

WIOA Region 5 (South Central and Southwest)

Policy Letter #4-2020

Effective Date: July 1, 2020

Purpose: To establish a policy for providing financial assistance for the purchase of computer hardware, software, and/or other necessary technology tools.

Background: The U.S. Department of Labor and MN Department of Employment and Economic Development include computers/technology in their definition of tools. The MN Department of Employment and Economic Development requires a local policy be established in order to provide financial assistance for the purchase of technology tools.

Policy/Procedure: Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, State Dislocated Worker funds **may** be used to assist participants with the cost of purchasing a computer, software, or other technology hardware required to complete their training plan. This policy will also apply to other program funding sources if the funding source allows for the purchase of technology.

The following policy parameters **must** apply:

1. The WDA may approve the purchase of technology if it is established that the technology is required to complete a training program.
2. The participant must be in a classroom or on-line training program that requires a specific use of technology.
3. The computer/technology is required to complete training. There must be specific documentation that the use of a particular technology (hardware or software) is required for each student to complete the training. Recommend documentation from the training provider evidencing the technology is required.
4. The participant does not own or have reasonable access to the technology required. Documentation must be included that the participant does not have access to the technology required that is capable of meeting the training requirements. *Not owning a computer is not a sufficient basis alone as schools generally provide access to technology as well as libraries, CareerForce, etc.*

5. The cost is reasonable. Documentation will be required evidencing that the cost is reasonable based on market pricing.

Documentation must be submitted to the Program Manager/Director for approval prior to purchasing the technology. Program staff must document the request, evidence that the technology is required and participant has no other reasonable access to technology.

Whenever possible, program staff will pay directly to the vendor. If reimbursement for the approved computer hardware, software, and/or other necessary technology tools is required, then the participant will provide a receipt that verifies the date of the purchased item(s), cost and payment.

Given the ongoing cost of renting or leasing computers and similar technology, this path for participants would be a last resort. Participants should document the reasons they believe that a rental or lease of the tool is necessary. Documentation must be submitted to the Program Manager/Director for approval prior to renting or leasing computers and similar technology and also documented in the participant's file.

If a student does not complete the training, program staff must ask the participant to return the technology.