**MAINTENANCE**

***Effective April 1st, 2015***

**POLICY**

Maintenance is the minimum monetary support provided to an individual for expenses (such as shelter and clothing) incurred due to an individual participating in:

* an assessment for determining eligibility
* an assessment for rehabilitation needs or
* a planned service

These expenses must:

* support of a primary service
* relate to the IPE goal
* not relate to daily living needs and
* go beyond the individual’s normal expense

**COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS**

A comparable benefits search for maintenance is required unless the search would interrupt or delay:

* an individual’s progress toward achieving an identified employment outcome
* an immediate job placement or
* the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to any individual who is at extreme medical risk

A comparable benefits search is not required for assessment activity.

If comparable benefits exist but are not available at the time needed to ensure the individual’s progress toward achieving an employment outcome, the agency must provide services until those comparable benefits become available.

SSB must not purchase a service when the consumer refuses or fails to make formal application for a comparable benefit to pay all or part of the cost of the service, or when the consumer refuses to accept a comparable benefit that is available.

**CONSUMER FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION (CFP)**

CFP applies to maintenance unless:

* it supports an assessment activity
* it is needed to obtain adjustment-to-blindness services or
* the individual is exempt from CFP

**HOUSING (POST-SECONDARY)**

See the Post-Secondary Policy for housing-related guidance and fee schedules.

**HOUSING (NOT POST-SECONDARY)**

SSB may provide financial assistance for short-term housing only through commercial lodging facilities (e.g., hotel, motel or extended stay). SSB will use the most cost-effective option that meets the individual’s needs.

Housing/lodging for individuals not participating in post-secondary training may be provided:

* only during the duration of the primary service it supports
* if it is necessary to participate in services on an IPE and
* if a primary residence is still being maintained by the individual or his/her family

Housing at an adjustment-to-blindness facility provided by the community rehabilitation provider (CRP) is not subject to the fee schedule. SSB will pay the CRP for housing costs.

Example:

An individual must attend a four-month internship in Minneapolis; however, the individual’s primary residence is in Willmar. SSB will pay for the temporary housing at the nearest commercial lodging facility not to exceed four months.

**UTILITIES**

SSB will not provide financial assistance for utilities.

**INTERNET**

The purchase of Internet service may be provided in the following circumstances:

* If a consumer is attending a post-secondary institution and is not living on-campus, Internet may be purchased only for the duration of the training program
* If a consumer requires the Internet to practice adjustment-to-blindness skills and is not living in a center-based ATB facility apartment, SSB may purchase Internet only for the duration of the training program
* If a consumer requires the Internet for job search, SSB may purchase Internet for no more than six months

**MEALS**

SSB will not provide financial assistance for meals.

**PHONE SERVICE**

SSB will not provide financial assistance for phone service, including texting and data plans.

**RELOCATION**

SSB may pay up to $1,500 for relocation expenses. Relocation expenses include one-time charges such as moving costs, damage deposits, added costs for first month’s rent, and initial utilities installation.

Relocation expenses can be provided one time to a consumer only under the following two circumstances. The individual:

* cannot receive vocational rehabilitation services without relocating or
* needs to relocate based on accepting employment

Example:

An individual living in a rural area cannot access transportation to attend a required two-year vocational program. All community resources are exhausted and none exist to get the individual to the vocational program. Relocation is the only option for the individual to access the required service.

When an eligible individual cannot receive needed services without relocating, SSB will only pay to relocate the individual within Minnesota.

When an eligible individual receives a confirmed offer of employment and the employer is located more than 70 miles from the individual’s current location, SSB may cover the cost of relocation. The individual must first ask the employer for relocation assistance. SSB may cover the remaining costs after the employer’s contribution.

SSB will not pay for the ongoing expenses of the individual in the new location.

## **ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES**

An enrichment activity is an activity considered beneficial or “enriching” to the individual.

*Training/Post-Secondary Related*

Taken from the Post-Secondary policy: Maintenance may be paid to cover the costs of enrichment activities related to a training program. Whenever possible payments should be made directly to the provider. Such activities can be provided only when all of the following criteria are met. The activity:

• is related to the individual’s training program

• enhances the consumer’s ability to benefit from a training program and

• is a college requirement, not paid for out of tuition or required fees

Enrichment activities include required attendance at a workshop, seminar, concert, or theater production. Travel abroad would not be included unless the school requires such a program of all students and provides no alternatives.

*Other*

SSB may pay no more than $500 for the cost of enrichment activities. Maintenance may be paid to cover the cost of an enrichment activity only if the activity would aid in reaching the job goal. An example of an enrichment activity *not* related to training may be attending a convention for people with disabilities.

**CLOTHING**

SSB will contribute a maximum of $100 for clothing (including for interviewing) per program sequence.

SSB may pay the full amount for job-required uniforms if the company does not already provide or pay for uniforms.

***Any exceptions must be approved by the Deputy Director of Program Services or that person’s designee.***

***Current Rule Language***

The proposed changes in policy do not go against the rule language, as there is no rule language or formal internal policies for the provision of maintenance services, other than the federal definition.