

The Flexible Employment Fund

The Flexible Employment Fund (FEF) provides one-time, short-term financial assistance to people with disabilities who are experiencing barriers to maintaining or obtaining competitive employment.

Who is eligible for the fund?

Applicants must:

- be employed, have been offered a job with an established start-date, or be actively searching for a job
- be enrolled in, or eligible for MaineCare through one or more of its disability categories (including the Workers with Disabilities Option) OR be eligible for and receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) [This requirement is waived if the applicant is employed.]
- need one-time support in order to maintain (or obtain) current competitive employment; the problem defined must have a solution that falls within the resource limits of this fund
- not have received such one-time support from the fund before

FEF is operated by the Disability Employment Initiative project through Maine Local Workforce Investment Boards Regions 1 and 2. **Financial support from the fund is available to individuals in the following counties:**

- Penobscot
- Washington
- Piscataquis
- Aroostook
- Hancock

For more information

Bangor CareerCenter

Gwen LaPointe
207.561.4095 or 1.888.828.0568
Glapointe@emdc.org
TTY: 1.800.498.6711

Presque Isle and Machias CareerCenters

Kent DeMerchant
207.493.5780 or 1.800.427.8736
kdemerchant@nmdc.org
TTY: 1.888.697.2877

Application will be available for download beginning April 15, 2011 at:

www.mainecareercenter.com/disabilityservices

CareerCenter

www.mainecareercenter.com

CareerCenter
The Maine Employment Resource

Flexible Employment Fund

An effort of the
Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)



Providing one-time financial support to keep people with disabilities in the workplace

The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request.

04/11

www.mainecareercenter.com

Financial Support

Examples of needs that might be considered for FEF:

- **Emergency repair or replacement of adaptive equipment or assistive technology** – the person needs a critical item repaired or replaced, and this item is not something provided by the employer as a reasonable accommodation.
- **Transportation** – the person's car is only means of transport to work and needs major repair (such as transmission, wheelchair lift mechanism). Without this repair it is unlikely the person could continue in this job.
- **Emergency housing** – the person loses their house or apartment to fire or other reason and needs temporary housing that is convenient to work while a longer-term housing solution is worked out. However, initial rent and deposit requests in many cases will not be considered without strong evidence that the rent can be sustained.
- **Work Uniforms and Tools** – the person needs uniforms and/or tools to begin or continue their employment and these items are not covered by any other source.

Limits on Use of the Fund

There is a limit of only one request per person (over the lifetime of the DEI project). There is also a \$1,200 limit per request.

FEF is a fund of last resort. The individual must have exhausted all other available resources before the FEF will provide support.

Other Funding Resources

FEF will coordinate with other support sources where possible.

Examples of key resources that may be recommended in response to fund requests include:

- CareerCenter programs
- The Social Security Administration's Plan for Achieving Self-Support and Impairment Related Work Expenses option
- Other government, community and agency supports

Application Decisions

Requests are considered on a first-come, first-served basis until all available funds are used. A decision will be made within five work days of application receipt.

Integrated Resource Team (IRT)

The IRT model, a coordination of services designed to meet the needs of job seekers and/or employees with disabilities, is a critical component of the FEF process. All applicants are required to participate in an IRT, along with someone from their referring agency or organization. IRTs can be done in person (preferred) or by telephone. Referral agencies are expected to contribute resources to the applicant's plan.

DEI Evaluation

Data is collected on individuals who receive assistance under this fund.

Applicants to the fund may be asked to participate in a survey about the DEI program and how it supports workers with disabilities.

The purpose of this evaluation is to document experiences of individuals with disabilities who applied for and/or receive funding from FEF.

Fund Payments

The FEF pays the vendor or provider of a needed service directly. Therefore, payments are not considered as earned income for the FEF recipient and will not affect eligibility for MaineCare and other similar programs.