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Your Guide to the Support Funds

Workbridge

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Your Guide to the Support Funds

Abstract

[Excerpt] Each fund has set targets to assist people who have higher support needs. There is a focus on ensuring that the funds are used to cover the applicant's "cost of disability". The funds encourage people with disabilities into employment.

Keywords

work, disabilities, person, task, workplace, independence, compliance, benefit, policies, equality, law, involvement, intellectual disability, communication, reasonable accommodation, equipment, technology

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Your Guide to the Support Funds



TRAINING
SUPPORT



JOB SUPPORT



SELF START

Introduction

Three training and employment Support Funds are available for people with disabilities in New Zealand. They are:

- Training Support
- Job Support
- Self Start

Each fund has set targets to assist people who have higher support needs. There is a focus on ensuring that the funds are used to cover the applicant's "cost of disability". The funds encourage people with disabilities into employment. Assistance should be sought from other funding programmes first.

The funds are available for all people with disabilities - not just Workbridge jobseekers - and are best used if all disability agencies communicate freely and work together on behalf of their mutual customers.

Specific eligibility criteria determine whether applications are approved or declined. Workbridge has published this information in order to make the decision-making process as transparent as possible.

**Specific eligibility criteria exist
for each of the Funds.**

The Support Funds ~

The Background

The three training and employment Support Funds for people with disabilities were established by the Government in 1994. The establishment of Support Fund was a clear signal that Government was committed to enabling people with disabilities to take up mainstream opportunities.

Workbridge administers the Fund on behalf of the Ministry of Social Development.

The eligibility criteria and funding limits are set by Government, not Workbridge.

Referrals

Anyone with a disability can self refer or be referred by a disability agency. A person does not need to be registered with Workbridge in order to access Support Funds.

Eligibility
criteria and
funding limits
are set by
Government.

The Way They Work

How to Apply

Support Funds Application forms are available from Workbridge Centres, or the Workbridge website: www.workbridge.co.nz

Workbridge's Role

Workbridge staff are responsible for discussing eligibility criteria with potential applicants, and accepting appropriate applications.

The manager in each Workbridge centre is responsible for making the approval decision. If an application is not approved, the applicant is advised the reason in writing.

If your application is not successful, and you consider that you do meet the criteria and an invalid decision has been made, then you can appeal the decision. There is a Review Committee independent of the person who made the decision on your application. A Support Funds Review Application Form is available from Workbridge centres. Review decisions are made within 10 working days of the review application being received.

Workbridge staff have an ongoing administration role, and will follow up on all funding recipients.

Eligibility Criteria for all Funds

The eligibility criteria used for the Support Funds were set by the Government. It is Workbridge's responsibility to ensure these criteria are met. A criteria checklist on each Approval Form guides staff through the process. Most criteria are common to all three funds, and are as follows:

Cost of Disability

The funds must be used to cover the additional costs that a jobseeker has as a direct consequence of their disability, when undertaking the same job or training as a person without a disability or impairment.

Age

Applicants must be aged between 16 and under 65.

Disability

To be eligible for Support Funds, the applicant must have a disability that is likely to continue for at least six months. This disability must present a barrier to employment that cannot be overcome by the support available through the Ministry of Social Development's mainstream services. Support Funds assistance may be ongoing.

Residency

To be eligible for Support Funds, the applicant must be currently living in New Zealand, and be a New Zealand citizen, or a permanent resident, or hold an appropriate open work permit.

Ministry of Health

An applicant is not eligible for Support Funds when their vocational services (employment focussed services) and/or disability costs (for example personal care, assistance to dress, bath and toilet) are provided through the Ministry of Health.

ACC

An applicant is generally not eligible for Support Funds where their vocational services or disability costs are the result of an accident, and/or are the responsibility of ACC. Generally but not exclusively, the applicant will be in receipt of Earnings Related Compensation (ERC).

Individualised Funding

Support Funds are for an individual only. Support Funds cannot be paid to a third party or an organisation to distribute on behalf of an individual.

Other Funding

Other funding sources need to be investigated before Support Funds assistance can be provided. Workbridge and Work and Income are just two of the organisations which may be able to provide information on other funding sources.



T R A I N I N G
S U P P O R T

Training Support

What is it?

Training Support is used to assist a person with a disability undergoing a period of assessment, work experience, training or education as part of their plan to gain open employment. It targets those with high support needs.

It may be used:

- for the provision of a support person to help sustain access to a training course and/or associated expenses
- to pay transport costs, not covered by the disability allowance, to attend a training opportunity or work experience
- to pay for special equipment which is not covered by other provisions.

Applicants are not subject to means testing, but every effort is made to ensure that payment levels are consistent with equity and need.

Training Support Funds can only be used for training opportunities that are linked to the NZQA framework, or involve other educational institutions approved by the Ministry of Social Development.

The Training Support funding lifetime limit for each individual is \$15,600.

Training Support ~ Specific Criteria

Vocational Plan

The Vocational Plan establishes an achievable link between the training opportunity and an employment outcome. This means the applicant has an identified, planned individual programme, which is aimed towards future employment options.

Applicants may provide their own Vocational Plan featuring equivalent information showing how they will move towards employment.



Job Support

The Job Support funding limit for each individual is \$16,900 in any 12 month period. The \$16,900 limit is inclusive of any other Work and Income grants and subsidies being received for similar purposes e.g. Job Plus subsidies; Modification Grants etc.

What is it?

Job Support aims to help people moving into work. It is available for people who will be employees, and also for people in self employment. It may be used for one or more services necessary to set up and support an individual in a job.

Examples of the most common uses of Job Support include:

- workplace modifications
- job coaching (both short-term and on-going)
- mentoring
- purchase of additional physical support necessitated by the demands of the job (including on-the-job physiotherapy or attendant care)
- interpreter services
- special equipment to accommodate a person's disability
- additional costs of transport and parking
- special induction training after placement into work
- either temporary or on-going assistance to cover shortfalls in productivity
- disability awareness training for fellow workers
- productivity assessments for long-term productivity allowances.

The scheme is very flexible and there will be many other support services which may be funded.

Job Support can also be made available to people already in employment who are in danger of losing their jobs because of the sudden onset of a disability or a worsening condition.

Job Support ~ Specific Criteria

The Public Sector

Job Support Funds are available to people employed in the State Sector. Applications however, will only be considered once the respective State Sector employer has met their statutory 'good employer' obligations under or based on the provisions of the State Sector Act 1988.

Mainstream Programme

Participants in the State Services Mainstream Programme are not eligible for Job Support Funds assistance through the Support Fund administered by Workbridge.

From 1 July 2005, the Mainstream Programme has an equivalent support scheme called "Cost of Disability in Employment" (CODE), available to assist participants. For more information on the CODE scheme, visit the State Services Commission website:

www.ssc.govt.nz/mainstream

or, call the Mainstream Programme, State Services Commission, phone 04-495 6726.

Job Support ~ Specific Criteria

Open Employment

Employees working for an employer

- An Employment Contract to be in place that meets the conditions of the current Employment Relations Act for the person applying and all staff within that workplace.

People in self-employment, including group co-operatives

- People with disabilities must be in control of the business, the primary decision-makers of the business and the business cannot be controlled by a support agency.
- If in self employment, the net returns of the business must be received by the owner of the business.
- If the business is a group co-operative, the net returns must be received by the co-operative workers with disabilities.
- Any agency or consultancy involvement in the business must be on a contractual basis for specific services which relate to the cost of the disability.
- The group cannot be funded by the Community Employment Group or any other government-funded programme to provide the same work opportunities.

Wage Levels

A wage reflecting the person's productivity after the provision of support services must be paid. In general, the employee should be paid the going rate of pay for that particular job. This must be the minimum hourly rate or higher. Workbridge staff are provided with information on the minimum hourly rates and basic wage levels for the major industries.

Productivity Allowance

Productivity Allowances are intended to compensate for the person's lower productivity or higher level of supervision/support. They are not intended to support the viability or profitability of the business.

Where a person is granted a Productivity Allowance from Job Support and a Wage Subsidy from Work and Income, the total combined amount should not exceed \$16,900 a year.

Both temporary and on-going assistance with wages are available, however an on-going Productivity Allowance is only considered after all other support services have been provided.

Job Coaches

Job coaches are engaged by the Job Support recipient. The contract is between the job coach and the Job Support recipient. If Workbridge finds a job coach to assist a particular Job Support recipient, Workbridge is acting as the agent for the Job Support recipient, but is not itself contracting with the job coach.

Job coaches are independent contractors and not employees of the Job Support recipient.



Self Start

What Is It?

Self Start is a fund created to assist people with disabilities to set up their own business ventures. The aim of this programme is to help provide greater flexibility by covering the additional costs relating to a person's disability in becoming self-employed.

Self Start is based on four primary ingredients:

- opportunity
- priority for people with high support needs
- individualised funding
- returns of the business going to the individual.

Only applications which are consistent with realistic and reasonable outcomes for the individual will be approved.

Funds available under this programme are not subject to means testing, but every effort is made to ensure that allocations are consistent with equity and need.

Self Employment (Self Start) and Support Funds

Job Support Funds can be used in conjunction with Self Start.

Job Support Funds can be used if the applicant has not received their full \$16,900 annual support entitlement from Work and Income Enterprise Allowance and Self Start Support Funds, or a combination of these funding sources.

Self Start funding has a lifetime limit of \$5,200 per individual.

It is not available to supplement business income.

Self Start ~ Specific Criteria

The Business Plan

Each Self Start application must be accompanied by a business plan, cash flow projection and feasibility study. Evaluation of these is done by a professional vetting agent. Selection of the agent takes account of the following:

- management skills
- accounting skills
- marketing skills
- interest in providing this type of service
- understanding of unemployed people starting their own business.

The Vetting Agent considers:

- main issues in business plan
- strengths and weaknesses of plan
- applicant's skill level to run the business
- applicant's ability to adapt to change
- applicant's ability to market the goods and services produced.

20 Hours Personal Effort

The applicant must be able to put in 20 hours of personal time into running the business each week.

**For additional information contact your nearest Workbridge Centre
freephone 0508 858 858 or freefax 0800 080 715**

KERIKERI

Phone 09-401 7387, Fax 09-430 2176

WHANGAREI

ARFD Building, 4 Vinery Lane. Phone 09-430 2120, Fax 09-430 2176

ALBANY

Unit 7, 76 Paul Matthews Road, Albany, North Harbour, Auckland

Phone 09-921 6800, Fax 09-921 6811

AUCKLAND CENTRAL AND WEST

10 Pioneer Street, Henderson, Auckland

Phone 09-302 2836, Fax 09-302 1209

AUCKLAND SOUTH

Rear of State Insurance Bldg, 9-11 Ronwood Ave, Manukau City

Phone 09-263 6665, Fax 09-263 6260

WAIKATO

150 Victoria Street, Hamilton. Phone 07-957 3700, Fax 07-957 3709

TAURANGA

71 Hamilton Street. Phone 07-577 0998, Fax 07-577 6672

WHAKATANE

Unit 2, 38 Landing Road. Phone 07-307 0241, Fax 07-307 0056

ROTORUA

1131 Pukaki Street. Phone 07-343 1800, Fax 07-343 1809

GISBORNE

Level 2, Wilson James Centre, 77 Peel Street. Phone 06-867 9970, Fax 06-867 8961

NAPIER (HAWKES BAY)

25 Bower Street. Phone 06-974 5610, Fax 06-835 8995

TARANAKI

23 Ariki Street, New Plymouth. Phone 06-759 9260, Fax 06-759 9265

WANGANUI

373 Victoria Avenue. Phone 06-348 0352, Fax 06-348 0360

PALMERSTON NORTH

28-32 Queen Street. Phone 06-952 5640, Fax 06-952 5649

WELLINGTON

Level 2, 330 High Street, Lower Hutt. Phone 04-913-6400, Fax 04-913-6409

NELSON

241 Hardy Street. Phone 03-546 7560, Fax 03-546 7850

MOTUEKA

129A High Street. Phone 03-528 1040, Fax 03-528 1041

BLLENHEIM

Level 1, NZI House, Market Street. Phone 03-984 3510, Fax 03-984 3519

GREYMOUTH

26 Mackay Street. Phone 03-768 0225, Fax 03-768 0226

CHRISTCHURCH

Amuri Courts, Cnr Armagh and Durham Streets. Phone 03-377 2188, Fax 03-377 2176

HORNBY

Unit 3, 11 Goulding Avenue, Hornby, Christchurch. Phone 03-962 8369, Fax 03-962 8366

TIMARU

21 Beswick Street. Phone 03-684 8119, Fax 03-688 4408

OAMARU

Coquet House, 23 Coquet Street. Phone 03-434 8713, Fax 03-434 5027

DUNEDIN

6th Flr, John Wickliffe House, The Exchange, 265 Princes Street. Phone 03-477 0877, Fax 03-479 2736

ALEXANDRA

William Fraser Building, Kelman Street, Phone 03-448-6513, Fax 03 448-7286

INVERCARGILL

48 Kelvin Street. Phone 03-214 0227, Fax 03-214 0250

