YOUTH INCENTIVE POLICY

Purpose

Partner4Work, through a network of youth providers, ensures that appropriate and necessary incentives to encourage youth participants in the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County to achieve specific goals are available.

Affected Parties

This policy applies to all Partner4Work funded In-School Youth (ISY) and Out-of-School Youth (OSY) participants.

Pittsburgh/Allegheny County WIOA Title I youth staff, TANF Youth staff, and Partner4Work staff are responsible for implementing this policy.

References

- 20 CFR 681.650
- 2 CFR 200

Definition of Key Terms

“Incentive payments” are payments awarded to youth participants in recognition of achievement directly tied to training activities and work experiences.

Eligibility Requirements

The following are the eligibility requirements for youth incentives:
- Participant must be a WIOA or TANF eligible youth participant.
- Participants must be active and in good standing with a program.
- Participants must have achieved an outcome listed as a goal within their individual service strategy.

Policy

Each Partner4Work funded ISY and OSY program that utilizes incentives must maintain a clear and concise written incentive policy that outlines a uniform and consistent strategy for awarding incentives with Partner4Work funds.

At a minimum, the provider’s incentive policy must include:
- The method and justification for the issuance of incentives;
- The method by which gift cards for incentives are purchased (e.g. with a purchasing card), if applicable;
- The method by which gift cards for incentives are stored, if applicable; and
- The internal controls for incentive awards (e.g. number of signatures required).
Programs may not award direct cash payments to youth participants as part of an incentive strategy. A cap of $50 in value per instance (e.g. obtainment of a GED, placement in employment, retention of a job for 90 days) is required. Participants cannot receive multiple incentives for the same activity.

Incentives may not include entertainment costs, such as movie or event tickets or gift cards to movie theatres.

Incentive payments may only be awarded in recognition of an achievement directly tied to training and work experience and must be tied to the goals of the program. Incentives must be administered in a manner that ensures all participants receive equal awards for equal achievements.

At least three individuals must sign off to indicate that an incentive has been awarded: two staff members of the youth service provider and the participant receiving the incentive. The provider’s written incentive policy must clearly describe this process.

All incentives are taxable at the full amount of the award and subject to withholding in accordance with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations. It is the responsibility of the service provider to maintain required documentation detailing the distribution and management of awards.

Providers may not have more gift cards on hand than enrolled participants at any given time (i.e. if a program has 25 enrolled participants, no more than 25 gift cards can be on hand at once. If a program has 100 enrolled participants, no more than 100 gift cards can be on hand at a time). Partner4Work encourages providers to limit the number of gift cards stored on site when possible. Providers should maintain a consistent method for purchasing gift cards where possible (e.g. purchasing card or company credit card).

Effective Date: July 1, 2016