

8.32 COLLEGE TRAINING

Background

When a consumer is interested in any form of training, it is necessary for the counselor to explain eligibility, ongoing eligibility and the development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The two criteria for eligibility are:

1. The individual has a disability, defined as any individual who has a physical or mental impairment (which must include legal blindness) that results in a substantial impediment to employment; and who can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services, and
2. The individual requires vocational rehabilitation services (in this case, college training) to prepare for, enter, secure, retain or regain employment.

In vocational rehabilitation, college is considered a form of vocational training and should only be authorized when it is clear that it is necessary to achieve the consumer's vocational goal (occupation). Before college can be discussed, the counselor and consumer must first mutually agree on an occupation that the consumer will pursue and then develop an IPE. The consumer should understand that the appropriateness of the vocational goal and college training will continue to be evaluated during the annual reviews of his/her IPE.

College level professional training can present a special challenge to counselors because of the differing views held by consumers and, in some cases, their parents. For some individuals, NYSCB is viewed as a special scholarship program available to anyone who is blind and meets entry level academic qualifications. Others may not fully understand the purpose of vocational rehabilitation and the role of college training in the rehabilitation process.

If it appears that the consumer is unable to do college level work it will be necessary to discuss a more appropriate goal. In this case, another type of training will be planned.

When an occupation is identified and agreed upon, the services needed to achieve the goal should be listed on the IPE and eventually authorized. This process forms the core of vocational rehabilitation and requires a relationship between the counselor and consumer that is built upon mutual respect, understanding and cooperation.

The dialogue concerning college training may appear difficult at times; however, counselors are encouraged to explain the vocational rehabilitation process and hopefully assure mutual understanding. Lacking agreement, consumers must be notified in writing and provided a rationale for any decision to deny services. At this time consumers should be notified of their rights under the appeals process and be given information about the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

Expectations for Students in College

Developing skills in a real work environment is critical for young adults and for older adults who have not had on-the-job experience. Work experiences along with education and training help to build resumes that enable individuals to successfully compete for jobs. NYSCB expects that all consumers who attend college will participate in work experiences or internships during summer breaks and if possible during the school year. Preferably, some or all of the work experience will be related to the student's job goal.

What is College Training

College is academic training provided at the post-secondary level. It includes undergraduate and graduate courses at an accredited university, college, junior college or extension program and tutorial training, correspondence and home study.

Accreditation

NYSCB will use only those colleges, universities and other degree granting institutions, including correspondence or home study programs, accredited by a regional accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or approved by the New York State Board of Regents. Exceptions may be made where accreditation is pending or conditional and the course of study is sufficiently unique to justify use.

NYSCB reserves the right to review and disapprove the use of a college or university program that is not accredited.

Cutoff Dates for College Sponsorship

Applicants and consumers who are interested in pursuing college training should notify their NYSCB counselor by May 1st for the Fall semester and September 1st for the Spring semester. These cutoff dates have been established to allow adequate time to determine whether or not the applicant or consumer meets the criteria for college sponsorship. Exception to these cutoff dates may be made by the senior counselor upon request by the NYSCB counselor.

Length of Training

NYSCB expects consumers to complete their undergraduate and graduate programs within the customary attendance period (e.g., Bachelor's - 4 years, Associate's - 2 years). We do, however, recognize that individual circumstances may sometimes interfere with a consumer's ability to do this. In recognition of this fact, NYSCB may

provide financial sponsorship for up to one semester in addition to each year of coursework required by the educational institution for the consumer to complete his/her academic program.

Attendance beyond the customary period includes part-time and full-time study.

The customary attendance period can only be exceeded with documentation of the reasons for the extension and senior counselor approval. The reason for exceeding the customary attendance period should be entered in the "Specific Understandings ..." section of the IPE.

Examples of situations that may warrant exceeding the customary attendance period are:

1. equipment needed by the consumer to participate in college courses was not received on time or in proper working order
2. the consumer or his/her family member developed a medical problem which interfered with the consumer's ability to attend college
3. the consumer has received approval to attend college part-time

Graduate School Sponsorship

NYSCB sponsors training beyond the baccalaureate level only in instances where entry into the selected professional field of work requires completion of graduate or professional school training as documented on the IPE.

Graduate School IPE

Graduate school training can only be indicated on an IPE after the successful completion of two full years of college study.

When the counselor and consumer mutually agree on a vocational goal that includes graduate school, the counselor should complete the IPE as follows:

1. state the vocational goal
2. enter in the Understandings section a statement regarding the fact that the IPE will be amended to include graduate school after the successful completion of two full years of college study.

The amended IPE must be developed in accordance with the procedures in Chapter 6.00-IPE and prior to implementation must be signed by the district manager.

Part-Time Sponsorship

Part-time college training is defined as less than 12 credit hours of training per semester. Part-time study may be sponsored at any time during college training with counselor approval.

In approving part-time sponsorship, the counselor should ensure that the consumer understands that part-time study may impact on his/her ability to complete college within the length of training allowed under NYSCB policy. If necessary, consumers who participate in part-time study should be encouraged to take courses during summer session, mini-semester and intersession in order to complete their studies within the limits on length of training established by NYSCB.

College Training: Out-of-State/Foreign Country

College training may be sponsored in out-of-state schools.

When consumers are sponsored at out-of-state schools, they should be advised of resources in the area such as the local VR agency. Counselors should maintain responsibility for service coordination but may also inform the equivalent state agency that the individual is present in their state.

Students who attend college outside of New York State will receive sponsorship at the same level of financial support as they would if they attended a college within New York State.

College training in foreign countries is not sponsored by NYSCB. However an individual matriculated in an American university may participate in a semester/year abroad if required by his/her program. Note: Expenses for tuition, transportation, and room and board are limited to the level paid while the student is in the school in which he/she is matriculated. Excess expenses incurred during foreign study will be the responsibility of the student.

Correspondence and Home Study

College training through correspondence and home study and programs may be sponsored when the counselor deems the program to be the most appropriate training program for the consumer. The decision will be based upon the fact that:

1. the training program is not available through other sources, OR
2. it is not feasible to utilize other available resources, AND
3. the training program will adequately prepare the consumer to achieve his/her

vocational goal.

This decision must be documented in a case contact.

Summer, Mini-Semester or Intersession Sponsorship

Summer session, mini-semester, and/or training during intersession is only provided:

1. to advance the date of completion of a program
2. to enable a consumer to complete his/her college program within the limits on length of training established by NYSCB
3. to enable a consumer to take required or sequential courses which would not be available at any other time
4. as necessary, when a consumer's disability restricts the number of credits to be taken per semester or trimester
5. to enable a consumer to complete a previously failed course within the time restrictions of this policy

Selecting A College

When selecting the most appropriate school the consumer and counselor must address, as a minimum, the following questions:

1. The appropriateness of the school. Will the education and training provided prepare the consumer for his/her vocational goal?
2. Does the school meet established standards for accreditation set forth in this chapter?
3. Is the school willing and able to accommodate any disability-related needs the consumer may have?
4. Does the consumer meet the school's selection criteria?

Remediation

Some individuals may require remediation training in order to effectively participate in a college program. Efforts should be made to obtain remediation prior to entrance into a college program. When a student is receiving remediation at a college, college policy rates apply and sponsorship is contingent on economic need.

NYSCB will sponsor one semester of remediation courses. After that semester, it will be expected that the consumer take at least 9 hours of credit bearing courses in order to qualify for sponsorship. The student will be expected to provide grades including information on credits earned, at the end of the semester. If a semester has less than 9 credit hours earned, NYSCB will not continue sponsorship. When provided with a transcript that shows that the student has completed a semester with 9 credits, sponsorship can be reinstated.

For these students, one semester of remediation will replace the trial semester utilized for students who are entering college in credit bearing programs, and will not count toward the maximum length of training allowed under NYSCB policy. After the first semester, however, semesters that include remediation courses count toward the maximum length of college training. Therefore, counselors and consumers should consider this factor when approving remediation as it may affect sponsorship later on for credit bearing courses.

Trial Semester

Clients can receive NYSCB sponsorship for up to one semester of part-time or full-time study as a trial semester. A trial semester will not count toward the maximum length of training allowed under NYSCB policy. College policy rates will be applied during trial semesters. Trial semesters are considered to be college training and are contingent upon economic need.

NYSCB will sponsor students for a semester of remediation or a trial semester but not for both.

Criteria to be Considered in Determining College Sponsorship

The responsibility for determining the appropriateness of college sponsorship rests with the NYSCB counselor with supervisory approval. To arrive at a decision, the counselor will consider, at a minimum, the following criteria:

1. Acceptance by an accredited college or university (including junior college, community college, etc.).
2. When acceptance is by an institution operating with an open admission policy, the individual must meet the following criteria:
 - a. maintenance of a C academic average in high school (only applicable to students who have graduated within the last five years), or
 - b. be deemed qualified by the NYSCB counselor. This determination shall

include consideration of the student's scoring on college aptitude tests and any other pertinent information available to the counselor. This determination requires senior counselor input and approval, which shall be documented in the case file.

In addition, all students must meet the following criteria:

1. Certification by a mobility instructor of sufficient independence in mobility to travel to, from and about a setting similar to the proposed college environment. Written certification of a formal schedule of mobility instruction to meet this requirement prior to the first college semester will be acceptable at the time of consideration for college sponsorship.
2. Certification by a rehabilitation teacher of sufficient independence in activities of daily living to care for one's daily needs on and off campus. Written verification of a formal schedule of rehabilitation teaching to meet this requirement prior to the first college semester will be acceptable at the time of consideration for college sponsorship.
3. Certification by a communications specialist of sufficient independence in communication skills to cope effectively with the heavy and varied workload of a college student. Written verification of a formal schedule of communications instruction to meet this requirement prior to the first college semester will be acceptable at the time of consideration for college sponsorship.

Pre-College Programs

College students are encouraged to participate in one of the pre-college programs available in the State. The content of these programs vary from program to program but generally provide students with an opportunity to learn about the college environment, develop self-advocacy skills and learn about their rights and responsibilities as a student with a disability.

Sustaining Criteria for College Sponsorship

In order to continue to qualify for NYSCB sponsorship, the consumer must:

1. maintain adequate performance (as defined in this section),
2. continue to pursue an approved vocational goal within the context of the mutually developed IPE, and
3. be willing to participate in a minimum of two face-to-face progress reviews per academic year with a NYSCB counselor

Adequate Academic Performance

A consumer will be deemed to have maintained adequate academic performance only if, after the first two semesters of attendance, she/he maintains a minimum cumulative grade index equivalent of C or 2.0. A consumer will be expected to maintain the minimum cumulative grade index each semester thereafter.

If the cumulative index falls below this level, support will continue for one semester while the consumer attempts to raise his/her grade point average. During this time, the consumer must be notified that he/she is on probationary status and the counselor and consumer should:

1. address issues which may have affected the consumer's performance, and
2. reassess the appropriateness of the vocational goal and/or college as a means of obtaining that goal.

If the consumer is unable to raise his/her grade point average after one semester with NYSCB sponsorship the counselor and the consumer should:

1. reassess the appropriateness of the vocational goal and/or college as a means for achieving that goal, and
2. develop an alternative IPE (See Chapter 6.00)

If the consumer is not interested in pursuing an alternative goal, the counselor must consider whether or not the consumer continues to be eligible for services.

NYSCB will not provide any services except counseling, guidance and assessments while an alternative IPE is being developed.

Courseload Changes

Students may not drop credits or significantly change their curriculum without the prior approval of the NYSCB counselor. Curriculum changes may significantly alter the IPE and may make it invalid. This could result in an interruption or loss of NYSCB sponsorship.

If dropping a course reduces the number of credits to less than 12 credits for a semester, that semester is considered to be part-time training.

Comparable Benefits

Before NYSCB funds can be used for college training, a full consideration of comparable benefits available to a consumer must be made by the NYSCB counselor. The consumer must also cooperate, to the maximum extent feasible, with the NYSCB counselor in exploring and applying for alternate funding.

The consumer must submit written verification of yearly application for alternate funding. Funding sources should include but not be limited to:

1. PELL Grant
2. Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)
3. Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)

For each application for alternate funding, the consumer must submit the following information to the NYSCB counselor:

1. a copy of the award notice including the amount of the award and the starting date, OR
2. a copy of disallowance or denial of any award applied for.

Note: Notice of receipt of application will suffice until the award/disallowance notice is received. A statement signed by the consumer may be considered sufficient if the consumer has received no other documentation.

Rule

All comparable benefits available to consumers must be applied to the costs of college training prior to authorizing NYSCB funds.

At times, financial aid is not received prior to the provision of NYSCB sponsorship and it may be necessary for the counselor to authorize payment to the college in order to allow a student to maintain their enrollment status. It is the student's responsibility to notify their counselor of any excess financial aid they receive directly and it will be determined whether it is to be refunded to NYSCB or applied to the following semester's expenses.

Exception To Comparable Benefits Rule

Monetary awards or scholarships to consumers based on merit from civic, professional or social organizations are not considered as grants or comparable benefits as long as no restrictions are placed by the organization on the use of the money. Even if the award is designated for general educational purposes, it is not considered a comparable benefit.

If the money is specifically earmarked for tuition or particular college expenses, it is then considered an available resource and comparable benefit that may replace or reduce the NYSCB contribution to college expenses.

Guidelines for Application of Comparable Benefits

TAP should be applied to tuition.

The PELL Grant may be applied first towards the actual cost of room and board or tuition, whichever is to the greater financial benefit of the student. The balance of the grant should be applied towards:

1. college fees
2. books
3. equipment
4. transportation
5. maintenance and/or
6. other college expenses

The Responsibilities of the College and NYSCB in Providing Comparable Benefits

Both NYSCB and colleges receiving federal funds are authorized and/or obligated to provide necessary services, such as interpreter services or other auxiliary aids, to allow each student to participate effectively in the college program. As both entities must conserve fiscal resources, it is important that NYSCB and the colleges negotiate on a case-by-case basis, to agree upon those services to be provided, and how to coordinate and pay for those services. In some instances, the college will routinely provide all needed services and accommodations. Other times, NYSCB and the college will agree to share costs.

Negotiations between NYSCB and Colleges

The NYSCB counselor should work together with the student and a representative of the college to determine the nature and needs of the student as regards his/her academic activities. Once these services are identified, the college and NYSCB should decide how to provide and pay for those services. In most instances, these discussions will take place between the counselor and the Disabled Student Services (DSS) Coordinator at the college.

Whenever possible, the counselor should schedule these discussions prior to the beginning of the semester, so that arrangements will be in place when classes begin. Prior to discussion, the counselor should review the college's web site to determine what support services are customarily provided to students with disabilities.

In most instances, it is expected that the DSS Coordinator will coordinate provision of the agreed upon services. Any discussions and resulting understandings must be documented in the case record.

Dispute Resolution between NYSCB and the College

If both parties cannot reach agreement within 20 days, the issue should be directed to the District Manager for resolution with the college ADA Compliance Officer (if that is not the same as the DSS Coordinator, or if it is, then the next level supervisor at the college).

Unresolved Disputes

If an agreement cannot be reached by the date classes begin, NYSCB will provide the necessary services and accommodations for that semester in order to avoid delays in the student's participation in college. NYSCB will continue to negotiate with the college regarding responsibilities for future semesters.

Student Responsibilities

In researching potential colleges, students should learn what services and auxiliary aids are available from the college to meet their disability-related needs. This information may be key in selecting a college to attend.

At the time of acceptance to the college, the student should submit any required applications and documentation to meet eligibility requirements for disabled student services to the DSS Coordinator. The NYSCB Counselor may be asked to forward the certificate of blindness, or other documentation of disability(ies) to the DSS Coordinator.

Comparable Benefits: Defaulted Student Loan

Under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, in order to receive a grant, loan or work assistance, a student must not owe a refund on grants previously received or be in default on any student loan. The limitation applies to provision of financial assistance for post-secondary education by vocational rehabilitation agencies to consumers who have been refused grant awards because they defaulted on student loans.

Since we require that students make every attempt to secure comparable benefits, a consumer who has defaulted on a student loan should proceed to clear his/her default status prior to applying for financial assistance.

Determination of Default Status

In most instances, a counselor will be able to determine whether a student is in default status from the grant award notice.

If a student has been denied a grant, then the award notice will indicate whether the denial was based upon default status.

If a student has not yet received award notification, then the counselor may base his/her determination upon a statement, signed by the student that he/she is not in default status.

Clearing Defaulted Loan Status

For the Perkins Loan program, an individual is no longer in default if:

1. all past-due amounts have been repaid, cancelled, or deferred;
2. the individual's loan has been discharged in bankruptcy; or
3. the individual has entered into a new repayment agreement for the loan.

For the Guaranteed Student Loan program, an individual may no longer be in default status if:

1. the holder of the loan certifies for the purpose of reinstating Title IV eligibility that the borrower has made satisfactory arrangements to repay the defaulted loan; or
2. the loan is discharged in bankruptcy.

Implications for NYSCB Sponsorship

Prior to obtaining NYSCB sponsorship for college training, individuals who are in default of a loan must arrange to clear their defaulted status. An individual who chooses not to repay a loan although financially able to do so is not eligible to receive NYSCB sponsorship for college training. In this instance the individual is not availing him/herself of a comparable benefit or service that is available.

Inability to Repay

In some instances, a true hardship situation may arise where an individual has limited or no financial resources available and cannot work out a satisfactory repayment agreement with the lender, despite responsible repayment efforts. In such instances, it may be concluded that the individual has made maximum efforts to secure grant assistance and that comparable benefits and services are not available. The VR counselor should determine the appropriateness of VR assistance on an individual basis after careful examination of all the circumstances involving an individual's default status and financial situation.

College Related Services: Contingent Upon Economic Need

The college related services listed below are contingent upon economic need. Some of the services are also subject to maximum expenditure allowances as indicated in this section.

1. tuition in accordance with the rates in this section
2. required college fee's including but not limited to:
 - a. application fees (limited to three applications)
 - b. aptitude test fees
 - c. student activity fees
 - d. college fees
 - e. laboratory fees
 - f. library fees
 - g. health insurance fees (unless the consumer has other medical coverage which would apply while s/he is in college)
 - h. graduation fees
3. room and board in accordance with the rates and guidelines in this section
4. security deposits in accordance with the guidelines in Section 8.03 - Maintenance
5. books and supplies in accordance with the guidelines and rates in this section
6. equipment in accordance with Section 8.20 - Rehabilitation Technology
7. transportation in accordance with the guidelines and rates in this section and Section 8.04 – Transportation

College Related Services: Not Contingent Upon Economic Need

The college related services listed below are not contingent upon economic need.

1. Reader services for individuals not eligible for the State Education Department Reader's Aid Program or as a supplement to such funds (See Section 8.09 - Reader Services)
2. tutoring assistance
3. personal assistance services (See Section 8.11 - Personal Assistance Services)

Temporary Exception to Economic Need for Certain Students

Many high school and post-secondary education students are not able to meet NYSCB economic need criteria because their parents' income is too high. When they reach their 18th birthday, they can apply for SSI benefits; and if found eligible for SSI will meet economic need.

However, some students do not turn 18 early enough to qualify for SSI and services contingent upon economic need prior to the start of college, vocational, technical or business school training. The process of assessing assistive technology needs, purchasing the technology, and training the student may take several months. As a result, students who do not turn 18 until shortly before or after the start of their first

semester may begin their post secondary education without assistive technology and the skills to use the technology. In addition, their parents pay full costs for tuition, room and board, and books and supplies that are also contingent on economic need.

Allowing temporary exceptions will:

- provide a standardized method for providing equity for students negatively affected by the economic need policy on the basis of their date of birth, and
- allow students expected to qualify for SSI benefits to receive the supports they need to succeed in post secondary education.

The temporary exception will only apply to students prior to the time they become eligible to apply for SSI benefits on their own (before their 18th birthday). A student who is over age 18 who has not yet applied for SSI will only qualify under this policy on a case-by-case basis after a review of their particular circumstances by the NYSCB district office manager.

The decision to allow the temporary exception will be made by the NYSCB counselor after receipt of the required documentation, a determination that the student meets the requirements noted below and a determination that the student is likely to qualify for SSI on their 18th birthday.

To meet the requirements for the temporary exception, the student must:

1. not meet economic need due to family resources,
2. be at least in the second half of their senior year of high school (applies to the provision of high-tech equipment),
3. not be eligible to apply for SSI benefits on their own early enough to determine if they meet economic need and obtain equipment for college (post secondary) training or qualify for NYSCB funding for tuition, room and board and books and supplies, and
4. provide proof of application for SSI benefits or, confirm their intent to apply for SSI benefits when they turn 18. The confirmation must be verified in writing by the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).

Once the counselor determines that the student meets the requirements for the temporary exception, high-tech equipment will be provided as a loan through the Equipment Reserve Program and tuition, room and board and books and supplies can be paid to the student's school for one semester.

High-tech assessment, training and equipment and tuition, room and board and books and supplies will be provided in accordance with NYSCB policy. A high-tech assessment and high-tech training may take place prior to the second half of the student's senior year because they are services that are not contingent on economic need.

If the student is found to be eligible for SSI benefits when they turn 18, NYSCB will purchase the appropriate equipment required by the consumer for college training in accordance with NYSCB policy and arrange for the return of the loaned equipment.

NYSCB reserves the right to reclaim equipment provided to students who are denied SSI benefits and who have exhausted all appeals for reconsideration of their application for SSI benefits. NYSCB will not provide tuition, room and board and books and supplies funding for a consumer who has been denied SSI benefits and does not meet the NYSCB economic need standard. If the consumer is in the process of appealing the decision, these services will continue to be paid by NYSCB.

Tuition Expenses: Academic Year

For students who meet economic need, NYSCB will pay actual tuition costs (after the application of all comparable benefits) up to the rates established by the State University of New York (SUNY).

Examples, Payment of Tuition

The following examples illustrate application of NYSCB tuition allowance.

Example 1: An undergraduate's tuition costs for an in-state private school are \$3,500/year. She receives an \$800 TAP award. NYSCB will pay the remaining tuition up to the undergraduate tuition rate established by SUNY.

Example 2: A regular graduate student's tuition costs are \$15,400/year. He receives a \$400 TAP award. NYSCB will pay the remaining tuition up to the graduate tuition rate established by SUNY.

Tuition Expenses: Part-time Study, Summer Session, Mini-Semester

For students who meet economic need, NYSCB will pay actual tuition cost, up to the credit hour rate established by SUNY. The maximum tuition rates for part-time, summer session, mini-semester and/or intersession will be applied on a pro-rata basis.

Undergraduates - for students taking fewer credits than the equivalent of a full-time semester (e.g., less than 12 credits) NYSCB will pay actual tuition costs up to the credit hour rate established by SUNY.

Graduates - for students taking fewer credits than the equivalent of a full-time semester (e.g., less than 12 credits) NYSCB will pay actual tuition costs up to the credit hour rate established by SUNY.

Tuition during summer-session, mini-semester and/or intersession will be in addition to the maximum per academic year. Tuition for part-time study is included in the maximum per academic year. In no instances shall total support per session or semester exceed half the maximum rate for an academic year.

Residential Statuses

COMMUTING STUDENT - an individual who resides at his or her normal residence while attending a college program.

RESIDENTIAL STUDENT - an individual residing in a college dormitory while attending a college program.

OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT - an individual who must live away from home in order to attend a college program and who is living in an apartment or other residence off campus.

Rule

NYSCB will not pay room and board expenses for commuting students. Room and board expenses are only allowable to pay additional costs incurred while participating in rehabilitation.

Room and Board Expenses: Academic Year

NYSCB will pay room and board expenses to students who meet economic need in accordance with the following rules and guidelines.

Residential and Off-Campus Students: NYSCB will pay actual room and board and day-to-day transportation costs needed to attend college up to a maximum of \$8,000 per academic year. The consumer must provide documentation of actual room costs (a college bill for residential students; a copy of the lease agreement or a written statement from the landlord specifying the number of individuals sharing the living space and either a receipt from the landlord for the consumer's portion of the rent or a copy of the cancelled check payable to the landlord). Meals are calculated at the rate of \$400/month. This amount should be prorated during months when school is not in session for the entire month. This meal payment rate can also be used for students living on campus who do not participate in a meal plan.

Additional funds for day-to-day transportation can be provided if needed and the student demonstrates that the payment from NYSCB, and from PELL and SSI, for those that receive those benefits, does not cover the cost of their room, board and transportation.

Room and Board Expenses: Part-Time Study, Summer Session, Mini-Semester, Intersession

NYSCB will pay room and board expenses to consumers who meet economic need in accordance with the following rules and guidelines.

Residential and Off-Campus Students: The maximum rates for room and board for consumers attending college for summer session, mini-semester or intersession will be applied on a pro-rata basis. NYSCB will pay room and board expenses up to a maximum of \$250 per week.

Example: A consumer who attends a college during a 6-week intersession can receive a maximum of \$1,500 for room and board expenses.

Room and board during summer session, mini-semester and intersession will be in addition to the maximum per academic year. Room and board for part-time study is included in the maximum per year.

In no instance shall total support per session or semester exceed half the maximum rate for an academic year.

Determining When an Individual is Considered to be a Commuting Student

The following guidelines are to be used to determine when a student should be considered to be a commuting student.

If the student lives within a 20 mile radius or within one and one half hours of travel time each way from the school and adequate transportation is available, then they should be considered to be a commuting student.

Students who meet the criteria listed above are not eligible to receive room and board payment if they choose to live away from home. Students who live more than one and one half hours of travel time each way from the school or beyond the 20 mile radius can choose to live at home. These students will also be considered to be commuting students.

Exception, Commuting Students

In some instances, even though a student lives within commuting distance of a school and adequate transportation is available, the student's home environment may seriously interfere with their ability to participate in college training. In such situations, If the counselor believes that it is in the student's best interest to reside on campus, the counselor can request that an exception be made. Exceptions may only be made on an

individual basis with senior counselor approval and appropriate documentation in the record of services.

Room and Board Expense Waiver

The maximum limits for room and board may be waived if room and board is provided in lieu of more expensive, special transportation for students who are eligible for special transportation. This waiver may be obtained only if:

1. the student is eligible for special transportation.
2. the student has medical documentation to substantiate the fact that public transportation cannot be used due to the severity of his/her disability.
3. the counselor has determined that the student can function adequately while living on campus.
4. it has been demonstrated that the cost of living on campus is equal to, or less than, providing special transportation. The costs of living on campus must include dormitory fees, attendant services, special campus transportation, necessary room modifications, adaptive devices and any other costs incurred by the student. These costs must be detailed in writing by the counselor and compared to the estimated potential cost of special transportation for the same period of time.

Waiver Rule

Documentation to support the waiver must be prepared prior to the approval of the IPE. This documentation must be filed in the record of services.

Transportation and Maintenance

For consumers who meet economic need, NYSCB will pay the actual cost of public transportation for travel to school at the beginning of the semester or trimester and travel from school to home at the end of the semester or trimester. Exceptions will only be granted for emergency travel due to the death or serious illness of a member of the consumer's immediate family.

Counselors should note that:

1. transportation services may not be authorized for holiday travel.
2. maintenance can be authorized during school holidays if the consumer has remained at the school during holidays

See specific guidelines on authorizing maintenance and transportation at the end of this section.

Equipment

For consumers who meet economic need criteria, NYSCB will purchase all equipment necessary for the consumers to participate in their college program in accordance with NYSCB policy. The record of services must document the need for all equipment purchased.

Books and Supplies Expenses

NYSCB will purchase books and supplies for consumers who meet economic need criteria in accordance with the following rates and guidelines.

Books: NYSCB will purchase required reading books and supplies for consumers to participate in their college program. The need for the books purchased must be documented in the record of services.

Supplies: NYSCB may authorize up to \$200 per academic year for supplies necessary for the consumer to participate in his/her college program. The need for supplies purchased must be documented in a case contact. Examples of supplies are:

1. cost of audiotapes
2. copying costs
3. Braille paper

NYSCB recognizes that the cap on supplies may be insufficient for certain college courses (e.g., photography, commercial art). When the cap is insufficient, additional funds may be provided with documentation of the need for additional supplies from the school or instructor and senior counselor approval.

Supplies Expenses: Part-Time Study, Summer Session, Mini-Semester, Intersession

The allowance for supplies for consumers attending college for part-time study, summer session, mini-semester, and intersession will be applied on a prorata basis.

For consumers taking fewer credits than the equivalent of a full-time semester (e.g., less than 12 credits) NYSCB will pay the actual cost of supplies up to a maximum of \$14.00 per credit.

Example: A consumer who attends a three credit course during intersession can receive a maximum of \$42.00 for supplies.

Supplies purchased during summer session, mini-semester and intersession will be in addition to the maximum per academic year. Supplies purchased for part-time study are included in the maximum per year. In no instance shall total support per session or semester for supplies exceed half the maximum rate for an academic year.

The NYSCB Counselor's Responsibilities

The NYSCB counselor should:

1. encourage the consumer to seek his/her own admission to college
2. offer guidance to the consumer in selecting a particular college to obtain the education necessary to reach his/her vocational goal
3. provide the consumer with information on recording and transcribing books and other coursework
4. assess the consumer's job readiness before the end of the third year of college
5. review the responsibilities listed below with the consumer.

The NYSCB Consumer's Responsibilities

The NYSCB consumer attending college has responsibility to:

1. maintain adequate academic performance (as defined in the policy)
2. provide the NYSCB counselor with copies of course grades
3. report any problems affecting his/her performance to the NYSCB counselor
4. report any anticipated changes in program to the NYSCB counselor
5. submit the college's billing statement to the NYSCB counselor if NYSCB is paying for college training
6. participate in a minimum of two face-to-face progress review meetings per academic year with the NYSCB counselor
7. cooperate to the maximum extent feasible with the NYSCB counselor in exploring and applying for comparable benefits

8. submit written verification of yearly application for comparable benefits funding to the NYSCB counselor
9. notify the NYSCB counselor if excess financial aid is received directly from the college. The counselor will determine whether the funds should be refunded to NYSCB or applied to the following semester's expenses.
10. provide the NYSCB counselor with receipts as required in this policy.

AUTHORIZING MAINTENANCE AND TRANSPORTATION

General Guidelines

1. All authorizations for maintenance and transportation must include the beginning and end dates of the semester in the details section on the authorization. This should be based on information from the school calendar for the school the student is attending.
2. Receipts for maintenance, transportation and supplies should be obtained from the consumer and attached to the appropriate authorization in CIS.

These guidelines should be applied in accordance with established NYSCB policy regarding use of comparable benefits, maximum expenditures, etc.

Specific Guidelines

Commuting Students - Transportation

Since it is understood that students must not only attend classes, but also use the library, meet with instructors and access laboratories or other special facilities, counselors may assume that the student usually attends the college program five days per week. The number of days of class attendance per week should not be shown on the authorization.

For commuting students, NYSCB will authorize the actual cost of one roundtrip per day between the student's home and the college program, five days per week, less holidays during which the school is closed.

Residential Students – Room, Board and Transportation

For students residing in a dormitory on campus, the counselor will authorize maintenance (for room and board) and transportation, up to the established maximums, as follows:

Room and Board - rate per semester for dormitory and standard meal plan up to the established maximum of \$4,000 per semester/\$8,000 per academic year.

If the student is not purchasing a meal plan but is being provided a meal allowance, the counselor can pay a maximum of \$400/month (not to exceed the maximum allowable payment of \$4,000 per semester/\$8,000 per academic year for room and board) of school attendance based on the beginning and end dates of the semester. These dates must be entered in the details section of the authorization.

Transportation - actual cost or common carrier rate one way between the student's home and the college at the beginning and end of the semester or trimester; actual cost or common carrier rate for travel home due to the death or serious illness of a member of the consumer's immediate family.

Off-Campus Students – Room, Board and Transportation

NYSCB will pay actual costs up to a maximum of \$4,000 per semester and \$8,000 per academic year for room, board and transportation for students residing off-campus. The amount paid will be based on the actual costs of the student's living situation plus a maximum of \$400/month for board expenses, not to exceed the maximum allowable payment of \$4,000 per semester/\$8,000 per academic year for room, board and transportation. The monthly board allowance should be prorated during months when school is not in session for the entire month.

The consumer must provide documentation of actual room costs (a copy of the lease agreement or a written statement from the landlord specifying the number of individuals sharing the living space and either a receipt from the landlord for the consumer's portion of the rent or a copy of the cancelled check payable to the landlord). This documentation must be kept in the consumer's electronic case folder.

Additional funds for day-to-day transportation can be provided if needed and the student demonstrates that the payment from NYSCB, and from PELL and SSI, for those that receive those benefits, does not cover the cost of their room, board and transportation.