



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES COUNTY OF MADERA

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An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

The Madera County Department of Social Services amends its CalWORKs Plan as follows:

Madera County CalWORKs Transportation Policy

When public transportation is not available and the participant uses a personal vehicle, the participant will be reimbursed at the *standard mileage rate for business miles driven* established and published annually by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which can be found at www.irs.gov. The participant will be reimbursed for qualified mileage following a two-tiered system. The first five hundred miles in a calendar month will be reimbursed at 100% of the IRS standard mileage rate. Mileage that exceeds five hundred months in a calendar month will be reimbursed at 50% of the IRS standard mileage rate.

MADERA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES POLICY AND PROCEDURE GUIDE

Policy:	Transportation	Effective:	1/1/13
Policy #:	11-12	Supersedes:	03-09
Program:	Welfare to Work (WtW)		
Reference:	ACL 08-41, EAS 42-750.112; 42-750.21, 42-713.21		

Introduction

Welfare-To-Work (WTW) transportation shall be paid for every eligible participant to and from their WTW activity and/or place of employment. CalWORKS participants cannot be required to use their income, earnings, or income disregard to pay for supportive services, including transportation. The necessity for supportive service cannot be determined based on participant income or the fact that they are receiving a paycheck from unsubsidized employment. This applies to advance payments of supportive services as well.

Bus Passes are issued in advance. Mileage payments can be paid in advance when it is necessary so that the participant need not use their funds to pay for these services and is approved by a Supervisor. Other income, including earnings, cannot be used to determine whether or not the participant needs advance funds (See **Advance Payments**). Program Manager (PM) approval is required for any mileage or flat rate payments to be made three or more months in arrears and for mileage payments exceeding \$1500. For example, the participant does not submit their mileage claims for May, June and July until September 1, issuances for May and June would require supervisor and PM approval. July is only 2 months in arrears and does not require supervisor and PM approval. Approval can be obtained through completion of a memo or email. Approval of the Supervisor and PM must be documented in case comments in C-IV. Requests for ancillary related issues like insurance and auto repairs will be processed and approved according to Ancillary MAD WTW 363 CalWORKS Supportive Services Request.

Limiting or denying transportation services to employed participants is not allowed under MPP Section 42-750 and Section 42-711.552. Participants who are employed and meet participation requirements are not required to participate in additional WTW activities, but are entitled to supportive services, including transportation. Full-time employed individuals are not required to sign a WTW plan to receive supportive services; however they must be active WTW participants.

Transportation expenses can include but is not limited to bus passes, mileage reimbursement, and parking. The participant is expected to utilize the **least expensive** means of transportation that will not cause undue hardship.

Capping Transportation Expenses

Capping supportive services, including transportation services, is prohibited under the CalWORKs WTW program statutes. “Capping” refers to establishing a maximum monthly amount beyond which additional miles driven are not reimbursed.

Transportation Noticing Requirements

Participants shall be notified of specific arrangements for authorized transportation expense through an appropriate Notice of Action (NOA) for approval, denial, change, discontinuance, and termination actions. NOAs must include the start date, end date, level of payment, method of payment, and type of transportation expense. NOAs for denial and change are sent to the client upon calculation of the claims by the Fiscal department. Discontinuance and termination actions must allow for a 10-day calendar notice. In computing the 10-day notice period, the 10-day period shall not include the notice date, or the date that the action is to take effect.

NOAs must be issued to the participants for the following actions and changes:

- Approval of transportation expense and the level and method of payment.
- Denial of requests by participants for transportation expense costs or payments.
- Changes to existing transportation expense payments and arrangements.
- Discontinuance or termination of transportation expense payments or arrangements. When the WTW activity is less than 30 days and the approval notice informs the participant that they will not get another notice notifying them when their payment ends, a termination notice may not be required.

Criteria for Transportation Supportive Services

There are various transportation services available to participants. It is important that the Employment and Training Worker (ETW) evaluate each participant’s transportation needs to ensure the participant is receiving the transportation services necessary to successfully participate in approved WTW activities and employment. The ETW should inform participants of the various transportation services available and explain these services.

Transportation Payments

When public transportation is available and the participant’s travel time to and from a WTW activity using public transportation does not exceed two hours and the participant chooses to use a private vehicle, the transportation payment issued may be equal to but may not exceed the current bus pass cost. However, if the mileage rate is less than the cost of public transportation, a participant who drives a private vehicle would receive the lesser amount.

Available Bus Transportation in Madera County includes:

Madera Area Express

The City operates **Madera Area Express (MAX)**, a fixed-route system and **Dial-A-Ride**, a general

public demand-response system. Both services are operated under contract with First Transit. MAX is available weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The service operates primarily within the City limits. The system utilizes three lift-equipped vehicles and transports over 120,000 riders annually.

Chowchilla Area Transit Express

The City of Chowchilla operates **Chowchilla Area Transit Express (CATX)**, a general public, demand-response service. CATX service was initiated in 1995 as an expansion of the existing senior bus program. The County of Madera funds CATX service for unincorporated portions of the service area. The CATX service area encompasses the City and contiguous unincorporated areas, including Fairmead. Inter-city service to the City of Madera's Intermodal Facility is offered once a month based on demand. Service is provided with two vehicles on weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and transports approximately 27,000 riders annually.

Madera County Connection

The County of Madera operates the **Madera County Connection (MCC)**, a general public, intercity fixed-route system. The MCC was initiated in 2001 as a demonstration service to provide transportation for children aged 0-5 and families to Children's Hospital Central California. MCC provides access to the communities of Madera, Chowchilla, Fairmead, La Vina, Ripperdan, Eastin Arcola, Madera Ranchos, Coarsegold, Oakhurst, and North Fork. The service operates 5 days a week from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and transports approximately 2,500 riders annually.

If there is no public transportation available, or travel time to and from a WTW activity using public transportation exceeds a total of two hours (not including the time necessary to transport family members to a school or place providing care), participants using a private vehicle may be reimbursed at the rate as described in **Mileage Reimbursement**. Participants must provide verification that the travel time to and from a WTW activity using public transportation exceeds a total of two hours. When the participant discloses they do not have a valid California Driver's License, the ETW cannot authorize transportation beyond issuance of a bus pass for the participant. The ETW must ascertain if a legal or financial barrier is the reason for the lack of license. When possible, the ETW should assist the participant in removing the barrier(s). It may not be possible to remove some barriers such as the participant having legal fines due to multiple violations for Driving under the Influence (DUI).

When the bus is not a viable option for the participant who reside in a rural area in Madera County without a bus line, the ETW must request information regarding transportation for the participant. The ETW needs to determine the participant's mode of transportation and if the participant states they have someone who takes them to and from their appointments, the ETW will obtain a note indicating if there is an amount charged for the rides. The amount charged needs to be compared with the Flat Rate, when the participant's activities will be within the city limits the lesser amount will be authorized.

Example 1: Participant lives within the city limit where public transportation is available. Participant is full-time employed and chooses to use his/her own vehicle to go to and from work. Participant provided verification that had participant used public transportation it would take the

participant 45 minutes (not including the time necessary to transport family members to a school or place providing care) to get to work and another 45 minutes to get back home. Since the travel time to and from the participant's work place is less than two-hours, the transportation payment issued will be equal to the current bus pass cost.

Example 2: Participant lives in Madera and works in Raymond. There is no public transportation available and participant chooses to use his/her own private vehicle. Since there is no public transportation available, participant must be given the Mileage Record For Welfare to Work Activities Log (MAD751) to record miles driven. When the participant turns in the MAD751 log at the end of the month or at the end of the activity, whichever comes first, the ETW will verify activity attendance. If there are no discrepancies, the ETW will submit the mileage claim and verification to Fiscal for auditing and payment.

The ETW will review and submit to Fiscal for payment within 10 working days of receiving the Mileage Record For Welfare to Work Activities Log.

Employment and Training Worker Responsibility

The ETW will determine the appropriate form of transportation, and then follow the appropriate directions below.

The ETW will:

- Determine the number of tickets needed by the participant to complete the assigned WTW activity
- Determine the appropriate issuance, monthly bus pass, partial bus pass, or single ride bus ticket(s)

In C-IV the ETW will:

- On the local navigation bar, click on **Supportive Services**
- On the Task bar, select **Needs**
- Click on **Add Need**
- Select either Bus Ticket or Bus Pass – Valid Month from the Type drop down box
- In the Save and Add New field, select **Service Arrangement** and click on the “GO” button
- **Select WTW as the Program Type**
- **Select the Activity that requires the bus ticket/pass—then Save and Return**
- Click on the **Bus Ticket/Pass** hyperlink to access the Service Arrangement Detail page
- Print the **Service Arrangement Detail page**

- Print the Approval of Transportation NOA (NA 820)
- Submit both Service Arrangement Detail page and the NOA to your Supervisor for approval.
- Make Journal entry

Mileage

Regulations allow counties to establish their own Regional Market Rate (RMR) for mileage reimbursements. Effective April 2, 2012, when public transit is not available or the activity is not within the city limits and a participant is claiming mileage expense; a transportation payment shall be computed using the established Internal Revenue Service (IRS) “standard mileage rate,” which is published annually, for the first 500 miles traveled in a calendar month for participation in approved WTW activities. The individual will be paid at half of the established IRS “standard mileage rate” for all miles exceeding 500 miles in a calendar month.

The Mileage Record for Welfare to Work Activities Log (MAD751) must be given to participants who choose to use their own vehicle. The ETW must instruct the participant to record either their odometer reading or the total number of miles traveled one way that pertains to the WTW activity only. The Mileage Log is to be used to show how many days were worked or traveled. Participants who choose to use their own vehicles when public transportation is available or when public transportation exceeds a total of two hours will be reimbursed at the least expensive reimbursement rate.

Reimbursement

The WTW participant must meet all of the following criteria for use of a personal vehicle in order to be eligible for mileage reimbursement:

- The vehicle must be registered through the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).
- The vehicle must be currently insured with the appropriate vehicle insurance coverage.
- The client must provide monthly verification of payment of insurance premium.
- The client must possess a current, valid California Driver’s License.
- For clients who borrow a vehicle for WTW purposes and seek mileage reimbursement, the following criteria must be met:
 - a. The client must possess a current, valid California Driver’s License.
 - b. Provide proof of current vehicle registration.
 - c. Provide proof of client coverage under insurance policy.
 - d. Provide monthly verification of payment of insurance premium.

Mileage reimbursement payments are intended to be used to reimburse the participant for operating the vehicle and fixed costs such as:

- Fuel
- Vehicle Insurance
- Vehicle License fees
- Vehicle registration costs including smog inspection
- Routine maintenance and tune-ups to include parts (belts, filters, fluids, spark plugs and wires, and similar items) and labor
- Oil changes
- Replacement of tires and
- Replacement of brakes, brake lines and brake pads

In most circumstances WTW participants are not eligible for separate supportive services payments or reimbursements for any of the items above, as these operating and fixed costs are covered within the mileage reimbursement rate. Such payments or reimbursements may be approved on a case by case basis when there is a hardship or extenuating circumstances. The participant must provide information and/or documentation to support circumstances. Any requests will need to be reviewed by an ETW supervisor or PM to approve or deny request.

The Private Auto Mileage Record will be submitted to ETW monthly for authorization to be paid in arrears. Payments should be issued within 10 business days of receipt of the Mileage Record for Welfare to Work Activities Log (MAD751) and attendance or employment verification. The ETW will complete a Notice of Action (NOA) for approval of transportation cost. Monthly NOAs will be mailed out in arrears. The ETW will send the discontinuance NOA when the activity ends early and update C-IV. The ETW on a reimbursement basis will authorize transportation for actual days of participation. The ETW shall utilize the MAD751 to determine the one-way mileage to that activity. The ETW must verify activity attendance and miles driven.

When there is a considerable difference in what the participant records on the Mileage Record for Welfare to Work Activities Log and the estimated mileage on Map Quest, the ETW will first contact the participant and attempt to clarify the discrepancy. In some situations, the participant may be making stops prior to arriving at their work site which are not covered and will not be reimbursed. The ETW will then notify Fiscal to review MapQuest to determine the distance. MapQuest is the only website authorized to be utilized in mileage discrepancies. Other sites such as Yahoo maps or Google maps are not to be used. When the mileage claimed by the participant is within 2 miles of the MapQuest route, Fiscal can authorize payment. When the mileage exceeds the 2 mile allowance, Fiscal will authorize mileage based on the number of miles indicated by MapQuest. A copy of the MapQuest calculation will be printed out as verification and the ETW will update the case journal with all actions taken.

When the participant does not turn in the MAD751 by the 10th day of the month, the ETW may send a denial notice to the participant for not providing the auto mileage log for the month in question.

However, once the participant provides the mileage log for the month in question, the ETW will review the participant's MAD751 for eligibility to reimbursement. The ETW would need to review the participant's required activity during this time and compare it to the participant's mileage log to ensure they have an accurate and correctly completed claim. Once the ETW has verified the mileage log is accurate, the claim and verification can be submitted to Fiscal so the participant may be reimbursed for their mileage.

Sometimes participants travel to various cities for their employment and claim mileage for their travel to each city. When this occurs, the ETW must determine if the participant has one main branch/office to which they report first. When the participant reports to their main branch/office first and then travels to their assignment in a different city, mileage will only be allowed from the participant's home to their main branch/office. When the participant does report to a different office in a different city, the mileage can be allowed for the distance from the participant's home to the different branches/offices.

When a participant does not own a vehicle but states they are borrowing a vehicle from a relative or friend, the ETW will request a statement from the owner of the vehicle indicating that the participant is indeed borrowing his/her vehicle and if there is any charge for the use of the vehicle.

When reviewing the case for the mileage payment, the ETW will review the amount charged, compare this rate to the type of transportation rate to which the participant is eligible to receive (either mileage or flat rate), identify which amount is the lesser of two and authorize payment accordingly. All calculations must be entered in C-IV case journal.

Advance Payments

Mileage payments can be paid in advance when it is necessary so that the participant need not use their funds to pay for these services and is approved by a Supervisor. When the participant requests mileage prior to the start of their activity or employment, the ETW will:

- Review C-IV to obtain the participant's home address
- Ask the participant for the address for their place of employment or review C-IV for the location of their activity
- Use MapQuest to calculate the mileage to and from the participant's home to their place of employment/activity
- Calculate the mileage for one week based on the participant's work/activity schedule
- Submit the calculation and the reason for the participant's request to a Supervisor for approval
- When approved by the Supervisor, follow the appropriate steps to authorize one week of mileage
- Give the participant the form MAD751 and request that they complete the form for the month and submit it according to the directions above.

Other income, including earnings, cannot be used to determine whether or not the participant needs advance funds.

Vehicle Repair Requests

Vehicle repairs are approved on a case by case basis and the following conditions are considered before approving:

- The WTW participant must be in an approved WTW activity. The loss of transportation will impede the client from continued participation in the assigned activity.
- Public transportation is not available to the participant.
- The participant does not have another operational vehicle that can be used for transportation.
- The vehicle must be registered to the client or companion in the home. If a new vehicle to the client, the client must have a signed “pink slip” with the client or companion’s name as the owner.
- The vehicle must be currently insured with proof of current payment and meets the DMV minimum vehicle insurance requirement.
- The participant must possess a current and valid California Driver’s License.
- The vehicle should be listed as the participant’s property on the CalWORKs benefits case.
- The value of the vehicle according to Kelly Blue Book is more than the cost of the repair.
- The participant provides a minimum of three estimates for the repair from licensed vehicle repair businesses.

Upon obtaining the required documentation, the ETW will complete the MAD WTW 363 packet along with a signed Declaration of Facts and Understanding by the participant indicating this is a one-time only request. The ETW will provide a recommendation and forward to the supervisor to review and provide a recommendation to the PM.

The request along with all supporting documentation will ultimately be submitted to the Program Manager for a decision.