**Policy Clarification   
Employment & Training**

**Special Allowances**

**ESA-21598-135**

**Submitted: January 8, 2024 Agency: Bureau of Employment Programs**

**Subject:**  **Employment and Training (E&T) Special Allowances: School Supplies, Clothing, and Mileage**

**Question:** **We are getting requests for school supplies, clothing, and mileage for students:**

1. **What verifications are needed to issue school supplies and clothing?**
2. **How is the least costly, most practical estimate determined?**
3. **If students are taking online classes, do they still qualify for mileage? How do we process these requests?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Response By: Bureau of Employment Programs** | **Date: 11/17/2023** |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

1. Students attending school often need school supplies and appropriate clothing to attend classes. School supplies are not typically listed on a course syllabus; however, SNAP and TANF E&T participants often need pens, notebooks, backpacks, and similar items to facilitate participation in an approved E&T activity. E&T program staff will work with participants to determine what supplies are needed to participate and submit the [SPAL Verification Form (PA 1883)](http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/cash/PA_1883_3-16_UF.pdf) to the CAO along with the appropriate estimates.

Students also need appropriate clothing to attend classes. Schools do not always have a specific dress code, but students are expected to dress in clothing that fits, is clean, and not tattered. E&T program staff will meet with participants to determine what clothing is needed and submit the PA 1883 to the CAO along with the appropriate estimates.

1. Participants and E&T program staff will work together to research and provide estimates that are least costly and most practical to support the needs of students. As such, it is understood that the E&T program staff is requesting the least costly and most practical items to meet the student’s needs prior to submitting a PA 1883 to the CAO. More than one estimate is not required. Participants are not required to purchase items at a particular store; however, they are still expected to provide estimates from a store where they can purchase needed items that are the least costly. When reviewing for the most practical special allowance need, consideration should also be given to a participant’s ability to obtain needed items without causing an undue hardship.
2. Students taking online courses may still qualify for transportation SPALs such as mileage, public transportation, and vehicle repair. Students often need to travel to campus to meet with program staff, study, or visit the library. In addition to traveling to campus, some participants also need to transport children to daycare to participate in their classes. Program staff will submit the PA 1883 to the CAO and include an estimate on the number of days the student is expected to travel to campus.