

TR: 16541
SF No.: ESA16541-135
TITLE: SPALs associated with a Vehicle Purchase
Submitted: 02/15/2013
Agency: CAOs
Program:
CITATIONS:

QUESTION:

1. Do SPAL codes 261 or 861 (working TANF) for vehicle purchase also include the fees associated with the vehicle purchase or should these associated fees be issued separately onto a client's EBT card with either reason code 260 or 860 (working TANF client)?
2. Can the CAO issue SPALs for fees such as notary fee and documentation fee (sometimes referred to as "doc fee")? The dealer said the documentation fee is what he pays someone to do the paperwork and then passes the cost onto the buyer. The car can't be purchased without paying this fee. Are documentation fees and notary fees allowable under reason codes 260 and 860 (working TANF)?
3. What if the term "flat fee" or an unspecified fee is indicated on the documentation for the purchase of a vehicle? Can the CAO authorize payment for these fees without knowing what they are for?

RESPONSE: Division of Employment and Training

1. No, SPAL codes 261 and 861 are for vehicle purchase only. Car purchase is available once/lifetime with a maximum issuance of \$1,500 and is issued locally via the restricted endorsement check process. Sales tax can also be included with this SPAL if funds permit, depending on the purchase price of the vehicle.

SPAL codes 260 and 860 are the correct codes to be used for state-required fees associated with purchasing a vehicle. The CAO should first evaluate whether there is sufficient funds available since SPAL codes 260 and 860 are grouped with other transportation-related codes and have a combined annual limit of \$1,500.

2. Yes, SPAL payments may be authorized to cover actual client costs associated with purchasing a motor vehicle. This includes the cost of all current state required fees, which may include notary fees and the documentation fee. Notary fees are set by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. A notary public must not charge, attempt to charge or receive a notary public fee that is in excess of the fees that are fixed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Following is a link to current notary fees: [Notary Public Fees](#). Document fees are not regulated in Pennsylvania and should be examined closely by the worker. The documentation fees are negotiable in Pennsylvania and the cost can vary across the state. You may need to contact local reputable dealers to determine if the documentation fee is reasonable in your area. The CAO can reject SPAL requests for fees that seem unreasonable. All requests for SPALs and the decision to reject or approve them should be narrated in detail in the case record.
3. No, the worker should require the seller of the vehicle to detail what the "flat fee" is or any other unspecified fee that is not clearly understood. The worker should not issue a SPAL if an adequate description of the fee is not provided and seems unreasonable. All requests for SPALs and the decision to reject or approve them should be narrated in detail in the case record.

Further questions regarding SPAL issuances can be directed to the Bureau of Policy, Division of Employment and Training at (717) 787-302.

This obsoletes ESA-223-138