

DIVISION OF EMPLOYMENT & REHABILITATION SERVICES

TANF Jobs Program

Informational Broadcast (IB)

IB #20-014

Electronic Devices and Internet Connectivity as a Supportive Service

This Policy Broadcast is to inform all Jobs Program staff of Jobs Program policy regarding the provision of Internet connectivity to Jobs Program participants. TANF Jobs Program policies, regulations, and laws allow the Program to provide internet connectivity, either through a device or as a service, in certain circumstances.

Under Chapter 6, Section V.A of the TANF Jobs Program Policy Manual, the TANF Jobs Program has the authority to purchase electronic devices for Program participants, including devices that are Wi-Fi-enabled or otherwise able to connect to the Internet. These purchases must be reasonable and must be made directly for the client.

If a TANF Jobs Program participant can demonstrate that a lack of Internet connectivity presents a barrier to employment, participants may be reimbursed for basic Internet services if the TANF Jobs Program participant can demonstrate that the lack of internet connectivity presents a barrier to employment, per Chapter 4. Section V.B.3.b of the TANF Jobs Program Policy Manual.

Like other support services, the cost of Internet services must be reasonable. Therefore, the TANF Jobs Program can only reimburse participants for basic Internet services packages. If a participant wants expanded or premium services, they will need to cover the costs above the basic service level. Since different Internet service providers serve different areas of the state at different rates, Program staff must make the final determination as to what constitutes a reasonable cost for basic Internet service.

If the participant's employer requires Internet service speed beyond what is provided in basic Internet service packages, the employer will need to furnish documentation stating the necessity for increased Internet speed as a condition of employment and provide supporting evidence of that necessity. Additionally, the participant will need to demonstrate they will be able to maintain the expanded service speed once the 6-month time limit for support services expires.

In the case of Internet service, TANF Jobs Program participants must establish the service in their name(s) and provide payment documentation that the Program will reimburse. Service is not to be established in the name of DES or its contractor on behalf of a participant. Additionally, Program participants must provide documentation from their employer attesting to the necessity for Internet connectivity as a requirement of employment.

Per Chapter 6 Section V.A of the TANF Jobs Program Policy Manual, there is a 6-month limit for all support services that begins after the closure of TANF Cash Assistance and the start of verified unsubsidized employment. The Program will only be able to reimburse clients for up to 6 months of basic Internet services.

All requests for clarification should be sent by your policy designee via email to TANFJobs@azdes.gov or derswfpolicy@azdes.gov.