the Department pay for glasses?

Q: Couldn't we pay for glasses for a JO step to help aid the need to be successful in a job and not have to go through the rigmarole of figuring out their expenses?

A: No, the Department cannot pay for glasses because it is a medical expense. Our federal partners prohibit it. However, we are in conversations with our federal partners to allow for that expense. Unfortunately, the conversations have taken months with no resolution yet.

Q: As a family coach, how long should I wait for families to reach out for the lower cost alternatives, or do I need to wait at all?

A: It would be situationally based on the needs of the family. If it's mid-month and the rent is due the 5th of the following month then there is still time for families to pursue community partner support while the Department continues to help them set up appointments and even attend appointments with them if the families, see that as supportive. The Department wants to help families build skill sets and guide them through the processes, so they don't go into eviction status, etc.

Q: Does the JAG refer to minor or major car repairs?

A: Support services for car repairs is situationally based. Repairs must be in reasonable relation to the value of the car, and it should be clear that the proposed repairs will provide good working transportation for the Oregonian to complete job searches, assist with mental health, attending school, or for whatever activity they are engaged in that helps them meet their goals.

Q: Can we assist with tuition payments?

A: The Department can help with vocational trainings and self-initiated trainings. The programs must be a 4-year or shorter program. They can also be for short-term certificates. As with all our other programs they must be lower cost alternatives.