

Policy Clarification
Cash Assistance – All
PCT-22582-135
Employment & Training – Special Allowances
ESA-22582-535

Submitted: August 27, 2026

Agency: CAOs

Subject: Discounts and Special Allowances (SPALs)

Question: Should County Assistance Offices (CAOs) require participants to sign up for discount programs when determining the most practical, least costly item or service?

Response By: Bureau of Employment Programs

Date: August 27, 2026

The CAO may not require employment and training (E&T) participants to apply for or enroll in local programs that may provide discounted services prior to the issuance of an E&T SPAL. To prevent delays or unnecessary burdens to participation, applying for discounts must remain voluntary and cannot be used as a condition of eligibility for SPALs.

Instead, CAOs are encouraged to share local resources when completing the Agreement of Mutual Responsibility or the Employment Development Plan. This may include information about free or discount programs, such as reduced transit fares for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients. The purpose of this discussion is to help participants maximize their annual or lifetime SPAL limits and connect them to local opportunities with which they may not be familiar.

The CAO must not delay, deny, or reduce a SPAL issuance because discounts may be available.

If the CAO is aware that a participant is enrolled in a discounted program, the CAO must issue the SPAL at the discounted rate and narrate thoroughly.

If a receipt reflects a discounted rate, the CAO must review for an overpayment when the amount issued for the SPAL is \$10.00 or more than the actual cost shown on the receipt ([CAH 135.6](#) and [SNAP HB 535.4](#)).