

877—33.18(259) Award of financial assistance funds.

33.18(1) Awards. Following the business development specialist's review of the business plan feasibility study, the business development specialist will issue a recommendation to support or not to support the proposed business venture. The counselor shall make a decision regarding approval or denial of the recommendation. If the plan is approved, the job candidate and counselor will review conditions of the financial assistance award and sign the appropriate forms of acknowledgment.

a. Financial assistance funds may be awarded, based on need, up to \$10,000 after approval of a business plan feasibility study and evidence of business need or evidence of business progression. Before receiving financial assistance, the job candidate must demonstrate a dollar-for-dollar match based on the amount of funding needed. The match may be provided through approved existing business assets, cash, conventional financing or other approved sources.

b. Financial assistance funds may be approved for, but are not limited to, equipment, tools, printing of marketing materials, advertising, rent (up to six months), direct-mail postage, raw materials, inventory, insurance (up to six months), and other approved start-up, expansion, or acquisition costs.

33.18(2) Award process. The amount that may be recommended by the business development specialist and approved by the counselor shall be provided when there is a need. Recipients of financial assistance must demonstrate ongoing cooperation by providing the business development specialist with financial information needed to assess business progress before additional funds are expended.

33.18(3) Financial assistance contracts. Contracts for financial assistance funds shall be the responsibility of the division and will be consistent with the authorized use of Title I vocational rehabilitation funds and policy.

33.18(4) Vendors. Procurement of goods or services shall follow procedures established by the department of administrative services. The type of goods or services to be obtained, as well as a timeline for delivery of such, shall be stated by the vendor and agreed upon by the division. Authorization for goods or services shall be made by a counselor employed by the division or the department for the blind based upon the negotiated rate and terms as noted in the contract. A copy of each contract shall be filed with the division. Approval for payment of authorized goods or services shall be made by authorized division personnel.

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