

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION
POLICY MANUAL**

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POLICY

Developmental Services (DS) Regional Centers will meet the needs of the individual through consistently developed and fiscally responsible cost of living allowances for individuals receiving residential support services.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide Regional Center staff with reasonable and consistent guidelines in the development of authorizations related to cost of living allocations to ensure that individuals are being supported through an equitable process, as well as to clarify specific responsibilities of the individual, the Regional Center and Provider regarding the use of resources and benefits.

SCOPE

This policy and procedure applied to all residential settings with the exception of Shared Living services and Supported Living services received in the family home. Refer to ADSD Policies 41-6 Shared Living Arrangements and 41-8 Administering Agencies and Shared Living Arrangements for guidelines on Shared Living cost of living allocations. DS does not contribute funds towards the cost of living in a family home.

REFERENCES

[Code of Federal Regulations: Title 42 Part 441.301](#)

[Nevada Developmental Services, Room & Board, Program Rates & Poverty Guidelines](#)

[Ageing and Disability Services Division Provider Service Agreement](#)

[ADSD Policy 41 -13 One-Time Cost Allocations](#)

PROCEDURE

A. RESOURCES

1. The individual's resources are the first source of revenue used in the authorization of cost of living allocations. Resources include the individuals' benefits (SSI, SSDI), trust funds, retroactive benefits, or work income (retained earnings). Individuals are approved to retain 25% of work income (up to a maximum of \$250) to use for discretionary funds. All other income will be used to cover personal expenses to include personal needs, food, utilities, and phone. If individual resources cover all four of these categories in entirety, then their resources will be utilized towards other room and board areas on the contract. State funds will be allocated to any room and board area of the authorization, except for retained earnings, not fully covered by the individual's resources.
2. It is the responsibility of the provider to communicate the amount of an individual's benefits, trust funds, retroactive benefits, or work income to the Regional Center. Proof of resources, such as Social Security award letters, are required. Changes in a resource amount may result in an amended room and board cost allocation authorization.
3. When an individual transfers from one Supported Living Arrangement (SLA) provider to another, the transferring SLA provider will submit a check for the individual's trust fund balance within 30 days of transfer. A check for initial spending money covering food and

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personal needs will be submitted to the receiving SLA provider within three (3) days of transfer. The receiving SLA provider is responsible for contacting the Social Security Administration and Medicaid for changes in Representative Payeehip and notification of address changes within ten (10) business days of the move.

B. HOUSING

1. Regional Center Responsibility

- a. The cost of housing, to include motel, apartment, and single dwelling homes, will be limited to a maximum of \$770.00 per person per month. The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) fair market value and local rental pricing will be reviewed to determine if requested rent amounts are reasonable. If the individual chooses to exceed the approved rent amount, the individual/family/guardian/provider will be solely responsible for the additional costs above the maximum amount unless otherwise approved by the Regional Center Agency Manager or designee.
- b. The Regional Center may make available limited one-time cost funding to assist with paying for furnishings, deposits, first and last month's rent and cleaning needs. (Refer to ADSD Policy 41 - 13 One-Time Cost Allocations for more information.) Furniture purchased by the Regional Center for the common areas must remain in the 24-hour supported living environment when the individual served moves out. Bedroom furniture may follow the individual if he/she moves into another residential services setting. If the individual exits the SLA program, bedroom furniture purchased by the Regional Center will remain in the SLA home.
- c. Twenty-four hour supported living environments will be limited to a minimum of three (3) and maximum of four (4) occupants, each with their own bedroom, unless otherwise authorized by the Agency Manager or designee.

2. Provider Responsibility

- a. Housing used for supported living services must be located in integrated community neighborhood settings.
- b. Individual/organizational provider agencies (including subsidiaries, family and employees) may not have financial interest in homes in which the agency has a contract for supported living services unless otherwise authorized by the Regional Center Agency Manager or designee.
- c. It is the responsibility of the provider to apply for all low-income housing alternatives (e.g. HUD).
- d. Whenever possible, the provider will negotiate with the landlord to include ongoing monthly home maintenance costs, such as yard care, in the monthly rent.
- e. It is the responsibility of the provider to collect outstanding deposits on behalf of individual choosing to relocate to an alternative residence. Returned deposits will be used towards the deposit on a new residence if the individual continues to receive residential services support. If it is not possible to use the money towards a new deposit, or the individual leaves the residential services program, the deposit will be returned to the original funding source. This process will be completed *by* the provider within 90 days of the relocation.

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- f. It is the responsibility of the provider to set up an appropriate sleeping environment for staff in homes authorized to provide sleep supervision.

C. UTILITIES/PHONE/CABLE

1. Regional Center Responsibility

- a. The cost of utilities, to include power, gas, water, sewer, and trash, will be limited to \$140.00 maximum per person per month during the initial six months Of residence. In areas requiring the purchase of propane or experiencing other unique costs, the cost of utilities will be limited to \$200.00 maximum per person per month during the initial six months of residence. If additional funding is needed the Regional Center will request a copy of all utility bills and authorize the average over a 12-month period. Exceptions to this will be authorized by the Community Services Program Manager or designee.
- b. Phone service will be reimbursed a maximum of \$30 per month per residence. Telephone service is limited to the basic plan service rate per home. The cost of the phone is shared with all individuals residing in the home. Advanced features such as three-way calling, call waiting, call forwarding, and long distance are not covered unless they are part of basic telephone services. Additional features/charges are paid by the individual and must be pre-approved by the Service Coordinator before the issuance of any phone contracts.
- c. Cable or satellite television and internet service will be paid by individuals desiring the service. These services are only billed to individuals who request and utilize them.

2. Provider Responsibility

- a. It is the responsibility of the provider to assist individuals in applying for public assistance services to include but not limited to, HUD, low income energy assistance, equal payment plan and any other community resource available to support individuals funded by the Regional Centers. All 24-hour supported living environments should be fitted with a programmable thermostat that is consistent with utility company recommended temperature for the individual's community. The temperatures must be set for the absence of individuals in the home during the workday. Installation costs may be reimbursed by the Regional Center.
- b. It is the responsibility of the provider to complete all applications for the above services within 60 days of the individual's move-in date, maintain eligibility and notify the assigned Service Coordinator of the eligibility date.
- c. If television and internet service in the residence are also utilized by provider staff, the provider is responsible to pay a portion of the television and internet service bill. The amount paid by the provider is divided equally with the number of residents utilizing the service(s) in the home. For example, if four residents and provider staff are utilizing television and internet services, each entity is responsible for paying 1/5 of the service bill.

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D. FOOD

1. Regional Center Responsibility
 - a. Food expense allocation is adjusted annually based on the USDA Average (January current year) USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food at Home at four levels- amount for adults (20 to 50 years of age) males and females for the low-cost monthly plan as show on the USDA Table. The USDA table can be found at: www.cnpp.usda.gov.
 - b. On an individual basis, and based on the health needs of the individual, the pre-determined amount may be increased at the discretion of the support Team. This justification will be documented in the Person-Centered Plan (PCP) and approved by the Community Services Program Manager or designee prior to allocation of additional funds.
 - c. The food expense allocation is intended to purchase food. Regional Center Service Coordinators and Quality Assurance staff will review ledgers and receipts for food purchases, as well as observe individual outcomes such as food available in the residence and the individual's stated satisfaction with their food consumption.
2. Provider Responsibility
 - a. It is the responsibility of the provider to assist the individual in applying for additional assistance or benefits (such as food stamps). Provider staff will support individuals in comparison shopping, use of coupons, or food bank resources.
 - b. It is the responsibility of the provider to inform the Regional Center Service Coordinator when an individual is receiving food stamps, including the dollar amount of the food stamp allotment. Changes in benefit amount will result in an amended cost allocation authorization.
 - c. If the provider is serving as representative payee or assisting with money management per the PCP, it is the responsibility of the provider to ensure individuals and direct support staff who assist with food purchases know the amount of money allocated towards food if money given to the individual is for combined purposes (e.g. food and personal needs).
 - d. Provider staff must provide their own food, or purchase thereof, when working in the home or at a community activity.

E. PERSONAL NEEDS

1. Regional Center Responsibility
 - a. Personal Needs expense allocation is adjusted annually based on the 12 Month Annual Average Percent Change of the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers from the previous year using the US Department of Labor - Bureau of Labor Statistics Data. This data can be found at www.bls.gov/cpi/.
 - b. Retained Earnings, as indicated in A.1., can be used to supplement the amount of Personal Needs received by the individual.
 - c. Personal Needs monies are used for various monthly expenses including clothing and personal hygiene items, entertainment, paper products, linens, phone services in excess of the basic services, internet service and cable television.

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- d. Purchases of \$50 or more, including the cost of any contracts, must be pre-approved by the Service Coordinator and, if applicable, the guardian.

2. Provider Responsibility

- a. It is the responsibility of the provider to contact the Service Coordinator and, if applicable, the guardian prior to assisting the individual in making purchases of \$50 or more.
- b. If the provider is serving as representative payee or assisting with money management per the PCP, it is the responsibility of the provider to ensure individuals and direct support staff who assist with personal needs purchases know the amount of money allocated towards personal needs if money given to the individual is for combined purposes (e.g. personal needs and food).
- c. If television and internet service in the residence are also utilized by provider staff, the provider is responsible to pay a portion of the television and internet service bill. The amount paid by the provider is divided equally with the number of residents utilizing the service(s) in the home. For example, if four residents and provider staff are utilizing television and internet services, each entity is responsible for paying 1/5 of the service bill.

F. MEDICAL

1. Regional Center Responsibility

- a. Monthly medical supplies prescribed by a medical professional but are either not covered or not adequately covered by Medicaid or other medical insurance can be added to the cost of living allocation. Medical supply examples include briefs and nutritional supplements. If the supply quantity covered by insurance is not adequate, OS will add a monthly medical allocation to pay for the difference between what the insurances pays for and what is needed.
- b. OS does not pay for the full cost of prescription medication or supplements. If an individual's insurance requires a monthly co-pay for medications, the cost of the co-pay may be added to the medical allocation.
- c. Medical allocations will not be authorized without a copy of the prescription and proof of inadequate insurance coverage or required co-pay.

2. Provider Responsibility

- a. It is the responsibility of the provider to inform the Service Coordinator and provide needed documentation of prescribed medical needs that are not covered or inadequately covered by the individual's insurance.

G. OTHER MONTHLY COSTS

1. Regional Center Responsibility

- a. The cost of regular monthly home maintenance, such as yard care and pest control, will be based on reasonable and customary costs, if the residents of the home are unable to perform the maintenance. The cost for maintenance services will be equally divided among all residents of the home.

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- b. Individuals must assist with home maintenance as able to do so. Staff will assist the individual in these tasks as delineated in the PCP.
 - c. Approved monthly costs are based on a minimum of two estimates for the maintenance work. It is encouraged that maintenance crews consisting of people in service and employed by Jobs and Day Training providers are utilized.
2. Provider Responsibility
- a. Whenever possible, the provider will negotiate with the landlord to include ongoing monthly home maintenance costs in the monthly rent.
 - b. It is the responsibility of the provider to submit at least two estimates for the maintenance work to the Service Coordinator.

H. TRANSPORTATION

1. Regional Center Responsibility
- a. Transportation costs shall not exceed the monthly Medicaid maximum rate for Non-Medical Transportation unless the monthly cost of public transportation or, in rural Nevada, other unusual transportation needs exceed the Medicaid maximum. The Agency Manager or their designee must approve any transportation amounts greater than the Medicaid maximum.
 - b. Transportation monies may be utilized toward the cost of public transportation, home/staff vehicle mileage, or gasoline.
 - c. Expected transportation, including the anticipated outcome(s) of transportation dollars, must be discussed by each support team and written in the PCP.
2. Provider Responsibility
- a. It is the responsibility of the provider to assist all individuals in accessing community activities through natural means if applicable i.e. learning to ride bus, ride sharing, or informal supports.
 - b. Providers will not be reimbursed for staff commute time to and from an individual's living environment, work/school, or community activity.
 - c. Providers must thoroughly document all non-medical transportation activities on the individuals Quarterly Report.

I. ITEMS WHICH CANNOT BE PURCHASED WITH STATE MONEY/THROUGH A STATE COST OF LIVING ALLOCATION

- 1. Neither state nor waiver funds may be utilized to purchase items which are illegal.
- 2. Cost allocation authorizations will not be increased when individuals have misused their funds on such items as gambling, purchasing pornography, alcohol, visiting strip clubs or brothels, etc., and cannot pay rent and/or utilities.

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ATTACHMENTS (CLICK BELOW)

None

Approved By		
Title	Signature	Date
Deputy Administrator		<i>1/29/19</i>
Division Administrator or Designee	Approved by Lisa Sherych	<i>1/29/19</i>
Document History		
Revision	Date	Change
	3/15/201	Original policy approval
1	1/25/201	Addition of categories and update of limits