

STATE OF VERMONT
AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES

DCF

Department for Children and Families

BULLETIN NO.: 25-20

FROM: Miranda Gray, Deputy Commissioner
Economic Services Division

DATE: 9/17/25

SUBJECT: Reach Up and Reach Up Services Procedures

CHANGES ADOPTED EFFECTIVE 10/1/2025

INSTRUCTIONS

X **Maintain Manual - See instructions below.**
 Proposed Regulation - Retain bulletin
and attachments until you receive
Manual Maintenance Bulletin: _____
 Information or Instructions - Retain
Until _____

MANUAL REFERENCE(S):

P-2200

P-2300

P-2213D- Updated new numbers for 2026 for Income from providing childcare.

P-2213E- Was updated with rule cites and to align with the RU Services procedure 2330. Clarification that in-kind income is considered a form of earned income.

P-2213F- Updated new numbers for 2026 for Room and Board Income.

P-2215- Clarification on adding an ABSP panel for parent living with legal caretaker.

P-2215A- This was split into two procedures (2215 and 2215A) to separate out information specific about the 137. Clarification on the pages OCS requires for a 137 Child Support Authorization to be valid.

P-2215B- Added that 137W (OCS waiver) should be scanned to On Base and provided information on consulting with District Management team before releasing records if there is a records request that includes child support waiver.

P-2340- Clarification added on 2 parent households accessing transportation repairs on 1 vs 2 vehicles.

P-2341- Removed mileage smart information as no longer exists. Added in clarification on GNG list if there is no active license. Added in clarification on how we handle if someone declines a GNG/BGS car. Added in clarification on ICAN housing and utility support service funds.

Manual Maintenance

Significant changes are indicated by highlighting text in gray.

Reach Up Procedure

<u>Remove</u>		<u>Insert</u>	
P-2213D	(24-18)	P-2213D	(25-20)
P-2213E	(20-08)	P-2213E	(25-20)
P-2213F	(24-18)	P-2213F	(25-20)
Nothing		P-2215	(25-20)
P-2215A	(23-12)	P-2215A	(25-20)
P-2215B	(23-12)	P-2215B	(25-20)

Reach Up Services Procedure

<u>Remove</u>		<u>Insert</u>	
P-2340	(24-20)	P-2340	(25-20)
P-2341	(24-20)	P-2341	(25-20)

P-2213 INCOME (continued)

P-2213D Income from Providing Child Care (Reach Up rule 2251.3) (10/01/2025, 25-20)

If payment received is:

Weekly: multiply by 4.3.

Bi-monthly: multiply by 2.15.

Monthly: use **monthly** figure.

Meal Deductions:

A participant who is providing child care for other children in their own home can deduct the cost of meals and snacks for the children from earned income as a business expense. To receive this deduction the household must report the number of children receiving meals; the number of days on which meals were provided; and the type of meals provided. Use the following standard deductions or actual documented expenses, if higher.

	FFY 25	FFY 26
Breakfast	\$1.66 per day	\$1.70 per day
Lunch only	\$3.15 per day	\$3.22 per day
Dinner only	\$3.15 per day	\$3.22 per day
Snack	\$0.93 per day	\$0.96 per day

Need to know if the childcare provider is receiving a state reimbursement for food. If so, deduct the reimbursement from the expenses.

Other Business Expenses:

Can be counted if documented, such as a portion of the rent, toys, non-meal related supplies.

In cases that have documented non-meal related expenses, complete the following:

1. Manually calculate the total monthly meal expense using either the standard deduction table or the actual verified expenses (whichever is higher).
2. Calculate the monthly total for non-meal related expenses.

3. Add the two expenses together (meal and non-meal) and enter the total in the ACTUALS field on the DCIN panel. For these cases the entries in the meals fields will be disregarded and the amount in the ACTUALS field used.

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12/21/15 13:15 DEPENDENT CARE INCOME QUESTION 24 ( DCIN . 01 )
                                (LAST UPDATED: 12/21/15 13:15 | ASPAFC )

PERSON WITH INCOME                INCOME  AMOUNT      NUMBER OF MEALS PROVIDED:
FROM BABYSITTING                 FREQ  $$$$$$ ¢¢  BREAKFAST LUNCH DINNER SNACKS
DIANNA M GARNER                   M      1450 00      200      200      240      240

                                MONTHLY AMOUNT      MONTHLY NUMBER OF MEALS:
                                $$$$$$ $$      BREAKFAST LUNCH DINNER SNACKS
                                1450 00      200      200      240      240

COUNT RECUR                     EXPENSE          ACTUAL          ***** WARNING! *****
CODE  (Y-N)      EXPENSE  AMOUNT  EXPENSES  (RUFA, MED, TCC WILL USE THE
-      Y          FREQ    $$$$$$ $  $$$$$$ $  'TABLE' OR 'ACTUAL', WHICH-
                                EVER IS HIGHER. FS & SF WILL
COUNTABLE CODES:                USE 'TABLE' IF 'ACTUAL' IS
BLANK - ALL PROGRAMS              BLANK OR ZEROES. IF 'ACTUAL'
A - RUFA, RUFA-ME, TCC            FIELD IS COMPLETED, FS & SF
F - FS                             WILL USE 'ACTUAL').
M - SSI-ME
S - SF

USER: 084 FNX: STAT MODE: C RPTGRP: 666 39 8792 PERIOD: 12 15 COMMAND:
DO: B IMS: SB2 REPORTING ADULT: DIANNA M GARNER
  
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BPS Support

Watch the ACCESS Eligibility Training Video [\(DCIN\) Entering Day Care Income](#) (internal ESD staff site).

P-2213 INCOME (continued)

P-2213E In-Kind Income (Reach Up rule 2248.2) (10/01/2025, 25-20)

In-kind income is considered a form of earned income when someone works and receives full or partial shelter instead of cash payment.

A portion of this income is counted in the Reach Up budget.

See Reach Up Services procedure [2330 Paid Employment and Income Reporting](#) for how in-kind income counts towards the federal TANF Work Participation Rate (WPR).

BPS Support

Entering an INKD panel

See the ACCESS Eligibility Training video: [\(INKD\) Creating and Viewing In-kind Income Panel](#).

Calculating In-Kind Income as Shelter

Determine the amount of the in-kind income:

The in-kind income is either the actual value of the work as determined by the landlord/employer, OR the maximum shelter allowance, whichever is LESS (\$450/400).

Example:

Mr. Bradley and his son rent an apartment in Rutland valued at \$800 a month. Mr. Bradley helps the landlord with maintenance of the apartment complex. The landlord reduces the rent by \$300 a month.

Determine how much of the in-kind income to count in the budget:

Multiply in-kind income X's the ratable reduction (.496).

In-Kind income	\$300
Ratable Reduction (Must be calculated manually)	<u>X .496</u>
Countable in-kind income	=\$148.80

On the INKD panel:

Enter \$ 300 in the Claimed Value field.
 Enter \$ 148.80 in the Equiv Amount field.
 Enter a "Y" in the Recur field of the INKD panel.

On the RENT panel:
 Enter the incurred shelter amount (market value): \$800.

INKD

Earned In-kind Income

12/21/15 13:09 EARNED INKIND INCOME QUESTION 23 (INKD . 01)
 (LAST UPDATED: / / : | ASPAFB)

NAME OF PERSON WITH INKIND INCOME	CLAIMED VALUE \$\$\$\$\$ ¢¢	EQUIV AMOUNT \$\$\$\$\$ ¢¢	RECUR? (Y-N)
DANIEL W SARTWELL	00300 00	00148 80	Y

USER: 084 FNX: STAT MODE: C RPTGRP: 666 77 4474 PERIOD: 12 15 COMMAND: _____
 DO: B IMS: 377 REPORTING ADULT: DANIEL W SARTWELL 3

x .496

This will allow ACCESS to count \$148.80 as earned income.

In-kind income more than maximum shelter allowance

Regardless of the value given to the shelter, the most that can be counted as income the maximum housing standard, ratably reduced.

Example:

Participant outside of Chittenden County acts as a **property manager** in an apartment complex and has their \$800 rent reduced by \$500. Because \$500 is more than the maximum shelter allowance, ratably reduce the maximum shelter allowance.

Maximum Shelter Allowance	\$400
Ratable Reduction (Must be calculated manually)	<u>X .496</u>
Countable in-kind income	=\$198.40

On the INKD panel:
 Enter \$500 in the Claimed Value field.
 Enter \$ 198.40 in the Equiv Amount field.

Enter a "Y" in the Recur field of the INKD panel.

On the RENT panel:

Enter the incurred shelter amount (market value): \$800.

P-2213 INCOME (continued)

P-2213F Room and Board Income (Reach Up rule 2251.2) (10/01/2025, 25-20)

Income from Room and Board means that the participant is renting out a room and providing meals for one cost. The income for this type of business is entered on the RBIN panel in ACCESS.

During the interview, clarify if meals are really included. Sometime the term “room and board” is used even when just housing is involved.

Business expenses for the cost of Room and Board are either Standard Deduction or the Actual Documented Expenses, whichever is the higher amount.

Standard Deduction FFY2026

ACCESS	Group Size							
Code	Type		1	2	3	4	5	6+
1	Room Only		254	465	669	847	1008	1211
2	2/3 Board		199	364	523	663	789	947
3	Board Only		298	546	785	994	1183	1421
4	Room & 2/3 Board		453	829	1192	1510	1797	2158
5	Room & Board		552	1011	1454	1841	2191	2632

Actual Documented Expense

The actual documented amount of business expenses for room and/or board as long as the amount does not exceed the income received from the roomers and boarders.

BPS Support

Watch the ACCESS Eligibility Training Video [\(RBIN\) Entering a Room and Board Income Panel](#) (internal ESD staff site).

P2215 CHILD SUPPORT (Reach Up rule 2232)(25-20)

Child support must be pursued from any parent that is not in the household. These parents are considered the “Absent Parent” (ABSP) or “Non-Custodial Parent” (NCP).

Example:

A person is married to their second spouse and lives with the two children from a previous marriage. Pursue support from the first spouse, the birth parent of the children.

Caretakers must agree to pursue any support for children they are caring for. The Office of Child Support (OCS) can clarify how this process works for caretakers.

Determining who to list as Head of Household

If household is applying and only one parent has a child or children with an absent parent, and that parent is not the Head of Household according to the application, ask if the household minds if that parent is listed in ACCESS first. If they agree, enter a voluntary withdrawal for the Head of Household and APPL the household under the other parent’s name. Ask the Application & Document Processing Center (ADPC) to mirror the documents in both cases.

If the family does not want us to switch the Head of Household, see procedure 2215A for more information about Signing the Child Support Authorization ([form 137](#))

Example:

Pat and Sam are newlyweds. Pat’s son is 5 years old from a previous marriage. When the family submitted their application, Sam was listed as the Head of Household. Since Sam is not the birth parent, it would be easier for OCS to direct the payments to the department if Pat was the Head of Household.

Determining who to list as the Absent Parent

Ask the household to list any and all possible absent parents to the child. OCS will assist the household through the process of identifying the birth parent if necessary.

If the household claims they cannot identify a parent, ask them for the names of all potential parents, complete [137](#)’s for each of them, and create an ABSP panel for each possibility in ACCESS.

Voluntary Acknowledgement of Parenthood (VAP)

Effective July 1, 2018, the Vermont Parentage Act (VPA) (15C VSA 305(a)) expanded the categories of individuals recognized as parents under Vermont law. The VPA also allows courts to determine that a child has more than two parents.

This means that a Reach Up applicant or participant completing a [137](#) must list anyone who has signed a VAP and/or falls into one or more of the categories below as a noncustodial parent.

The VPA recognizes the following individuals as parents:

- A person who gave birth to the child
- A person who is the alleged genetic parent of the child
- A person who is an intended parent of the child.
An intended parent is a person who has manifested an intent to be legally bound as a parent of child resulting from assisted reproduction or surrogacy.
- A person who has adopted the child
- A person who was married to the person who gave birth to the child when the child was born
- A person who was married to the person who gave birth to child and the child was born not later than 300 days after the termination of the marriage
- A person who was married to the person who gave birth to the child after the child's birth and is named as a parent on the birth certificate
- A person who lived in the same household with the child for the first two years of the child's life and, together with the child's other parent, openly acknowledged the child as their child
- A person who has been adjudicated to be a parent of the child (a court has issued an order adjudicating the person as a parent)

Sperm, egg and embryo donor

If applicant reports the child was conserved using a sperm egg, embryo donor, or if there was a gestational carrier (surrogate) under the Vermont Parentage Act, the donor is not a parent, and a Child Support Authorization (form [137](#)) is not needed.

In most situations the Department can accept the information reported by the applicant. However, due to the variety of donor situations and informal contract it is best practice

to look at each case individually. If the case is questionable, please forward it to AOPS. Under rule 2208.3 the Department can request additional verification.

Adoption by single parent

If an applicant reports they are the only parent of a child due to adoption, a Child Support Authorization (form [137](#)) is not needed. ACCESS will ask for an ABSP panel to be added. Enter the ABSP using the name "Unknown Unknown" with a temporary social security number and explain in CATN and WARN.

Terminated parental rights

For households where parental rights have been terminated and ACCESS is still asking for an ABSP panel, enter 1 or more ABSP panels using the name "Unknown Unknown" with a temporary social security number and explain in CATN and WARN. Code the Absent Parent Coop Code 7 for a lifetime waiver.

Absent Parent Removal Reasons

Certain individuals have been ruled out as having an obligation to a child. This occurs when someone has had their parental rights terminated, or when OCS has determined through DNA testing that an individual is not considered a parent.

OCS enters the correct removal reason. The child's name will have to be removed from the absent parent panel, or the panel should be deleted if there are no other children listed.

New Child Support Authorizations ([137](#)) will need to be collected if there are other potential parents.

	ASHADMCT
Removal Reasons	
D1 ON ANFC - OVER AGE FOR 4D	
D2 ON IV-D - OVER AGE FOR PA	
D3 CHILD WITH AP OR OTHER REL	
D4 EMANCIPATED MINOR	
D5 AP EXCLUDED BY BLOOD TEST	
D6 ADOPTED	
D7 TERMIN OF PARENTAL RIGHTS	
D9 OTHER	

IV-D (or 4D) = Child Support side of ACCESS
PA = TANF funded public assistance

Removal reasons D1, D3, and D9 are only informational and will allow you to continue. All other codes will require the child to be removed from the panel, or for the panel to be deleted.

Assigning a temporary SSN for an absent parent

If a Social Security number (SSN) of the absent parent is unknown, a temporary (666) number will have to be assigned.

Follow the local district procedure for obtaining a temporary SSN. **Before assigning a temporary number check thoroughly in ACCESS for a known number (either a Social Security number or a previously assigned temporary number) for the absent parent.**

Places to look:

- Look up the Head of household or custodial parent's name in PERS D to see if the noncustodial parent is listed.
- Look up the Head of household or custodial parent's name in CUST D (this is the child support side of ACCESS) to see if the noncustodial parent is listed.
- Look up the child in PERS D to see if the noncustodial parent is already listed from another case.

Child support received while applying for Reach Up

Explain that until a decision is made on the grant, the household may use any child support received for living expenses but must report it to the department. All support received after a grant has been approved must also be reported to the department and will count as unearned income.

Past due child support

Any past-due support owed to the household by any noncustodial parent prior to application may be used after the household is approved to reimburse the department for any benefits paid to the household or to pay off any money owed to the department that accumulated while the household was on benefits.

Amounts more than the department's reimbursement will be paid to the household.

Requesting a child support waiver

Explain what a waiver of cooperation is. Households can request a waiver by marking off Waiver Request in Section 8 of the Child Support Authorization ([137](#)), and completing a Waiver of Cooperation for Child and Medical Support ([form 137W](#)). See Reach Up procedure [2215B](#) for more information.

Sharing information with OCS

When a Reach Up/PSE case is approved, enter a CATN in ACCESS and send a copy of the CATN/TODO to the OCS Record Center worker number FMU.

Use the top portion of the CATN screen to enter the CATN/TODO so that a copy remains available in CATN.

The CATN/TODO should only be sent to FMU. Delete the worker number that pre-populates in the “Send Reminder to workers” field and replace it with “FMU”*.

Do not enter the CATN/TODO while the case is pending Reach Up/PSE.

Include the following information in the CATN/TODO:

- Which program is approved (Reach Up/PSE)
- 137 Status in OnBase (137 is available in OnBase/137 being scanned to OnBase)
- If applicant is requesting a waiver include: Waiver has been requested.

Examples if there is only one ABSP/137s:

Reach Up is approved. 137 is in OnBase.

Or

PSE is approved. 137 is being scanned to OnBase today. Waiver has been requested.

If there are more than one ABSP also indicate:

- Name of HOH
- Number of 137s
- Initials of each ABSP

Example if there are multiple ABSPs/137s:

Chris Dorer (HOH/CP SSN) has been approved Reach Up. Two 137s available in OnBase for BS and JJ.

Example:

05/22/19 13:35	CASE ACTION LOG	ASPATC
TYPE OF CONTACT: C Person Contacted: D_ _____		
MSG: Reach Up is approved. 137 is in Onbase. _____		

List MD Cases?		
CS Worker: 621		
CS Supv: 648		
BPS Supv: 183		
Case Mgr: _____		
RU Supv: _____		
SF Worker: GN1		
*** REMINDER FUNCTION ***		
Reminder Date: 05 22 2019 ('*' in first M = Today's date)		
Send Reminder to workers: FMU _____		
Of the above entry (if any) OR of the following:		
Msg: _____		

USER: 430 FNX: CATN MODE: C RPTGRP: _____ PERIOD: 05 19 COMMAND: _____		
DO: N IMS: GN1 REPORTING ADULT: _____		
F8= 'MORE' Shift-F3= 'EXIT' Shift-F12= 'HELP'		

*If the ESD worker number is left in the reminder section it will not send to the OCS worker number.

Changes to Reach Up household

Adding a child with an absent parent

If, at some future date, a child whose parent is absent enters the household, a new 137 must be obtained using a 202V for the new absent parent before the child is added to the benefit.

If the child is added, enter a CATN and send a copy of the CATN/TODO to the OCS worker number FMU, that a new child has been added to a Reach Up benefit. Indicate if [137](#) form is available in OnBase or is being scanned. Indicate if a Waiver has been requested.

137 for new child not returned

If the [137](#) is not returned, the household's Reach Up must close.

Unborn children with absent parent

Unborn Children should not have the [137](#)'s gathered until that child is born.

When the birth of the child is reported, mail the [137](#)'s to the parent with a 202VCR with a 10-day time frame to return the [137](#)'s.

Inform OCS as done above for adding a new child.

137 for new baby not returned

If the [137](#)'s are not returned, the household's Reach Up must be closed or denied.

ABSP joins Reach Up household

If the absent parent of a child joins the Reach Up household, delete the ABSP panel, and send a TODO to the OCS worker indicated on the CATN C screen.

P2215 CHILD SUPPORT (Reach Up rule 2232)

P2215A Assignment of Child Support Rights (10/01/2025, 25-20)

Signing the Child (and Medical) Support Authorization ([form 137](#)) assigns child support rights of the parent/caretaker to the Department for Children and Families (DCF). It is also an application to work with the Office of Child Support (OCS).

If the household refuses to assign support attempt to get the refusal in writing. The document will then be scanned into OnBase. Make a note in CATN and deny the application.

Children receiving SSI

Signing the Child Support Authorization (137) does NOT assign child support rights related to a child that receives SSI. However, cooperation with OCS is required for any child of an individual receiving Reach Up, regardless of whether the child is included in the Reach Up household. In addition, OCS collects information about all children living with the custodial parent to ensure that they distribute child support correctly.

Deceased Absent Parent

Initial Reach Up applications must have one Child Support Authorization ([137](#)) that indicates ABSP is deceased. Ask the household if they would like to work with OCS to pursue parentage of the deceased absent parent. There are times when a child may be eligible for survivors' benefits if parentage is established.

Enter code 3 for Absent Parent Assign Code on the ABSP panel. Enter a CATN and a WARN on case. If the household is interested in working with OCS, send an email to AHS.DCFOCS137Submission@Vermont.gov.

If household has been on Reach Up before, and a copy of the original Child Support Authorization is available in OnBase, print the original 137 that indicates parent is deceased and then rescan with current date to demonstrate it has been documented. Enter a new CATN and update WARN as needed.

Information required for the Child Support Authorization (137) to be considered valid

OCS requires that pages 1 through 7 of the signed Child Support Authorization (137) be submitted to ESD in order for the form to be considered valid. This includes pages 4 and 5 which do not have any fields for the household to complete but does include statements of understanding from OCS and important information about child support & Reach Up/PSE.

In order for the 137 to be considered valid, the following information must be filled out by the person signing the form:

- The name of the head of household or custodian parent;
- The name of the ABSP (non-custodial) parent;
- The name of all the children shared between the head of household/ custodian parent and the ABSP (non-custodial) parent;
- Signatures on both pages requiring signatures (page 6 and page 7);
- See notes below about signing the 137
- If a waiver was requested on the 137, and it was determined a waiver was not wanted—a new 137 or an updated 137 would be required.
- If the household marked the waiver box incorrectly, have the household cross it out, initial and date the change; or collect a new 137 on which the waiver box is not checked off.

Other missing information on the 137

If ESD knows other information about the ABSP whose name is listed on the Child Support Authorization (137) some information can be added to the physical form or a “sticky” note can be added to the document in OnBase. Update the ABSP panel correctly. Indicate in the note what information was completed by the Department.

Information that can be added to the 137 by the Department includes: address, place of employment, date of birth or social security number.

Signing the Child Support Authorization (137)

The Head of Household/custodial parent should complete the Child Support Authorization (137).

Two parent household absent parent associated with second adult

The custodial parent must co-sign the Child Support Authorization (137) if they are not the Head of Household but are included in the Reach Up household.

Example:

Tom and Jane are not married but have a child (Rowan) in common. Jane also has a child (Maya) that lives with them from a previous relationship. They apply for Reach Up with Tom as the Head of Household (listed first on the application). Tom and Jane must both sign the Child Support Authorization (137) for Maya's absent parent, Bill.

Minor parents

If the applicant is a minor, their guardian must also sign and date the Child Support Authorization (137) for the paperwork to be considered valid by OCS.

Legal caretakers and parents living together

In households where the caretaker remains the payee because they have legal guardianship and have agreed to add the birth parent to the Reach Up benefit, the Child Support Authorization (137) will have to be completed and signed by all parties that have either a legal or parental relationship to the child.

Example:

Melissa took in her niece Shelley of whom she has legal custody per court order; she has a Reach Up child only grant. Shelley's mom, Renee moved into Melissa's home. Melissa agrees to have Renee added to the Reach Up household but remains the payee of the benefit. Child Support Authorization should be signed by both Melissa and Renee.

A 137 does not need to be collected naming the birth parent that is living in the home. See BPS Support below for entering an ABSP panel in these situations.

Reach First applications

If a household is granted Reach First, do not request a 137. Enter information in an ABSP panel as it is listed on the 202 application or as it was previously known to the department. If the absent parent information is unknown, enter it as UNKOWN. Enter code 4 in the Absent Parent Assign Code.

If a case transitions from Reach First to Reach Up, request a 137 using a 202V. If Reach Up is approved enter a CATN and send a copy of the CATN/TODO to the OCS

worker number FMU when transfer is complete. Indicate if 137 form is available in OnBase or is being scanned. Indicate if a Waiver has been requested.

Checking absent parent information at time of recertification

At every annual recertification check that a Child Support Authorization (137) is available in OnBase. If one is not available, request a new one using a 202RL2.

Review with the household the current information about the absent parent available in ACCESS, such as:

- an address or employment change for the absent parent.
- a change in the financial circumstances of the absent parent.
- Social Security Number of the absent parent if previously unknown.
- a divorce since last review.
- court orders since last review.
- the addition of a child of the same noncustodial parent.

A source of information to assist in this check would be the “common update” (COMM) screen in ACCESS. To view this screen, type in the command COMM/D and the head of household and/or custodial parent’s SSN and C as the tenth digit. This will give the latest information OCS has on the absent parent such as his/her most recent employment. Review the information on the screen with the household.

If any information from the household is more current than what OCS has on COMM or what is in the ABSP panel, send a TODO or email message to the OCS worker.

P2215 CHILD SUPPORT (continued)

P2215B Child Support Waiver (Reach Up rule 2232.4) (10/01/2025, 25-20)

Requesting a Waiver

A household can request a waiver from cooperating with the Office of Child Support (OCS) on the Child (and Medical) Support Authorization ([form 137](#)) if they do not feel safe pursuing child support from the absent parent. During the interview, ask every household with an absent parent (ABSP) if they feel safe to pursue child support from that person. If they express safety concerns, explain the child support waiver process.

Explain that the decision to grant or deny a waiver of cooperation is up to the District Management team. Offer to refer family to the District DV Liaison or the local Domestic Violence Organization (Sister Agency) in your area.

Preparing for the waiver request

- Make sure a copy of the Child Support Authorization 137 is scanned into OnBase. The 137W and other supporting documents should be scanned to OnBase.
- If a future records request is ever made that includes child support waiver related documentation consult with the District Management team before releasing records.
- While waiting for additional documents and decision, update ACCESS by entering Absent Parent Coop Code 2 (pending waiver) on the ABSP panel.
- Do not hold up eligibility for waiver paperwork, as long as a 137 has been provided, eligibility can be approved while the waiver is pending.
- Send CATN/TODO to OCS worker number "FMU" when the Reach Up is approved (see P-2215 for the process). OCS will suspend collection activity for households that request a waiver based on the Code 2 on the ABSP panel until a decision on the waiver is made.

Waiver request not indicated on 137

If the waiver request was not indicated on the original 137, do the following:

- If in person, ask the household to correct the 137, initial the change and sign the 137 with a new date.
- If over the phone, add a sticky note to the 137, document in OnBase, indicating that a waiver has been requested.

Discrepancy on 137 about waiver request or not

DOMESTIC/FAMILY VIOLENCE CONCERNS
To be eligible for Reach Up or Post-Secondary Education (PSE), you must apply for services from the Office of Child Support (OCS) and assign your rights to child & medical support to the State of Vermont. If you have any concerns related to domestic/family violence, we want to know. Do you believe pursuing child support could put your, or a child's, safety at risk? ☐ Yes ☐ No If NO, skip to #1. If YES, check one of the boxes below. I'd like to: ☐ Request a waiver from participating in the child support process (<i>see page 6 for more info</i>). ☐ Pursue child support anyway. I can request a waiver later if the situation changes.

- If nothing is checked, and a waiver was not requested verbally, proceed as though no waiver requested. The 137 can be considered complete.
- If Yes is checked, and nothing else, proceed as if waiver is requested.
- If No is checked or the Yes/No boxes are not checked, but the "Request waiver from participating..." box is checked, proceed as if waiver is requested.
- If No is check or the Yes/No boxes are not checked, but the "Pursue child support anyway..." box is checked, proceed as though no waiver is requested.

Waiver request not pursued

If the household decides not to pursue a waiver after checking the waiver box on the 137, OCS will need to have the household indicate that a waiver is not being pursued. It is not enough that ESD emails or CATNs this information.

Requesting the new 137 does not need to hold up eligibility. Reach Up can be approved while waiting for the updated 137.

Ask the household using a VCR to either:

- initial and explain on the original 137 that a waiver is NOT being requested or
- complete a new 137 with the waiver box not checked.

Keep the Absent Parent Coop Code as 02 (pending waiver) while waiting for new 137. If a new 137 is not provided, follow the process to officially deny the waiver rather than close or deny the benefit.

Supporting documentation for waiver request

Typically, if a waiver request is made, ask for the household to complete a Waiver of Cooperation for Child Support ([form 137W](#)).

There are times when a 137W does not need to be requested. This includes the following:

- If ESD District Staff know of the absent parent and have knowledge that would reasonably consider there to be a safety risk if child support was pursued. If this is the case, the ESD District Staff may complete a Waiver of Cooperation Supplement ([form 137WS](#)).
- If the family is working with a domestic violence organization (Sister Agency), and the organization is willing to indicate their support of the waiver request in writing, this can instead be requested.

If in person, have the household complete and sign the [form 137W](#).

- When possible, review the 137W with the household and discuss what supporting information is available. Offer to help if the household has difficulty getting the information without assistance. OCS has access to some records.
- When in doubt talk with a supervisor about if sufficient information is provided.

If not in person, send a written request for the 137W and allow 10 days as the due date. Allow 2 additional business days past the due date for the scanning and dispatching process through the Application & Document Processing Center (ADPC).

Making decision on a waiver request

When all available evidence has been collected or the last deadline has been reached, whichever comes first, complete the top of the Notice of Decision-Waiver Request ([form 220W](#)).

Send the partially completed 220W, referencing what other documents are available in OnBase including the 137, the 137W and/or 137WS if available, and any other documents the household has provided to the designated member of the District Management Team for decision.

The District Management Team designee reviews the waiver request packet. Decisions on whether the waiver should be granted or denied using the guidance found at Reach Up [rules 2232.3, 2232.4 and 2232.5](#) which includes if the waiver should be permanent or reviewed annually. If there are questions or the Management Team is considering denying the waiver, they should call the household member to see if there is any further information that would support the waiver being approved rather than denied.

When the decision has been made, the District Management Team designee finishes completing the 220W, mails the original to the household, uploads it to OnBase and informs OCS of the decision by emailing AHS.DCFOCS137Submission@Vermont.gov. Reference the 220W document in OnBase. (Though very rarely needed—it is allowable to send the 137W and other supporting documents to OCS if they indicate they need it for their documentation purposes.)

The District Management Team designee then enters the appropriate Absent Parent Coop Code in ACCESS:

- 1-waiver denied and parent is cooperating,
- 3-waiver was granted and needs a review date, or
- 7-waiver granted and it is permanent, no review needed.

For waivers that have a review date, set the waiver to match the next Reach Up recertification date. If there are problems entering a date to match the next recertification date, send to COPS to correct.

A clear CATN should be entered regarding the Waiver decision.

Waiver denials

A new 137 is not required by OCS if a waiver has been requested, the request was denied and the denial notice of decision has been sent to the participant and shared with OCS.

Fair Hearing request on waiver decision

If a household requests a Fair Hearing based on the child support waiver decision, email OCS of the request. Enter a CATN explaining that a Fair Hearing request has been made on the waiver decision.

OCS will wait for 90 days following a denial before working a case to make sure the decision is not being appealed.

Waiver Reviews

At each regularly scheduled Reach Up eligibility recertification, review the circumstances of the waiver. The decision of a waiver review must be CATN-ed.

No change to waiver

If there have been no changes, and the household wishes to continue with the waiver, no new forms or supporting material are required. Update the review date to align with the next Reach Up recertification date.

Waiver circumstances changed

If a change has occurred (for example, the household is now in contact with the absent parent) and the waiver request needs to be evaluated again, follow the same procedures as for an initial waiver. The household does not need to resubmit information already in the case record. Let the District Management Team designee know which documents are available in OnBase. Encourage the household to submit any new information (for example, new or continuing threats) and reference that information with the required forms.

Waiver review missed

If it is noticed that a waiver review has been missed during the regular recertification process, attempt to reach the household by phone to complete the review. If unable to reach, err on the side of caution and extend the waiver review date to align with the next Reach Up recertification date.

Reapplying for Reach Up with waiver

Reach Up households granted a child support waiver who then close and re-open with a break in benefits, must still complete a new 137 and request the waiver by checking the box on the 137. However, supporting documentation does not need to be completed. Write on the 137WS that the participant had a waiver in place.

The District Management Team designee can extend a new waiver approval based on the previously provided documentation. A new Notice of Decision- Waiver Request (form 220W) must be sent to the household and to OCS at AHS.DCFOCS137Submission@Vermont.gov.

Example:

Participant applied for Reach Up on 1/20/23 and requested a child support waiver. A 137W was sent to the participant and returned. Waiver was granted with a yearly review and Reach Up was approved 2/1/2023. Waiver granted through 1/31/24.

At the end of July (7/31/23), participant's Reach Up is closed, as they did not return their Interim Report. On 8/1/2023, participant re-applies and new 137 is completed. Participant marks "waiver requested" on the 137 again. At this time, the department can still see that the previous waiver was approved (ABSP panel with code 3 or 7) and writes on the 137WS that waiver has already been approved through 1/31/24 in this case. The District Management Team Designee completes a new 220W based on the waiver information that was provided in 1/2023. The new 220W is sent to both participant and OCS.

BPS Support

Absent Parent Coop Codes

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ASHADMCS
- ABSP Coop Codes
|
| 1 Cooperating.
| 2 Requested Waiver (pending) - no CS collected.
| 3 Waiver Granted - needs review date, no CS collected.
| 4 Not cooperating - 25% grant reduction;Med Support Denial/Close.
| 5 R First or R Ahead- no assignment of support required.
| 7 Waiver Granted - permanent, no CS collected.
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Parent files child support motion while waiver is in place

If either the custodial parent (CP) or the non custodial parent (NCP) files a motion that may lead to establishing or enforcing child support, the waiver code must temporarily be removed to allow OCS to open a case on their side of ACCESS. This will allow OCS to represent ESD. The waiver code can be reentered once the case is open.

OCS will inform Reach Up Central Office (RUCO) when this occurs. RUCO will contact the district and ask that they attempt to reach the family that has the waiver in place. OCS will provide details about the court action and provide a contact name and number for the CP to speak to if they have questions.

The family can either be informed over the phone, in person or in writing of the information that OCS provides. Once the household has been informed or the letter has been mailed, the waiver code on the ABSP panel can be switched to a "1". After OCS opens the case, the code can be switched back to a "3" or "7".

If the family no longer wants the waiver, they must provide an updated 137 indicating they do not want a waiver.

Example of information sent to CP in writing:

We have been informed by the Office of Child Support (OCS) that you filed an action in court to establish child support on [enter date]. Economic Services Division (ESD) had previously granted a waiver to you, so you would not have to cooperate with OCS. In order for OCS to move forward with the case, we must remove the waiver in our computer system. This letter is to inform you of this action. Once OCS has completed the steps they need to take, we will place the waiver back into our computer system.

If you have concerns about this—please contact your case manager or the ESD Call Center at 1800-479-6151 right away.

If you have questions for OCS you can reach out to [enter name of OCS contact]. She can be reached via email @ [enter OCS email address] and her number is [enter OCS phone number].

If you no longer want a child support waiver in place at all, you can complete an updated Child Support Authorization form found here: [137.pdf \(vermont.gov\)](#). Indicate on the form that you no longer want a child support waiver in place.

P-2340 SUPPORT SERVICES (Reach Up Services rules 2303-2310.1) (10/01/2025, 25-20)

Support services are intended to help participants reach their short-term and long-term goals. Support services should contribute to the scaffolding of skills and goals so that participants can obtain employment, training, and education, and ultimately increase their income. Reach Up Case Managers and Career Coaches help participants identify goals by coaching and using the Goal Plan Do Review Revise (GPDR/R) process. Support services help remove obstacles that prevent participants from achieving their goals.

Support services also help individuals accept or maintain paid employment, participate in other Reach Up activities such as assessment and appointments, and help participants engage in training and educational opportunities.

Who is eligible for support services

Support services may be provided to Reach First, Reach Up, Reach Ahead, and Post-Secondary Education (PSE) participants, at any stage in their journey with the program(s)

Reach Up Case Managers and Career Coaches should review the types of support services that are available with each participant, and how to access those support services. Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches should document that participants have been informed of support services on the case note template and add agreed upon or potential support services to the Family Development Plans or goal sheets.

Transitional support services

Participants may also be eligible to receive support services if their Reach First, Reach Up or PSE benefits close, and they have income from unsubsidized employment (Code 99). These supports are limited to six months after the benefits close. Participants do not need to be meeting their work requirement, but they must have earned income that is contributing to them being ineligible for Reach First, Reach Up, or PSE. In order to issue the support service, it must be needed to maintain or increase employment.

Reach Ahead

Participants receiving Reach Ahead may be eligible for support services following the matrix ([Support Services Matrix](#)). In order to issue the support service, it must be needed to maintain or increase employment. In 2 parent households, only the employed

participant is eligible for the support services. If both parents are employed in a 2-parent household, then both parents are eligible for support services if it is needed to maintain or increase employment.

Determining support services

Given the maximum spending limits, Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches must use coaching strategies to help identify the support services that will have the greatest impact in helping participants reach their goals. In some circumstances a participant may be asked to contribute toward the cost of the support service requested.

Participants and Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches should also explore all other community partner resources (e.g. HireAbility, VDOL). In these situations, the Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach should confirm that the remaining balance will be covered before issuing a support service check.

The participant should be empowered to make their own decision on what supports services will help them achieve their goals or overcome obstacles as long as it follows the guidelines outlined in the procedure and support service matrix. The Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach should coach the participant and relay information so the participant is aware of all options. However, the participant should be empowered to make the best decision for their family and Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches honor the participant's expertise in their own lives.

The Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach must explain the spending limits each time they discuss support services, so the participant can make an informed decision.

Spending limitations for non-transportation related expenses

Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coaches review support services at their initial meeting or within the first month of Reach Up services. Support services are regularly reviewed and discussed as part of the Goal, Plan, Do, Review, Revise.

Support service spending limits are outlined on the matrix ([Support Services Matrix](#)) in addition to required forms or reference to other resources. The maximum amount a participant can receive in a state fiscal year (July 1-June 30) is \$400.00 for all support services except for transportation related support services. Reach Up Supervisors cannot double the amount of non-transportation related support services. In 2 Parent households both parents are eligible for support services up to the \$400 maximum.

Spending limitations for transportation related expenses

The maximum amount a participant can receive in a state fiscal year (July 1-June 30) for transportation related support services is \$1,000.00. Reach Up Supervisors can double the amount of transportation related support services as noted on the matrix. In 2 Parent households both parents are eligible for transportation related support services however both parents cannot use transportation related support services for the same vehicle if the support service is for a repair cost. Each parent can use repair cost support services separately if it is for 2 different vehicles.

Special note on GNG and BGS vehicles

Reach Up Central Office will issue the check for the registration, title, and taxes for both BGS and GNG vehicles. Additionally, if there are car repairs completed on a BGS vehicle prior to the car being awarded then that will be issued by Reach Up Central Office and those expenses **do not** count towards the maximum spending limits for transportation related expenses. See [P2341](#) for more information on Transportation Opportunities.

Spending limitations continued

Spending limits ensure Reach Up stays within the Department support services budget, maximizes the number of participants that will receive support services, and creates a more equitable system where every participant is made aware of their availability. Example: If there was no spending limit in place, one participant could receive many support services from many categories while another may not receive any. This does not mean that every participant will receive \$400.00 in non-transportation related support services or that every participant will receive \$1,000.00 in transportation related support services. The amount a participant will receive will depend on their goals, obstacles, community resources, household income, natural supports, etc.

Example #1:

Mary is working on establishing childcare for her 1-year-old and is also working on gaining her license. Mary and Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach discuss support services related to these goals and other community resources. It is determined that Mary will be authorized for a childcare subsidy and that the Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach will support the cost of license fees. Mary is under the \$400 limit for the fiscal year.

Example #2:

Ben has started working with his Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach and is in need of phone minutes to participate in Reach Up Services. Ben has applied for a Qlink phone, but the phone will not arrive for a month. Ben has a long work history and has a job offer that requires Ben to purchase work boots and work clothing for the position. Ben has explored all community resources. Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach will support cost of phone minutes for a month and work boots/clothing. The cost of these support services equals \$400 for that fiscal year.

The spending limits encompass all programs (RF, RU, PSE, and RA). If a participant receives support services on one program and transitions to another, the spending limits follow them to the other program. For example, if someone is on RF and receives \$250.00 in non-transportation related support services, then transitions to RU, they would only be eligible for \$150.00 in non-transportation related support services for the remainder of the fiscal year. If a participant closes and reopens, any supports they have already received this fiscal year would still be counted towards their spending limits. If a participant transfers to another district any support services they have already received would be counted towards their spending limits.

Dentures and childcare authorizations

Dentures and Childcare Authorizations do not fall into either category. A participant must be eligible for support services to receive help with dentures or childcare authorizations. Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach should follow the matrix for guidance.

Denture authorizations should be reviewed with a Reach Up Supervisor prior to approval. Denture resources can be found on SharePoint [Dental Services including Denture Resources](#) (ESD Internal Link).

Childcare authorizations are not authorized for child only households by the Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach. If a parent is receiving a Reach Up child only grant, they can apply for Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) through the regular application. The parent can contact their [local Community Child Care Support Agency](#) if they have any questions about the application.

Caretakers receiving a Reach Up child only caretaker benefit can also apply for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program through the regular application (CCFAP).

Childcare funds that include short-term/sporadic care and recreation costs do count towards the spending limits.

Exploring Other Resources

Before a support service can be issued the Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach in partnership with the participant, needs to explore all other resources available. This includes all community resources such as HireAbility and WIOA, household income and natural supports (family/friends). If the participant's household income or resources can reasonably cover the cost of the support service, the request should be denied. Resources will vary by participant and district. To determine what community resources may be available the Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach can access suggested links from the support services matrix, the [Reach Up - Case Management \(Services\)](#) SharePoint page (internal ESD link), VT 211 and support from Reach Up Supervisors as needed. Before a support service is issued, confirm with the participant what resources they have explored and the outcome. If there are no available resources, then Reach Up support services can be issued within the spending limits.

Reach Up Case Managers and participants can use conversations about support services as a coaching opportunity around establishing budgets, accessing natural supports, prioritizing spending, and establishing goals to increase income. If the participant is amenable, review their budget to determine if other areas of support are needed or if a referral to another service would be helpful. Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches can reference tools such as [Your Money, Your Goals](#) to support participants in financial education. Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches can also offer the use of a [budgeting worksheet](#) to help outline income vs. expenses.

Coaching, Goal setting, and support services

Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches will support participants in the goal setting process which includes use of the Goal Plan Do Review Revise (GPDR/R) tools ([GPDR/R](#)—internal ESD link) creation of a Family Development Plan. Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches and participants should talk about support services in conjunction with the goal setting process. Consider the obstacles that are in place to a participant reaching their goal and if a support service will help to remove that obstacle. Ask appreciative questions [Appreciative Questions](#) and powerful questions [Powerful Questions](#) to help a participant set these goals. If it is identified that a support service may be needed for an established goal then document this on the Family Development Plan and on the case note template. Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches should inform participants of spending limitations regarding support services following the matrix guidelines ([Support Services Matrix](#)). Support services must be directly connected to the identified goal and support the participant in the progression of this goal (consider if the support service is needed to take the next step).

Example#1:

No, do not proceed with issuing a support service.

Suzie is working on getting her GED as her identified goal. Suzie asks for a voucher to get clothing. Clothing is not directly needed to support Suzie in completing her GED. This would be an opportunity to explore other available resources for Suzie to get clothing. Document the denial in case notes.

Example #2:

Yes, proceed forward with issuing a support service.

Suzie is working on getting her GED as her identified goal. Suzie is engaged and making progress on her goal. Suzie has asked for help with cost of the GED test. Suzie applied for funding through Vermont Adult Learning and VSAC, but there was no funding available. Suzie has not accessed any other support services this fiscal year. Proceed with paying for GED test following the matrix spending limits and guidelines. Before approving make sure to review the spending limits with Suzie and ask if Suzie wants to move forward with Reach Up covering this cost. Issue the payment following the support service matrix and document in case notes.

Incentives and goal setting

Incentives can be issued to support participants in achieving their identified goal on their Family Development Plan or GPDR/R goal sheets or for recognition of goal completion. Incentives should be discussed with the participant so the participant can articulate what might help support their goal progression. Incentives can range in amount and frequency depending on the participant's goal/s and circumstance. It is important to consider the maximum spending limits when discussing incentives with participants. Once an incentive is issued participants are able to spend these funds based on their family's needs (EX: could use it to go to a movie, buy food, pay for a fine, or for clothing for their child).

Incentives can be used when a participant re-engages with their Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach during a sanction to help the family to meet their basic needs. The incentive should be discussed with the participant, so the participant is aware of the maximum spending limits.

Exception Requests for Transportation

The Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coach will follow the guidance in Reach Up Services procedure on Transportation Opportunities ([P2341](#)) for exception requests

pertaining to transportation. All exception requests for transportation must be approved through Reach Up Central Office.

Exception Requests for non-transportation related expenses

In order for an exception to be considered the participant must meet one of the following categories:

- Fleeing domestic violence or need of support service to safely leave abusive situation,
- Extreme geographic isolation that prevents the family from accessing food, social support, medical care, early intervention services, laundry, etc

To send an exception request the Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach would complete an [AOPS-Inquiry-Form](#) (internal ESD link) and review with their Reach Up Supervisor before being sent to Reach Up Central Office AHS.DCFESDCOReachUp@vermont.gov for review. All exception requests must include a current budget worksheet [Monthly Budget](#).

Self employment

Support services for self-employment are included on the matrix and spending limits should follow these guidelines.

Support service funds may not be used to support Cannabis Self Employment due to federal laws prohibiting such use of funds.

ICAN support services

Support services available through ICAN-RU are highlighted in yellow on the support service matrix ([Support Services Matrix](#)). If a participant is registered with an active account in Vermont Job Link (VJL) with a current component entered and has an ICAN-RU component on their Family Development Plan, then the ICAN support services should be explored first. If the maximum available support for ICAN-RU is less than the Reach Up support services matrix then a combination can be. The maximum amount a participant can receive in a state fiscal year (July 1-June 30) applies to both ICAN-RU support services and regular RU support services combined. In order to receive these funds all other resources must be exhausted.

When issuing the ICAN-RU support service check through ACCESS make sure to use the correct code 70 E&T Transportation, 71 E&T Childcare, or 72 E&T Other. Use the matrix as a guide.

ICAN Support with Housing and Utilities

Assistance for ICAN-RU Housing and Utility support services (rent, electric, fuel, gas, general, internet), is exempt from the spending limits since it has its own spending limit of two months or \$2000 whatever is less for the year and can only be utilities once per year. Payment can only be made for the month prior to or the first 3 months of employment. Participants must have made progress towards an ICAN-RU component and must:

- Eligible for Job Retention. To be eligible for Job Retention participant must have been in an ICAN-RU component the month prior to or the current month of employment
- Job Retention is only for 3 months from the start of employment. Participants would need to be active Reach Up with Employment, Reach Ahead or code 99.
- Have an active VJL account and an ICAN component entered in VJL in the month of employment or previous month of employment.
- Provide a budget that shows the expense will be paid going forward or a plan for how they will increase their income to be able to afford the expense in two months. Have a reasonable reason why they are behind in rent or utility payments and has an emergent need such as shut off notice or eviction letter.
- 30% of participant income must be used to support housing costs. If current budget supports the expense participants must provide a detailed explanation why they are requesting support.

ICAN support services cannot be used to pay a mortgage payment, refundable deposits, taxes or back utility balance.

Example:

Joe is active Reach Up, has an active VJL account and the component entered in VJL is Job Search. He is engaged with his case manager and has a current goal sheet. In October (the following month) he gains employment, Reach Up closes for 10/31/2025 and he is eligible for Reach Ahead 11/1/2025. Joe's FDP is current, and Job Retention has been entered in VJL for October. Joe is behind in rent for October because Reach Up didn't cover his full rent. He has an eviction notice and will have to leave if he doesn't pay his rent. Joe will be able to afford November's rent and future rent due to his earned income; a budget of expenses has been completed. Joe is eligible for ICAN to pay October's rent after he has paid the 30% of his income toward housing costs.

Documentation of support services

The Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach will document support services in case notes with the following information:

- Support services that have been issued
- The amount of the support service issued
- The date the support services was issued
- Any support services that were reviewed or discussed

Reach Up Case Managers should also include what support service was discussed on the Family Development Plan and GPDR/R worksheets.

Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coaches will need to document all support services issued on a spreadsheet provided by Reach Up Central Office. Support service spreadsheets will be kept on district share drives. Reach Up Supervisors will review the spreadsheet with the Reach Up Case Manager during regular supervision. VABIR leadership and Reach Up Supervisors will review with Career Coaches at least monthly. The purpose of the review is to ensure the procedure and matrix are being followed, Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coaches provide support services regularly, and multiple participants are receiving support service. Reach Up Central Office will periodically review the spreadsheets for budgetary considerations and during case consultation.

Issuing support services

Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches have two business days to issue a support service check after receiving a bill or request for payment from a partner, local business, or participant.

A Payment Authorization for Reach Up Support Service (form [630A](#)) may be used to allow a participant to purchase or obtain a service from a business in the community. The form is then returned to the local District office for payment.

Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches can issue a check through ACCESS using the CHCK C function. Checks can be written directly to a business, or checks can be written to the participant as reimbursement for an expense already paid with prior approval from the Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach. For more information see Reach Up Services procedure [P2340A](#) on writing a support service checks in ACCESS.

Credit Card Purchase Request

Reach Up Case Managers/Career Coaches and Supervisors may request that support services for a participant be paid for by credit card when no other payment method is an option. The credit card is held in central office and the following questions below must be completed when requesting use of credit card. The Questions should be emailed to AHS.DCFESDReachUpPurchaseCard@vermont.gov .

Questions to submit for credit card purchase request:

- Participant name, SSN, and date of request
- Describe the need and why the purchase card needs to be used (instead of check, voucher, reimbursement)
- Item to be purchased (include link to item)
- Item shipped to what name and mailing address
- Participant email address

Example:

Joe and his Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach have established that a lap top is needed for Joe to participate in college courses. Joe has explored all other available resources. Joe is needing the lap top for class in the next week, but doesn't have the Reach Up funds to purchase this and get reimbursement. Joe needs to purchase the lap top online and cannot get it from a local business with a check or voucher. The Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach can submit the credit card request questions to AHS.DCFESDReachUpPurchaseCard@vermont.gov for review.

Once the credit card request questions have been submitted, Reach Up Central Office will review it within 2 Business days and will send a decision back to the Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach. The Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach will document the decision in case notes. The decision should also be saved in the participant's electronic case file.

If approved, RUCO will make the item or service purchase. Items will be shipped to the address listed on the credit card request questions.

If a return or exchange must be made, the participant must notify the Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach as soon as possible. The Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach will then email AHS.DCFESDReachUpPurchaseCard@vermont.gov

to explain the reason for return/exchange. It will be the participant's responsibility to repackage and return the item, however if free returns are available, RUCO will email the shipping label to the participant.

P-2341 Transportation Opportunities (10/01/2025, 25-20)

Vehicle ownership supports the mission of Vermont's Reach Up Program to help families overcome obstacles such as lack of transportation, while improving their finances and improving employment prospects. Owning a car is a life-changing event for families and is strongly tied to upward economic mobility.

Transportation opportunities may be available to participants receiving Reach First, Reach Up, Post-Secondary Education, Reach Ahead, and participants eligible for Code 99 who need reliable transportation to achieve their goals.

It is important for case manager/career coach to have very clear conversations with participants regarding transportation opportunities. Participants should be aware of the opportunities available to them. Case manager/career coaches should never promise support regarding purchasing or receiving a vehicle through Reach Up until they receive correspondence from Reach Up Central Office. If a participant asks their case manager/career coach for help with purchasing a vehicle or a down payment, follow the steps in this procedure. Unless the case manager/career coach has received an email from Reach Up Central Office the case manager/career coach should be clear with the participant that their initial request is denied. However, they may move up the list as cars are purchased/awarded and be eligible in the future.

Initial Screening

Case managers/career coaches should explore transportation with all participants to help them achieve their goals and discuss the costs associated with owning a vehicle and saving for future expenses. The website [Your Money, Your Goals Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#) includes a lot of great resources to consider when purchasing a vehicle.

Valid VT Driver's License

The case manager/career coach confirms the participant has a valid VT driver's license. Participants will need to provide their license number.

If they do not have a valid license or their license is valid in another state, they will need to obtain a VT license before they are to be considered for a vehicle.

Resources Available

The case manager/career coach will confirm if the household has a working vehicle. If the household has a working vehicle, a second vehicle cannot be issued. This includes families with more than one adult. Exceptions may be considered if the health and safety of the children and/or other family members is severely affected by lack of a car, and if owning a car may significantly improve the family's situation. Examples may include:

- Fleeing domestic violence or need vehicle to safely leave abusive situation;
- Literal homelessness with no access to transportation;
- Extreme geographic isolation that prevents family from accessing food, social supports, critical medical care, early intervention services, laundry, etc.

Reach Up Supervisors can send exceptions to AHS.DCFReachUpGNGCars@vermont.gov. Reach Up Central Office team will review exception requests within 48 hours of receiving. If an exception is approved a Transportation Point Sheet will need to be submitted.

Previously received support

If a participant has received a vehicle or support to purchase a vehicle from Reach Up in the past, they are not eligible to receive additional support unless they receive approval from Reach Up Central Office

Exceptions will be considered if the health and safety of the children and/or other family members is severely affected by lack of a car, and if owning a car may significantly improve the family's situation. Examples may include:

- Fleeing domestic violence or need vehicle to safely leave abusive situation;
- Literal homelessness with no access to transportation;
- Extreme geographic isolation that prevents family from accessing food, social supports, critical medical care, early intervention services, laundry, etc.

Additional exceptions may be considered pending on the situation. The case manager/career coach should work with the participant to answer the following questions:

- What support was previously received (GNG Car, BGS Car, help with downpayment or purchasing a vehicle)?
- How long were they able to maintain ownership of the vehicle?

- Why do they no longer have the vehicle?
- Why was the participant not able to increase their income for their next vehicle?
- What planning was done to try to prepare for the inevitable need for a new vehicle?

Reach Up Supervisors can send exceptions to AHS.DCFReachUpGNGCars@vermont.gov. Reach Up Central Office team will review exception requests within 48 hours of receiving and notify the case manager/career coach of a decision by email. If an exception is approved a Transportation Point Sheet will need to be submitted before they will be added to the waiting list.

Car wait list

All participants who would like to pursue car ownership must be added to the car wait list by completing a Transportation Point System ([602TPS fillable.pdf](#)--ESD internal link) and submitting to AHS.DCFReachUpGNGCars@vermont.gov. The form must be typed (not handwritten). Save the form in the following format: date, document type, and participant's initials. Example: 8.21.21 602TPSMB. If the form is not completed correctly, it will be returned.

Do not print, but scan and save this document. The original document is required for the participant to be added to the list. This will allow for the document to be edited if necessary. Save a copy of the 602TPS in the 4th brad of the electronic case file. Enter a case note after submitting a 602TPS for the participant.

Case manager/career coaches select the corresponding number in each category on the form that best fits the participant's current transportation needs. Only select one. The additional information must be completed before submitting the form.

In summary briefly explain the participant's current transportation situation. Include their struggles and success. Indicate if public transportation is available. If they are using public transportation include the participant's experience and why it does not meet their transportation needs. If they are not using public transportation, please explain why.

Prioritizing the list

The participant will be added to a state-wide list of applicants and prioritized by:

- Highest total points;
- Highest urgency score;
- Highest obstacle score;

- Date added to the list.

Reach Up Central Office will prioritize participants at the top of the car waiting list and will email case managers/career coach if a participant they are working with is one of the prioritized participants.

After the case manager/career coach receives an email, they will explain the three options outlined above to the participant, and help the participant think through the pros and cons of each. They choose which option is best for them. These are the only participants who the case manager/career coach should be supporting in potentially purchasing a vehicle using support services.

- The participant will remain on the wait list until they receive a GNG/BGS car, or they purchase a vehicle.
- This conversation must be documented in case notes.

Reviewing/Updating the prioritization list

Updates should be sent by email to AHS.DCFReachUpGNGCars@vermont.gov within 5 business days of the participant's points change. A new 602TPS may be requested.

In addition, the Reach Up Central Office will email the list to Reach Up Supervisors quarterly for review.

The case manager/career coach will:

- Confirm the points are the same or provide an updated 602TPS for any participant on the list that has had changes that were not previously reported.
- Review license expiration dates and update for those who have expired since the 602TPS was submitted.
- Email all changes to AHS.DCFReachUpGNGCars@vermont.gov

If the Reach Up Central Office does not receive any correspondence about the participants on the list, they will remain unchanged on the list.

At any time Reach Up Central Office may ask for any specific update. Case manager/Career Coach will respond within 48 hours. Participants will be placed "on hold" and will not be able to receive a vehicle until the case manager/career coach provides updated information.

Reach Up Central Office will ask for license expiration dates to be updated for those that have expired. If a current license expiration date is not provided within 60 days of

the request, then Reach Up Central Office will remove the participant from the car list. Once the participant has a valid VT drivers license to provide then Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach will submit a new 602TPS to have the participant placed back on the car list if transportation is still a need.

If a participant has closed, but it is expected they reopen within 30 days, they may remain “on hold”. While on hold they are not eligible to receive a vehicle unless they qualify for code 99.

Exceptions to the prioritization on the list

Exceptions may be considered if the health and safety of the children and/or other family members is severely affected by lack of a car, and if owning a car may significantly improve the family’s situation. Examples may include:

- Fleeing domestic violence or need vehicle to safely leave abusive situation;
- Literal homelessness with no access to transportation;
- Extreme geographic isolation that prevents family from accessing food, social supports, critical medical care, early intervention services, laundry, etc.

Reach Up Supervisors can send exceptions to AHS.DCFReachUpGNGCars@vermont.gov. Reach Up Central Office team will review exception requests within 48 hours of receiving and let the Reach Up Supervisor know the outcome.

Opportunities to owning a vehicle

There are two options for a participant to pursue car ownership through Reach Up:

- Reach Up will purchase and give a vehicle to participants through agreements with Good News Garage or Buildings and Grounds Services (BGS).
- The participant can identify a car for purchase from a reputable dealer or private sale, and Reach Up will pay, up to a set amount towards a down payment or cost of purchase.
- Reach Up may pay up to \$3,500 towards the cost of a vehicle, which may be either the full cost of the vehicle if less than \$3,500 or a down payment. The purchase price of the vehicle must be close to or less than the NADA value of the vehicle. If the cost of the vehicle exceeds \$3,500, the monthly car payment cannot exceed 15% of the participant’s current monthly income. They must complete a budget with their case manager and/or a community partner to demonstrate how they will maintain payments.

Car Becomes Available

When a vehicle is available the participant at the top of the list will be selected to receive it. When selecting the participant, the type of vehicle available will be taken into consideration. (i.e., large family size, # of children, transmission type, 4Wheel drive).

When a participant is offered a vehicle (GNG or BGS) and asks for time to consider accepting the vehicle then we can allow up to 72 hours for the participant to respond back.

When a participant is offered a vehicle and declines the Reach Up Case Manager/Career Coach will work with the participant to determine if there is still a transportation obstacle. If there is still a transportation obstacle and the participant declined as the vehicle offered did not meet the family's needs then the participant can remain on the list and be offered the next available vehicle.

If the participant declines a second vehicle then the participant will be removed from the car list unless Reach Up Central Office has determined there is a reasonable reason for the vehicle to be declined or the participant has chosen to identify their own car for purchase and has been given this as option to car ownership by Central Office.

Car available is a GNG vehicle

If a participant is chosen to receive a GNG vehicle, Reach Up Central Office will send an email to the case manager/career coach and Reach Up supervisor.

The case manager/career coach will inform the participant they were selected to receive a GNG vehicle, complete the Car Authorization form ([602TPS](#) --ESD internal link) and email the completed form to [the Reach Up GNG Email group](#). Support the participant on securing insurance. Collision is not required, however highly recommended. Reach Up can help with the cost of insurance following the [Support Services Matrix](#). Review with the participant the importance of following the GNG car warranty.

GNG will send the completed Car Authorization form (602RTP) to the Reach Up Central Office. Reach Up Central Office will issue a check for the registration, title, and taxes. This is exempt from the support service procedure and matrix.

Once GNG receives the Car Authorization form (602RTP), they will begin the placement process, which takes up to 8 days. It can take longer in certain situations.

- GNG will run a license check to ensure the participant holds a valid license and can legally operate a vehicle.
- GNG will contact the participant to arrange a date/time to pick up the vehicle.

- GNG will provide the participant with all the information needed for insurance. They will verify that the participant has required Automotive Insurance.

On the date of the vehicle pick up, GNG will educate the participant on their new vehicle, the warranty that goes with the purchase, and child safety seat instruction.

GNG Warranty

A one-year limited warranty comes with all GNG vehicles. This warranty is intended to support responsible vehicle ownership. Repairs will be focused on vehicle safety and reliability using Vermont State Inspection standards as a guide.

The Warranty applies to the owner and vehicle given by GNG ONLY. The Warranty is non-transferrable and terminates if the vehicle is sold or modified during the warranty period. Repairs not specifically authorized by Good News Garage (or partner garage) are not covered under the warranty.

During the first 3 months or 3,000 miles of ownership, whichever comes first, Good News Garage will repair the vehicle and/or at GNG's option, authorize and pay for a garage near the participant to repair their vehicle if they have mechanical problems or a break down. This includes towing the vehicle if necessary.

Warranty of the power train may be extended for up to 12 months, as long as the participant contacts GNG and authorizes GNG to provide a free Vehicle Wellness check and a free oil change every 3 months or 3,000 miles, whichever comes first. Vehicle Wellness checks need to happen at 3, 6, and 9 months or 3,000, 6,000, and 9,000, whichever comes first. Failure to complete the authorized inspection effectively ends the warranty.

Example if a participant has the vehicle wellness check done at 3 months, but then misses the 6 months vehicle wellness check. The warranty would end at 6 months. GNG would no longer support vehicle repairs, wellness check, or oil changes.

Any concerns with a GNG car the case manager/career coach should support the participant in contacting GNG. If additional support is needed the Reach Up Supervisor can be consulted. If the issue cannot be resolved the Reach Up Supervisor should contact Reach Up Central Office AHS.DCFReachUpGNGCars@vermont.gov for support.

Car available is a BGS vehicle

If a participant is chosen to receive a BGS vehicle, Reach Up Central Office will run a license check to ensure the participant holds a valid license and can legally operate a

vehicle. Reach Up Central Office will then send an email to the case manager/career coach and Reach Up supervisor to inform that the participant has been selected.

The case manager/career coach will inform the participant they were selected to receive a BGS vehicle. The case manager/career coach will work with Reach Up Central Office and the participant on the placement process, which can take up to 10 days or longer in certain situations. The case manager/career coach would do the following once the participant has been chosen and notified.

- Support the participant in securing insurance. Collision is not required, however highly recommended. Reach Up can help with the cost of insurance following the support service procedures and Support Services Matrix).
- Send a copy of the insurance card to the identified Reach Up Central Office staff.
- Coordinate between Reach Up Central Office and the participant a time for vehicle pick up. Vehicles will be picked up at the Waterbury State Office Complex (WSOC) at 280 State Drive Waterbury, VT.
- Educate the participant on their new vehicle and inform the participant that there is no vehicle warranty.

At time of vehicle pick up Reach Up Central Office will complete the following with the participant.

- Temporary vehicle registration and plates
- New vehicle registration form
- Title transfer
- Bill of Sale

Reach Up Central Office will issue a check for the registration, title, and taxes. This is exempt from the support service procedure and matrix. Reach Up Central Office will mail in the registration, title, and tax checks with the above documentation to the Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV). The DMV will then send the participant the registration, plates, and title in the mail. This could take up to 60 days.

BGS vehicles do not come with a warranty. Reach Up Central Office will inform participants of this at time of pick up and will provide with information on any repairs that have been completed on the vehicle by the Reach Up program. Participants can access support with car repairs following the support service procedure and matrix. Please consult with Reach Up Central Office before denying car repairs on a BGS awarded vehicle (if awarded within that fiscal year).

BGS and GNG vehicle fees at time of awarding

Reach Up Central Office will issue a check for registration, title, and taxes for both BGS and GNG vehicles. Additionally, if there are car repairs completed on a BGS vehicle prior to the car being awarded then that will be issued by Reach Up Central Office and those expenses do not count towards the maximum spending limits for transportation related expenses.

Car for Purchase

If a participant is eligible to find a car for purchase Reach Up Central Office will notify the case manager/career coach of this opportunity.

If participant finds a car for purchase the case manager/career coach will answer **all** questions below and sends an email to AHS.DCFReachUpGNGCars@vermont.gov for final approval. If you don't have an answer to a question, note the reason why. Reach Up Central Office **MUST** approve before a vehicle is purchased. Requests that are approved will be issued using Support Services code 63) GNG/CAM Vehicles, case manager/career coach will issue the check to the dealership or lender.

- Have you verified that the participant has a current driver's license?
- What is the make, model, year, and mileage of the vehicle? What is the current NADA value?
- What is the asking purchase price?
- Has a GNG partner or reputable local garage looked over the vehicle to ensure it is in good condition and inspectable?
- What is the plan to insure the vehicle?
- If the participant will have a car payment, how does the participant plan to keep up with the payments? What will the car payment be?
- Give a brief description of the conversation regarding budget and car ownership and which tool(s) you used in that conversation.

Down payment

If this is a request for a down payment the case manager/career coach will answer all questions below and sends an email to AHS.DCFReachUpGNGCars@vermont.gov for final approval. If you don't have an answer to a question, note the reason why. Reach Up Central Office **MUST** be approved before a down payment is supported. Requests that are approved will be issued using Support Services code 63) GNG/CAM Vehicles, case manager/career coach will issue the check to the dealership or lender.

- Have you verified that the participant has a current driver's license?
- What is the make, model, year, and mileage of the vehicle? What is the current NADA value?
- What is the asking purchase price?
- Has a GNG partner or reputable local garage looked over the vehicle to ensure it is in good condition and inspectable?
- What is the plan to insure the vehicle?
- If the participant will have a car payment, how does the participant plan to keep up with the payments? What will the car payment be?
- Give a brief description of the conversation regarding budget and car ownership and which tool(s) you used in that conversation.
- What is the request for the down payment?
- What is the monthly payment?
- Is the payment less than 15% of their current monthly income? Was a budget completed?

Future planning

When participants receive a vehicle through the Reach Up program they almost immediately need to begin working towards a plan for their next vehicle. Many of the vehicles awarded are not intended to last a significant amount of time. The case manager/career coach should support the participant in developing a plan that may include increasing income or savings.

Repossessions/Behind on Payments/Monthly Car Payment

If a participant reports to the case manager their vehicle is in jeopardy of being repossessed, behind on payments, or they cannot make a current monthly payment case managers must complete the following questions and submit to AHS.DCFReachUpGNGCars@vermont.gov for review. Reach Up may pay up to \$3,500 towards the cost. Requests that are approved will be issued using Support Services code 63) GNG/CAM Vehicles, RUCM issues the check to the dealership or lender.

All participants must complete a budget before submitting a request. If they are not working with a financial coach, they should be encouraged to consider this as an option. Please include a 602TPS and a copy of the monthly statement with your request. If the

request is time sensitive due to a repossession date a request can be made without a budget, however the % of income must be provided for the monthly payment.

- How much support are they requesting and why were they unable to make their monthly payment?
- What is the make, model, year, and mileage of the vehicle?
- What is the current NADA value? How much does the participant still owe on the vehicle?
- What is the monthly payment?
- After completing a budget, is the payment less than 15% of their current monthly income? If the monthly payment exceeds 15%, what percent of their current monthly income is the payment.
- Do they have a history of sustaining payments and what is the plan to sustain payments going forward?
- For repossessions what is the amount needed to stop repossession? Please submit documentation from the lender. When is the deadline to pay?
- If the request is higher than \$3,500 what is the plan to cover the remaining balance.
- If approved this remaining balance will need to be paid before Reach Up will issue a check.