

## Guidance and Instructions for the State Economic Security for All (EcSA)

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/17/2024

POLICY #: P215. V4

### **I. Background**

In recognition of the work that Washington's workforce development system did to alleviate poverty through the Economic Security for All (EcSA) Initiative, Governor Inslee and the Legislature approved an appropriation of state general funds to be allocated to Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to expand on the work done by local EcSA programs funded by the Governor's WIOA statewide activities funds. Because this additional allocation is state funded, these new resources are not subject to the same policy environment and requirements as WIOA funded services. This policy provides guidance in the planning and implementation process for these funds and be in effect the entirety of the grant.

Note: To avoid ambiguity, programs funded by the Governor's WIOA statewide activities funds will be called Federal EcSA, while those funded by state general funds will be called State EcSA.

### **II. Program Requirements**

A. The priority of these funds is to accomplish the following goals:

1. Meet or exceed our local and statewide goals for the number of people moving to self-sufficiency, in order to demonstrate that EcSA is a successful model for moving people out of poverty with equity.
2. Bundle WIOA and non-WIOA services (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, housing, many others) to stabilize customer's lives, conveniently and with dignity for the customer.
3. Establish and implement customized career plans to reach 100% of participant self-sufficiency, as established by the UW Self-sufficiency Calculator.
4. Provide extensive wrap-around services and continue bundling benefits to maintain stability as customers pursue their customized career plan, continuously until they reach self-sufficiency.
5. Include Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities, rural communities and people experiencing poverty in program design and implementation.
6. Work collaboratively across local, state, and federal levels to remove barriers to coordinated delivery of multiple benefits.

B. The success of the program will be measured based on the following criteria:

- Reach target number of participants with income above their self-sufficiency goal. This is not an exit-based measure; participants do not need to exit in order to be counted toward this measure. Providers are encouraged to continue providing job retention services and other services to these individuals to ensure they remain permanently out of poverty.
- Reach target number of participants enrolled in training for a career with starting wages above their unique self-sufficiency goal.
- Reach target number of enrollments for individuals who meet eligibility requirements of the program.
- Measure the proportion of State EcSA participants who are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), and/or unhoused/in rural communities, and work together to increase that proportion over time.

To properly measure accomplishment of these goals, providers must comply with the following

requirements:

- After enrollment into the program in accordance with State EcSA policy, all clients must be tracked in the ETO Case Management System or its successor according to the case management policies and procedures required by the WIOA Title I program.
- In addition, clients must be assessed using the University of Washington (UW) Self-Sufficiency Calculator and their information stored in the calculator, including updating the calculator at the time of exit to demonstrate whether the client has reached their self-sufficiency goal.
- For the purposes of all State EcSA programs, Self-Sufficiency is defined as Attainment of 100% of individualized household Income Adequacy, as established through use of the UW Self-Sufficiency Calculator.
- Every State EcSA client must be provided information about other workforce, education, and human services that may be of value to them by using the Bundled Services Desk Aid provided by ESD or a local equivalent.
- Providers must recruit participants in a manner that reaches out to BIPOC, individuals with disabilities, and/or unhoused/in rural communities, with the intention of increasing the proportion of these populations that are served over time.
- When possible, both parents in eligible two-parent households should be offered career development, English language learning, and other services, if desired by the family.

## Eligibility

Eligibility for the program falls into two different categories: under 200% FPL and above 200% FPL.

A. To be eligible for **State EcSA – People Experiencing Poverty - Under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)**, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- I. Be from households that are below the 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and
- II. Meet eligibility requirements for WIOA Adult Basic, WIOA Dislocated Worker, and/or WIOA Youth, excluding requirements to register for Selective Service.

B. To be eligible for the **State EcSA – People Who Demonstrate Financial Need - Above 200% of FPL**, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Be below their self-sufficiency goal and require employment or training-related services to achieve self-sufficiency.
- Meet basic eligibility requirements for any of the three WIOA Title I-B formula programs, excluding requirements to register for Selective Service.
- Individuals may be below or above 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, at the discretion of LWDBs, as long as they are below their self-sufficiency goal.

C. One of the major goals of the State EcSA program is the promotion of a holistic approach to fighting poverty. For this reason, co-enrollment in any program that will assist clients to that end is encouraged. Please note, however, that eligibility for the State EcSA program does not supplant the eligibility criteria for any other program. Providers must ensure each participant meets the specific eligibility requirements prior to enrollment in each program.

D. In order to demonstrate eligibility, providers are required to maintain documentation for each participant that verifies the following:

- Identity
- U.S. Citizenship or otherwise legally entitled to work in the U.S
- Age
- Income status

Note: To better facilitate co-enrollment and local monitoring, the documents permitted to satisfy the above

are the same as those designated by WDC policy for the WIOA Title I program.

## Allowable Uses of State EcSA Funding

- a. The State EcSA program uses the “State-Funded” program services found on Tab 4 of the WorkSource Services Catalog (see WIN 0077, Change 16, WorkSource Services Catalog).
- b. Food assistance, which is not capable of being provided by WIOA Title I, is allowable through State EcSA funds.
- c. Any aspects of the program not specifically cited in this document or other State EcSA guidance are controlled by the regulations set forth to govern the WIOA Title I program.
- d. The following services and activities not capable of being provided by WIOA Title IB are allowable uses of State EcSA funds:
  - Stipends/Participant Cash Support/ Incentives Payments
  - Food Assistance
  - Housing and Rental assistance
  - Medical and Mental Health Care including technology (eyeglasses, hearing aids, dental care etc.)
  - Marketing and Outreach
- e. For the purpose of State EcSA, a participant support payment is defined as the provision of cash or gift cards to client in order to incentivize participation or assist in participation in programs established in the client’s individual employment plan. Items such as rental assistance or payments made on behalf of the client are supportive services and must be recorded and reported as such.
- f. State EcSA training and supportive services are not entitlements and must be provided on the basis of demonstrated need and individual circumstances, as documented in the client file.
- g. To ensure the equity of client service and expenditure decisions under the State EcSA program, all services and expenditures must follow existing WDC services policies, including policies that cover support services, training services, and establishing priority of service for expenditures.

## EcSA Career Accelerator Incentives Fund

### Eligibility

In order to receive monthly incentive payments through the EcSA Career Accelerator, participants must be eligible for and enrolled in the State EcSA program prior to receipt of any payment:

- Participants may receive incentives from the EcSA Career Accelerator when State EcSA-enrolled, whether they are above or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL).
- The EcSA Career Accelerator’s focus supports Black, Tribal, and Latino communities and areas should implement outreach strategies to reach these populations. However, anyone who is eligible may be enrolled in State EcSA and receive incentives from the EcSA Career Accelerator.

Areas 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 from 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.

### Incentive Payments

Incentives must meet the following requirements:

- Incentive payments may only be provided to individuals who are enrolled in the State EcSA program.
  - Payments must be tracked in the State MIS (currently ETO) using the Community Reinvestment Financial Support Payment touchpoint.
  - Incentives must be included as part of the career plan of the participant who would receive

them.

- Participants must be making satisfactory progress in carrying out the career plan developed with their case manager at the time of enrollment, as determined and recorded by the case manager in case notes. WDC may develop and promulgate local standards or guidelines regarding this requirement.
- Incentive payments provided by the EcSA Career Accelerator must be in the amount of \$1,000 per month.
  - There is no time limit on how many months participants may receive incentives.
  - Incentives provided by the Career Accelerator Incentives Fund do not count toward the \$5,000 cap for participants enrolled in EcSA who are over 200% of the FPL.
  - Upon receiving an initial EcSA Career Accelerator Incentive, participants must continue to receive them monthly while meeting eligibility requirements for as long as they are enrolled in the program, making suitable progress toward their career plan as documented by their Case Manager each month, and so long as funding is available for the EcSA Career Accelerator Incentives. Any gaps in receipt of incentives must be tracked in ETO with an explanation for the break in service.
  - 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 similar to a debit card. The method of payment must be included in the touchpoint tracking the incentive. 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 any 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.

### **Impact of Payments**

Provision of incentive payments under this program may cause additional requirements on sub-grantees or LWDBs concerning the provision of tax forms. Because of this, it is recommended that LWDBs and sub-grantees 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.

Note: Incentives under state EcSA only will follow the same guidance as CRF and allow flexibility in range of payment of \$500 or \$1000.

## **Documentation and Data Entry Requirements**

- a. Enrollment, eligibility, services, and all other aspects of client progress must be recorded in State MIS (currently ETO).
- b. An Individual Employment Plan (IEP) must be established for every State EcSA enrollee, whether below 200% of the FPL or above, and the details must be recorded in ETO. If a client already has an Individual Employment Plan as a result of prior enrollment in a WIOA or Federal EcSA program, the IEP from the previous program may be used, but must be updated with the data from the UW Self-Sufficiency Calculator and an explanation as to how the State EcSA program will be used to help the client reach self-sufficiency.
- c. Client data must be entered into the UW Self-Sufficiency Calculator. Tracking of income information in other systems is acceptable for local purposes but does not replace this requirement.

- d. All individuals who are enrolled, regardless of income level at time of enrollment, must be tracked in ETO.
- e. The amount and type of support services provided to clients must be tracked in ETO.
- f. In the interest of data integrity, it is imperative, to the fullest extent possible, that data entered into ETO accurately reflect the service provided at the time the service is provided. The minimum ETO data entry requirements are as follows:
  - i. Services must be entered at the point in time at which they are delivered. If services cannot be entered at the time they are delivered, State EcSA services must be entered within 14 calendar days of service delivery, and the date entered must reflect the date the service was delivered. Subsequent edits to the services after the 14-day period to correct errors or further describe circumstances are acceptable.
  - ii. Services entered after the 14 calendar-day restriction must be entered in accordance with the following process:
  - iii. For any State EcSA service errors identified after the 14-day calendar restriction, staff must correct the errors and request that the individual who has supervisory oversight over the program review and approve the correction. This approval must be documented with a case note. The case note must identify the service name, the reason for the correction, and the designated supervisor's review and approval of the correction.

**Case Note Example:** "The [enter service name, i.e.: Occupational Skills service, that was provided on {date service occurred}] was not entered within the 14-day allowable timeframe per WIN 0129. As a designated supervisor, I reviewed and approved the late entry."

## Performance and Evaluation

Success of the program will be measured based on the following criteria, which will be determined each program year during contract negotiations and will be included in providers' contract with WDC:

- a. Reach target number of enrollments for individuals who meet eligibility requirements of the program.
- b. Reach target number of participants enrolled in training for a career with starting wages above their unique self-sufficiency goal.
- c. Reach target number of participants with employment income above their self-sufficiency goal.
- d. Meet targets for expenditure of funding on the schedules set in your contract with the WDC.
- e. Use the designated UW Self-Sufficiency Calculator and record the results at intake and upon reaching self-sufficiency or exit from program in accordance with the guidance provided. The recorded results may be updated as circumstances require.

## Monitoring

The State EcSA program will be monitored by the WDC during program monitoring of all grants and programs funded by the WDC; the time and manner of monitoring is to be determined in consultation with the WorkSource Providers' Consortium.

## ATTACHMENT A:

### State EcSA Monthly Incentive Payment Acknowledgement Form

The following are the requirements to qualify and participate in the State EcSA Monthly Incentive Payments Pilot Program:

1. Be enrolled in State EcSA program.
2. Meet additional demographic requirements to fall on the priority groups for the sub-contractor providing the services (if applicable).
3. Meet at least monthly with the case manager to discuss progress/challenges in any activities (training, education, job search, etc.) as defined in their customized career plan/individual Employment Plan.
4. Attend all scheduled financial literacy classes.
5. Complete additional monthly State EcSA activities outlined in their customized career plan/individual Employment Plan.

#### Payments:

If participants meet the above criteria, they are eligible for monthly incentive payments of \$1,000 as long the participant is enrolled in the State EcSA program.

#### Filing Taxes:

It has been explained to me that this incentive is considered as taxable non-wage related income. And as an earner I should calculate the amount of taxes that should be set aside.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, *have read the requirements and agree to abide by them.*  
(Print Name)

I understand this form and the contents have been explained to me in my primary language.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Participant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Case Manager Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ATTACHMENT B:

### Monthly Progress Report for Participants Receiving Monthly Incentive Payments

Participant Name:		ETO #
Program of Enrollment: State Funded EcSA	Co-enrollments (if any): Example -WIOA Adult	
Reporting Month:	Meeting Type: In-Person/Online	

1. Is the participant on track to reach their career goals? Briefly describe the progress made by the participant on the following activities (if applicable).

Financial Literacy Classes	Workshop Participation? <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Absent	Notes:
Job Search	Satisfactorily Met? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Notes:
Trainings/Education	Satisfactorily Met? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Notes:
Work Based Learning	Satisfactorily Met? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Notes:
Other Activities	Notes:	

2. What was the participant's biggest success story and/or challenge this month?

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3. What does the participant need help with?

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Case Manager Name & Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_