Use of Gift Cards as Incentives

Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH)

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Prepared By: Bureau of Community Behavioral Health Services
Applicability:

1. DSAMH-Operated Program
2. DSAMH State Providers

Approved By: Joanna Champney, Division Director



Date Signed: October 22, 2026

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for managing retail gift cards which are utilized to incentivize client participation in surveys and specialized assessments.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) supports the use of incentives to increase the likelihood of participation of clients in surveys and specialized assessments. Distribution of a gift card is one way in which DSAMH can incentivize such participation. SOR-funded gift cards are distributed by the State Opioid Treatment Authority (SOTA). All other gift cards shall be distributed by the responsible authority. All federal regulations and State requirements must be met.

III. DEFINITIONS

"MCI" means master client index.

"Responsible Manager" means the assigned individual who shall safely store and handle the gift cards once they have been provided by the SOTA or other responsible authorities. The responsible manager for providers shall track all gift cards that have been distributed by DSAMH.

IV. SCOPE

This policy applies to DSAMH-operated programs and DSAMH-contracted programs that use gift cards from DSAMH as incentives.

V. PROCEDURES/RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Eligibility: To be eligible, a person must be connected to a DSAMH-operated or DSAMH-contracted program and agree to participate in the proposed activity. Upon completion of the activity, the gift card shall be provided by the responsible manager.

B. Responsible Manager: A manager shall be assigned by the provider for the safe storage and handling of the gift cards.

C. Storage: Responsible manager shall keep gift cards in a secure, locked area, only accessible by the responsible manager and approved by the responsible authority.

D. Tracking: The responsible manager for each provider shall maintain a log with:
   1. Each card number listed,
   2. Name of receiving individual by card number,
   3. Signature if client is present or MCI of receiving individual if the card is mailed to the client,
   4. The amount included on each gift card, and
   5. Date for receipt of incentive gift card.

E. Usage:
   1. Incentives should be the minimum amount necessary to meet the program and evaluation goals of the grant, up to $30 per person per incentive.
   2. Providers shall not use incentives to make direct payments to individuals to induce them to enter treatment or prevention programs.

VI. POLICY LIFESPAN

This policy will be reviewed annually.

VII. REFERENCES

A. N/A

VIII. RESOURCES

A. https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grants-management/policies-regulations/additional-directives

IX. RELATED POLICIES

A. N/A