



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



Support Funds Manager & Administrator

Training Support Fund Operational Guidelines

Effective July 2018

Training Support Funds Legislation, Administration, Purpose, Principles, Funding and Eligibility Criteria and Operating Framework

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1. Introduction – General Principles

1.1 Training Support Fund Legislation and Administration

The government provides funding for the Training Support Fund (Training Support) through the Ministry of Social Development (Ministry) as part of the Employment Work Readiness and Assistance Programme (EWRAP).

The EWRAP is a Ministerial programme under the Social Security Act 1964 and is the overarching programme that enables the Ministry to grant funding assistance and provide a wide range of employment and work readiness assistance.

The Support Funds (the Funds) are provided under Clause 7 (Extra or Specialist assistance for eligible people with sickness, injury or disability) of the Schedule of the EWRAP.

The Funds consist of Job Support and Training Support and provide assistance to disabled people or people with a health condition to cover the cost of disability (costs that would not be incurred by people without that disability or health condition) incurred whilst in employment or training.

Workbridge administers Training Support on behalf of the Ministry.

This handbook outlines **Operational Policy** in respect of Training Support only.

1.2 Purpose of the Training Support Fund

The purpose of the Support Funds is to increase disabled people's participation in open employment by meeting the additional costs incurred as a direct consequence of their disability when undertaking the same employment or training as a person without a disability.

Training Support aims to make individualised funding available for disabled people or people with a health condition to purchase training support services so they can gain or retain open employment through participation in employment related education, training and other activities.

A clear link between the training opportunity and the employment goal must be established.

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Training must be consistent with realistic and reasonable outcomes for the applicant. The expected outcome of Training Support is that the applicant either:

- gains or retains employment as a result of the training, or
- moves into further training or work experience.

Training Support requires a scripted, time framed vocational pathway to employment to be supplied with the application.

Training Support will only be granted if the applicant is considered capable of undertaking the training.

Other forms of funding or assistance, e.g. other government funding or reasonable accommodation, available for the same assistance or service, must be considered first.

1.3 Principles of Support Funds

Support Funds will be used most effectively when:	
<i>Open and inclusive employment</i>	People obtain and retain employment that is open, inclusive, and uses their strengths
<i>Build capability</i>	People build their capabilities, skills, and financial independence
<i>Disability confidence</i>	Employers become disability confident and knowledgeable about employing the person
<i>Universal supports first</i>	People use the services and supports that are available to everyone before considering specialised supports and services.
<i>Additional costs</i>	<p>Funds are used to assist with costs that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • over and above reasonable accommodations (i.e. the support complements but does not replace or subsidise an employer's legal duty to make reasonable accommodations for disabled employees) • additional to what a non-disabled person would need to do their Training. <p>Funds are not used for workplace modifications if the building owner has a legal responsibility to provide access for disabled people (such as in new buildings or where the building is undergoing renovation).</p>
<i>Value for money</i>	The support provided meets the person's needs and is cost-effective.
<i>User-Friendly</i>	The process for identifying and deciding on the right support involves the disabled person and is easy to use

1.4 Cost of Disability

Support Funds can only pay the 'cost of disability'. The Cost of Disability is defined as:

- The additional cost incurred by an applicant as a direct consequence of their disability or health condition, when undertaking the same employment or training as a person without a disability or impairment.
- Training Support for alterations or equipment must be additional to the employer's or training organisation's legal obligations to provide access for people with disabilities.

1.5 Transition from School

Students in the final year of schooling, who meet the eligibility criteria, are able to apply for Training Support for unpaid work experience.

Work experience must be time limited (generally placements should not exceed four weeks).

Where there is a person already providing support to the student, and that support naturally carries over to the work experience (e.g Ministry of Education ORRS), then Training Support cannot be used).

2. Funding Criteria

2.1 Fund of last resort

Training Support is a fund of last resort and can only be accessed after other government funding programmes have been considered.

Training Support is not available where the funding costs of an applicant's disability or health condition are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health or ACC.

See also: [Disability](#)

2.2 Reasonable Accommodation

Training Support can only be used after reasonable accommodation has been taken into consideration.

Reasonable accommodation is defined as those actions or interventions that a training organisation can reasonably be expected to undertake to accommodate the needs of the person with a disability.

Reasonable accommodation is determined through a discussion with the training organisation and the applicant.

2.3 Funding approval amount for Training Support

Workbridge may approve a maximum lifetime amount of Training Support assistance up to \$15,600 per applicant (the "up to" amount). Applications above this amount should be referred to the Ministry to be decided at the discretion of the Chief Executive based on the circumstances of the applicant.

When a combination of training and employment related assistance is being used by any one applicant, the combined maximum that can be approved by Workbridge in any given year is \$15,600.00. Applications above this amount should be referred to the Ministry.

A 'year' is a 52 week period calculated from the start date when an applicant first received a subsidy or grant.

No applicant can receive more than \$16,900 from all Ministry sources, which include:

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- Job Support Fund
- Training Support Fund
- Flexi-wage (refer Work and Income)
- Flexi-wage Basic
- Flexi-wage Plus
- Flexi-wage Project in the Community
- Flexi-wage Self-employment
- Skills for Industry

2.4 Approval period

Training Support can be approved for the length of the training course, up to a period not exceeding 52 weeks, with a compulsory review taking place at (no greater than) 26 weeks from the date of approval.

An application can be reviewed at any time at the request of:

- Workbridge as administrator of the Training Support Fund
- the Ministry of Social Development as the Training Support Fund owner
- the applicant or the agent.

At the completion of the approval period, the Training Support application and any agreement between Workbridge (as the Training Support Fund administrator) and the client or employer or provider of service are deemed to have expired.

2.5 Applicant contribution

In some situations, a contribution may be sought from the applicant to purchase equipment.

See also: [Personal contribution](#)

2.6 Support Funds Calculation of funding balance

Workbridge can approve Support Funds up to \$16,900 for each 52 week period, per applicant, which includes the lifetime maximum payment of \$15,600.00 for Training Support. This amount commences on the date of the first payment from either of the two Support Funds (Job Support or Training Support).

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This anniversary date remains constant, even if there are extended periods of time between applications.

Should an applicant use their entire Support Funds annual funding prior to their anniversary date, then further funding requests will be referred to the Ministry.

2.7 On-going support

Training Support can provide funding that is on-going up to the lifetime approval amount of \$15,600.

2.8 Individualised funding

Training Support cannot be paid to a third party or an organisation to distribute on behalf of an individual.

2.9 Payments

Payments can only be made for costs incurred during the approval period.

2.9.1 Reimbursement

Training Support cannot provide reimbursement for the cost of any equipment, software, service or support that has been purchased by an applicant, their family or whanau, support person or through any other source.

2.9.2 Delaying payments when annual funding is exceeded

Where an applicant reaches the approval limit of the yearly funding before their anniversary date, payments for assistance provided in that year cannot be carried forward and invoiced against the following year's allocation.

2.9.3 Invoicing the Training Support Fund

Invoices for services or equipment provided from Training Support must be received within two months of the final date of the approval period.

Payment of invoices outside this timeframe will be at the discretion of Workbridge.

2.10 Sharing costs between applicants

Multiple applicants can share the cost of a single [support person](#), [NZSL interpreter](#), and/or [transport](#) arrangement.

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The cost of the support is pro-rated in accordance with the individual need of each applicant.

An assessment may be required to determine each individual's share of the cost.

NOTE: It is not possible for equipment costs to be shared between multiple applicants as the item of equipment becomes the possession of one applicant.

3. Eligibility Criteria for Training Support

3.1 Target Group

The target group for this service is people receiving Jobseeker Support or Supported Living Payment (or Sole Parent Support) registered with Work and Income, who are willing to undertake part or full-time employment, but face barriers to gaining and/or retaining employment because of a disability or health condition.

3.2 Residency

To be eligible for Training Support, the applicant must be:

- Currently and usually living in New Zealand
- A New Zealand citizen or a permanent resident (i.e. not be in New Zealand unlawfully or on a temporary work permit or student visa)

Training Support is not available where the training is located or provided outside of New Zealand.

3.3 Age

To be eligible for Training Support, the applicant must be within New Zealand's working age population (generally aged 16 years or over, and less than 65 years).

3.3.1 Aged under 16

An applicant may access Training Support if they are less than 16 years of age if an exemption is granted.

Criteria for an exemption are:

- Applicant has a properly issued school leaving certificate and is transitioning into employment.

3.4 Disability

To be eligible for Training Support, the applicant must have:

- A disability or a health condition that is likely to continue for a minimum of six months. The disability or health condition will result in a reduction of independent function or social well-being to the extent that support is required

There are some situations where funding the costs associated with an applicant's disability is the responsibility

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of the Ministry of Health or ACC. In these situations, the applicant is not eligible for Training Support.

3.4.1 Applicant's disability is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health

An applicant is not eligible for Training Support when their employment related health services and/or disability costs are provided through the Ministry of Health.

3.4.2 Applicant's disability is the responsibility of ACC

An applicant is generally not eligible for Training Support where the applicant's vocational services or disability costs are the result of an accident, and/or are the responsibility of ACC.

3.4.3 Applicant has been exited from ACC

An applicant who has been in receipt of Weekly Compensation and who has exited ACC is eligible for Training Support. Exiting can be via:

- Medical Case Review (MCR)
- Vocational Independence Occupational Assessment (VIOA)
- Vocational Independence Medical Assessment (VIMA)
- Transitional Training Search (TJS)
- Medical Clearance via medical certificate ACC A team
- No longer receiving ACC weekly earnings

3.4.4 Applicant has exited ACC voluntarily

If an applicant has exited the ACC service voluntarily, the applicant may still be eligible for support through ACC. For this reason, an application for Training Support may not be approved until eligibility for funding from ACC has been tested.

4. Verification required with all applications

4.1 Identification

All applicants, as a person, are required to provide confirmation of their identity when first making an application for Training Support.

Each new application requires identification to be sighted.

NOTE: Confirmation of identity for each application is an auditing requirement that cannot be waived.

4.1.1 Scheduled review

Identification does not need to be resubmitted at a scheduled review.

4.1.2 Forms of identification

One form of photo ID and two forms of identification without a photo are required with each application, unless the applicant has a permanent disability.

4.1.3 Accepted photo ID (one only required)

- Driver's Licence
- Passport
- Firearms Licence
- 18+ Card
- Student ID
- Photo ID from a disability organisation (e.g. RNZFB)

4.1.4 Accepted Secondary ID (two required)

If the applicant cannot provide photo ID, as specified in 4.1.3, then they must provide any two of the following forms of identification

- Birth Certificate
- Community Services card (showing Work and Income client number)
- IRD card
- Bank statement, phone or power bill showing applicant's name and address

4.2 Disability

All Training Support applicants will be required to provide confirmation of the impact of their disability with each new application, unless the impact of their disability is permanent.

Examples of impact of disability

A person with Epilepsy has a permanent disability. However, the impact can change over time due to being seizure free.

The impacts of suffering a stroke or heart attack may lessen over time.

The evidence must be signed, dated and in a format that clearly identifies the source of the confirmation and the signatory's qualification to make the diagnosis or issue the confirmation.

NOTE: Confirmation of impact of the disability at each new application is an auditing requirement that cannot be waived unless the impact of the disability is permanent.

Confirmation of impact of disability will be required for all applications for transport.

Only one document confirming the impact of the disability is required.

4.2.1 Accepted confirming documents

Currently in receipt of Supported Living Payment or Jobseekers Support for the disability noted on the Training Support Funds application (written confirmation required from Work and Income), plus (or any of, if not receiving a benefit) of:

- Medical certificate of letter from doctor's office;
- Occupational Therapist's report
- Learning Support report;
- Psychologist's reports;
- ACC documents;
- Evidence of on-going literacy or learning disabilities at school;

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- SPELD or similar assessments;
- An applicant may provide other evidence of disability specific to their condition. Please discuss with Workbridge.

4.2.2 **Disability is permanent**

An applicant who has a permanent disability will need to provide confirmation of their disability for their first application relating to that disability only.

NOTE: Confirmation of disability at the first application is an auditing requirement that cannot be waived. Subsequent applications will not require evidence.

EXCEPTION: Applications for transport may require ongoing impact of disability confirmation.

4.2.3 **Using Training Support to gain evidence**

Training Support cannot be used to gain evidence of disability – for example Doctor’s Certificates or assessments.

4.2.4 **Accepted confirming documents**

Written confirmation from the training provider of acceptance to the training or study course, including:

- start and end dates, and
- hours per week

4.3 **Confirmation other funding sources have been investigated**

Training Support is a fund of last resort and approvals can only be made if funding from other sources is not available.

Workbridge can approve funding for each applicant up to \$16,900 per year, which includes \$15,600.00 lifetime total for Training Support. Included in this amount is any Work and Income wage subsidy or Job Support.

See also: [Funding approval amount for Training Support](#)

4.3.1 **Reasonable attempt to find alternative funding sources**

It is not intended that applicants should be required to access other sources of funding if there is no reasonable

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expectation that funding is available or can be granted within a reasonable period.

A guideline for reasonable period is whether the employment or training opportunity would be placed at risk due to a known delay in the applicant receiving advice of eligibility or funding from another source.

4.3.2 Confirmation of no alternative funding

An applicant is required to provide confirmation that alternative funding sources have been investigated.

At a minimum, Workbridge will accept an e-mail from the alternate funding source verifying that no assistance is available or is not available within a reasonable period.

In some situations, due to the special nature of the intervention, there will be no alternative funding source. If there is no alternative funding source, the applicant should discuss their situation with Workbridge.

4.4 Work and Income Social Welfare Number (client number)

An applicant who is also a client of Work and Income must supply their nine digit client number with their first application.

The client number can be found on the applicant's Community Services Card (if they have one) or on any correspondence from Work and Income.

5. Applying for Training Support Funds

5.1 Enrolling with Workbridge to apply for Training Support

An applicant does not need to enrol as a Workbridge client to access Training Support.

Workbridge will provide an administrative service for applicants who are not registered as Workbridge clients.

5.2 Making an application

All applications for Training Support require an application to be completed and verification of acceptance to the training or study course.

5.3 Application form

Applicants must complete all sections of the Training Support application form available from Workbridge and other support agencies. The application form can also be downloaded from the Workbridge websites:

<http://supportfunds.co.nz>

or

www.workbridge.co.nz

The application form, which includes a declaration that the application is accurate, must be signed by the applicant or the person legally appointed to sign on behalf of the applicant.

See also 7 [Agents](#)

5.3.1 Confirmation required

All applicants for Training Support will be required to supply confirmation of the following with their application:

- Identity
- Disability
- Study or training course details, including start and finish dates
- Work and Income client number (if in receipt of Work and Income assistance)
- Attempts to source funding elsewhere

- Applications signed by an Agent can only be accepted if the agent has been properly appointed and documentation authorising the signatory is attached

Training Support can only be approved, reviewed or renewed when all documentation is present. Workbridge endeavours to notify the applicant of the outcome of their application within 10 working days of receipt of all documentation required to make a decision.

5.3.2 Applicant does not wish to provide information

If an applicant does not wish to provide the information requested, Training Support cannot be approved.

Workbridge Support Funds Administrators may be able to suggest different ways for the applicant to source the information required if obtaining the information is presenting a barrier.

5.3.3 Applicant – competence or ability to sign

The Training Support application is a legal document and contains a declaration that the information in the application is 'true and complete'.

Where an applicant has another person legally appointed for the purposes of signing contracts or documents, then that person should sign the application form. Documentation of the legal appointment should be attached to the application.

An "Appointment of Agent" form is available from Workbridge.

See also 7 [Agents](#)

5.3.4 Application completed by third party

Application forms can be filled in by a third party on behalf of the applicant, but cannot be signed by the third party unless the third party is the applicant's agent or properly appointed signing agent.

The person filling out the form must record their details in the section of the application that asks "Who filled out the application form?"

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Any application filled out by another person must be signed by the person filling out the form and their relationship to the applicant should be noted.

See also 7 [Agents](#)

5.4 **26 week review**

All applications for ongoing assistance are reviewed no more than 26 weeks from the date of the approval (or sooner if an earlier review date is determined at the time of the approval).

Possible outcomes of a review are:

- Continued payment of Training Support at the agreed level
- Changes to the provision of Training Support
- Discontinuance of Training Support

NOTE: Any change to the provision of support will require a new set of contracts and agreements to be drawn up reflecting the changes.

Applicants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their review are able to apply for a Review of Decision.

See also 6 [Review of Decision](#)

5.5 **Incomplete Applications**

Applications received by Workbridge that do not have all complete information and/or supporting documentation will be placed on hold for no longer than 20 working days.

Workbridge will advise the applicant of outstanding requirements.

If the information has not been provided by the applicant within 20 working days of Workbridge advising the outstanding requirements, the application will be declined.

If an application is to be declined because the applicant has not supplied all the information:

- The application can be resubmitted using the original forms and documents once the outstanding information is available
- The incomplete application will be held on the applicant's file for the 20 day period

See also 4 [Verification required with all applications](#)

5.5.1 Using discretion

The Workbridge Support Funds Manager may exercise discretion in situations where the application is delayed for reasons outside the control of the applicant.

5.6 Application approved in error

When it is determined that an application has been approved in error, Training Support payments will cease at the earliest possible time.

- The applicant or their agent will be advised in writing that an error has occurred and that their application does not meet funding criteria and/or the intent of Training Support.
- A time frame for ceasing payments will be negotiated with the applicant.
- The cessation date will not exceed three months from the date of the letter sent to the applicant advising them of the error.

5.7 Cancelling an application after approval

All applicants have a responsibility to advise Workbridge if they no longer require Training Support.

Once Workbridge is notified that Training Support is no longer required, the application should be cancelled immediately and funds returned to the general pool of Support Funds. The balance of the applicant's annual approval funding amount will be adjusted to reflect the returned funds.

6. Review of Decision

6.1 Review of Decision rights

The Ministry has a formal review process in accordance with sections 10A (benefits review committees) and 12J (rights of appeal) of the Social Security Act 1964 for any applicants requesting a review of funding decisions.

All applicants must be advised of their rights of review of any decision at the time of making any application for Training Support.

Any applicant may request a review of funding decision if they believe that their application has not been fully or properly considered, or that the decision made in relation to their application was incorrect.

Workbridge has a Review Committee that will undertake the internal administrative review.

6.2 Membership of the Workbridge Review Committee

The Workbridge Review Committee (Review Committee) is comprised of three senior Workbridge managers.

No member of the Review Committee will have been involved in the original decision or action.

From time to time, the Review Committee may second a person with specialist knowledge to the Review Committee.

6.3 Time period for submitting reviews

A request for the review of a declined application can be submitted up to three months from the date of the letter declining assistance.

6.4 Out of time review requests

If a request for the review of a declined application is received by Workbridge more than three months, and under seven years, from the date of the letter declining assistance, the request will be forwarded to the Ministry for review by the Benefits Review Committee.

6.5 Review Process

The Review Committee will undertake an internal administrative review of a declined decision.

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If the Review Committee upholds the original decision to decline the application, an applicant can request the decision be reviewed by the Ministry's Benefits Review Committee. This request will be forwarded to the Ministry by Workbridge.

A Review of Decision process chart is attached as Appendix 1

7. Agents

7.1 What is an agent?

An agent is a person who acts in the interests of another. A person can be made an agent with the consent of both the applicant and the prospective agent, by way of a Court Order, or, in exceptional circumstances, without an applicant's consent.

At all times the agent must act in the best interests of the applicant. This includes providing accurate information about the applicant to Workbridge.

The limits of agency are recorded in the '*Appointment of Agent*' form - *Part Three: What Rights and Responsibilities do you want to give your agent?* (form available from Workbridge).

An agent cannot personally benefit financially or otherwise by being an agent.

NOTE: Workbridge has the right to refuse to deal with any agent appointed by the applicant.

7.2 What can an agent do?

The rights and responsibilities an agent has over an applicant's affairs are determined by the applicant, and are dependent on what role the applicant wishes to give an agent. In general, anything a person can do for themselves, they may authorise an agent to do on their behalf.

An application should be completed and signed by the applicant when they have the capacity to do so.

7.3 Enduring Power of Attorney already appointed

The legally appointed Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) may sign on behalf of the applicant.

Copies of documents appointing the EPA should be attached to the application.

7.4 Applicant already has an Agent

A copy of the documentation appointing the Agent and indicating the limits of the agent's powers should accompany the application.

7.5 Agent appointed from a support agency or organisation

An agency or organisation as an entity cannot be appointed an agent for the purposes of accessing Training Support. Where an applicant wishes to appoint someone from a support agency as their agent, an individual from within the agency will need to be appointed.

The individual rather than the agency assumes the responsibilities associated with being an agent.

8. Assessments

8.1 Provision of assessments

Assessments can be requested at any time to determine that the most appropriate support is being funded.

If the client cannot provide a suitable current assessment, then Workbridge will arrange an assessment.

Assessments can also be undertaken at the request of Workbridge or the applicant or their agent.

Types of assessments include, but are not limited to:

- [Equipment](#)
- [Support person](#)
- [Transport](#)

Generally, assessments are undertaken prior to approving an application or at the time of the 26 week review.

All assessments are undertaken by:

- a qualified occupational therapist; or
- a person qualified in rehabilitation or occupational health; or
- other specialist assessment provider (such as the RNZFB)

A person with specific skills who does not fall into the above categories may, upon Workbridge request, undertake an assessment if the person has specific skills or knowledge in the area of the applicant's disability or proposed work environment.

Recommendations are the professional opinion of the assessor and are based on:

- Observation of the applicant in their usual environment
- Information supplied by the applicant and their carer
- Information supplied by school, education provider, current employer (for training for different work)

All assessments must be completed using the standard assessment formats wherever possible.

8.2 **Payment for assessments**

The cost of the assessment is deducted from the yearly maximum of Training Support to the applicant.

8.3 **Assessment to obtain a diagnosis**

Assessments are to determine the intervention required and cannot be used for obtaining a diagnosis.

8.4 **Release of assessment to applicant**

Assessments inform the categories of support that may help the applicant in their Training. An assessment may recommend support that is outside the range of support that can be funded through Training Support. Therefore, Workbridge will review the assessment in the first instance and then discuss it with the applicant and/or their support person.

Under **no circumstances** can the assessor release the assessment to the training provider. The outcome of the assessment, not the details of the assessment itself, may be discussed with the training provider after discussion with the applicant.

8.5 **Types of assessments**

8.5.1 **Equipment**

Equipment applications may require an assessment, regardless of cost.

Equipment recommended by an assessor may fall outside the range of equipment able to be purchased using Training Support. The final decision as to whether the equipment can be purchased rests with the approving Workbridge Support Funds Services Manager.

8.5.1.1 Obvious need for equipment

There will be some situations where the need for a piece of equipment is so evident that an assessment may not be necessary.

8.5.2 **Support person**

Training Support applications for a support person may require an assessment to determine the number of hours of support required, and the duties that the support person will be required to undertake.

Training Support Fund Operational Guidelines

Assessment for a support person can specify a shorter period for reassessment (rather than waiting for the 26 week or 52 week review) to take account of the increasing independence of the applicant.

8.5.3 **Transport**

An assessment may be undertaken before granting transport assistance.

Where Training Support is approved for transport, an assessment should be undertaken at no later than 26 weeks from the date of approval to determine whether the applicant is able to integrate independent travel into their daily schedule. This is to take account of increasing independence and familiarity with travel routes or car-pooling arrangements that may have become available.

9. Categories of assistance

9.1 Disability confidence training in the training venue

Training Support can be used to purchase the services of advisors from relevant organisations, or persons with specialist knowledge, to educate staff in a training place about the most appropriate and effective way in which to fully integrate the disabled student into the training site and course.

9.2 Equipment

The following links should be read in conjunction with any information pertaining to equipment:

See also [Reasonable accommodation](#)

See also [Training organisation contribution](#)

See also [Personal contribution](#)

See also [Ownership of equipment](#)

9.2.1 Training Organisation Contribution

A training organisation contribution will be in line with the cost of standard equipment or furniture ordinarily purchased by the organisation for a person without a disability undertaking the same Training.

A contribution may not always be necessary when equipment is purchased using Training Support. Guidelines for requesting a contribution are:

- If the applicant can take the equipment or furniture with them to their next training or into employment, then no contribution is required from the employer.
- If the equipment or furniture is designed to stay with the training organisation, however keeping it adds no value to the business then no contribution is required from the training organisation.
- If the equipment or furniture will stay with the training organisation and be absorbed into the business to be available for any subsequent students, a contribution equivalent to the average cost of the standard equipment or furniture will be requested.
- If the training organisation has already provided equipment or furniture for use by the student, however the applicant cannot use the equipment or furniture because of their disability, no contribution is required from the training organisation.

9.2.2 Personal contribution

If the equipment will have a component of personal use, a contribution may be requested.

There is now an expectation from education/training providers that all students will require a laptop or iPad. Therefore, Training Support can only cover the cost of disability, e.g. the cost of additional specifications required to operate an Application related to the disability.

A personal contribution may be requested from the applicant towards the cost of Applications that will be used for purposes other than training requirements.

9.2.3 Ownership of equipment

In general, equipment purchased using Training Support becomes the property of the applicant and can be taken by the applicant when they leave the training provider.

If a training provider has made a contribution towards the purchase of the equipment and the applicant subsequently leaves the training, the applicant and training provider should negotiate the 'sale' of the training provider share to the applicant. This would usually be at the current book value of the 'share' contributed by the training provider.

9.2.4 Examples of commonly requested equipment and associated products or service

9.2.4.1 Corrective lenses or spectacles

Training Support cannot be used to purchase corrective lenses or spectacles.

9.2.4.2 Course Fees

Training Support cannot be used to pay course fees, as these are payable by all students and are not a cost of disability.

9.2.4.3 Ergonomic desks and chairs

All ergonomic equipment applications require an assessment to be undertaken.

Training Support can be used to purchase ergonomic desks and chairs only where an occupational therapist's

recommendation exceeds requirements of current ergonomic furniture.

NOTE: Most standard desks and chairs are now ergonomic in design. Any recommendations for ergonomic furniture must exceed the requirements of current standard office/training furniture.

See also [Equipment](#)

9.2.4.4 Hearing Aids

Training Support cannot be used to purchase hearing aids.

9.2.4.5 Insurance

Any item purchased using Training Support is considered to be the property of the applicant and should be insured against loss or damage.

Training Support cannot be used to replace damaged or lost items that were not insured.

9.2.4.6 iPads, laptops and tablets

Students are now generally expected to have a laptop, notebook or tablet, so these devices are considered study costs rather than a cost of disability. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

See also [Equipment](#)

9.2.4.7 Irlen (Meares Irlen) Glasses and corrective or anti-glare lenses

Training Support cannot be used to purchase Irlen glasses or any form of corrective or anti-glare lenses.

9.2.4.8 Replacing obsolete equipment or software

All purchases of adaptive software and/or hardware require an assessment to be undertaken, except where the need is obvious.

Equipment or software originally funded through Training Support

If there has been a change in the applicant's disability, or training requirements resulting in the existing computer equipment being no longer suitable for employment related activity, replacement may be considered.

9.2.4.9 Service Maintenance Agreements – SMA

If disability-related software (for example JAWS, Dragon Dictate or Open Book) has been purchased using Training Support, applications for SMA may be considered where the purchase of the SMA is less than the cost of purchasing new software.

Applicants will have to establish that their unemployment situation requires the increased functionality provided by the SMA upgrade.

9.2.4.10 Vibrating alarm clock

Vibrating alarm clocks can be purchase for Deaf or hearing impaired applicants. Workbridge Centres have recommended models that should be considered first.

9.3 Interpreters

Training Support can be used to pay for qualified New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreters.

Where any NZSL interpreter is used for both training and personal requirements, the applicant must calculate the percentage of time for training requirements and utilise Training Support for this amount only.

Training Support is a fund of last resort. Alternative forms of funding or assistance, e.g. NZ Relay or NZVIS, other government funding or reasonable accommodation, must be considered first.

Given the approval levels of funding for Training Support, care should be taken to ensure that NZSL interpreters are used in a cost effective way to the best advantage of the applicant.

9.3.1 Interpreters for interviews

If the application for NZSL interpreters is for a training interview, then Training Support should be used. This is for all interviews regardless of whether the applicant is currently unemployed and seeking employment or the applicant is employed and seeking new employment. Contact Workbridge for more information on Training Support.

9.4 Repairs and Maintenance

Training Support **cannot** be used to pay for repairs and maintenance to equipment purchased using Training Support.

Workbridge strongly recommends that any items purchased using Training Support is insured for loss or damage.

As any equipment purchased using Training Support becomes the property of the applicant, the onus is on the applicant to ensure that any insurance cover taken out will cover the equipment in the workplace. Similarly, the applicant should check with the employer the extent of the employer's insurance in relation to personal property.

9.5 Support Person

Training Support may be used to fund the services of a support person to assist an applicant with their daily training tasks. However, the applicant must be able to perform the core tasks of the training. An [assessment](#) may be required. When a support person is paid through Training Support, the primary employment relationship remains between the applicant and the support person. The support person acts as a contractor to the applicant and is responsible for their own tax, holiday pay and transport arrangements.

9.5.1 Support Person – Passenger (P) driver's licence endorsement

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) requires all drivers who receive any form of payment or reward to have a P licence.

9.5.2 Support Person - Passenger service vehicles

The NZTA requires all vehicles that are used for passenger services (drivers receiving a fare or reward for driving) must have a Certificate of Fitness rather than a Warrant of Fitness.

9.5.3 Police checks for support people

Workbridge reserves the right to request a Police check for any support person, regardless of whether that person is recommended by Workbridge, the applicant or another agency or third party.

9.5.4 Plan for reduction

As there is an expectation that dependence on a support person will decrease over time, all applications for a support person must be accompanied by a plan for reduction.

In some situations it will be unreasonable to expect a reduction in support. These will be determined by

Workbridge following the assessment and no reduction plans will be required.

9.5.5 Agreement to provide service

An agreement to provide support services is signed by the applicant, Workbridge (as the administrator of Training Support) and the support person. This agreement should list the purposes for which the support person is being engaged. The support person cannot exceed the agreed scope of their support without approval from Workbridge.

Whenever a support person is present, the applicant must be performing the key components of their training.

Workbridge reserves the right to approve any individual as a support person before entering into an agreement for services.

9.5.6 Support exceeds 50% of training hours

Any application for a support person to provide support for more than 50% of the applicant's training or course week will require approval by a Workbridge senior manager.

9.5.7 Verification required before payment

Before payment can be made, the following confirmation is required:

- A timesheet signed by the trainer and the applicant, showing the number of study hours of the applicant in the payment period, and
- A timesheet signed by the applicant and the support person showing the number of hours worked by the support person.

9.6 Reader/Writers

Training Support may be used to meet the cost of a reader/writer where reading and/or the hand recording of notes is required in order that the applicant can gain or retain employment.

9.6.1 Driver's Licences

Training Support can be used to pay for disability related assistance (for example reader/writer) to enable an applicant to obtain a driver's licence when:

Training Support Fund Operational Guidelines

- The applicant is in employment and requires the licence to retain or advance her/his employment

NOTE: Applications for assistance on the basis that a driver's licence will increase a person's opportunity to become employed cannot be approved.

NOTE: Some Testing Organisations provide reader/writers for the assessment.

NOTE: There is no provision for the cost of the licence or driving lessons to be met from Training Support.

NOTE: **Training Support** can be considered when:

- The drivers licence is part of a vocational course
- Where there is a job offer subject to gaining the licence

NOTE: Training Support requires a scripted, time framed vocational pathway to employment to be supplied with the application.

9.7 Training in the workplace

Training Support may be available for applicants who want to undertake study that is not essential for their current employment. For example, study to change roles within the current organisation or to change careers.

9.8 Transport

Training Support can be used to pay for transport where:

- the applicant cannot (safely and with dignity) use available public transport
- other government funding is not available

Transport paid by Training Support can only be used for the approved journey. If the applicant wishes to deviate from the home to training venue, or training venue to home journey (for example to drop children at day care) any extra cost incurred because of the deviation must be met by the applicant.

Where appropriate, a combination of public transport and transport paid through Training Support will be considered for all transport applications.

An [assessment](#) may be required

9.8.1 **Transport assistance and mobility vouchers**

Where an applicant has access to the Total Mobility Scheme, the amount of the Total Mobility Subsidy is taken into account when calculating the assistance available from Training Support.

9.8.1.1 **Calculation of Training Support assistance**

The formula for calculating Training Support assistance is as follows:

Formula to Calculate Training Support for Transport

Full cost of one unsubsidised taxi journey

Less Total Mobility subsidy

Less applicant contribution

Less any employer contribution

= Support Funds assistance

Multiply by number of journeys per week

Multiply by weeks of assistance approved
(not exceeding 26 weeks)

9.8.2 **Applicant contribution for transport**

Applicants for Training Support transport assistance will be required to contribute the cost of weekly or daily travel equivalent to that incurred by a person without a disability undertaking the same journey.

The approval decision will take into account the mode of transport most commonly used by a person without a disability, living in the same approximate area as the applicant, of a similar age and with similar training circumstances.

Training Support is a fund of last resort. If an applicant is able to obtain a ride or share-ride for any part of the travel (e.g. travels with a parent from home to training venue) then that part of the travel is not taken into account for the calculation of Training Support.

9.8.2.1 Calculation of applicant contribution

Calculation of applicant contribution is based on how a person with a disability, living in the same approximate area with similar training or study circumstances would choose to travel.

Example 1. A person would usually travel by bus or train

The applicant contribution is the cost of a bus or train fare, or a concession ticket if available and in common use. The same amount it would cost a person without a disability to make the same journey.

Example 2. A person would usually travel by car

The applicant contribution is .73c per km for each kilometre of the journey. This amount covers the all-up cost of owning, maintaining and operating a vehicle.

If an applicant lived 20 km from their training venue, the calculation would be:

20 kms x 0.73c = \$12.40 for each journey

Other 'usual' methods of transport

Client contribution in relation to other usual methods of transport will need to be considered on a case by case basis.

9.8.3 Approving transport payments for taxi journeys

Training Support cannot be used to 'part-pay' for taxi journeys.

Training Support will be approved for a number of complete taxi journeys, with the applicant responsible for paying their taxi on the remaining days.

9.8.3.1 Calculation of number of journeys paid for by Training Support

Calculation of number of journeys each week payable by Training Support

Step 1

Full cost of unsubsidised taxi transport per week.

Divided by number of journeys per week.

Divided by number of days per week for Training

Full cost of each unsubsidised journey (A)

Step 2

Support Funds approved per week

Divide by full cost of one journey (A)

Equals journeys funded by Support Funds
This is rounded up to the nearest full journey

9.8.4 Transport assistance where there is no public transport

Where there is no public transport, the applicant is required to contribute the cost incurred by a person without a disability undertaking the same journey.

If a person without a disability would drive, then the cost should be calculated at .73c per kilometre.

9.8.5 Transport for blind or vision impaired applicants

Applicants who are members of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind should be referred to the RNZFB for orientation training after they have been in receipt of Training Support for 26 weeks.

9.8.6 Transport for reasons of safety

Where an application is received from an applicant for safety reasons (e.g. early starts, late finishes, busy or uncontrolled roads to cross) the safety of the applicant is central to the decision.

9.8.7 Verification required before payment can be made for taxis

Before payment can be made from Training Support, the following verification is required:

- Itemised account from the taxi company

9.9 Parking

Training Support can be used to pay for parking where the applicant's disability makes it necessary to park close to the training venue, the training institute is unable to provide disability parking and no free public parking is available at times when the applicant would reasonably be expected to attend training.

9.9.1 Verification required before payment

Before payment can be made from Training Support, the following verification is required:

- Evidence of attendance at work for the days when parking has been claimed.

Applicant contribution

Where a person without a disability would usually drive their car to the training venue and have the cost of parking the vehicle, the applicant contribution would be the cost of standard parking in the area.

Training Support Fund Operational Guidelines

If the applicant is required to drive a vehicle to training because of their disability, and this would not be the usual mode of transport chosen, then the applicant is not required to make a contribution to the cost of the parking.

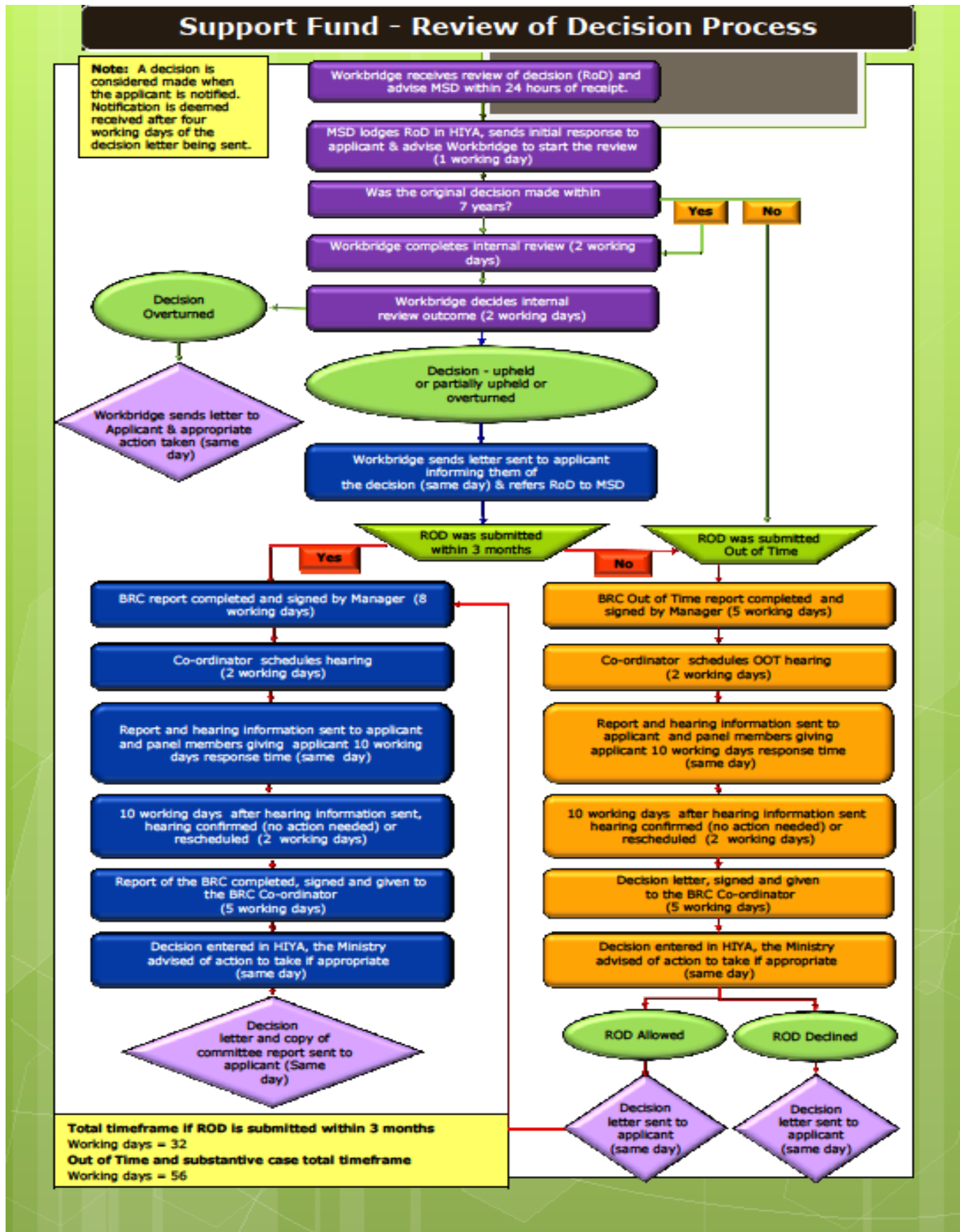
9.10 Upgrade existing equipment

Training Support can be used to pay for training related upgrade to existing equipment (whether purchased using Support Funds or not). Upgrades should be directly related to the applicant's disability.

9.11 Upgrade existing software

Support Funds can be used to upgrade software when a change in the applicant's disability or training situation makes the existing software inappropriate.

Appendix 1 – Review of Decision Process Chart



Support Funds Review of Decision (RoD) Process

This section sets out the Review of Decision process steps for Workbridge and the Ministry, including timeframes for notifications and hearings.

Decision Notification: Various steps in the RoD process required notification of decisions to the Applicant. For all decisions made in respect of a Review of Decision, a decision is considered made when the applicant has been notified. Notification is deemed received after four working days of the decision letter being sent.

Administrative Review

1. Workbridge receives review of decision (RoD) and advises the Ministry within 24 hours of receipt.
2. The Ministry lodges RoD in HIYA system, send initial response to the applicant and advises Workbridge to start the review (1 working day).
3. Was the original decision made within 7 years?
If no proceed to Out of Time section below
If yes, continue with Administrative Review process.
4. Workbridge completes internal review (2 working days).
5. Workbridge decides internal review outcome (2 working days).
6. If the original decision is overturned, Workbridge sends letter to the Applicant (same day) and appropriate action taken to complete the application.
Refer to Decision Notification at start of this document.
7. If the original decision is upheld, Workbridge sends a letter to the Applicant informing them of the decision (same day) and refers RoD to the Ministry.
Refer to Decision Notification at start of this document.
8. If the applicant does not agree with the internal review outcome to uphold the decision, they may request it to be progressed to the Ministry's Benefit Review Committee (BRC).
9. Was the original RoD request submitted within 3 months of the declined application?
If no, proceed to Out of Time section below
If yes, continue with the next process, BRC

Benefit Review Committee (BRC) process

10. BRC report completed and signed by Manager (8 working days).
11. Co-ordinator schedules hearing (2 working days)
12. Report and hearing information sent to the applicant and panel members giving applicant 10 working days response time (same day as step 11).
13. 10 working days after hearing information has been sent, the hearing is confirmed (no action needed) or rescheduled (2 working days).
14. Report of the BRC completed, signed and given to the BRC Co-ordinator (5 working days).
15. Decision entered in HIYA, the Ministry advised of action to take if appropriate (same day).
16. Decision letter and copy of BRC report sent to the applicant (same day).

Training Support Fund Operational Guidelines

17. Total timeframe if RoD is submitted within 3 months of initial decision to decline the application = 32 working days.

Out of Time process

18. BRC Out of Time (OOT) report completed and signed by the Manager (5 working days).
19. Co-ordinator schedules OOT hearing (2 working days).
20. Report and hearing information sent to applicant and panel members, giving applicant 10 working days response time (same day as step 19).
21. 10 working days after hearing information sent, the hearing is confirmed (no action needed) or rescheduled (2 working days).
22. Decision letter signed and given to the BRC Co-ordinator (5 working days).
23. Decision entered in HIYA, the Ministry advised of action to take if appropriate (same day as step 22).
24. RoD allowed
Decision letter sent to applicant (same day)
OR
25. RoD declined
Decision letter sent to applicant (same day).
26. Out of Time and substantive case total timeframe = 56 working days.