



# Welfare to Work Guidelines and Policies

## **Welfare to Work is available in four counties in Pennsylvania Clinton, Fulton, Lawrence, and Lycoming Counties**

The Welfare to Work Program (W2W) is a transportation assistance program established in 1997 to minimize transportation barriers for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other low-income persons from securing employment and being reliable employees. PennDOT’s Bureau of Public Transportation (BPT) administers W2W. Each W2W Project addresses transportation barriers and gaps identified in the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan of the local MPO/RPO.

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## **Objectives**

PennDOT is responsible for ensuring W2W funds are used appropriately and consistent with the goals of the Program:

1. To temporarily assist low-income individuals overcome transportation barriers preventing them from being hired in competitive jobs and from being a dependable employee.
2. To transition individuals from dependence on transportation assistance programs to independence.

PennDOT is also responsible for oversight and management activities confirming:

1. Participants are only provided services as described and approved in the grant application, are eligible for W2W funding, and meet the eligibility requirements of the Program.
2. Participants are managed at the local level in accordance with the guidelines and grant agreement.
3. Documentation must be provided by grantees to support PennDOT's payment of invoices.
4. Grantee's policies and procedures minimize abuse of the Program.

PennDOT is responsible for maximizing the benefits of the funds managed. PennDOT provides transportation assistance to work. The County Assistance Offices (CAO) under the Department of Health Services (DHS) provides transportation assistance to training for work.

## **Program Guidelines and Policies**

### **Term Limits:**

An individual is eligible to receive W2W benefits for a maximum of one year.

#### 1. Eligibility Start

Program begins on the date the participant is approved for services.

#### 2. Eligibility End

An individual's eligibility for the Program ends 12 consecutive months from the Eligibility Start. Months in which no services are reimbursed count against this limit.

#### 3. Service Extensions

Under extenuating circumstances, individuals can receive extensions to the Eligibility End. Each extension can be no more than 3 months, and an individual can receive no more than 2 extensions. Extenuating circumstances are beyond the individual's control and result in the participant being out of work for six weeks or more:

- Parental Leave
- Laid off
- Workman's Compensation
- Personal injury
- Serious illness
- Surgery and recovery
- Caring for a seriously ill household member

### **Financial Assistance Limits:**

An approved household is eligible for a maximum lifetime allowance of \$12,000 in W2W benefits. This lifetime limit is effective July 1, 2025.

### **Eligibility Criteria:**

To qualify for PennDOT's W2W Program, an individual of a household will be required to meet the following criteria:

- Total household income cannot exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG).
- The household must meet the definition of a needy family.
- The individual must be a Pennsylvania resident. They must show proof of residency consistent with CAO requirements and must reside in the county in which the agency provides service.
- Individual must be employed, work a minimum of 80 hours per month, and provide documentation proving employment. Proof of employment and hours worked must be re-verified monthly.
- Individual must be assigned the proper mode of transportation based on their needs and the W2W Program budget. County W2W Program Managers must assess the individual's needs prior to approving them for fixed-route transit, shared-ride transit, ride-sharing (e.g., Lyft, Uber), or taxi services. Fixed-route service is subsidized to make transportation more affordable for commuters and low-income individuals. In descending order, W2W Program Managers prioritize the most affordable mode of transportation meeting the individual's needs:
  1. Fixed-route transit
  2. Mileage reimbursement
  3. Shared-ride transit
  4. Ride-sharing or taxi service

**Eligible Program Expense:**

W2W services are only reimbursable when participants provide required eligibility verification documentation in accordance with [invoicing and standard guidelines](#).

Participants must be approved for services before requesting reimbursement as PennDOT will not issue reimbursements for services completed before Program eligibility. PennDOT has the right to accept or deny any reimbursement request on a case-by-case basis. Under the W2W program, BPT will reimburse:

### **Agency Case Management:**

Case management costs are eligible for reimbursement under the following conditions:

1. Expenses are not to exceed the total percentage in the approved W2W grant agreement. Case management costs can be reimbursed monthly up to 20% of the total invoice.
2. Expenses are necessary to manage and oversee the program such as:
  - Payroll
  - Benefits
  - Office space
  - Utilities
  - Supplies
  - Advertising
  - Travel

### **Eligible Transportation Expenses:**

Each eligible expense has one or more conditions for reimbursement. No other expenses are eligible for reimbursement. Eligible expenses include:

1. Fixed-Route Bus Passes  
Condition: Monthly employment documentation.
2. Mileage Reimbursement  
Conditions: Documentation from the employer verifying participant is currently employed at the indicated place of employment. Documentation must include number of days worked to be cross-referenced with the mileage reimbursement request. The distance between the participant's home and employment address must be verified using web-based mapping software.

For participants using their own vehicle for work-related transportation, PennDOT will issue reimbursements based on the current self-employed and business standard mileage rate from the IRS for the date of travel.

PennDOT will reimburse mileage up to a maximum of \$1,000/month per participant.

3. Shared-Ride Services

Condition: Documentation from the employer validating participant's work hours are consistent with the trips taken with shared-ride transit service.

4. Ride-sharing or Taxi Services

Condition: Documentation from the employer validating participant's work hours are consistent with the trips taken with ride-sharing or taxi service.

5. Childcare Transportation

Condition: Documentation verifying participant (parent of the child receiving transportation services) employment.

## **Transition Planning/Program Management**

### **Transition Plans:**

Transitioning participants from Program dependence to transportation independence is a goal in which W2W grantees are responsible to convey to every participant.

As part of the application process, W2W grantees must submit a transition plan in BPT's reporting system for review.

At a minimum, transition plans must detail information including:

- Timeline for transition (days, weeks, months)
- Individual contributions (dollar amount)
- Agency contribution (dollar amount)

### **Program Management:**

Agencies must submit oversight processes for program management in BPT's reporting system. BPT will review processes before awarding the grant.

At a minimum, program management processes must:

- Determine individual eligibility upon intake
- Determine eligible service modes for a participant
- Conduct monthly employment verification
- Verify number of hours worked

- Process invoices
- Track a participant's lifetime service limits
- Report services provided
- Track participant's start and end date in program

**Invoicing Standards and Guidelines:**

At a minimum, monthly invoices must include:

- Participant's time in the program
- Individual Lifetime Usage as it pertains to the program
- W2W Services used by month/fiscal year
- Monthly employment verification
- Monthly hours verification
- Participant's application

Invoices must be submitted monthly to BPT via eGrants, by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the subsequent month of service.

**Welfare to Work Transportation Program Grant Eligibility:**

To qualify for W2W transportation assistance, individuals not receiving TANF Cash Assistance must be part of a household that meets the definition of a needy family:

- A needy family is defined as a minor child and his/her parent(s) or other adult specified relative with whom s/he lives who meet the income and resource standards established under the TANF State Plan. Eligibility for TANF is also extended to pregnant women who have no other children living with them.
- A minor child is under age 18 or is age 18 and a full-time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training.
- A specified relative is defined as an adult who is exercising responsibility for the care and control of the child by making and carrying out plans for the support.
- Have a total household income not in excess of **200%** of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG's).

Updated annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:  
<https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>

Household income must be reported from employment(s) and/or from other sources including child support, spousal support, unemployment, workman's compensation, pension, interest, Social Security benefits, short term disability, and lottery winnings, etc.

Department of Human Services (DHS) TANF:  
[http://www.dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c\\_095465.pdf](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c_095465.pdf)  
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