# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual

## Manual Overview

The VR Standards for Providers:

* helps ensure TWC customers receive quality services to assist them in achieving a successful outcome to their vocational rehabilitation or independent living goals;
* helps to ensure taxpayer funds are spent wisely and each purchase paid for with public funds represents full value to the taxpayer;
* provides published standards for maintaining compliance; and
* provides criteria in order to meet TWC performance expectations for each purchase.

The latest update to this manual is reflected in the chapters below. Any printed versions may not contain the latest policy changes.

## Stevens Amendment

These activities are financed under the TWC Federal Vocational Rehabilitation grant. For the Federal fiscal year 2023 (October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023), TWC anticipates expending $243,212,287 in Federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds. Funds appropriated by the State pay a minimum of 21.3% of the total costs ($65,824,926) under the Vocational Rehabilitation program. (Revised May 2023)

For purposes of the Supported Employment program, the Vocational Rehabilitation agency receives 94.7 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2023 Federal fiscal year, the total amount of grant funds awarded are $1,482,250. The remaining 5.3 percent ($82,347) are funded by Texas State Appropriations. (Revised May 2023)

For purposes of the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind program, the Vocational Rehabilitation agency receives 90 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2022 Federal fiscal year, the total amount of grant funds awarded are $2,202,209. The remaining 10 percent ($244,690) are funded by Texas State Appropriations. (Revised May 2023)

Contents

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual 1](#_Toc155872697)

[Manual Overview 1](#_Toc155872698)

[Stevens Amendment 1](#_Toc155872699)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 1: Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation 20](#_Toc155872700)

[VR-SFP Chapter 1: Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation 20](#_Toc155872701)

[Competitive Integrated Employment 20](#_Toc155872702)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 2: Obtaining a Contract for Goods and Services 21](#_Toc155872703)

[2.1 Overview of Contracts 22](#_Toc155872704)

[2.2 Eligibility for a Contract 23](#_Toc155872705)

[2.3 Awarded Contracts 24](#_Toc155872706)

[2.4 Standard Terms and Conditions for Contracts 24](#_Toc155872707)

[2.5 Data Security and Confidentiality of Contracts 24](#_Toc155872708)

[2.6 Provider Orientation 24](#_Toc155872709)

[2.7 Renewing Contracts 24](#_Toc155872710)

[2.7.1 Renewal Options 24](#_Toc155872711)

[2.7.2 Renewal Assessment 25](#_Toc155872712)

[2.7.3 Contracts with No Renewal Options 25](#_Toc155872713)

[2.8 Amendments to Contracts 25](#_Toc155872714)

[2.8.1 Adding Counties or Services, Goods, and/or Equipment to a Contract 26](#_Toc155872715)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 3: Basic Standards 26](#_Toc155872716)

[3.1 Overview of the Basic Standards 27](#_Toc155872717)

[3.1.1 Terms Used in the Manual 27](#_Toc155872718)

[3.1.2 Contract Adherence 28](#_Toc155872719)

[3.1.3 Contract Noncompliance and Performance Deficiencies 29](#_Toc155872720)

[3.1.4 Legally Authorized Representative 30](#_Toc155872721)

[3.1.5 TWC Vocational Rehabilitation Contacts 30](#_Toc155872722)

[3.1.6 Contract Types 31](#_Toc155872723)

[3.1.7 Staff of the Contracted Provider 32](#_Toc155872724)

[3.2 Basic Standards - All Contract Types 33](#_Toc155872725)

[3.2.1 Informed Choice 33](#_Toc155872726)

[3.2.2 Customer Communication and Language Needs 34](#_Toc155872727)

[3.2.3 Professionalism 34](#_Toc155872728)

[3.2.4 Conflict of Interest 36](#_Toc155872729)

[3.2.5 Marketing 38](#_Toc155872730)

[3.2.6 Referrals to VR by a Provider 38](#_Toc155872731)

[3.2.7 Confidentiality 39](#_Toc155872732)

[3.2.8 Fraud, Abuse, Misconduct, and Waste 39](#_Toc155872733)

[3.2.9 Safe and Secure Environments 40](#_Toc155872734)

[3.2.10 Allegations or Incidents of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation 40](#_Toc155872735)

[3.2.11 Incident Reporting 43](#_Toc155872736)

[3.2.12 Purchasing Goods and Services 44](#_Toc155872737)

[3.2.13 Services, Goods, and/or Equipment and Premium Fees 48](#_Toc155872738)

[3.2.14 Documentation 49](#_Toc155872739)

[3.2.15 Forms 50](#_Toc155872740)

[3.2.16 Signatures 51](#_Toc155872741)

[3.2.17 Record Storage and Retention 52](#_Toc155872742)

[3.2.18 Background Checks 55](#_Toc155872743)

[3.3 Contactor Standards for Physical Locations 57](#_Toc155872744)

[3.3.1 Definition of Physical Location 57](#_Toc155872745)

[3.3.2 Exemptions to Physical Locations 57](#_Toc155872746)

[3.3.3 Required Accessibility and Safety Records 58](#_Toc155872747)

[3.4 Basic Standards for Service Providers 59](#_Toc155872748)

[3.4.1 Headquarters 59](#_Toc155872749)

[3.4.2 Director 60](#_Toc155872750)

[3.4.3 Staff Qualifications 60](#_Toc155872751)

[3.4.4 Staff-Required Documentation 61](#_Toc155872752)

[3.4.5 Temporary Waiver of Staff Qualifications 62](#_Toc155872753)

[3.4.6 Customer Orientation 63](#_Toc155872754)

[3.4.7 Service Delivery 63](#_Toc155872755)

[3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery 64](#_Toc155872756)

[3.4.9 Transportation 65](#_Toc155872757)

[3.4.10 Training Materials 65](#_Toc155872758)

[3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request 66](#_Toc155872759)

[3.4.12 Termination of Service Delivery 67](#_Toc155872760)

[3.5 Basic Standards for Goods Providers 67](#_Toc155872761)

[3.5.1 Parent Company 68](#_Toc155872762)

[3.5.2 Local Business 68](#_Toc155872763)

[3.5.3 Point of Contact 68](#_Toc155872764)

[3.5.4 Contractor Qualifications 68](#_Toc155872765)

[3.5.5 Contract Modification Request for Goods 69](#_Toc155872766)

[3.6 Contract Monitoring 69](#_Toc155872767)

[3.6.1 Ongoing Monitoring 69](#_Toc155872768)

[3.6.2 Compliance Monitoring 69](#_Toc155872769)

[3.6.3 Unscheduled or Unannounced Compliance Monitoring 69](#_Toc155872770)

[3.6.4 Monitoring Team 70](#_Toc155872771)

[3.6.5. Monitoring Review 70](#_Toc155872772)

[3.6.6 Report of the Monitoring Results 71](#_Toc155872773)

[3.6.7 Corrective Action Plan (CAP) 71](#_Toc155872774)

[3.6.8 Monitoring Closeout 71](#_Toc155872775)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 4: Employment Assessments 72](#_Toc155872776)

[4.1 Overview of Employment Assessments 72](#_Toc155872777)

[4.2 Staff Qualifications 73](#_Toc155872778)

[4.2.1 Vocational Evaluator 73](#_Toc155872779)

[4.2.2 Vocational Evaluator Aide 73](#_Toc155872780)

[4.2.3 Environmental Work Assessment Evaluator 74](#_Toc155872781)

[4.2.4 Career Planning Assessment Evaluator 74](#_Toc155872782)

[4.3 Vocational Evaluation 74](#_Toc155872783)

[4.3.1 Vocational Evaluation Service Description 74](#_Toc155872784)

[4.3.2 Process and Procedure 78](#_Toc155872785)

[4.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 79](#_Toc155872786)

[4.4 Vocational Evaluation - Situational Assessments and Work Samples 80](#_Toc155872787)

[4.4.1 Vocational Evaluation - Situational Assessments and Work Samples Service Description 80](#_Toc155872788)

[4.4.2 Process and Procedure 81](#_Toc155872789)

[4.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 83](#_Toc155872790)

[4.5 Environmental Work Assessment 84](#_Toc155872791)

[4.5.1 Environmental Work Assessment Service Description 84](#_Toc155872792)

[4.5.2 Process and Procedure 85](#_Toc155872793)

[4.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 86](#_Toc155872794)

[4.6 Career Planning Assessment 87](#_Toc155872795)

[4.6.1 Career Planning Assessment Service Description 87](#_Toc155872796)

[4.6.2 Career Planning Assessment Process and Procedure 88](#_Toc155872797)

[4.6.3 Career Planning Assessment Outcomes Required for Payment 90](#_Toc155872798)

[4.7 Employment Assessments Service Fees 90](#_Toc155872799)

[4.8 Resources 91](#_Toc155872800)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 5: Orientation and Mobility Services 91](#_Toc155872801)

[5.1 Overview of Orientation and Mobility Services 91](#_Toc155872802)

[5.2 Qualifications and Training 92](#_Toc155872803)

[5.2.1 Orientation and Mobility Specialist 93](#_Toc155872804)

[5.2.2 Annual Staff Training 93](#_Toc155872805)

[5.2.3 Orientation and Mobility Interns 94](#_Toc155872806)

[5.3 Orientation and Mobility Assessment 95](#_Toc155872807)

[5.3.1 Orientation and Mobility Assessment Service Description 95](#_Toc155872808)

[5.3.2 Process and Procedure 96](#_Toc155872809)

[5.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 97](#_Toc155872810)

[5.4 Orientation and Mobility Training 98](#_Toc155872811)

[5.4.1 Orientation and Mobility Training Service Description 98](#_Toc155872812)

[5.4.2 Process and Procedure 99](#_Toc155872813)

[5.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 101](#_Toc155872814)

[5.5 Orientation and Mobility Service Fee 101](#_Toc155872815)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 6: Hearing Aids and Related Accessories 102](#_Toc155872816)

[6.1 Overview of Services for Hearing Aids and Related Accessories 102](#_Toc155872817)

[6.2 Description of Hearing Aids and Accessories 102](#_Toc155872818)

[6.3 Returns 104](#_Toc155872819)

[6.4 Refunds 104](#_Toc155872820)

[6.5 Warranty 105](#_Toc155872821)

[6.6 Methodology for Payment 105](#_Toc155872822)

[6.7 Process and Procedure 105](#_Toc155872823)

[6.8 Outcomes Required for Payment 105](#_Toc155872824)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 7: Diabetes Self-Management Education Services 106](#_Toc155872825)

[7.1 Overview of Diabetes Self-Management Education Services 106](#_Toc155872826)

[7.2 Staff Qualifications and Training 108](#_Toc155872827)

[7.2.1 Diabetes Educators 108](#_Toc155872828)

[7.2.2 Annual Training 109](#_Toc155872829)

[7.2.3 Texas Confidence Builder Training 110](#_Toc155872830)

[7.3 Assessment of Diabetes Self-Management 111](#_Toc155872831)

[7.3.1 Assessment of Diabetes Self-Management Service Description 111](#_Toc155872832)

[7.3.2 Process and Procedure 113](#_Toc155872833)

[7.3.3 Education and Support Plan 114](#_Toc155872834)

[7.3.4 Outcomes Required for Payment 115](#_Toc155872835)

[7.4 Diabetes Skills Training 116](#_Toc155872836)

[7.4.1 Diabetes Skills Training Service Description 116](#_Toc155872837)

[7.4.2 Process and Procedure 117](#_Toc155872838)

[7.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 118](#_Toc155872839)

[7.5 Post-Training Assessment 119](#_Toc155872840)

[7.5.1 Post-Training Assessment Service Description 119](#_Toc155872841)

[7.5.2 Post-Training Assessment Process and Procedure 119](#_Toc155872842)

[7.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 120](#_Toc155872843)

[7.6 Diabetes Self-Management Education Service Fees 120](#_Toc155872844)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 8: Durable Medical Equipment (DME) 121](#_Toc155872845)

[8.1 Overview of Durable Medical Equipment 121](#_Toc155872846)

[8.2 DME Contractor Qualifications 121](#_Toc155872847)

[8.3 Description of DME 122](#_Toc155872848)

[8.3.1 Professional Recommendations 123](#_Toc155872849)

[8.3.2 Existing Equipment 123](#_Toc155872850)

[8.3.3 Fabricated Goods 123](#_Toc155872851)

[8.4 DME Maintenance and Warranty 124](#_Toc155872852)

[8.5 DME Products Returned 124](#_Toc155872853)

[8.6 DME Methodology for Payment 125](#_Toc155872854)

[8.7 DME Process and Procedure 125](#_Toc155872855)

[8.8 DME Outcomes Required for Payment 126](#_Toc155872856)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 9: Assistive Technology Services for Customers with Visual Impairments 127](#_Toc155872857)

[9.1 Overview of Assistive Technology Services 127](#_Toc155872858)

[9.2 Staff Qualifications and Training 128](#_Toc155872859)

[9.2.1 Assistive Technology (AT) Evaluators 128](#_Toc155872860)

[9.2.2 Assistive Technology (AT) Trainers 129](#_Toc155872861)

[9.2.3 Annual Training 129](#_Toc155872862)

[9.3 Baseline and Post-training Assessments 130](#_Toc155872863)

[9.3.1 Baseline and Post-training Assessments Service Description 130](#_Toc155872864)

[9.3.2 Process and Procedure 130](#_Toc155872865)

[9.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 131](#_Toc155872866)

[9.4 Assistive Technology Evaluations 132](#_Toc155872867)

[9.4.1 Assistive Technology Evaluations Service Description 132](#_Toc155872868)

[9.4.2 Process and Procedure 132](#_Toc155872869)

[9.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 133](#_Toc155872870)

[9.5 Assistive Technology Training 134](#_Toc155872871)

[9.5.1 Assistive Technology Training Service Description 134](#_Toc155872872)

[9.5.2 Process and Procedure 135](#_Toc155872873)

[9.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 137](#_Toc155872874)

[9.6 Assistive Technology Service Fees 137](#_Toc155872875)

[9.6.1 Assistive Technology Service Fees Description 137](#_Toc155872876)

[9.6.2 Assistive Technology Service Fees Table 138](#_Toc155872877)

[9.7 Resources 138](#_Toc155872878)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 10: Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind 139](#_Toc155872879)

[10.1 Overview of Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind 139](#_Toc155872880)

[10.2 Staff Qualifications 141](#_Toc155872881)

[10.3 Independent Living Skills Training 141](#_Toc155872882)

[10.3.1 Service Description 141](#_Toc155872883)

[10.3.2 Process and Procedure 142](#_Toc155872884)

[10.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 146](#_Toc155872885)

[10.4 Orientation and Mobility Services 147](#_Toc155872886)

[10.5 Diabetes Education Services 147](#_Toc155872887)

[10.6 IL Skills Training Service Fees 147](#_Toc155872888)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 11: Supportive Residential Services for Persons in Recovery 147](#_Toc155872889)

[11.1 Service Overview 148](#_Toc155872890)

[11.2 Staff Qualifications 149](#_Toc155872891)

[11.3 Facility Requirements 149](#_Toc155872892)

[11.4 Program Requirements 151](#_Toc155872893)

[11.4.1 Service Description 151](#_Toc155872894)

[11.4.2 Process and Procedure 153](#_Toc155872895)

[11.4.3 Discharge Notice 154](#_Toc155872896)

[11.4.4 Outcomes Required for Payment 154](#_Toc155872897)

[11.5 Supportive Residential Service Fees 155](#_Toc155872898)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 12: Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) 155](#_Toc155872899)

[12.1 Wellness Recovery Action Plan Service 155](#_Toc155872900)

[12.2 Staff Qualifications 156](#_Toc155872901)

[12.2.1 WRAP Facilitator 157](#_Toc155872902)

[12.3 Wellness Recovery Action Plan 157](#_Toc155872903)

[12.3.1 Service Description 157](#_Toc155872904)

[12.3.2 Process and Procedure 159](#_Toc155872905)

[12.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 160](#_Toc155872906)

[12.4 Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Service Fees 161](#_Toc155872907)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services 161](#_Toc155872908)

[13.1 Overview of Work Readiness Services 162](#_Toc155872909)

[13.2 Staff Qualifications 164](#_Toc155872910)

[13.2.1 Personal Social Adjustment Training General Staff Qualifications 164](#_Toc155872911)

[13.2.2 Work Adjustment Training General Staff Qualifications 165](#_Toc155872912)

[13.2.3 Vocational Adjustment Trainer Staff Qualifications 166](#_Toc155872913)

[13.3 Personal Social Adjustment Training Evaluation 166](#_Toc155872914)

[13.3.1 Personal Social Adjustment Training Service Description 166](#_Toc155872915)

[13.3.2 Process and Procedures 167](#_Toc155872916)

[13.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 168](#_Toc155872917)

[13.4 Personal Social Adjustment Training 170](#_Toc155872918)

[13.4.1 Personal Social Adjustment Training Service Description 170](#_Toc155872919)

[13.4.2 Process and Procedures 171](#_Toc155872920)

[13.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 173](#_Toc155872921)

[13.5 Work Adjustment Training Evaluation 174](#_Toc155872922)

[13.5.1 Work Adjustment Training Evaluation Service Description 174](#_Toc155872923)

[13.5.2 Process and Procedure 175](#_Toc155872924)

[13.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 176](#_Toc155872925)

[13.6 Work Adjustment Training 177](#_Toc155872926)

[13.6.1 Work Adjustment Training Service Description 177](#_Toc155872927)

[13.6.2 Process and Procedures 178](#_Toc155872928)

[13.6.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 179](#_Toc155872929)

[13.7 VAT Explore the "You" in Work 181](#_Toc155872930)

[13.7.1 VAT Explore the "You" in Work Service Description 181](#_Toc155872931)

[13.7.2 Process and Procedure 182](#_Toc155872932)

[13.7.3 VAT Explore the "You" in Work Outcomes Required for Payment 182](#_Toc155872933)

[13.8 VAT Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success 184](#_Toc155872934)

[13.8.1 VAT Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success Service Description 184](#_Toc155872935)

[13.8.2 Process and Procedure 184](#_Toc155872936)

[13.8.3 VAT Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success Outcomes Required for Payment 185](#_Toc155872937)

[13.9 VAT Soft Skills for Work Success 186](#_Toc155872938)

[13.9.1 VAT Soft Skills for Work Success Service Description 186](#_Toc155872939)

[13.9.2 Process and Procedure 188](#_Toc155872940)

[13.9.3 VAT Soft Skills for Work Success Outcomes Required for Payment 189](#_Toc155872941)

[13.10 VAT Entering the World of Work 190](#_Toc155872942)

[13.10.1 VAT Entering the World of Work Service Description 190](#_Toc155872943)

[13.10.2 Process and Procedure 192](#_Toc155872944)

[13.10.3 VAT Entering the World of Work Outcomes Required for Payment 193](#_Toc155872945)

[13.11 VAT Job Search Training—for Pre-Employment Transition Services Customers Only 194](#_Toc155872946)

[13.11.1 VAT Job Search Training—for Pre-Employment Transition Service Description 194](#_Toc155872947)

[13.11.2 Process and Procedures 198](#_Toc155872948)

[13.11.3 VAT Job Search Training—for Pre-Employment Transition Outcomes Required for Payment 199](#_Toc155872949)

[13.12 VAT Disability Disclosure Training 200](#_Toc155872950)

[13.12.1 VAT Disability Disclosure Training Service Description 200](#_Toc155872951)

[13.12.2 Process and Procedures 202](#_Toc155872952)

[13.12.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 203](#_Toc155872953)

[13.13 VAT Money Smart—A Financial Education Training 204](#_Toc155872954)

[13.13.1 VAT Money Smart—A Financial Education Training Service Description 204](#_Toc155872955)

[13.13.2 Process and Procedures 205](#_Toc155872956)

[13.13.3 VAT Money Smart—A Financial Education Training Outcomes Required for Payment 206](#_Toc155872957)

[13.14 VAT Public Transportation Training 207](#_Toc155872958)

[13.14.1 VAT Public Transportation Training Service Description 207](#_Toc155872959)

[13.14.2 Process and Procedures 208](#_Toc155872960)

[13.14.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 209](#_Toc155872961)

[13.15 VAT Specialized Evaluation 210](#_Toc155872962)

[13.15.1 VAT Specialized Evaluation Service Description 210](#_Toc155872963)

[13.15.2 Process and Procedure 211](#_Toc155872964)

[13.15.3 VAT Specialized Evaluation Outcomes Required for Payment 212](#_Toc155872965)

[13.16 Vocational Adjustment Training Specialized 213](#_Toc155872966)

[13.16.1 Vocational Adjustment Training Specialized Service Description 213](#_Toc155872967)

[13.16.2 Process and Procedures 215](#_Toc155872968)

[13.16.3 Vocational Adjustment Training Specialized Outcomes Required for Payment 216](#_Toc155872969)

[13.17 VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training 217](#_Toc155872970)

[13.17.1 VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training Service Description 217](#_Toc155872971)

[13.17.2 Process and Procedure 219](#_Toc155872972)

[13.17.3 VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training Outcomes Required for Payment 220](#_Toc155872973)

[13.18 Work Readiness Service Fees 221](#_Toc155872974)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 14: Work Experience Services 225](#_Toc155872975)

[14.1 Overview of Work Experience Services 225](#_Toc155872976)

[14.2 Staff Qualifications 227](#_Toc155872977)

[14.3 Work Experience Placement 228](#_Toc155872978)

[14.3.1 Work Experience Placement Service Description 228](#_Toc155872979)

[14.3.2 Process and Procedure 234](#_Toc155872980)

[14.3.3 Work Experience Placement Outcomes Required for Payment 234](#_Toc155872981)

[14.4 Work Experience Training 235](#_Toc155872982)

[14.4.1 Work Experience Training Service Description 235](#_Toc155872983)

[14.4.2 Work Experience Training Process and Procedure 239](#_Toc155872984)

[14.4.3 Work Experience Training Outcomes Required for Payment 240](#_Toc155872985)

[14.5 Work Experience Service Fees 242](#_Toc155872986)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 15: Pre-Employment Transition Services 242](#_Toc155872987)

[15.1 Overview of Pre-Employment Transition Services 243](#_Toc155872988)

[15.2 Staff Qualifications 244](#_Toc155872989)

[15.3 Pre-ETS Service Description 245](#_Toc155872990)

[15.3.1 Similar Contracted Services 247](#_Toc155872991)

[15.3.2 Curriculum Requirements 248](#_Toc155872992)

[15.4 Process and Procedure 249](#_Toc155872993)

[15.5 Outcomes Required for Payment 249](#_Toc155872994)

[15.6 Pre-Employment Transition Service Fees 250](#_Toc155872995)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 16: Project SEARCH Services 250](#_Toc155872996)

[16.1 Overview of Project SEARCH Services 251](#_Toc155872997)

[16.2 Staff Qualifications and Training 251](#_Toc155872998)

[16.2.1 Skills Trainer General Qualifications 252](#_Toc155872999)

[16.2.2 Job Placement Specialist General Qualification 252](#_Toc155873000)

[16.3 Project SEARCH Asset Discovery 252](#_Toc155873001)

[16.3.1 Project SEARCH Asset Discovery Service Description 252](#_Toc155873002)

[16.3.2 Project SEARCH Asset Discovery Process and Procedure 252](#_Toc155873003)

[16.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 253](#_Toc155873004)

[16.4 Project SEARCH Skills Training Services 254](#_Toc155873005)

[16.4.1 Project SEARCH Skills Training Service Description 254](#_Toc155873006)

[16.4.2 Project SEARCH Skills Training Process and Procedure 255](#_Toc155873007)

[16.4.3 Project SEARCH Skills Training Outcomes Required for Payment 255](#_Toc155873008)

[16.5 Project SEARCH Job Placement 256](#_Toc155873009)

[16.5.1 Project SEARCH Job Placement Service Description 256](#_Toc155873010)

[16.5.2 Project SEARCH Job Placement Process and Procedure 258](#_Toc155873011)

[16.5.3 Project SEARCH Job Placement Outcomes Required for Payment 260](#_Toc155873012)

[16.6 Project SEARCH Service Fees 261](#_Toc155873013)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services 264](#_Toc155873014)

[17.1 Overview of Basic Employment Services 264](#_Toc155873015)

[17.2 Staff Qualifications and Training 265](#_Toc155873016)

[17.2.1 Job Placement Specialist General Qualifications 266](#_Toc155873017)

[17.2.2 Job Skills Trainer General Qualifications 266](#_Toc155873018)

[17.3 Non-bundled Job Placement 266](#_Toc155873019)

[17.3.1 Non-bundled Job Placement Service Description 266](#_Toc155873020)

[17.3.2 Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training 267](#_Toc155873021)

[17.3.3 Interview Training 272](#_Toc155873022)

[17.4 Bundled Job Placement Services 275](#_Toc155873023)

[17.4.1 Bundled Job Placement Services Service Description 275](#_Toc155873024)

[17.4.2 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark A 278](#_Toc155873025)

[17.4.3 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark B 288](#_Toc155873026)

[17.4.4 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark C 291](#_Toc155873027)

[17.5 Job Skills Training 295](#_Toc155873028)

[17.5.1 Job Skills Training Service Description 295](#_Toc155873029)

[17.5.2 Job Skills Training Process and Procedure 299](#_Toc155873030)

[17.5.3 Job Skills Training Outcomes Required for Payment 300](#_Toc155873031)

[17.6 Basic Employment Service Fees 302](#_Toc155873032)

[17.6.1 Non-Bundled Employment Services 302](#_Toc155873033)

[17.6.2 Basic Job Placement 302](#_Toc155873034)

[17.6.3 Enhanced Job Placement 304](#_Toc155873035)

[17.6.4 Job Skills Training 305](#_Toc155873036)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 18: Supported Employment Services 306](#_Toc155873037)

[18.1 Supported Employment Overview 306](#_Toc155873038)

[18.2 Staff Qualifications 307](#_Toc155873039)

[18.3 Referral to Supported Employment Services 308](#_Toc155873040)

[18.4 Supported Employment Plan 308](#_Toc155873041)

[18.4.1 Supported Employment Plan Service Description 308](#_Toc155873042)

[18.4.2 Supported Employment Plan Process and Procedure 308](#_Toc155873043)

[18.4.3 Supported Employment Plan Outcomes Required for Payment 310](#_Toc155873044)

[18.5 Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark 310](#_Toc155873045)

[18.5.1 Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark Service Description 310](#_Toc155873046)

[18.5.2 Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark Process and Procedure 310](#_Toc155873047)

[18.5.3 Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark Outcomes Required for Payment 313](#_Toc155873048)

[18.6 Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark 313](#_Toc155873049)

[18.6.1 Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark Service Description 313](#_Toc155873050)

[18.6.2 Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark Process and Procedure 315](#_Toc155873051)

[18.6.3 Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark Outcomes Required for Payment 316](#_Toc155873052)

[18.7 Supported Employment Job Stability Review 317](#_Toc155873053)

[18.7.1 Supported Employment Job Stability Review Service Description 317](#_Toc155873054)

[18.7.2 Supported Employment Job Stability Review Process and Procedure 318](#_Toc155873055)

[18.7.3 Job Stability Review Outcomes Required for Payment 320](#_Toc155873056)

[18.8 Supported Employment Closure Benchmark 320](#_Toc155873057)

[18.8.1 Supported Employment Closure Benchmark Service Description 320](#_Toc155873058)

[18.8.2 Supported Employment Closure Benchmark Process and Procedure 321](#_Toc155873059)

[18.8.3 Supported Employment Closure Benchmark Outcomes Required for Payment 322](#_Toc155873060)

[18.9 Benchmark and Service Fees 323](#_Toc155873061)

[18.10 SE Resources 323](#_Toc155873062)

[SE Case Study 324](#_Toc155873063)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 19: Self Employment 325](#_Toc155873064)

[19.1 Overview of Self-Employment Services 325](#_Toc155873065)

[19.2 Staff Qualifications 326](#_Toc155873066)

[Staff Qualifications for Self-Employment Services 327](#_Toc155873067)

[Qualifications for Supported Self-Employment Services 327](#_Toc155873068)

[Job Skills Trainer 327](#_Toc155873069)

[19.3 Self-Employment Exploration 327](#_Toc155873070)

[19.3.1 Service Description 327](#_Toc155873071)

[19.3.2 Process and Procedure 328](#_Toc155873072)

[19.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 328](#_Toc155873073)

[19.4 Self-Employment Concept Development and Feasibility Study 329](#_Toc155873074)

[19.4.1 Service Description 329](#_Toc155873075)

[19.4.2 Process and Procedure 329](#_Toc155873076)

[19.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 330](#_Toc155873077)

[19.5 Self-Employment Business Plan Development 331](#_Toc155873078)

[19.5.1 Service Description 331](#_Toc155873079)

[19.5.2 Business Plans 331](#_Toc155873080)

[19.5.3 Process and Procedure 333](#_Toc155873081)

[19.5.4 Outcomes Required for Payment 333](#_Toc155873082)

[19.6 Supported Self-Employment 334](#_Toc155873083)

[19.6.1 Service Description 334](#_Toc155873084)

[19.6.2 Supported Self-Employment Assessment 336](#_Toc155873085)

[19.6.3 Benchmark 1: Supported Self-Employment Services Plan 339](#_Toc155873086)

[19.6.4 Benchmark 2: Supported Self-Employment Start-Up 342](#_Toc155873087)

[19.6.5 Benchmark 3: Supported Self-Employment Maintenance 345](#_Toc155873088)

[19.6.6 Benchmark 4: Supported Self-Employment Stability 347](#_Toc155873089)

[19.6.7 Benchmark 5: Supported Self-Employment Service Closure 351](#_Toc155873090)

[19.7 Self-Employment Service Fees 354](#_Toc155873091)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 20: Premiums 357](#_Toc155873092)

[20.1 Overview of Premiums 357](#_Toc155873093)

[20.2 Staff Qualifications 359](#_Toc155873094)

[20.3 Autism Premium 359](#_Toc155873095)

[20.3.1 Service Description 359](#_Toc155873096)

[20.3.2 Process and Procedures 360](#_Toc155873097)

[20.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 361](#_Toc155873098)

[20.4 Criminal Background Premium 361](#_Toc155873099)

[20.4.1 Service Description 361](#_Toc155873100)

[20.4.2 Process and Procedures 363](#_Toc155873101)

[20.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 363](#_Toc155873102)

[20.5 Deaf Premium 363](#_Toc155873103)

[20.5.1 Service Description 363](#_Toc155873104)

[20.5.2 Process and Procedures 364](#_Toc155873105)

[20.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 365](#_Toc155873106)

[20.6 Mileage Premium 365](#_Toc155873107)

[20.6.1 Definitions 366](#_Toc155873108)

[20.6.2 Service Description 367](#_Toc155873109)

[20.6.3 Process and Procedures 368](#_Toc155873110)

[20.6.4 Outcomes Required for Payment 368](#_Toc155873111)

[20.7 Professional Placement Premium 369](#_Toc155873112)

[20.7.1 Service Description 369](#_Toc155873113)

[20.7.2 Process and Procedures 369](#_Toc155873114)

[20.7.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 370](#_Toc155873115)

[20.8 Wage Premium 371](#_Toc155873116)

[20.8.1 Service Description 371](#_Toc155873117)

[20.8.2 Process and Procedures 371](#_Toc155873118)

[20.8.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 371](#_Toc155873119)

[20.9 Travel Premium 372](#_Toc155873120)

[20.9.1 Definitions 373](#_Toc155873121)

[20.9.2 Service Description 373](#_Toc155873122)

[20.9.2.1 Mileage Only 374](#_Toc155873123)

[20.9.3 Process and Procedures 377](#_Toc155873124)

[20.9.4. Outcomes Required for Payment 380](#_Toc155873125)

[20.10 Brain Injury Premium 381](#_Toc155873126)

[20.10.1 Service Description 381](#_Toc155873127)

[20.10.2 Process and Procedures 382](#_Toc155873128)

[20.10.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 383](#_Toc155873129)

[20.11 Blind Premium 383](#_Toc155873130)

[20.11.1 Service Description 383](#_Toc155873131)

[20.11.2 Process and Procedures 385](#_Toc155873132)

[20.11.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 386](#_Toc155873133)

[20.12 Premium Service Fees 386](#_Toc155873134)

[20.12.1 Autism Premium 387](#_Toc155873135)

[20.12.2 Criminal Background Premium 387](#_Toc155873136)

[20.12.3 Deaf Premium 388](#_Toc155873137)

[20.12.4 Professional Placement Premium 389](#_Toc155873138)

[20.12.5 Mileage Premium 389](#_Toc155873139)

[20.12.6 Wage Premium 389](#_Toc155873140)

[20.12.7 Travel Premium 389](#_Toc155873141)

[20.12.8 Brain Injury Premium 390](#_Toc155873142)

[20.12.9 Blind Premium 391](#_Toc155873143)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 21: Employment Supports for Brain Injury 393](#_Toc155873144)

[Introduction 393](#_Toc155873145)

[21.1 Overview of Employment Supports for Brain Injury Service Model 394](#_Toc155873146)

[21.2 Staff Qualifications, Ratios, and Training 397](#_Toc155873147)

[21.2.1 Licensed and Certified Professionals 398](#_Toc155873148)

[21.2.2 Staff Ratios 399](#_Toc155873149)

[21.2.3 Employment Service Provider 399](#_Toc155873150)

[21.2.4 Staff Training and Procedures 400](#_Toc155873151)

[21.3 ESBI Provider Qualifications 401](#_Toc155873152)

[21.4 ESBI Provider Requirements 402](#_Toc155873153)

[21.4.1 Provider Notifications 403](#_Toc155873154)

[21.4.2 Provider Vehicles 403](#_Toc155873155)

[21.4.3 Safe and Secure Environment 403](#_Toc155873156)

[21.4.4 Substance Abuse 404](#_Toc155873157)

[21.4.5 Exceptions and/or Limitations 404](#_Toc155873158)

[21.4.6 Customer Termination by Provider 404](#_Toc155873159)

[21.4.7 ESBI Referrals to VR 405](#_Toc155873160)

[21.4.8 ESBI Program Evaluation 405](#_Toc155873161)

[21.4.9 Weekly Activity Schedules 405](#_Toc155873162)

[21.4.10 Weekly Time Logs 406](#_Toc155873163)

[21.4.11 Progress Reports 406](#_Toc155873164)

[21.4.12 Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan and Individualized Program Plan Summary Reports 406](#_Toc155873165)

[21.5 Employment Supports for Brain Injury Services 407](#_Toc155873166)

[21.5.1. Case Management Service Definition 407](#_Toc155873167)

[21.5.2 Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan Service Definition 412](#_Toc155873168)

[21.5.3 Initial Assessments and Evaluations Service Definition 413](#_Toc155873169)

[21.5.4 Individual Program Plan Service Definition 417](#_Toc155873170)

[21.5.5 Therapy Services—Definition 419](#_Toc155873171)

[21.6 Employment Services Definition 421](#_Toc155873172)

[21.6.1 Process and Procedures 423](#_Toc155873173)

[21.6.2 Outcomes Required for Payment 423](#_Toc155873174)

[21.6.3 Fees 423](#_Toc155873175)

[21.7 Discharge Service Definition 424](#_Toc155873176)

[21.7.1 Process and Procedures 425](#_Toc155873177)

[21.7.2 Outcomes Required for Payment 425](#_Toc155873178)

[21.7.3 Fees 426](#_Toc155873179)

[21.8 Behavior Intervention Plan Service Definition 426](#_Toc155873180)

[21.8.1 Process and Procedure 427](#_Toc155873181)

[21.8.2 Outcomes Required for Payment 427](#_Toc155873182)

[21.8.3 Fees 427](#_Toc155873183)

[21.9 Other Support Goods and Services 428](#_Toc155873184)

[21.10 Residential Services 428](#_Toc155873185)

[21.11 Nonresidential Services 429](#_Toc155873186)

[21.12 ESBI Rates 430](#_Toc155873187)

[21.12.1 Co-treatments with Multi-Clinical Therapists 430](#_Toc155873188)

[21.12.2 Groups of Customers Seen by One or More Clinical Therapists 430](#_Toc155873189)

[21.12.3 Employment Services Provided by Clinical Therapist 430](#_Toc155873190)

[21.12.4 Premium Payments 431](#_Toc155873191)

[21.12.5 Nonresidential Rate Structure 431](#_Toc155873192)

[21.12.6 Residential Rate Structure 434](#_Toc155873193)

[21.13 Billing Procedures 437](#_Toc155873194)

[21.13.1 Co-Pay and Coinsurance 437](#_Toc155873195)

[21.13.2 Family Cost Share 438](#_Toc155873196)

[21.13.3 Invoices 438](#_Toc155873197)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 22: Vehicle Modifications 439](#_Toc155873198)

[22.1 Overview of Vehicle Modification Equipment 439](#_Toc155873199)

[22.2 Vehicle Modification Equipment Contractor Qualifications 440](#_Toc155873200)

[22.3 Vehicle Modification Equipment Insurance 440](#_Toc155873201)

[22.4 Description of Vehicle Modification Equipment and Installation 441](#_Toc155873202)

[22.5 Maintenance and Warranty 442](#_Toc155873203)

[22.6 Products Returned, Exchanged, or Replaced 442](#_Toc155873204)

[22.7 Vehicle Modification Equipment Method of Payment 443](#_Toc155873205)

[22.8 Vehicle Modification Equipment Process and Procedure 443](#_Toc155873206)

[22.9 Vehicle Modification Equipment Outcomes Required for Payment 443](#_Toc155873207)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 23: Placeholder 444](#_Toc155873208)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 24: Communication Access Services 444](#_Toc155873209)

[24.1 Overview of Communication Access Services 444](#_Toc155873210)

[24.2 Staff Qualifications 445](#_Toc155873211)

[24.2.1 Certified Interpreter 445](#_Toc155873212)

[24.2.2 Certified Deaf Interpreter 445](#_Toc155873213)

[24.2.3 Trilingual Interpreter 445](#_Toc155873214)

[24.2.4 Noncertified Interpreter 446](#_Toc155873215)

[24.2.5 Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) Provider 446](#_Toc155873216)

[24.3 Interpreting Services 446](#_Toc155873217)

[24.3.1 Service Description 446](#_Toc155873218)

[24.3.2 Process and Procedure 447](#_Toc155873219)

[24.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 448](#_Toc155873220)

[24.4 Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) Services 449](#_Toc155873221)

[24.4.1 Service Description 449](#_Toc155873222)

[24.4.2 Process and Procedure 449](#_Toc155873223)

[24.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 450](#_Toc155873224)

[24.5 Communication Access Reimbursement of Travel Costs 450](#_Toc155873225)

[24.5.1 Service Description 450](#_Toc155873226)

[24.5.2 Process and Procedures 451](#_Toc155873227)

[24.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 451](#_Toc155873228)

[24.6 Communication Access Fee Schedules 452](#_Toc155873229)

[Interpreter Certification Levels 452](#_Toc155873230)

[24.6.1 Interpreter Rates 452](#_Toc155873231)

[24.6.2 CART Rates 453](#_Toc155873232)

[24.6.3 Travel Rates 453](#_Toc155873233)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 25: Placeholder 454](#_Toc155873234)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 26: Benefits and Work Incentives Counseling Services 454](#_Toc155873235)

[26.1 Overview of Benefits and Work Incentives Counseling Services 454](#_Toc155873236)

[26.2 Staff Qualifications and Training 456](#_Toc155873237)

[26.2.1 Community Work Incentive Coordinator at a Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program 457](#_Toc155873238)

[26.2.2 Community Partner Work Incentives Counselor 457](#_Toc155873239)

[26.2.3 Work Incentives Practitioner-Certified (WIP-C™) Certified through Cornell University's Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability 458](#_Toc155873240)

[26.3 Supplemental Security Income and/or Title II Disability Benefits 458](#_Toc155873241)

[26.3.1 Supplemental Security Income and/or Title II Benefits Information and Referral 460](#_Toc155873242)

[26.3.2 Supplemental Security Income and/or Title II Benefits Summary and Analysis/Work Incentive Plan 462](#_Toc155873243)

[26.3.3 Veteran’s Supplemental Security Income and/or Title II Benefits Summary and Analysis/Work Incentive Plan 466](#_Toc155873244)

[26.3.4 Revision to Supplemental Security Income and/or Title II Benefits Summary and Analysis/Work Incentive Plan or Veteran’s Benefits Summary and Analysis/Work Incentive Plan 472](#_Toc155873245)

[26.4 Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives 474](#_Toc155873246)

[26.4.1 Supplemental Security Income Student Earned Income Exclusion 474](#_Toc155873247)

[26.4.2 Supplemental Security Income Impairment-Related Work Expense 477](#_Toc155873248)

[26.4.3 Supplemental Security Income Blind Work Expense 479](#_Toc155873249)

[26.4.4 Supplemental Security Income Plan to Achieve Self-Support 482](#_Toc155873250)

[26.4.5 Supplemental Security Income Property Essential to Self-Support 484](#_Toc155873251)

[26.5 Title II Work Incentives 486](#_Toc155873252)

[26.5.1 Title II Plan to Achieve Self-Support 486](#_Toc155873253)

[26.5.2 Title II Impairment-Related Work Expense 488](#_Toc155873254)

[26.5.3 Title II Subsidy or Special Condition 491](#_Toc155873255)

[26.6 Medicaid Buy-In 492](#_Toc155873256)

[26.6.1 Service Description 492](#_Toc155873257)

[26.6.2 Process and Procedures 493](#_Toc155873258)

[26.6.3 Outcomes Required for Payment 493](#_Toc155873259)

[26.7 Benefits and Work Incentives Counseling Service Fees 494](#_Toc155873260)

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 1: Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation

## VR-SFP Chapter 1: Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation

Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR) has developed both the VR Standards for Providers Manual (VR-SFP) and the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual (VRSM) to comply with federal and state laws, statutes, and rules or regulations while allowing for the use of professional judgment and sensitivity in administering the VR program to meet the individual needs of VR customers. For more information about requesting exceptions to policies and procedures, see VRSM E-200: Summary Table of Approvals, Consultations, and Notifications. For more information about the roles and responsibilities of VR staff in the VR process, see VRSM B-100: Vocational Rehabilitation Process, Roles, and Responsibilities.

Links to other information throughout these manuals provide examples, tools, and practical application guides that support existing policies and procedures. Links also are provided to other policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and forms that must be applied. All links in the VR-SFP are available to anyone who is accessing the manual either externally or internally. However, in the VRSM, there are links that are intended to provide additional decision-making supports to VR staff that may not be available to individuals who are accessing the VRSM outside of TWC's firewall. Copies of materials that cannot be accessed directly through links can be made available upon request.

VR staff must be familiar with and apply both the VR-SFP and the VRSM in all decision making. Providers of VR services that are provided under contract must comply with content in the VR-SFP that is related to the services provided. Providers of VR services that are not provided through a contract are subject to the content in the VRSM that is related to the services provided.

## Competitive Integrated Employment

All services and supports provided by TWC-VR are provided for the sole purpose of achieving a competitive integrated employment outcome, as defined in 34 CFR §361.5(c)(9).

Competitive integrated employment means work that—

(i) Is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment) and for which an individual is compensated at a rate that-

(A) Is not less than the higher of the rate specified in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) or the rate required under the applicable State or local minimum wage law for the place of employment;

(B) Is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and

(C) In the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and

(D) Is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees; and

(ii) Is at a location—

(A) Typically found in the community; and

(B) Where the employee with a disability interacts for the purpose of performing the duties of the position with other employees within the particular work unit and the entire work site, and, as appropriate to the work performed, other persons (e.g., customers and vendors), who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with these persons; and

(iii) Presents, as appropriate, opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.

For more information about competitive integrated employment, refer to the on demand webinars on the [Vocational Rehabilitation Provider Resources webpage](https://www.twc.texas.gov/programs/vocational-rehabilitation/provider-resources) or email VR Standards ([vr.standards@twc.texas.gov](mailto:vr.standards@twc.texas.gov)).

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 2: Obtaining a Contract for Goods and Services

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 2.1 Overview of Contracts

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), on behalf of Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation, purchases contracted goods and services defined in the Vocational Rehabilitation - Standards for Providers Manual (VR-SFP) only from providers with a current contract for that good or service. A contractor must comply with all the requirements published in the manual and must not provide goods or services until the contractor receives a service authorization from TWC on behalf of the customer.

TWC requires all contractors to read and conform to the following chapters of the VR-SFP manual:

* Chapter 1: Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation
* Chapter 2: Obtaining a Contract for Goods or Services
* Chapter 3: Basic Standards
* The appendices (including the VR Standards for Providers Glossary (PDF))
* Any chapter relating to the goods or services that the contractor plans to provide, including Chapter 20: Premiums when applicable.

All state agencies are required to publish solicitations for purchases of $25,000 or more on the Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD), which is maintained by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. The solicitations are referred to as open enrollment postings.

TWC publishes open enrollment postings for services, goods, and/or equipment when TWC needs bilateral contractors. To provide TWC with services, goods, and/or equipment through a bilateral contract, potential contractors must respond to the posting. Enrollment postings are published on the ESBD for a minimum of 21 calendar days.

This chapter provides basic information on:

* the application process for contracts;
* the standard terms and conditions for customer service contracts;
* data security and confidentiality;
* the orientation session for providers;
* contract renewals; and
* contract amendments.

## 2.2 Eligibility for a Contract

An Open Enrollment Application Packet is considered acceptable and responsive only if it:

* meets all required criteria and specifications, including containing all the completed forms in the enrollment posting, following the instructions in the solicitation and forms;
* includes the documentation necessary to demonstrate compliance with applicable requirements on licensure, certification, and credentials;
* includes all necessary signatures; and
* is submitted during the open enrollment period

All respondents must follow all the instructions provided in the specific ESBD enrollment posting. Each posting is identified by a unique enrollment requisition number. Postings also may include specifications and requirements that must be addressed in the application process.

Before submitting the Enrollment Application Packet, the respondent must read Chapter 3: Basic Standards and all other chapters in the VR-SFP manual that are associated with the services, goods, and/or equipment that the respondent wants to provide.

Failure to provide a complete and accurate application packet may prevent the respondent from being eligible for a TWC contract, as explained in the enrollment posting.

Failure to provide missing information when requested will prevent the respondent from being eligible for a TWC contract.

Entities, applicants, businesses and/or individuals that are debarred or excluded by the federal government are excluded from receiving Federal contracts or certain subcontracts, and certain types of financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits. Entities, applicants, businesses and/or individuals that are debarred or excluded by the State of Texas are excluded from doing business with the state.

TWC may consider past performance when determining whether to award a contract to an Applicant, or any other factor it deems to be in the best interest of TWC or the State of Texas.

As part of the application process, TWC may perform an onsite and in-person inspection of an applicant's location(s) when services will be provided at the applicant's location(s).

## 2.3 Awarded Contracts

Awarded contracts describe the services, goods, and/or equipment that the contractor is approved to provide.

Each contract includes standard terms and conditions. Many TWC contracts offer the opportunity for renewals.

When a contract is awarded, the contractor must ensure that all the documentation and supplemental information provided in the application remains accurate, up-to-date, and on file with the assigned Regional Quality Assurance Specialist and/or Regional Program Support Specialist for Texas Workforce Solutions–Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS). If a contractor does not know who their assigned Regional Quality Assurance Specialist and/or Regional Program Support Specialist is, they should email [vr.standards@twc.texas.gov](mailto:vr.standards@twc.texas.gov) .

## 2.4 Standard Terms and Conditions for Contracts

All contracts resulting from an enrollment posting include the applicable TWC Standard Terms and Conditions for Contracts.

## 2.5 Data Security and Confidentiality of Contracts

All contractors and subcontractors that access, create, or maintain confidential information must ensure the protection and security of all confidential information, as described in the contract.

## 2.6 Provider Orientation

TWC requires, as a condition of their contract, all providers to attend a program orientation and a contract orientation prior to the contract being activated so service authorizations can be issued.

Upon completion of the orientations, each contractor receives a copy of the contract, signed by both the contractor and TWC.

TWC does not allow the contractor to provide contracted services, goods, and/or equipment until the contractor completes the orientations.

## 2.7 Renewing Contracts

### 2.7.1 Renewal Options

When contract renewal options exist and TWC has a continued need for the contractor's services, goods, and/or equipment, the TWC contract manager may process a renewal amendment for the contract before the date the contract expires.

TWC conducts a renewal assessment before renewing any contract. Renewal amendments must be signed by all parties before the current contract expires.

### 2.7.2 Renewal Assessment

TWC decides whether renewing a contract is in the best interest of the customer and TWS-VRS.

The renewal decision is based on TWC's evaluation of the:

* contractor's past and current performance;
* contractor's past and current compliance with the contract's terms;
* contractor's past and current compliance with the VR Standards for Providers;
* contractor's past and current provision of services, goods, and/or equipment;
* need for the contractor's services, goods, and/or equipment based on changes in state or federal laws, rules, or regulations;
* availability of funds to support the use of the contract; and
* availability of other providers that offer the same or similar services, goods, and/or equipment.

### 2.7.3 Contracts with No Renewal Options

When an expiring contract has no renewal options, the contractor may reapply by responding to an open enrollment posting published on ESBD. Ideally, the existing contractor should reapply before the contract expires, to prevent a lapse in the contractor's ability to serve Vocational Rehabilitation customers.

## 2.8 Amendments to Contracts

Any changes, additions, or deletions to contracted services, physical locations, service areas, or terms that modify the contract in any manner require a written contract amendment. Contract amendments are issued by the TWC contract manager assigned to the contract and must be signed by both parties.

TWC may issue a unilateral amendment, which does not require the contractor's signature, under circumstances that include the following:

* Correcting an obvious clerical error in the contract
* Incorporating new or revised federal or state laws, regulations, rules, or policies
* Changing the name of the contractor to reflect the contractor's name, as recorded by the Texas Secretary of State
* Amending the name and address of a contact

### 2.8.1 Adding Counties or Services, Goods, and/or Equipment to a Contract

If the services, goods, and/or equipment to be provided or the counties to be served were included in the original enrollment posting published on the ESBD, the contractor may add them to the contract by requesting an amendment.

Open enrollment solicitations require applicants to describe the preferred service area for providing services, but contractors will not be precluded from serving customers in any area stated in the solicitation. Contractors whose contracts were awarded as a result of a solicitation that occurred prior to 2020 must have an amended contract in order to provide services in counties other than those listed in the contract.

If TWC determines that there is a current need for the services, goods, and/or equipment, TWC may approve the amendment. The contractor must request a change in the services or goods and equipment their contract allows them to provide to TWC customers. The contractor must ensure all the documentation and supplemental information provided in the application is accurate, up-to-date, and on file with the assigned Regional Quality Assurance Specialist and/or Regional Program Support Specialist.

If the services, goods, and/or equipment or the counties were not included in the original enrollment posting, the contractor must submit a new application that corresponds to an active enrollment posting.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 3: Basic Standards

All providers must comply with this chapter of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 3.1 Overview of the Basic Standards

The VR Standards for Providers (VR-SFP) manual focuses on the business practices, processes, and policies that the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the contracted provider must follow to comply with federal and state laws, executive orders issued by the Governor of Texas, and TWC rules and requirements.

TWC must ensure that taxpayer funds are spent wisely and provide the best value to the taxpayer.  The standards that providers must meet ensure that Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) customers receive quality services to help them achieve their vocational rehabilitation goals.

Each provider is expected to be familiar with and comply with the most recently published standards and use the most recently published forms applicable to their contract.  Each provider must maintain a VR3443, TWC VR Standards for Providers Certification form on file with their Regional Quality Assurance Specialist (Q) or Region Program Support Specialist (RPSS). The form must be submitted with the contract application package and updated whenever there is a change in the information, such as a change in qualifications.

### 3.1.1 Terms Used in the Manual

The following terms are used throughout the VR-SFP:

* Business Day - A business day is the working days that VR offices are open for business (typically Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m., excluding State of Texas observed holidays).
* Contractor - A contractor is an entity or individual awarded a contract with TWC to provide goods and/or services.  Sometimes used interchangeably with the term “provider” or “service provider.”
* Employment Services Provider (ESP) —An ESP is a provider that has a contract with TWC to provide employment-related services to customers.
* Incident - An incident is an unusual or unexpected event that compromises or may compromise the health and/or safety of individuals or the security of property.
* Provider - A provider is any individual or business from which a VR counselor may obtain goods and/or services for VR customers.
* Service Provider - Service Providers are entities or individuals approved to provide services to individuals with disabilities who receive VR services or ILS-OIB.

### 3.1.2 Contract Adherence

TWC only contracts with providers that are in full compliance with all chapters in the VR-SFP manual that relate to the contractor’s contract. Each contractor is required to undergo a review and comply with periodic monitoring activities to ensure continued compliance with the standards. For additional information about Contract Monitoring, refer VR-SFP 3.6 Contract Monitoring.

Contracted providers that provide goods or services listed in the VR-SFP manual must be in full compliance with the following:

* The following chapters of the VR-SFP:
  + Chapter 1: Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation;
  + Chapter 2: Obtaining a Contract for Goods or Services;
  + Chapter 3: Basic Standards;
* The chapters associated with the services or goods included in the contractor's contracts;
* Service authorizations (SA); and
* All applicable clauses in the contracts.

Revisions to the VR-SFP are posted on the [Vocational Rehabilitation Providers’ Resources (texas.gov)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-providers-resources) at least 30 days before the effective date of the revisions.  A revision list that summarizes any formal changes to the VR-SFP can also be found on the Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual | Texas Workforce Commission.

It is the contractor’s responsibility to be aware of revisions to the standards and to implement the changes as prescribed.

It is recommended all contractors sign up for [TWC's GovDelivery](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/txwc/subscriber/new) notices to ensure they are alerted to changes to the VR-SFP. Visit [Texas Workforce Commission (govdelivery.com)](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/txwc/subscriber/new) and select “Vocational Rehabilitation Contractors and Provider News” to subscribe.

Failure to follow applicable standards and contract requirements may result in adverse consequences, such as denial of payments, recoupment of payments, suspension as a provider of VR services, or loss of an awarded contract.

If a provider is unwilling or unable to change in a timely manner the provision of services or goods as prescribed, the provider must contact the Q or RPSS.

Questions related to the content found in the VR-SFP may be sent to [vr.standards@twc.texas.gov](mailto:vr.standards@twc.texas.gov).

### 3.1.3 Contract Noncompliance and Performance Deficiencies

TWC may suspend a contractor from providing services and goods on a temporary basis for reasons such as:

* failure to meet contract specifications;
* failure to comply with agency regulations;
* failure to comply with applicable state or federal law;
* failure to perform according to the terms and conditions of the contract;
* unprofessional behavior;
* failure to train, supervise or correct employees and subcontractors;
* failure to maintain internal controls;
* a substantial risk to the health, safety, or welfare of one or more customers;
* a pattern of not complying with various TWC policies or requirements;
* a pattern of spreading misinformation about the VR system or any individuals or contractors in the VR system;
* a persistent lack of concern among contactor leadership with the topics on this list; or
* any other cause of so serious or compelling a nature that it affects the contractor’s ability to perform under the contract or presents an imminent risk of harm to any individual or risk of liability for the agency.

Suspension means halting new SAs or reassigning existing SAs to a different contractor, or both.  Depending on the type and severity of the noncompliance, TWC may require the contractor to make specific improvements before the contractor resumes providing services.  A written Technical Assistance Plan (TAP) will be used in some cases.

In addition to a temporary suspension and a TAP, TWC may take adverse actions against the contractor, including recouping overpayments, or even contract termination and debarment.  Refer to [Title 40, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 858](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=40&pt=20&ch=858&rl=Y).

### 3.1.4 Legally Authorized Representative

Each contractor must have a legally authorized representative to sign contracts, official documents such as:

* VR3472, Contracted Services Modification Requests;
* Application and contract-related documents and forms; and
* Verification statements.

### 3.1.5 TWC Vocational Rehabilitation Contacts

The contractor’s primary TWC contacts include the following:

* Administrative Supervisor - An administrative supervisor is a VR staff member who supervises the work of a unit’s rehabilitation assistants and works with staff to identify, prevent, and resolve concerns.
* Contract manager - A contract manager is the assigned VR contact for helping with contract-related issues.
* Local Provider Liaison (LPL) - the LPL is the VR contact for ESPs who answers the routine questions asked by contractors and their staff about VR programs and the standards required for providers.
* ILS-OIB customer - An ILS-OIB customer is an individual age 55 or older who, due to their significant visual impairment, is limited in their ability to function independently when apart from their family or in their home or community and is in need of ILS-OIB, which may substantially improve their ability to function, continue functioning, or progress toward functioning independently when apart from their family or in their home or community.
* ILS-OIB worker - An ILS-OIB worker is the primary contact for customer-related items and who directs the ILS-OIB contractor in the provision of services to ILS-OIB customers. The ILS-OIB worker coordinates cases, provides counseling and guidance, determines a customer's eligibility, and develops and manages comprehensive independent living plans for ILS-OIB customers.
* Purchasing Specialist - A purchasing specialist is a VR staff member who provides purchasing actions for complicated cases or in cases where the caseload carrying team needs additional expertise.
* Regional Quality Assurance Specialist (Q) or Regional Program Support Specialist (RPSS) - These specialists maintain specific forms on file for the provider. They also approve forms needed to add services to the contract and to expand the contractor’s service area, help providers with open enrollment questions, and work with providers during the application process.  They are a VR contact for answering questions about the VR program, processes and procedures, and the VR-SFP.  Each Q or RPSS serves a different region of the state.
* Rehabilitation assistant (RA) - The rehabilitation assistant is a VR staff member who provides technical support to a counselor, supports the counselor in providing assistance to the customer, acts as a contact for the customer, and is often the point of contact when a provider has questions about SAs and invoicing.
* VR customer - A VR customer is an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment and who requires VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment.
* VR manager/VR supervisor - The VR manager and VR supervisor work together to provide support, direction, and oversight of direct customer services for their assigned unit.
* VR counselor - The VR counselor is the primary contact for customer-related items. The VR counselor provides counseling and guidance, determines a customer's eligibility, and develops the individualized plan for employment (IPE) with VR customers.

### 3.1.6 Contract Types

#### Service Contracts

Service contracts are used when a provider completes tasks or provides services described in the VR-SFP manual, such as the following examples:

* Orientation and Mobility Training
* Diabetes Education Training
* Assistive Technology Services for Customer with Visual Impairments
* Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind
* Supportive Residentials Services for Persons in Recovery
* Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)
* Pre-Employment Transition Services
* Project SEARCH
* Employment Services
* Self-Employment
* Employment Supports for Brain Injury
* Benefits Counseling

#### Goods Contracts

Goods contracts are used when a contractor provides a product for the customer, as described in the VR-SFP, such as when providing one of the following:

* Durable Medical Equipment
* Hearing Aids
* Vehicle Modification

#### Communication Access

Communication access services is a global term that describes the provision of sign language interpretation, transliteration, and/or Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services to those with hearing and/or speech disabilities. Communication access service contractors are instruments in providing effective communication access for customers. These services are governed by the [Code of Professional Conduct – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/assistive-services-providers/board-evaluation-interpreters-certification-program/code-professional-conduct) or the [Code of Professional Ethics - Association for Court Reporters and Captioners (NCRA.org)](https://www.ncra.org/home/professionals_resources/NCRA-Code-of-Professional-Ethics).

### 3.1.7 Staff of the Contracted Provider

A contractor may hire employees or use subcontractors. If the contractor uses subcontractors, refer to the contract for the subcontracting requirements.

Contractors must have the following on file for every employee:

* A completed US Department of Justice Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification, as applicable (refer to [United States Citizenship and Immigration Services](https://www.uscis.gov/)).
* A signed W-4 form from the IRS unless the staff member is a subcontractor.

A contractor's employees and subcontractors that are under contract to provide VR goods and/or services and/or ILS-OIB goods and/or services are not TWC employees, are not eligible for TWC employee benefits, and must not represent themselves as state employees. The contractor must provide all legally required unemployment insurance (UI) and workers' compensation insurance.

#### 3.1.7.1 Subcontractors

The contractor accepts liability and retains responsibility for the performance of subcontractors that provide services under the terms of their contract. Subcontractors providing services under the contract must meet the requirements and qualifications required in the standards.

No subcontractor may relieve the contractor of the responsibility of ensuring that the contracted services are provided according to the standards. The contractor accepts responsibility for compensating any party with which the provider enters a subcontract relationship.

## 3.2 Basic Standards - All Contract Types

Contractors must ensure all of the contractor’s employees and subcontractors conduct business according to the VR-SFP and all professional standards required by the licensing or credentialing entity when applicable.

Below are the minimum required standards all contractors and their staff, including subcontractors, must follow.

### 3.2.1 Informed Choice

It is the VR counselor and the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind (ILS-OIB) worker’s responsibility to help the customer in exercising informed choice. The VR counselor and ILS-OIB worker provide customers informed choice by providing information and assistance to customers that enables them to exercise informed choice in the development of their individualized plans for employment. This includes the selection of an employment goal, specific vocational rehabilitation services needed to achieve the employment goal, entity that will provide each good or service, employment setting, and the settings in which goods and services will be provided.

Individuals with disabilities must be active participants in their own rehabilitation programs and make meaningful and informed choices about the selection of their vocational goals and objectives and the VR services they receive based on their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests. Refer to [34 CFR §361.45](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-361/subpart-B/subject-group-ECFR8c5f55ccf5c0da2/section-361.45) and [34 CFR §361.52](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-361/subpart-B/subject-group-ECFR8c5f55ccf5c0da2/section-361.52).

### 3.2.2 Customer Communication and Language Needs

Each contractor must coordinate with the customer's VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker to ensure that all verbal and written communications between the contractor and the customer are conducted in the customer's preferred or native language. The following are examples of possible preferred methods of communication:

* Using a language interpreting service;
* Using training or service materials written in either large print, a customer’s native language, Braille, or a third grade reading level for non-readers.

If communication services are needed, the contractor is responsible for scheduling the services in a timely manner through the customer's VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker.  To avoid any extra fees, the contractor should provide either the VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker at least three business days’ notice to schedule communication services.

### 3.2.3 Professionalism

Contractors, their employees, and any subcontractors must perform in a professional manner and dress in business casual attire that is appropriate for the following work activities and workplaces:

* Interacting with VR customers and staff;
* Providing services or goods; and
* Visiting VR offices.

A professional manner is defined as, but not limited to, the following:

* Clothing appropriate to the training or educational setting;
* Assuming responsibility and accountability for all decisions and actions;
* Complying with all licensing, credentialing and/or accreditation requirements;
* Delivering quality services or goods to customer by promoting objectivity, non-discrimination, and sound business practices;
* Respecting and supporting the customer’s and VR staff’s decisions in the customer’s IPE;
* Maintaining the confidentiality of all customer information in full compliance with state and federal regulations;
* Submission of accurate, complete reports and other required documentation in a timely manner;
* Collecting signatures and date signed from the signee;
* Not engaging in fraud, waste, or abuse when delivering or invoicing for a service or good;
* Maintaining professional communication with VR staff and customers;
* Not allowing a third party to be present when meeting with a customer at the customer's home or business, unless the customer has consented by signing a release allowing the third party to be present, the third party is a potential employer, or unless the contractor (contractor employee or subcontractor) is providing communication access services;
* Not misrepresenting oneself as a state of Texas employee;
* Not misrepresenting the contractor as a state agency;
* Reporting in a timely manner and to the appropriate authorities any abuse or neglect of any customer or customer's family member. (Refer to VR-SFP 3.2.10.1);
* Considering the negative impacts of action or inaction on the part of the individual or contractor to the health, safety, or welfare of any customer or customer's family member;
* Contractors and contractor’s staff avoiding personal relationships with TWC-VR customers.  Examples include romantic relationships, invitations to attend church, or other non-professional activities that the customer was not previously associated;
* Not engaging in activities or relationships with customers that may be misconstrued by the customer;
* Not advertising or marketing services in a misleading manner or outside of the VR-SFP parameters.

Communication access service contractors must follow [Code of Professional Conduct – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/assistive-services-providers/board-evaluation-interpreters-certification-program/code-professional-conduct) or the [Code of Professional Ethics - Association for Court Reporters and Captioners (NCRA.org)](https://www.ncra.org/home/professionals_resources/NCRA-Code-of-Professional-Ethics).

### 3.2.4 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation that creates a risk that professional judgment or action will be unduly influenced by a personal interest or relationship and creates conflicts with the proper delivery of services or goods by a contract and the public interest.  If a violation occurs, corrective action is required, which may include contract termination or disqualification from receiving a future contract with TWC.

Each contractor must have a VR3444, Conflict of Interest Certification, on file with their Q or RPSS. An updated VR3444 is required at new contract application and whenever the information in the form has changed.

Contractors and potential contractors must not offer, give, or agree to give TWC staff anything of value.

Something of value includes, but is not limited to prepared foods, gift baskets, promotional items, awards, gift cards, meals, or promises of future employment.

Contractors and contractor’s staff may not use VR dedicated office space to provide services to TWC-VR customers, with the exception of providing communication access services.  
Contractors and contractor’s staff must avoid relationships with customers or VR staff that would impair the contractor's objectivity in performing their duties or that would endanger confidentiality.

Real or apparent conflicts of interest might occur when a former VR employee becomes an employee or a subcontractor of a TWC contractor.

A contractor must not do the following:

* Hire, contract with, or accept as a volunteer any current employees of TWC, VR, or ILS-OIB;
* Hire, contract with, or accept as a volunteer any former employees of TWC, VR, or ILS-OIB earlier than 12 months after the separation date, if the former employee will provide contracted services as defined in the VR-SFP and/or [Texas Government Code § 572.069](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/GV/htm/GV.572.htm);
* Hire or receive payment for hiring a VR or ILS-OIB customer to whom they are providing services unless there is a VR3472 approved by the VR division director; or
* Request or obtain confidential information from a state employee for either the personal or professional benefit of the contractor.

The scenarios above do not make up a complete list of real or apparent conflicts of interest. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may result in contract termination, disqualification from receiving a future contract, and/or recoupment of payments.

**Exception:**

A current TWC employee may be hired by a communication access service contractor; however, the TWC employee may not provide services to TWC while acting as an employee of the contractor. Communication access service contractors must follow [Code of Professional Conduct – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/assistive-services-providers/board-evaluation-interpreters-certification-program/code-professional-conduct) or the [Code of Professional Ethics - Association for Court Reporters and Captioners (NCRA.org)](https://www.ncra.org/home/professionals_resources/NCRA-Code-of-Professional-Ethics).

#### 3.2.4.1 Texas Workforce Solutions–VR Customer Providing Services to other Texas Workforce Solutions–VR Customers

A customer is acting in a dual role when the Texas Workforce Solutions–VR (TWS-VR) customer’s IPE supports the customer in:

* obtaining employment from an existing contractor to provide services to other VR customers; or
* becoming a TWC-VR contractor to provide services to VR customers.

When the VR customer is in a dual role, for a period of 12 months following the closure of his or her case, the customer:

* is prohibited from providing services to any customer who is assigned to the customer’s same TWS-VR counselor; and/or
* may not receive SAs from the Workforce Solutions Office to which the customer’s VR counselor was assigned at the time of the customer’s services.

An exception may be granted when a VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request, is approved for any of the following reasons:

* The customer lives in a rural or other area where no other providers are available to serve the customer;
* The contractor has a skill or capability that no other available and accessible provider has. (For example, in situations where a customer is not proficient in English, the contractor speaks the customer's language as well as English.)

### 3.2.5 Marketing

TWC contractors and subcontractors are encouraged to have materials about their business for customers and staff; however, TWC contractors and subcontractors are prohibited from using any of the following in their marketing materials:

* Statements from TWC-VR customers that include the customer’s identity;
* Photographs or videos of TWC-VR customers;
* Indications they are guaranteed funding by TWC;
* Indicating they are employed by TWC; or
* Actions misconstruing them as an agent of TWC-VR or TWS-VR.

### 3.2.6 Referrals to VR by a Provider

A provider may refer an individual for VR or OIB services.

To apply for VR or OIB services, individuals may use the following:

* [Start My VR – online self-referral for VR and OIB](https://twcgov.service-now.com/com.glideapp.servicecatalog_cat_item_view.do?v=1&sysparm_id=e05bd29c1bf5e41016a1caab234bcb94&sysparm_preview=true&sysparm_domain_restore=false&sysparm_stack=no);
* [VR Office Locator](https://webp.twc.state.tx.us/services/VRLookup/);
* VR Inquiries number at 512-936-6400; or
* [vr.office.locator@twc.texas.gov](mailto:vr.office.locator@twc.texas.gov).

The provider must inform the individual that:

* the VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker determines eligibility for VR services; and
* the VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker works with eligible customers to do the following and provide them with the information required to make an informed choice:
  + Develop an IPE for VR or an independent living plan;
  + Choose the services necessary to meet the individual's goals and objectives; and
  + Choose the providers of any planned goods or services.

Due to informed choice, referrals from a provider are not a guarantee the provider will be selected to work with the referred, eligible customer. For example, a customer may choose a different provider or choose to pursue other VR services, such as academic training, based on their unique needs, interests, preferences, and informed choice.

Note:  Due to confidentiality, a provider may not contact TWC-VR to request information about a customer to whom they are not providing services.

### 3.2.7 Confidentiality

TWC confidential information means any communication or record (whether oral, written electronically stored, or transmitted, or in any other form) provided to or made available to the provider electronically or through any other means including Personal Identifiable Information (PII), Sensitive Personal Information (SPI), and Protected Health Information (PHI).

The provider must comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations with respect to privacy, security, and notification of breaches.

The contractor must provide physical safeguards for confidential records, such as locked cabinets and encrypted file storage, and ensure the records are available only to authorized staff members as needed to provide goods or services. Customer case records must be stored in a secured location where there is maximum protection against fire, water damage, theft, and other hazards.

A breach of confidentiality incident may include, but is not limited to, the following:

* Laptop that contains stored customer PII, SPI, and/or PHI is stolen;
* Contractor’s email was hacked; or
* Customer’s case file was lost or stolen.

If a breach of confidentiality is discovered, refer TWC-VR incident reporting, refer to VR-SFP 3.2.11 Incident Reporting.

Communication access service contractors must also comply with the [Code of Professional Conduct – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/assistive-services-providers/board-evaluation-interpreters-certification-program/code-professional-conduct) or the [Code of Professional Ethics - Association for Court Reporters and Captioners (NCRA.org)](https://www.ncra.org/home/professionals_resources/NCRA-Code-of-Professional-Ethics).

### 3.2.8 Fraud, Abuse, Misconduct, and Waste

A contractor is responsible for of the following actions that are committed by the contractor’s staff or subcontractors:

* Abuse - Practices that are inconsistent with sound fiscal or business practices and that result in unnecessary costs, such as intentional destruction, diversion, manipulation, misapplication, or misuse of public resources in both financial and/or nonfinancial settings
* Fraud - Any intentional conduct designed to deceive others, that results in a loss to the victim and/or a gain or benefit to the individual committing fraud
* Misconduct - Intentional wrongdoing or improper behavior or activity
* Waste - The thoughtless or careless expenditure, consumption, mismanagement, misuse, or squander of public resources, such as incurring unnecessary costs because of inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls.

Contact [TWC Fraud Reporting](https://www.twc.texas.gov/services/report-fraud) or call 800-252-3642 whenever abuse, fraud, misconduct, or waste is identified.

For TWC-VR incident reporting, refer to VR-SFP 3.2.11 Incident Reporting

### 3.2.9 Safe and Secure Environments

Contractors must provide a safe and secure environment for their employees, VR or ILS-OIB customers, and visitors.

When the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov)](https://www.cdc.gov/), [Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/), state, and/or local governments issue health and safety protocols, executive orders, or mandates, the provider must be aware of and implement any required changes and provide services or goods to VR or ILS-OIB customers following these guidelines.

Communication access service contractors must follow the [Code of Professional Conduct – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/assistive-services-providers/board-evaluation-interpreters-certification-program/code-professional-conduct) or the [Code of Professional Ethics - Association for Court Reporters and Captioners (NCRA.org)](https://www.ncra.org/home/professionals_resources/NCRA-Code-of-Professional-Ethics).

Licensed professionals, including communication access service contractors, must follow their professional code of ethics and any other mandated guidelines.

### 3.2.10 Allegations or Incidents of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation

[Texas Family Code § 261.101](https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex._fam._code_section_261.101) requires a professional individual (such as any TWC contractor) who has cause to believe a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any individual to immediately (within 48 hours) report the suspected abuse.

[Texas Human Resources Code § 48.051](https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex._human_resources_code_section_48.051) requires a professional individual (such as any TWC contractor) to make a report if there is cause to believe that an individual age 65 or older or an individual with a disability is being abused, neglected, or exploited.

All TWC contractors and their staff are considered professionals and are required to report any allegations or incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Examples of allegations or incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Domestic violence;
* Stealing money or items; or
* Refusing necessary medical treatment for an individual who cannot seek on their own.

For specific information on how to report allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the appropriate agencies, refer to VR-SFP 3.2.10.1 Reporting to Investigatory Agencies.

If a licensed professional is an alleged perpetrator, the information must also be reported to the appropriate professional licensing agency.

For TWC-VR incident reporting, refer to VR-SFP 3.2.11 Incident Reporting.

**Exception:**

Communication access service contractors are not subject to VR-SFP Chapter 3 Incident Reporting. Instead, they are required to follow the [Code of Professional Conduct – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/assistive-services-providers/board-evaluation-interpreters-certification-program/code-professional-conduct) or the [Code of Professional Ethics - Association for Court Reporters and Captioners (NCRA.org)](https://www.ncra.org/home/professionals_resources/NCRA-Code-of-Professional-Ethics).

#### 3.2.10.1 Reporting to Investigatory Agencies

Any contractor or contractor's employee or subcontractor that has cause to believe a child who is a minor, an adult with a disability, or an individual 65 years of age or older is at risk of or in a state of harm due to abuse, neglect, or exploitation must immediately report the information to the appropriate investigatory agency. (Refer to the table below) If the incident is a threat to health or safety, the local law enforcement agency must also be notified.

Reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation directly to the appropriate investigatory agency is required, regardless of the circumstances.

#### Reporting Process

| **If the alleged abuse, neglect, or exploitation occurs in:** | **Then the contractor that has cause to believe abuse, neglect, or exploitation has occurred, reports the information to the following:** |
| --- | --- |
| * a child care operation licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, including a residential child care operation; * a state-licensed facility or community center that provides services for mental health, intellectual disabilities, or related conditions; * an adult foster home that has three or fewer customers and is not licensed by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS); * an unlicensed room and board facility; * a school; or * an individual's own home | Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Statewide Intake Program P.O. Box 149030 Austin, Texas 78714-9030 Voice 1-800-252-5400 Fax 512-832-2090 [Texas Abuse Hotline](https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx) |
| * an assisted-living care facility licensed by DADS; * a nursing home, adult day care; * a private intermediate care facility for individuals with intellectual disabilities; or * an adult foster care facility | Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services Complaints Management and Investigations P.O. Box 149030, Mail Code E-340 Austin, Texas 78714-9030 1-800-458-9858 |
| a Texas Department of State Health Services licensed substance abuse facility or program | Texas Department of State Health Services Substance Abuse Compliance Group Investigations 1100 W. 49th Street Austin, Texas 78756 Mail Code 2823 1-800-832-9623 |
| the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center at: Texas Workforce Commission 4800 N. Lamar Blvd. Austin, Texas 78756 | Report incident to the incident report mailbox for TWC Risk and Security Management at [incidentreports.rsm@twc.texas.gov](mailto:incidentreports.rsm@twc.texas.gov).    The [Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Policy Manual](https://www.twc.texas.gov/programs/vocational-rehabilitation/criss-cole) has additional reporting requirements. |
| a hospital licensed by the Texas Department of State Health Services | Texas Department of State Health Services Facility Licensing Group 1100 W. 49th Street Austin, TX 78756 Complaint Hotline 1-888-973-0022 |

### 3.2.11 Incident Reporting

An incident is an unusual or unexpected event that compromises or may compromise the health or safety of individuals or the security of property.  
The contractor is responsible for reporting all incidents, including but not limited to, the following:

* Breach of confidentiality;
* Fraud, abuse, misconduct, or waste;
* Events that put the health and safety of customers and contractor staff at risk;
* Allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation;
* Emergency evacuations;
* Emergency medical services;
* Emergency room treatment;
* Hospitalization; or
* Death.

If an incident is a threat to health or safety, secure the individual’s safety and immediately contact law enforcement, emergency medical personnel, and the appropriate investigatory agency.

To report an incident, the contractor must notify the VR counselor as soon as possible, but within three business days of the incident.

The VR3446, Incident Report must be completed by the contractor and submitted to the Q or RPSS assigned to the provider’s headquarters within ten business days of the incident.

**Exception:**

Communication access service contractors are not subject to VR-SFP Chapter 3 Incident Reporting. Instead, they are required to follow the [Code of Professional Conduct – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/assistive-services-providers/board-evaluation-interpreters-certification-program/code-professional-conduct) or the [Code of Professional Ethics - Association for Court Reporters and Captioners (NCRA.org)](https://www.ncra.org/home/professionals_resources/NCRA-Code-of-Professional-Ethics).

### 3.2.12 Purchasing Goods and Services

VR purchases contracted services and goods deemed necessary for the customer to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain successful competitive integrated employment or to achieve independent living goals.

#### 3.2.12.1 Service Authorization

A service authorization (SA) is a request for a contractor to provide identified goods or services based on the terms and conditions specified in the authorization. An SA is the only valid authorization by which purchases are made. No services or goods may be provided to a customer without a valid, signed SA for the specific services or goods.

If a contractor is issued an SA for a good or service that has prerequisites or requirements that have not been met, the contractor must inform the VR counselor that the contractor may not accept the issued SA to prevent being in noncompliance with the standards. For example, if a provider receives an SA for a service that requires an evaluation to be completed before service delivery, the provider must confirm whether the evaluation was completed and request a copy.

Authorized services must only be provided within the dates of the SA.

Each SA contains the following:

* A start date and end date during which the services are to be provided or goods are to be ordered;
* A description of the services or goods to be provided;
* An authorized quantity; and
* A unit cost.

An SA may include additional information in the comment section that define basic terms and provide supplemental information related to the services or goods being requested. Actions required of the contractor by the SA instructions must be completed before the contractor submits the invoice for payment.

If VR changes an SA in any manner, such as changing the service dates, quantity of service, or description of a good, a copy of the new, signed SA must be given to the contractor when the change is made. Before providing or to continue to provide the good or services, the contractor must contact the customer's VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker to ensure authorization is in place and valid.  If efforts to obtain an updated SA from VR staff have been unsuccessful, contact your regional Q or RPSS.

The contractor must keep a copy of all SAs in the contractor's customer records.

#### 3.2.12.2 Multi-customer Service Authorization

Multi-customer service authorizations (MCSA) are issued when services are purchased from a single provider for multiple customers.  An MCSA may contain customers from one or more caseloads.

Information related to multiple customers must never be filed in an individual customer's file.  Invoices that include the names of multiple customers must be kept in a separate file. Individual reports may be maintained in the individual case file since no identifying information for other customers is documented within the report.

#### 3.2.12.3 Timely Submission of Invoices for Payment

By accepting the SA, the provider agrees to send an invoice to TWC for payment once the goods or services have been provided.  It is a best practice to submit the invoice within 30 days of the delivery of the good or service.  For example, a service provider should invoice at the completion of each benchmark.

All invoices must contain all of the required elements, listed in 3.2.12.4 Required Elements of an Invoice Submitted to TWC-VR.  If billings for medically related purchases (such as professional medical services, durable medical equipment (DME), hearing aids, and hospital services) lack the required invoice data, but all other information on the billing is accurate and complete, the VR staff member attaches the ReHabWorks system generated billing cover sheet for the SA to the billing statement and files the documents in the customer’s case file.

Non-medical billings must be invoiced solely on the vendor and/or contractor’s paperwork and may not use the ReHabWorks system generated billing cover sheet to fulfill the required elements.

Provider electronic signatures will be accepted on forms required for invoicing. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.2.16 Signatures.

#### 3.2.12.4 Required Elements of an Invoice Submitted to TWC-VR

At a minimum, the invoices must include at a minimum as required by the [34 Texas Administrative Code § 20.487](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=34&pt=1&ch=20&rl=487):

* The vendor's complete name and remittance address including city, state, and ZIP code;
* The vendor's 14-digit Texas identification number (TIN) issued by the comptroller;
* The vendor's contact name and telephone number, email address, or fax number;
* The SA number;
* The VR office's name and address, or delivery address, as applicable;
* The contract number;
* A description of the goods or services provided, including the dates of service;
* The quantity and unit cost being billed, as documented on the current SA;
* Other relevant information supporting and explaining the payment requested or identifying a successor organization to an original vendor, if necessary; and
* Any other information required by applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations governing the provision of services under the contract and the policies and standards.

For examples of invoices that include all required elements, refer to the invoice templates posted on [UNT WISE Invoice Examples | Workplace Inclusion & Sustainable Employment (unt.edu)](https://wise.unt.edu/content/invoice-examples).

#### 3.2.12.5 Inaccurate Invoice

TWC-VR does not accept invoices that are incorrect or that do not include all the required items listed in VR-SFP 3.2.12.4 Required Elements of an Invoice Submitted to TWC-VR.

TWC-VR returns incomplete or incorrect invoices and any associated reports to the contractor with a completed VR3460, Vendor Invoice Additional Data Request form and asks the vendor to make the necessary corrections.

The contractor submits the corrected invoice and documentation required for review and payment.  If corrections were made to the report, the contractor must ensure the provider signature section of the form is signed again.  However, the provider is not required to obtain a new customer signature if it was previously obtained and filed in the provider and VR case files.  If corrections were made to the invoice only, new signatures are not required.

#### 3.2.12.6 Overpayments

If a contractor or a TWC VR staff member discover an overpayment, they must immediately report it to the Q or RPSS assigned to the contract.  Once the overpayment has been confirmed, the contractor will be provided guidance on how to return the funds to TWC.  A contractor must promptly settle all overpayments identified.

#### 3.2.12.7 Payments Due

TWC is obligated to pay only for goods and/or services if all outcomes required for payment are achieved, as explained in the VR SFP and on the SA. In accordance with the Prompt Payment Act, [Texas Government Code Chapter 2251](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/GV/htm/GV.2251.htm), TWC will make payment on a correct, properly prepared and submitted invoice within 30 days of receipt.

Invoices received outside of regular business hours or on a holiday will be considered received the day they are provided to TWC-VR.

#### 3.2.12.8 State Payee Payment

The application [Search State Payments Issued](https://security.app.cpa.state.tx.us/Public/login) allows contractors and other payees to view their detailed payment information.

TWC recommends contractors register at [TX Comptroller E-Systems](https://security.app.cpa.state.tx.us/Public/login).

For resources, refer to [CPA Texas](https://comptroller.texas.gov/).

For more information, refer to [FAQs from Comptroller](https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/faqs/), [State Payee Payment Resource](https://security.app.cpa.state.tx.us/Public/login), and [Search State Payments Issued Tutorials](https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/file-pay/about-webfile.php).

#### 3.2.12.9 Payments (Warrants)

”Warrant Number” and “Payment Number” may be used interchangeably to describe either a warrant number (nine digits) or a direct deposit number (seven digits) regarding a contractor’s payment.

The contractor may check the status of payment on the Texas State Comptroller’s website at:

<https://mycpa.cpa.state.tx.us/securitymp1portal/displayLoginUser.do>.

### 3.2.13 Services, Goods, and/or Equipment and Premium Fees

Contractors agree to accept TWC authorized rates as payment in full for services provided. Contractors may not collect money from a VR or ILS-OIB customer or the customer's family for any service that costs more than the authorized rate.

When VR and another resource pay for a customer service, the total payment may not exceed the authorized rate.

Premium fees may be available to service contractors as incentive payments for providing certain services. Premium fees are established to compensate contractors' staff members that have specialized skills or work with customers who meet specific criteria. For details about the criteria and the fees for services, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 20: Premiums.

#### 3.2.13.1 Contracted Modification Request

When necessary, the services being delivered to the customer may need to be changed or an alternate plan established to better meet the customer's goal.

When the service description, process and procedures, or outcomes required for payment for a good or service are changed from their description in the VR SFP to meet a customer's individual needs, a VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request must be completed.

### 3.2.14 Documentation

The provider’s customer case files must include:

* All invoices;
* All SAs; and
* All forms required by the VR-SFP chapters; and
* Any supporting documentation, such as training materials, resumé, job applications, or attendance records, that is required by VR-SFP chapters.

The provider’s contract file should include:

* Copy of all contracts and any amendments;
* Proof of insurance, as applicable;
* Incident reports, if any;
* Staff information sheets, as applicable, such as:
  + VR3440B, Goods and Equipment Part B – Local Business Location Information;
  + VR3449, Employment Supports for Brain Injury Professional Staff;
  + VR3454, Benefits Counseling Provider Staff Information Form; or
  + VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form.
* Training curriculums; and
* Any documentation required by the Standards for Providers or under the contract.

Upon request, the contractor must make available to TWC, TWS, VR or ILS-OIB staff (such as assigned monitors, Qs, RPSSs, and contract managers) any documents, papers, and records that are directly related to the goods or services provided to VR customers.

A contractor must not share with a customer any documents received from TWC-VR. When a customer makes a request for such documents, the contractor must refer the customer to the customer's VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker.

A contractor may share with a customer the documents that relate to the services provided by the contractor, such as résumés, employment data sheets, and reports.

### 3.2.15 Forms

Forms are used to document how the goods and services meet the outcomes required for payment.  When completing forms and/or documentation related to the delivery of services or goods to customers, the contractor must type all information into the form and include the following:

* Answers to all questions related to the services or goods provided. If a question or section does not apply, enter "Not Applicable" or "N/A;
* For questions requiring a narrative response, summaries must be written in paragraph form in clear English including adequate details;
* Write the goal in clear, measurable terms, when goals are required;
* Review carefully, leaving no blanks, making certain that all standards have been met before submitting any form and/or report with an invoice for payment;
* Collect required signatures from VR or ILS-OIB staff, customers, provider’s staff, and circle of supports.

TWC-VR forms are protected and should not be unprotected at any time by a contractor or TWC-VR staff.  Unprotecting the forms can remove accessibility and other form functions.  Contractors must use the most current form published to the Vocational Rehabilitation Service Forms Catalog.

Note:  When new forms are published, any previous forms initiated before the new form is posted may continue to be used, if the service has already initiated.  It is not necessary to transfer previous form information to a newly published form unless policy or guidance is specifically provided to the providers.

Some examples include the following:

* The VR1604, Work Experience Training Report, or the VR3315, Job Skills Training Progress Report, may continue to be used to record training sessions initiated before and after the date change on the form. When it is necessary to continue to record the customer’s progress, after the previous form is ready to be invoiced, the provider must transition to the new form.
* The VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan - Part B and Service Report which is initiated during the planning meeting it is not necessary to transfer the information to the new form unless a new meeting is held to update the job placement plan.

When a contractor receives a TWC VR form from VR staff, the contractor should ensure it contains the information needed to move forward with goods or services.  If forms from VR staff appear incomplete or incorrect, it is best practice for the contractor to request corrections from VR staff via email and to document these communications in the contractor's case file.  However, the contractor is not ultimately responsible for ensuring the completeness and accuracy of VR form sections that are the VR staff’s primary responsibility (e.g., referral forms, VR use only sections).

For questions related to TWC VR forms or if a form that is no longer published is needed, contact [vr.standards@twc.texas.gov](mailto:vr.standards@twc.texas.gov).

Providers must submit forms by United States mail, hand delivery, fax, or encrypted email, unless otherwise noted.  Information must be accurate and complete. All instructions on the form and in the VR SFP must be followed.

### 3.2.16 Signatures

Signatures are used to validate the purchase of most goods and/or services. The customer’s signature is used to verify they received the good or service. Verifying the customer received the good or service is a state of Texas purchasing requirement, and a customer signature is oftentimes the most efficient method to do this. When signatures are required, they may be obtained by:

* Handwritten signatures; or
* Digital signature(s).

#### 3.2.16.1 Handwritten Signatures

Handwritten signatures may be collected as follows:

* In person; or
* Sending an electronic copy of the document to the customer, if the customer has the equipment necessary to print, sign, and return an electronic copy of the signed document.

#### 3.2.16.2 Digital Signatures

Digital signatures may only be collected using software that produces a certification of the date and time the signature was collected.  These signatures may be collected on smart devices, such as tablets and phones.  Examples of software that allows for collection of digital signatures includes:

* [Acrobat sign](https://www.adobe.com/sign/online-signature.html); and
* [DocuSign](https://www.docusign.com/).

Note:  Typing a name in the place of a signature does not count as a provider or customer’s digital signature.

#### 3.2.16.3 Obtaining Signatures

Signatures—handwritten or digital— are always preferable to other methods of verification.  The provider must make at least three attempts to obtain signatures, but not more than one per day, after the services have been completed.

When the provider’s attempts to obtain signatures have been unsuccessful and have been recorded on the submitted documentation, the form should be sent to TWC-VR to verify receipt of goods and/or services, and the customer’s satisfaction.

If every attempt has been unsuccessful, payment may be made with a VR3472, Contract Modification Request approved by the VR division director.

### 3.2.17 Record Storage and Retention

Contractors must keep their financial and supporting documents, statistical records, and any other records that are essential to the services for which a claim or report was submitted to the TWC:

* safe;
* confidential; and
* available to TWC staff on request.

The records and documents must be kept for the following lengths of time, whichever is later:

* For seven years after the date that the final bill was paid; and
* Until all billing-related questions are resolved.

For more information on how to address an incident that includes a records storage or data breach, refer to VR-SFP 3.2.11 Incident Reporting.

#### 3.2.17.1 Paper Record Storage

Stored paper documents must be protected:

* as required in VR SFP-3.2.7 Confidentiality; and
* in a retrievable and organized manner that prevents the documents from being stolen, tampered with, or damaged.

The contractor assumes all business risk associated with lost records. Lost records may result in adverse action against the contractor.

#### 3.2.17.2 Encryption

VR policy and federal law requires that all email messages that contain confidential information be sent using the level of encryption required by publication 140-2 of the Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS).

If a contractor is not equipped to use the FIPS 140-2 level of encryption, then the contractor must ask a VR staff member to send an encrypted email to the contractor.

The same encrypted email message may then be used to send encrypted information back to VR staff.

If the contractor fails to use the FIPS 140-2 level of encryption, the contractor must report a breach of confidentiality to the assigned Q or RPSS.

If the contractor sends confidential information that is not encrypted, the contractor must report the incident using the VR3446, Incident Report.  See VR-SFP 3.2.11 TWC-VR Incident Reporting.

#### 3.2.17.3 Electronic Storage (Not Cloud-Based or on a Third-Party Server)

Records stored on desktop computers or on portable devices (for example, on laptops, USB flash drives, hard drives, CDs, and DVDs) must be protected as required in VR-SFP 3.2.7 Confidentiality and VR-SFP 3.2.17.2 Encryption.

Portable devices must be protected from theft, tampering, or damage. The contractor is responsible for all data collection and assumes all business risk associated with lost data. Lost data may result in adverse action against the contractor.

The contractor must ensure that all data meets TWC's stringent privacy and security requirements and adhere to Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 140-2.  The contractor must use AES-256 encryption to encrypt the entire hard drive (PC), drive (server), or device (USB or other portable media).

TWC's privacy and security requirements for electronic storage taking the following actions:

* Disposing of data in a manner that complies with [NIST Special Publication 800-88, Revision 1: Guidelines for Media Sanitization | NIST](https://www.nist.gov/publications/nist-special-publication-800-88-revision-1-guidelines-media-sanitization); and
* Maintaining continuous process improvement and vigilance to assess risks, monitor and test security protection, and implement changes needed to protect TWC data.

#### 3.2.17.4 Cloud-Based Storage

Records that are stored entirely or partially in the cloud must be stored in compliance with the [Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP)](https://www.nist.gov/itl/federal-risk-and-authorization-management-program)  and meet FedRAMP moderate controls.

The three main cloud vendors that have Government Cloud offerings that meet FedRAMP moderate controls are:

* [Google Cloud Storage](https://cloud.google.com/storage/)
* [Amazon Web Services (AWS);](https://aws.amazon.com/products/storage/) and
* [Microsoft Azure (Azure).](https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/)

For more information, refer to [Understanding baselines and impact levels of FedRAMP](https://www.fedramp.gov/understanding-baselines-and-impact-levels/#:~:text=Understanding%20Baselines%20and%20Impact%20Levels%20in%20FedRAMP%201,Impact%20Level%20...%203%20High%20Impact%20Level%20).

Additional TWC privacy and security requirements for cloud storage include the following:

* Cooperating fully with TWC's chief information security officer to detect and remediate vulnerability of the hosting infrastructure and/or the application;
* Giving TWC access to the contractor's facilities, installations, technical capabilities, operations, documentation, records, and databases, to the extent required to carry out FedRAMP assessments and FedRAMP continuous monitoring, and to safeguard against threats and hazards to the security, integrity, and confidentiality of the nonpublic TWC data that are collected and stored by the contractor;
* Giving TWC access within 72 hours to the contractor's facilities, installations, technical capabilities, operations, documentation, records, and databases, to the extent required to conduct an inspection to safeguard against threats and hazards to the security, integrity, and confidentiality of TWC data;
* Allowing inspections to include vulnerability scans of authenticated and unauthenticated:
  + operating systems and networks;
  + web applications; and
  + database applications;
* Understanding that TWC has the right to perform manual or automated audits, scans, reviews, or other inspections of the IT environment being used to provide or facilitate services for TWC.
* The contractor must notify TWC about new or unanticipated threats or hazards or about safeguards that cease to function, as the issues are discovered through the submission of the VR3446, Incident Report.  Refer to VR-SFP 3.2.11 Incident Reporting.

### 3.2.18 Background Checks

Contractors that will provide goods or services directly to VR customers must run a criminal background check on each staff member who will interact with any VR customer. This includes any staff who have any communication or other contact whether in person, on paper, by voice, by sign language, electronically or any other method. The only exception is for staff who never communicate with or are physically present with a VR customer. Background checks must be completed by the contractor before the employee interacts with any VR customer. If a contractor elects not to conduct background check on a staff member, the contractor must demonstrate that the staff member has never interacted with any VR customer in any way on any subject. Refer to the [Background Check FAQ](https://www.twc.texas.gov/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-providers-resources) for additional questions. All provisions in this section apply equally to any subcontractor.

Contractors are responsible for purchasing and conducting a background check. A background check consists of running a name-based search from the [Texas Department of Public Safety](https://publicsite.dps.texas.gov/ConvictionNameSearch/)  and checking the [National Public Sex Offender](https://www.nsopw.gov/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1) public website. [How To Use the Conviction Name Search - Criminal History Conviction Name Search (texas.gov)](https://publicsite.dps.texas.gov/ConvictionNameSearch/Home/Default/HowToSearch) provides instruction in how to use the Texas Department of Public Safety website, and the [National Public Sex Offender](https://www.nsopw.gov/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1)  website provides information on the program and use of the registry. Contractors may also conduct a more comprehensive background check on their staff. A more comprehensive background check may substitute for the Texas DPS name-based search.

Contractors must maintain a record of all background checks conducted, including a screenshot or printed copy from the Texas DPS name-based search and from the National Public Sex offender registry if no results are found. Contractors must also complete the [Background Checks Attestation and Release Form](https://www.twc.texas.gov/vocational-rehabilitation-service-forms) for all staff, which includes:

• The staff person’s first name and last name;

• Type of background search conducted;

• Date background search was conducted;

• If the search return a conviction;

• Date the national public sex offender website search was conducted; and

• If the search returned a result

If the background search returned a conviction, the contractor must also document:

• If the conviction is barred per the [Convictions Barring Vendor Staff from Performing Services for TWC list](https://www.twc.texas.gov/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-providers-resources);

• Whether an exception has been sought;

• If an exception was granted, by whom, and on what date

Contractors must maintain the [Background Checks Attestation and Release Form](https://www.twc.texas.gov/vocational-rehabilitation-service-forms) Background Checks Attestation and Release Form and background check records on file for a minimum of 7-years. TWC may request to review background check records at any time. If background check records are not available to review at time of request, the contractor must recreate the search.

Any contractor staff who appear in the [National Public Sex Offender](https://www.nsopw.gov/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1) database are immediately barred from providing services with TWC.

Any contractor staff member who has a conviction listed on the [Convictions Barring Vendor Staff from Performing Services for TWC list](https://www.twc.texas.gov/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-providers-resources) must not have any interactions with TWC-VR customers. TWC will consider an exception in some cases to offenses listed under subsection (b) and (c) of the list. Contractors are responsible for requesting an exception. To request an exception, follow the [Exception to Background Check Instructions](https://www.twc.texas.gov/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-providers-resources). Any exception must be approved by the VR Director or designee before any interactions with VR customers occur.

A background check is only valid for 3 years. An updated background check must be obtained no later than the 3-year anniversary date of the original background check, or the contractor must remove the employee from interacting with VR customers on and after the date the background check expires.

For a contractor to self-report noncompliance with background checks refer to VR-SFP 3.2.11 Incident Reporting.

Limited contracted services are exempt from the background check requirement, such as for certain types of entities, procurements, services, or goods. See [Contracted Services Exempt from Background Checks](https://www.twc.texas.gov/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-providers-resources) for a full list of contracted services that are exempt from the background checks requirement.

#### 3.2.18.1 Contractor Self-Reporting

A contractor must require all staff, including employees, subcontractor, or volunteers, to self-report any conviction, incarceration, criminal fine, probation, community service, or deferred adjudication occurring after the contractor last performed a background check for that staff member.

When a contractor’s staff person self-identifies a change in their background status, a new background check must be obtained prior to any interactions with VR customers.

## 3.3 Contactor Standards for Physical Locations

The following applies to contractors that provide services and/or goods to customers at their physical location.

### 3.3.1 Definition of Physical Location

A Physical location is defined as a location the contractor owns, leases, or uses as dedicated space to provide services and/or goods to customers. The services contractor must complete the VR3442A, Entity’s Physical Location Part A – Service Contracts Certification Statement and the VR3442B, Entity’s Physical Location Part B – General Information Service Contracts, as applicable. The goods contractor must complete the VR3440B, Goods and Equipment Part B – Local Business Location Information. The VR3442B and VR3440B must be completed for each facility owned, leased, or used as dedicated space in which services or goods are routinely provided to customers.

If at any time a physical location does not meet the individual accessibility needs of a customer, the service location must be changed so the customer is able to fully engage in the service.

### 3.3.2 Exemptions to Physical Locations

Physical locations do not include sites that are not owned, leased, or used as dedicated space by the contractor. This can include state, federal, city, county, other public meeting spaces, such as places of worship. Although community sites are exempt from section 3.3, it is the contractor’s responsibility to ensure they meet the individual accessibility needs of the customer no matter the location.

Headquarters are exempt from this policy unless customers receive services or attend meetings at the headquarter location.

### 3.3.3 Required Accessibility and Safety Records

A contractor must meet each customer’s individual accessibility needs to ensure customer safety when a customer is accessing the building or facility when receiving goods and/or services.

The contractor must maintain the following records and ensure a copy is on file with the assigned Q or RPSS at contract application and must provide an updated form and supporting documentation anytime the information changes during the contract period:

* Certificate of Occupancy or building permit; and
* Fire inspection report from an inspection by the fire marshal with local jurisdiction (if the contractor's local fire department does not conduct inspections, the contractor may request an inspection from the Texas Department of Insurance, State Fire Marshal's Inspection Services Division, 333 Guadalupe Street, Austin, Texas 78701, (512-305-7900).

**Note:** The permits and fire inspection reports may be obtained from the landlord, if they are not in the possession of the contractor. If the contractor has requested the occupation permit and/or the fire inspection, but has been denied or otherwise unable to obtain, they must provide documented evidence to the assigned Q or RPSS.

It is recommended the contractor complete the [Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Checklist for Existing Facilities](https://www.adachecklist.org/) and keep the completed checklist on file. To ensure a customer’s access to contractor’s physical location to receive goods or services, the physical location should meet the minimum accessibility standards listed below. When the below minimum standards cannot be met, accommodations must be made to ensure the customer can be safely and effectively served.

The contractor’s physical location should have, at a minimum, the following:

* Accessible/handicapped parking;
* Accessible exterior route(s) to enter/exit the building (i.e., ramps, curb cuts, level);
* Accessible interior space in the building (i.e., level, wheelchair seating area, elevator, wide aisles, and doors); and
* Accessible bathroom(s).

The contractor must ensure the safety and health of staff, customers, and visiting public at each physical location where goods and/or services are provided and must have at a minimum, the following:

* Working smoke detectors with visible (flashing) and audible fire warning signals;
* Fire extinguishers in accessible locations, ensuring that they are current with annual inspections;
* Posted Diagrams that show accessible fire escape routes that are free and clear of obstructions;
* A plan to evacuate customers who are in the facility and require physical assistance;
* Arrangement of emergency medical services, when necessary;
* Accessible aisles and work safety zones;
* Secure, safe storage and identification of hazardous or flammable materials; and
* Have safety protocols for use of equipment and machinery with moving parts.

All incidents must be reported using the VR3446, Incident Report.  For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.2.11 Incident Reporting.

## 3.4 Basic Standards for Service Providers

The following applies to any contractors who provide services to customers.  Section 3.4 of the VR-SFP does not apply to providers of communication access services.

### 3.4.1 Headquarters

Each provider must have a designated headquarters identified in the contract. The provider must maintain the following forms related to their headquarters and keep them updated on file with the Q or RPSS:

* VR3441A, Entity Headquarters Information Part A - Management Team
* VR3441B, Entity Headquarters Information Part B - Services and Goods
* VR3441C, Entity Headquarters Information Part C - Counties

### 3.4.2 Director

Service contracts must designate a director as the primary contact.   
The designated director in each service contract is responsible for the following:

* Handling routine communication;
* Addressing compliance issues;
* Ensuring that staff qualifications are documented and current;
* Supervising staff and subcontractors; and
* Ensuring that the contractor meets the requirements described in the contract, in VR SFP, and SAs.

The director is not required to have the job title of director.

The director may be the legally authorized representative, or the legally authorized representative may assign a staff member to be the contractor's designated director.

All designated directors must hold the UNT WISE Director Credential and maintain its effectiveness throughout the contract term. The director credential must be maintained without lapsing.

The following contracted service providers are not required to have a UNT WISE Director Credential:

* Communication access service contractors; and
* Employment Supports for Brain Injury contractors.

For more information, refer to [UNT WISE](https://wise.unt.edu/).

The contractor must keep a completed VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form, for the director on file at the contractor's headquarters, and must provide copies upon request to the Q or RPSS. VR3455 must fully document that the required qualifications of the director are met.

### 3.4.3 Staff Qualifications

Contractor and subcontractors must meet the qualifications described in the applicable service chapter of this manual the entire time the staff person or subcontractor is providing the service. The contractor is responsible for ensuring each provider staff member or subcontractor meets the qualification and that an accurate staff information form is on file and submitted to the Q and/or RPSS.

#### 3.4.3.1 Staff Credentials

TWC has partnered with UNT WISE and the Center for Social Capital to ensure that providers are fully equipped to offer the highest quality services to Texans with disabilities.

UNT WISE credentials include the following:

* A director credential for all standards-related service contracts, except communication access services and employment supports for brain injury;
* A credentialing and training process for the staff of providers' that offer employment services such as job skills training, job placement, supported employment services, and vocational adjustment training; and
* The endorsements for areas of specialization to work with various disability groups, such as groups for individuals with autism or with blind and visual impairments.

For additional information about the UNTWISE credentialing and endorsement processes, see [Texas Credential Training](https://wise.unt.edu/).

The [Center for Social Capital](https://www.griffinhammis.com/cbtac/)  has developed credentialing and training processes for contractors' staff that provide self-employment services.

For information on the qualifications required of contractors' staff and the premiums TWC pays for services, see the chapters in the VR-SFP that are related to each service.

A director's qualifications and any credentialed staff qualifications are reviewed and verified by TWC staff during contract monitoring reviews and before payment for services. TWC staff may request verification of the director's qualifications and credentialed staff qualifications at any time. Payment made for services provided during periods without an approved credentialed director or staff member who is providing the services may be subject to recoupment or other penalties under the contract. Failure to maintain the qualifications is not in compliance with the terms of the contract and may result in the contract being suspended or terminated.

### 3.4.4 Staff-Required Documentation

Each service provider (contractor), except communication access service providers, must keep the following information on file for all directors, employees, and subcontractors, as applicable:

* VR3449, Employment Supports for Brain Injury Professional Staff;
* VR3454, Benefits Counseling Provider Staff Information Form; and
* VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form; and
* Supporting evidence that the staff providing the services, or the appointed director meets all required qualifications under the contract and the applicable chapter in the VR-SFP.

Each service provider must submit the above forms and the supporting evidence that the staff member meets the required qualifications to the Q or RPSS within 30 days of:

* hiring new staff member;
* making a significant change to a staff member's job duties;
* changing staff qualifications and/or credentials; or
* terminating a staff member.

### 3.4.5 Temporary Waiver of Staff Qualifications

When a contractor no longer has qualified or credentialed staff, including directors, VR3490, Temporary Waiver of Qualifications, may be completed and submitted to Q or RPSS. VR3490 must be approved by the VR director before services are provided.

The waiver is specific to the contractor and staff members named on VR3490 and is valid for the period specified on the approved waiver.

The VR director may approve a VR3490 waiver after consideration of the following:

* The availability of another qualified or credentialed director;
* The availability of a qualified or credentialed staff member who meets the qualifications required by the standards for the contracted service;
* The necessity of the waiver to avoid a break in the essential services being provided to a VR or ILS-OIB customer receiving services from that provider; and
* Whether approval of a waiver is in the best interest of VR or ILS-OIB customers and the state.
* After a VR3490 is processed, regardless of whether approved or denied, a copy is sent to the contractor and must be kept on file by the:
* Contractor;
* Q; or
* RPSS.

A copy of the approved VR3490 must accompany any invoice for services provided by a non-credentialed employee or subcontractor to a VR or ILS-OIB customer.

### 3.4.6 Customer Orientation

Any customer referred to a service contractor by VR must receive an orientation that includes at a minimum the following:

* An overview of the services they will be receiving;
* Expectations related to attendance, participation, rules, health and safety and appropriate behaviors;
* What could result in termination of services;
* How to report complaints about a contractor to TWC-VR at 1-800-628-5115; and
* Explain the purpose of the [Client Assistance Program (CAP) – Disability Rights](https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/handout/client-assistance-program-and-transition-services/#:~:text=The%20Client%20Assistance%20Program%20%28CAP%29%20is%20a%20federally,program%20and%2For%20at%20Independent%20Living%20Centers%20in%20Texas.) and provide their telephone number (1-800-252-9108).

Form VR3473, Customer Orientation Checklist completed by the contractor may be used to document the customer’s orientation. The contractor maintains the checklist in each customer’s case file.

This does not apply to communication access service providers.

### 3.4.7 Service Delivery

Service delivery includes meetings and delivery of services prescribed in the VR SFP. All staff qualifications and requirements outlined in the services description, including staff to customer ratios, process and procedures, and outcomes for payment must be followed in the delivery of services for VR or ILS-OIB customers. Each chapter will indicate how the service must be conducted. When the service chapter allows for remote service delivery, requirements in 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery must be followed.

Providers should maintain contact with the VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker at least monthly or as prescribed on the form or SA to keep TWC-VR current on the customer’s progress and to address any identified issues.

### 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery

Remote service delivery is the delivery of rehabilitation over telecommunication networks and includes some VR services. Remote service delivery may not be conducted solely through voiced telephone communication.

Not all customers will benefit from participating in remote service delivery. The VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker must evaluate each customer's case to determine if remote service delivery is in the best interest of the customer and whether the customer has access to required resources and has the skills necessary for effective use.

If the VR SFP service chapters allow and if indicated and approved by the TWC-VR or ILS-OIB worker on the referral form, plan, or SA, a provider may:

* implement accessible training activities using a computer-based training platform that allows for face-to-face and/or real time interaction; or
* use video telecommunication services and software such as Video Relay Services or FaceTime, as training tools.

The service provider must ensure all requirements in the VR-SFP, including confidentiality and the customer's literacy and disability needs, are met in the delivery of the services.

The service provider continually evaluates the customer's ability to actively participate in the remote service delivery, including identifying whether the customer's computer resources are adequate.  When a service provider identifies a customer's needs are not being met, they must notify the VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker.

Meetings may be held remotely between the VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker, customer, provider, and, as appropriate, the customer's circle of supports (including the customer's representative).

Appropriate Online Platform

The U.S Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued guidance on utilizing HIPAA-compliant platforms: [HHS's Notification of Enforcement Discretion for Telehealth During COVID-19](https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/emergency-preparedness/notification-enforcement-discretion-telehealth/index.html).

The following are listed as HIPAA-compliant applications by HHS:

* Skype for Business / Microsoft Teams for government;
* Updox;
* VSee;
* Zoom for Healthcare;
* Doxy.me;
* Google G Suite Hangouts Meet;
* Cisco Webex Meetings / Webex Teams;
* Amazon Chime; and
* GoToMeeting.

The contractor must visit the link above to ensure continued compliance with HIPAA-compliant platforms and to identify when platforms have been added or removed.

### 3.4.9 Transportation

Transportation of VR customers by a contractor or their employees is not required.  However, if a contractor or their employees or subcontractors do transport a customer in the contractor’s vehicle or their personal vehicle, they must meet the minimum liability requirements of the Texas Department of Insurance.  The contractor must keep proof of insurance for any staff member who transports customers.

Contractors and subcontractors must record proof of auto liability insurance on their insurance or staff information forms VR3455 as applicable when they transport customers.

Service providers are prohibited from becoming a vendor for transportation for customers to whom they are also providing a contracted service. The mileage and/or travel premium may be available for VR-SFP services when authorized by TWC-VR. Refer to VR-SFP Chapter 20, Premiums.

### 3.4.10 Training Materials

The contractor implements services using instructional approaches that meet each customer's educational and disability needs, such as:

* discussions;
* PowerPoint presentations;
* inquiry-based instructions;
* hands-on experiments or activities;
* project- and problem-based learning;
* computer-aided instructions;
* handouts; or
* exercises.

All training materials must be available in a format that is appropriate to the customer's needs, including regular print, large print, braille, or recorded audio and/or video files on flash memory, and must be provided in the customer's preferred language. TWC staff may ask to review training materials at any time.

### 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request

When necessary, the services being delivered to the customer may need to be changed or an alternate plan established to better meet the customer's goal.

When the service description, process and procedures, or outcomes required for payment for a service are changed from their description in the VR SFP to meet a customer's individual needs, a VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request must be completed.

The following are common examples of when a VR3472 would be required are:

* A customer requires more than 200 hours of Job Skills Training;
* An Orientation and Mobility training conducted without a blindfold or using a cane not allowed in policy; or
* When all attempts at obtaining a customer’s or customer’s legal representative’s signature have been unsuccessful.

The following requests must be made on the service-specific VR3472:

* Contracted Service Modification Request for Blind and Visually Impaired Services;
* Contracted Service Modification Request for Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services;
* Contracted Service Modification Request for Project SEARCH Services;
* Contracted Service Modification Request for Vocational Assessments;
* Contracted Service Modification Request for Work Experience Services; and
* Contracted Service Modification Request for Work Readiness Services.

For any service not listed above, the non-service specific VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request will be used.

The VR3472 must be approved by the VR division director before services are provided.  VR3472s may not be approved after the fact.

NOTE:

A provider may request a VR3472, but it is the VR counselor’s or ILS-OIB worker’s responsibility to determine if the request is necessary to meet the customer’s individual needs and to fill out the form.

### 3.4.12 Termination of Service Delivery

If a customer's behavior is a concern, contractors must address the behavior before terminating a contractor-provided service due to the behavior. If behaviors are harmful to the customer or others, appropriate actions must be taken to ensure that all parties remain safe.

Reasons for terminating services based on behavior may include the following:

* Behaviors dangerous to oneself or others;
* Serious infraction of the provider's rules;
* Frequent unexcused absenteeism;
* Frequent unexcused tardiness; or
* Lack of cooperation on assigned tasks.

Every effort must be made to inform the VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker before termination of a customer's services. When the VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker cannot be informed before termination, the VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker must be informed in writing within three business days after termination. The contractor must maintain documentation that the VR counselor or ILS-OIB worker was informed of termination.

## 3.5 Basic Standards for Goods Providers

The following section applies only to contractors who provide goods to customers.

### 3.5.1 Parent Company

The parent company is the business that is requesting or has been granted the bilateral contract with TWC to provide services on behalf of VR customers. The VR3440A, Goods and Equipment Part A- Parent Company Information, must be completed at contract application and kept current with TWC-VR by providing updates to the Q or RPSS.

### 3.5.2 Local Business

A local business is the business that is part of the parent company or a parent company that only operates one location or is a manufacturer that provides goods and/or equipment to TWC-VR customers. The VR3440B, Goods and Equipment Part B- Local Business Location Information must be completed at contract application and kept current with TWC-VR by providing updates to the Q or RPSS.

### 3.5.3 Point of Contact

Goods contracts must designate a point of contact as the primary contact.

The point of contact is the person appointed by the legally authorized representative as the primary contact.

The designated point of contact in each good contract performs the following functions:

* Handles routine communication;
* Addresses compliance issues;
* Ensures that staff qualifications, as applicable, are documented and current;
* Supervises any staff and subcontractors; and
* Ensures that the contractor meets the requirements explained in the contract, in the VR SFP, and in SAs.

Note:  The director credential is not required for the point of contact.

### 3.5.4 Contractor Qualifications

The VR-SFP goods chapter will outline all contractor qualifications.

The contractor and contractor’s staff must maintain and provide upon request proof of qualifications, such as proof of licenses, certifications, and résumé, per the VR-SFP goods chapter.

### 3.5.5 Contract Modification Request for Goods

The goods being delivered to the customer may need to be changed or an alternate plan established to better meet the customer's goal.

When the content in the VR-SFP goods chapter needs to be modified or changed from their description in the VR SFP to meet a customer's individual needs, a VR3472, Contracted Services Modification Request must be completed.

## 3.6 Contract Monitoring

The contractor agrees to allow on-site monitoring visits and desk reviews, as needed by TWC, to review all financial or other records and management control systems relevant to providing goods and/or services under the contract.

### 3.6.1 Ongoing Monitoring

TWC staff members, including Contract Oversight, regional, and field staff members, continuously monitor services provided to VR customers. Each provider may have formal liaisons assigned to answer questions about the standards and to perform routine monitoring reviews, and to ensure compliance with standards. Monitoring may include ongoing dialogue, observation, on-site visits, and reviews of case files.

TWC maintains negative and positive performance records on providers and may use the reviews to determine the risk of requiring formal monitoring and/or to determine whether a contract will be renewed or terminated.

### 3.6.2 Compliance Monitoring

All contractors are subject to the periodic monitoring of programmatic and financial compliance by TWC staff. Risk assessment tools are used at the state and regional level each fiscal year to identify VR contractors that will be monitored on-site during a 12-month period. Contractors not identified on the risk assessment may be monitored at the discretion of TWC.

### 3.6.3 Unscheduled or Unannounced Compliance Monitoring

TWC staff members may conduct an unscheduled monitoring review if VR management determines that such a review is necessary.

### 3.6.4 Monitoring Team

A monitoring team comprises representatives from the Fraud Deterrence and Compliance Monitoring – VR Contract Oversight, the Business Operations-VR Contract Administration, and VR staff.

The lead monitor sends a letter notifying the contractor of an announced monitoring review.  The letter explains the scope of the review and how to prepare for the review.

### 3.6.5. Monitoring Review

A monitoring review typically consists of:

* the entrance conference;
* the records review; and
* the exit conference.

At the entrance conference, the lead monitor is responsible for the following:

* Introduces the monitoring team members;
* Briefly explains the monitoring process, purpose, and scope of the review;
* Requests that the contractor assign an individual to be accessible to and work with the monitoring team; and
* Ensures that the team has an acceptable work area to use while conducting the review, if conducted at the contractor's facility.

During the records review, the monitoring team:

* Completes the customer records review;
* Reviews the contractor's files;
* May compare information in the contractor's files with information in the VR files; and
* May conduct customer interviews or observations.

At the exit conference, the lead monitor verbally provides the contractor with the following:

* The results of the records review information about potential overpayments identified during the records review that are subject to possible recoupment;
* Notice that TWC will send the contractor a finding report, if applicable; and
* Information on the time frames and process for the contractor's response and the importance of meeting deadlines.

### 3.6.6 Report of the Monitoring Results

For routine monitoring reviews, the lead monitor sends the results of the monitoring review to the contractor in writing through either a monitoring review closeout letter or through a findings report, if instances of noncompliance were noted. The findings report includes findings of noncompliance with program or financial standards. The lead monitor asks the contractor to offer a Corrective Action Plan or provide further documentation to help resolve the findings.

### 3.6.7 Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

If TWC asks the contractor to submit a corrective action plan, the contractor must, by the date requested in the report of findings:

* submit a corrective action plan, including financial restitution, if required; or
* rebut a finding and submit documentation that substantiates the rebuttal.

The CAP must include the specific steps the contractor will take to prevent future occurrence of the identified finding.  If the finding resulted in an identified overpayment, the contractor must submit financial restitution with their CAP by the date requested in the letter.  TWC reviews the CAP and decides either to accept the CAP or recommend changes to the CAP.

If the contractor chooses to submit a rebuttal, supporting documentation must be submitted no later than the date requested in the letter.

If the contractor does not submit an acceptable corrective action plan or make financial restitution when required, TWC may take adverse action against the contractor, which may include termination of the contract.

### 3.6.8 Monitoring Closeout

The monitoring review is closed if there are no findings, or when the monitoring team accepts the CAP. TWC sends the contractor a letter to close the monitoring review.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 4: Employment Assessments

Contract Subject: VR Employment Services, VR Vocational Evaluation

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with the requirements in Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 4.1 Overview of Employment Assessments

Employment assessments are tools that evaluate a customer's work and training background, general functional capacities, and social behavior. Employment assessments are designed to determine a customer's present and future vocational potential and to evaluate the customer's employment-related strengths and limitations.

This chapter includes information on the following employment-related assessment services:

* Vocational Evaluation
* Situational Assessments and Work Samples
* Environmental Work Assessment (EWA)
* Career Planning Assessment (CPA)

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 4.7 Employment Assessments Service Fees.

Premium payments may be available for some employment assessment services. Premium payments are paid after all deliverables for the service have been achieved. For more information about premiums, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 20: Premiums.

Any request to change a Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Vocational Assessments form, before the change is implemented. The approved VR3472 must be maintained in the provider’s customer case file. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

## 4.2 Staff Qualifications

Before services are provided to customers, the service provider's director must approve VR3455, Provider Staff Information form, completed by each staff member, and submit the approved forms to the provider's assigned VR regional quality assurance specialist or designee. The staff member must document the customer's qualifications on the VR3455, Provider Staff Information form, and provide evidence of meeting all qualifications by providing, for example, transcripts, diplomas, reference letters, credentials, and/or licenses.

It is preferred, but not required, that the provider staff have a varied and successful work history and experience working with individuals with disabilities.

Each individual who administers vocational tests, batteries, and/or other instruments requiring certification must be certified by the appropriate entity.

The provider must give the VR regional quality assurance specialist or designee assigned to the contract an up-to-date written list of vocational tests, batteries, and/or other instruments when the contract is executed or renewed, and any time instruments are added or deleted. The list must:

* identify each instrument used to evaluate customers; and
* describe what each instrument is intended to measure.

### 4.2.1 Vocational Evaluator

A vocational evaluator must hold:

* a master's degree in vocational evaluation; or
* a master's degree in a related field (for example, psychology, sociology, or education) and have two years of full-time experience as a vocational evaluator; or
* a bachelor's degree in a related field (for example: psychology, sociology, industrial arts, etc.) and have three years of full-time experience as a vocational evaluator; or
* a valid psychologist's license.

A vocational evaluator cannot supervise more than two vocational evaluator aides.

### 4.2.2 Vocational Evaluator Aide

A vocational evaluator aide must have:

* one year of full-time work experience directly related to vocational evaluation; or
* a bachelor's degree in a related field.

The vocational evaluator aide must work under the supervision of the vocational evaluator.

### 4.2.3 Environmental Work Assessment Evaluator

The environmental work assessment evaluator must have a current autism endorsement from the University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE).

Information on the UNTWISE Texas credentials and endorsements can be found at [http://wise.unt.edu/crptraining](https://wise.unt.edu/crptraining).

No waiver or exceptions can be used to waive the autism endorsement requirement.

### 4.2.4 Career Planning Assessment Evaluator

The CPA evaluator must have:

* a current University of North Texas Workforce Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE) Supported Employment Specialist credential; and
* a high school diploma or GED; however, a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation, business, marketing, or related human services is preferred.

## 4.3 Vocational Evaluation

### 4.3.1 Vocational Evaluation Service Description

Vocational evaluation is an assessment of an individual's work and training background, general functional capacities, and social and/or behavioral characteristics. The vocational evaluation must contain a detailed description of the customer's behaviors and must describe any implications for the workplace. The evaluation must be designed to determine the customer's present and future vocational potential. The evaluation also must include an assessment of the customer's employment-related strengths and limitations. Vocational evaluations cannot be conducted remotely.

The evaluation must:

* be conducted by the vocational evaluator;
* document up to six hours of assessment per day; and
* result in a vocational objective or alternative vocational objectives being identified by the vocational evaluator.

The following techniques are generally used to establish and measure a customer's work characteristics.

#### 4.3.1.1 Standardized Tests

Standardized tests include tests that:

* measure the customer's academic achievement, cognitive abilities, aptitude, personality, vocational interests, sensory and/or motor skills, and independent living skills; and
* compare the individual's performance with the performance of an appropriate sample population.

All test instruments must be appropriate for use with the target population, including appropriate norms, adaptations, and accommodations.

#### 4.3.1.2 Work Samples

Work samples provide a close simulation of an actual industrial task, business operation, or component of an occupational area. Work samples might not be necessary for all vocational evaluations. However, when deemed necessary by the vocational evaluator or when requested on the referral form or service authorization, work samples must be completed.

The activities involved in conducting a vocational evaluation and preparing a report include developing a case history, assessing information, performing standardized tests, and providing work samples, when appropriate.

The customer's case history must include:

* contact information;
* educational background;
* employment history;
* medical history;
* social history;
* psychological and/or emotional history and current stability;
* daily living activities; and
* independent living skills.

The following areas must be evaluated during the vocational evaluation:

1. Cognitive abilities, such as:
   * learning ability, including attention, concentration, comprehension, memory and/or retention, creativity, and conceptualization;
   * communication skills and interaction with others;
   * ability to follow oral and written instructions;
   * work organization and planning; and
   * spatial concepts
2. Academic achievements (grade level) in reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics
3. Physical abilities, such as:
   * fine motor abilities, including bimanual dexterity, speed, coordination, and strength;
   * gross motor abilities, including strength, balance, and coordination; and
   * stamina and/or physical tolerance and endurance
4. Sensory abilities (identifying preferred learning style—visual, auditory, or tactile), such as the use of:
   * residual vision;
   * auditory processing and sound localization; and
   * tactile perception
5. Aptitudes and vocational interests and/or exploration, such as:
   * specific equipment and technical skills; and
   * preferred vocational interests compared to abilities
6. Behavioral observations and work habits, such as:
   * general and work-related behaviors;
   * self-image (pertaining to self and work);
   * appearance (for example, grooming, hygiene, appropriate clothing for the work setting);
   * motivation and attitude toward work;
   * attendance and punctuality;
   * travel to and from the work setting (for example, access to dependable transportation, understanding how to use transportation);
   * orientation within the work setting (for example, showing the customer where the work area is, restrooms, break rooms, supervisor's location);
   * work stability (including attention to work despite environmental distractions or changes);
   * work productivity and quality;
   * acceptance of supervision (accepting and responding to suggestions, corrections, and general feedback);
   * responsibility for materials and work;
   * adherence to workplace standards (for example, employee policies, rules, and schedules);
   * safety standards (understanding and adhering to specific workplace safety standards);
   * impulse control (for example, predictable behavior and adequate self-control);
   * stress tolerance;
   * cognitive flexibility;
   * persistence (following through on a work task to completion);
   * initiative (working independently);
   * job-seeking skills; and
   * the customer's potential to benefit from VR services.

### 4.3.2 Process and Procedure

An employment service provider receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, and a service authorization.

The VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, includes any documentation that will:

* prepare the provider to better work with the customer;
* indicate the reasons for referral; and
* include specific questions to be addressed during the evaluation.

The scope of each evaluation is determined based on the customer's individual needs. There are no fixed guidelines regarding the number of days required to complete an evaluation. Generally, an evaluation is expected to take one to eight days. The VR counselor determines the appropriate length of the evaluation based on the assessment of the customer's individual needs and circumstances.

The vocational evaluator's job responsibilities during the evaluation are to:

* remain on-site to supervise all services, including the evaluation;
* supervise qualified vocational evaluator aides and maintain the following ratios:
  + One evaluator to no more than six customers without an aide
  + One evaluator and one aide to no more than 10 customers
  + One evaluator to no more than three customers with blindness and/or visual impairment
  + One evaluator and one aide to no more than six customers with blindness and/or visual impairment
* provide written proof, through attendance records made available on request, that the correct ratio of customers to vocational evaluators and vocational evaluator aides is maintained;
* identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviors using existing records, personal observations, and conversations with the VR counselor, the customer, family members, and others;
* prepare an electronic VR1837, Report for Vocational Evaluation, or an electronic report with all required elements; and
* review the customer's vocational interests, strengths, challenges, and recommendations with the customer, the customer's representation, if any, and the VR counselor, when requested on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, or on the service authorization.

### 4.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

Vocational evaluation reports must be submitted using a VR1837, Report for Vocational Evaluation, or an electronic report containing all required elements outlined in the Service Description and noted in the VR1837. The cumulative findings of a vocational evaluation must be submitted no later than 10 working days from the last day of the evaluation.

The report must describe the customer's behavior and must stress the vocational implications of the following factors:

* results of the evaluator's findings and observations specified in the Service Description;
* potential for competitive integrated employment, or the reasons that competitive integrated employment is not appropriate, when applicable;
* job recommendations related to the current job market using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes for the customer's geographic area;
* specific training options that match the customer's capabilities; and
* specific job modifications and/or accommodations necessary to achieve the employment goal

The VR1837, Report for Vocational Evaluation, or the electronic report must contain the signature of the vocational evaluator who conducted the evaluation. For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

When requested on VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, or on the service authorization, the vocational evaluator must complete a feedback session with the customer, the customer's representative, if any, and the VR counselor, to review the evaluator's recommendations and the customer's vocational interests, strengths, and challenges.

To request partial payment for work that has not been completed in its entirety, a VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request, may be submitted. Justification for why the vocational evaluation cannot be completed in its entirety must be included on VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request.

A partial work product, such as a report and documentation of the time spent completing the deliverables, must be submitted with the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request, and must be approved by the TWC-VR director before any partial work is invoiced. The achievement of required deliverables and the hours spent is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

## 4.4 Vocational Evaluation - Situational Assessments and Work Samples

### 4.4.1 Vocational Evaluation - Situational Assessments and Work Samples Service Description

A Vocational Evaluation must be completed before the Situational Assessment and Work Samples are administered.

The Situational Assessment and Work Samples are tools to help the customer and VR counselor determine long-term goals related to finding competitive integrated employment. The Situational Assessments and Work Samples service must consist of the three situational assessments and at least four work samples. The work samples cannot be the same as the ones used in the vocational evaluation.

The evaluator's observations and the customer's career goal, interests, preferences, and experiences are used to determine the type of job and support services necessary for the customer to find competitive integrated employment.

Vocational Evaluations-Situational Assessments and Work Samples are provided in person and cannot be conducted remotely.

#### 4.4.1.1 Situational Assessments

A situational assessment is conducted at three or more competitive integrated work sites within a business or industry setting in the community. The vocational evaluator must observe the customer for a minimum of two hours per competitive integrated work site.

The community-based assessments allow the customer to explore his or her ability to perform a variety of job tasks and help the customer make informed choices about the type of work environment and job tasks that he or she prefers.

Situational Assessments:

* assess the customer's ability to perform real job tasks that exist in industry (whether paid or unpaid);
* demonstrate the customer's ability to do the tasks successfully; and
* assess job tasks that have been carefully documented to show adherence to industrial norms.

Examples of the sites at which situational assessments may be conducted include production lines, jobsites, and areas within a provider's established workplace.

#### 4.4.1.2 Work Samples

A minimum of four Work Samples that were not completed in the vocational evaluation must be completed. Work samples provide a close simulation of an actual industrial task, business operation, or component of an occupational area.

The VR1838, Situational Assessment and Work Sample Report, must include documented examples of the customer's behavior and the vocational implications of relevant factors, including:

* the reason for referral, including the customer's response to specific questions asked by the referring VR counselor;
* the customer's assets and capabilities;
* the customer's disability and limitations (or special considerations);
* the customer's physical capacities;
* the results of medical examinations or related information obtained during evaluation, if appropriate;
* the results of the evaluator's findings and observations specified in the Service Description;
* the potential for competitive integrated employment or the reasons that competitive integrated employment is not appropriate, when applicable;
* the job recommendations related to the current job market using the SOC codes for the customer's geographic area;
* the specific training options that match the customer's capabilities; and
* the specific job modifications and/or accommodations necessary for the customer to achieve the employment goal.

### 4.4.2 Process and Procedure

An employment service provider receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, and a service authorization.

The VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, includes any documentation that:

* will prepare the provider to better work with the customer;
* indicates the reasons for referral; and
* poses specific questions to be addressed in the assessment.

The scope of each Situational Assessment and Work Sample is determined by the customer's individual needs.

The vocational evaluator's job responsibilities during the evaluation are the following:

* Remain on-site to supervise the provision of all services, including the Situational Assessment and Work Samples service.
* Supervise qualified vocational evaluator aides and maintain the following ratios:
  + One evaluator to no more than six customers without an aide
  + One evaluator and one aide to no more than 10 customers
  + One evaluator to no more than three customers with blindness and/or visual impairment
  + One evaluator and one aide to no more than six customers with blindness and/or visual impairment
* Provide written proof, through attendance records made available on request, that the correct ratio of customers to trainers and vocational evaluator aides is maintained.
* Identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviors using existing records, personal observations, and conversations with the VR counselor, customer, family members, and others.
* Prepare the electronic report or the electronic VR1838, Situational Assessment and Work Sample Report.
* Review the customer's vocational interests, strengths, challenges, and recommendations with the customer, the customer's representative, if any, and the VR counselor, when requested on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, and/or on the service authorization.

### 4.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The situational assessment and work sample reports must be submitted using a VR1838, Situational Assessment and Work Sample Report, and this must be submitted no later than 10 working days from the last day of the assessment.

The report must describe the customer's behavior and must stress the vocational implications of the relevant factors outlined below:

* The results of the evaluator's findings and observations specified in the Service Description
* The potential for competitive integrated employment or the reasons that competitive integrated employment is not appropriate, when applicable
* The job recommendations related to the current job market using the SOC codes for the customer's geographic area
* The specific training options that match the customer's capabilities
* Any specific job modifications and/or accommodations necessary

The VR1838, Situational Assessment and Work Sample Report, must contain the signature of the vocational evaluator who conducted the assessment. For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

When requested on VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, or on the service authorization, the vocational evaluator must complete a feedback session with the customer, the customer's representative, if any, and the VR counselor, to review the evaluator's recommendations and the customer's vocational interests, strengths, and challenges.

To request partial payment for work that has not been completed in its entirety, a VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request, is submitted. Justification for why the vocational assessment cannot be completed in its entirety must be included on the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request form.

A partial work product, such as a report and documentation of time spent in completing the deliverables, must be submitted with the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request form. The form must be approved by the VR director before any partial work is invoiced. The achievement of required deliverables and hours spent is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

## 4.5 Environmental Work Assessment

### 4.5.1 Environmental Work Assessment Service Description

An EWA is a diagnostic tool that assesses how the customer responds to variables in a work environment. The EWA is an accurate assessment of the correlations between a customer's performance and environmental variables and is critical to the customer's ability to find and maintain employment. Results of the assessment identify the variables in a work environment that affect the customer's ability to function at his or her full potential. The EWA is provided in person and cannot be conducted remotely.

The EWA is most appropriate for a customer who:

* has a neurodevelopmental disorder that significantly affects him or her;
* has a history of behavior that varies depending on the environment; and
* may benefit from an evaluation that assesses how his or her neurodevelopmental disorder may manifest in a work setting.

The EWA evaluator assesses the customer's skills in at least three work environments that align with his or her interests and the employment goal in the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE), when known. Each environment is assessed for a minimum of two hours.

#### Exceptions

The following exceptions are allowed when conducting an EWA:

* Conducting an EWA in another environment—Environments that accurately mimic the intended work environment are acceptable, when an intended work environment is not available or when another environment is in the best interest of the customer. For example, if the intended work environment is loud, busy, and bright, then the alternate environment in which the assessment is conducted must mimic those same variables in order for the assessment to be valid.
* Assessing three environments during an EWA—One environment can be used twice, if changing the day or time would significantly alter the environmental variables. For example, the environment in a grocery store on a Saturday at 1:00 p.m. is significantly different from the environment at the same grocery store on a Sunday at 11:00 p.m. The assessment must be conducted in an environment that accurately mimics the intended work environment.
* Spending at least two hours per environment—If appropriate, assessments in the same location can occur over time. For example, a customer can go to an environment for one hour on one day and go to the same environment for the second hour on another day.
* Reviewing the results of the EWA with the customer in person—If an in-person meeting with the customer is not possible, the VR counselor may approve a teleconference to review the EWA results. The written approval must be kept in the evaluator's and the customer's case files.

The EWA may be conducted during any phase of the VR process, but it is typically conducted during the development of the IPE. The EWA is not a Vocational Evaluation or a Career Planning Assessment.

For more information on fees for the EWA, refer to the fee chart.

### 4.5.2 Process and Procedure

An EWA evaluator must have a current bilateral contract for conducting EWAs before providing the service.

The VR counselor sends VR1879, Referral Form for Services for Neurodevelopmental Disorders, and a service authorization to the provider. The provider may request additional documentation from the VR counselor, such as case notes on psychological, vocational, or medical evaluations, that will prepare the provider to better work with the customer.

Billable time spent with the customer includes time spent on a combination of the following:

* Gathering information with the VR counselor and other pertinent professionals related to the customer (conducted by email, phone, or in person)
* Reviewing records
* Visiting the customer's home
* Observing the customer
* Planning for assessments at each work site
* Assessing the customer at each site
* Completing the report and recording the scores
* Meeting with the customer to review the assessment results, provide feedback, and plan next steps

After the EWA is completed, all results must be documented on the

* VR1877A, Environmental Work Assessment Report Part A;
* VR1877B, Environmental Work Assessment Report Part B (when printing the results of the EWA Part B, use the print option "print entire workbook.");
* VR1877C, Environment Work Assessment Signature Page Part C; and
* VR1878, Environmental Work Assessment Time Log.

The EWA evaluator must review the results of the EWA with the customer in person. The results must be presented to the customer in color; for example, printed with colored ink or viewed on a monitor that displays color.

### 4.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The EWA evaluator documents in descriptive terms all the information required in the Service Description on VR1877, Environmental Work Assessment, parts A, B, and C, and VR1878, Environmental Work Assessment Time Log, demonstrating evidence that the customer's:

* interests, assets, and abilities in work and nonwork areas were explored, identified, and summarized;
* personal, social, school, and medical histories were collected;
* self-assessment includes the customer's score of the 40 basic skills;
* skills were assessed in three environments related to the following four domains, after the environmental demands were identified and rated:
  + Basic and social communication
  + Problem solving and executive functioning
  + Advanced social and communication
  + Self-regulation and emotional intelligence

The EWA evaluator documents in descriptive terms all the information required in the Service Description on the VR1878, Environmental Work Assessment (EWA) Time Log, recording:

* each session held with the customer;
* locations at which the sessions were held; and
* whether the time spent was direct or indirect, as well as whether:
  + no more than eight hours were spent on indirect services; and
  + no fewer than 12 hours were spent on direct services.

Payment is authorized when the EWA evaluator submits a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR1877A, Environmental Work Assessment (EWA) Report, Part A (Summary);
* VR1877B, Environmental Work Assessment (EWA) Report, Part B (Results);
* VR1877C, Environmental Work Assessment (EWA) Report, Part C (Signature Page);
* VR1878, Environmental Work Assessment (EWA) Time Log; and
* invoice.

This is an outcome-based service; therefore, VR will not pay unless all topics in the Service Description and service authorization are addressed. For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

## 4.6 Career Planning Assessment

CPA will be purchased through Employment Services contracts effective May 1, 2022.

### 4.6.1 Career Planning Assessment Service Description

The Career Planning Assessment (CPA) is a functional assessment designed to evaluate the customer's work skills, determine support needs, and provide information needed to plan for future employment. The CPA is completed by the CPA evaluator using an individualized and supportive approach. The CPA evaluator conducts the assessment using a variety of strategies, including exploration and work skills assessment. During the CPA, the CPA evaluator conducts interviews, observes the customer in natural environments such as at home or in the community, and assesses the customer in three integrated work settings. The CPA includes multiple visits, which consist of a minimum of three hours of home and community exploration and a minimum of six hours of career exploration and work skills assessments. Interviews with the customer and his or her circle of support may be done in person or remotely. All observations and assessments of the customer's skills and abilities in the community or a work environment must be done in person only.

### 4.6.2 Career Planning Assessment Process and Procedure

#### 4.6.2.1 Referral

The VR counselor sends VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, and a SA to the CPA evaluator. The VR counselor should provide relevant documentation, such as case notes, psychological reports, and vocational and/or medical evaluations, that prepare the provider to assess the customer.

If an EWA is conducted before the CPA, payment for the CPA may be prorated or the CPA may be purchased fully as determined by the VR counselor. When payment for the CPA is prorated, the work skills assessment section of the CPA does not need to be completed. However, if circumstances dictate, such as significant changes in the customer’s life or a long amount of time between assessments, an entire CPA may be purchased a second time with an approved VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Vocational Assessments, before the referral.

To prorate payment for the CPA, VR staff issues a prorated service authorization (SA) to the provider using the fee listed in VR-SFP 4.7: Employment Assessments Fee Schedule. On the VR1630, Career Planning Assessment, the provider must complete all sections except for the three work skills assessments.

At the time of referral, the VR counselor authorizes disability-related premiums, if appropriate. For more information on premiums, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 20: Premiums.

#### 4.6.2.3 Home and Community Exploration

The CPA evaluator conducts home and community exploration with the customer by observing the customer in natural environments, such as at home and in the community. The CPA evaluator must spend a minimum of three hours conducting home and community exploration with the customer.

During home and community exploration, the CPA evaluator conducts interviews with the customer and members of the customer’s circle of support and observes the customer engaging in typical activities within home and community settings.

When conducting home and community exploration, the CPA evaluator collects information on the customer’s:

* independent living skills and household responsibilities;
* circle of support;
* financial resources;
* community and long-term support resources;
* transportation access and abilities;
* education and learning style; and
* other pertinent information.

#### 4.6.2.4 Career Exploration and Work Skills Assessment

The CPA evaluator spends at least six hours conducting the career exploration and work skills assessment.

During career exploration, the CPA evaluator administers career exploration activities to explore the customer’s vocational interests and preferred employment conditions. Career exploration activities should entail researching industries or fields, exploring employers in the local community, discussing job tasks and environmental preferences, reviewing education and experience requirements, and/or reviewing outlook and wages.

During the work skills assessment, the CPA evaluator observes the customer in three integrated work settings that align with the customer’s interests and allow for an assessment of the customer’s abilities and skills. The work skills assessment must take place at more than one location or multiple environments within one location when necessary.

The CPA evaluator monitors the customer closely during the work skills assessment, documenting the tasks performed, functional abilities and work tolerance, strengths and abilities, support needs, and likes and dislikes. At the work site, the customer completes work tasks, tours the work site, observes employees performing tasks, and/or conducts informational interviews with staff.

After the CPA is completed, the CPA evaluator documents all results on VR1630, Career Planning Assessment.

The VR counselor reviews the CPA and determines the next steps needed for the customer to achieve competitive integrated employment. The assessment may be reviewed with the CPA evaluator, the VR counselor, and the customer during a subsequent meeting (for example, during the Supported Employment Plan meeting).

### 4.6.3 Career Planning Assessment Outcomes Required for Payment

The CPA evaluator:

* completes a minimum of three hours of home and community exploration;
* completes a minimum of six hours of career exploration and work skills assessment; and
* documents all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedures on VR1630.

Payment is made upon receipt of:

* a signed, complete, and accurate VR1630; and
* an invoice.

## 4.7 Employment Assessments Service Fees

A provider may not collect money from a VR customer or the customer's family in excess of VR service fees for any service charged. If VR services and another resource are used to paying for a service for a customer, the total payment must not exceed the fee specified in the VR Standards for Providers manual.

Each employment assessment below must only be purchased one time per customer.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Employment Assessments** | **Unit Rate** | **Comment** |
| Vocational Evaluation | $288 per day | * Minimum hours per day is two with no more than six hours * Maximum payment allowed is $1,440. * Incomplete assessments with the report are paid at $48 per hour, when VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Vocational Assessments is approved by the VR division director |
| Vocational Evaluation - Situational Assessments and Work Samples | $864 | * Paid only on receipt of a complete report, with all deliverables addressed |
| Environmental Work Assessment | $1213 | * Paid only on receipt of a complete report, with all deliverables addressed |
| Career Planning Assessment | $1,194 | * Paid only upon receipt of a complete report, with all deliverables addressed |
| Prorated Career Planning Assessment | $643 | * Paid only when EWA has been completed and paid |

Premium payments may be available for some employment assessment services. Premiums payments are paid after all deliverables for the service have been achieved. For more information, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 20: Premiums.

## 4.8 Resources

* Case Study for Career Planning Assessment (CPA):
  + [CPA Case Study-Marsha](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.twc.texas.gov%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fvr%2Fdocs%2Fse-cpa-case-study-twc.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
  + [VR1630 CPA Example](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.twc.texas.gov%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fvr%2Fdocs%2Fse-case-study-vr1630-twc.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 5: Orientation and Mobility Services

Contract Subject: Orientation and Mobility

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 5.1 Overview of Orientation and Mobility Services

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) services prepare blind and visually impaired customers to travel independently with competence and confidence.

O&M specialists offer complex, interrelated services designed to develop independent travel skills in individuals who are blind or visually impaired. O&M services begin with an assessment and can include training held in environments frequently visited by customers.

Orientation is the process of using the available senses to establish one's position and relationship within the environment.

Mobility is the ability to travel in the environment with the help of an established tool (including white canes, dog guides, and electronic travel aids).

O&M assessments and training can be provided in locations within the customer's home or community. O&M assessments and training are provided in person and cannot be provided remotely.

Examples of training locations include:

* the customer's home (indoor and outdoor);
* public areas, such as a bank, church, or doctor's office;
* commercial areas, such as a grocery store or mall;
* transit systems, such as public transportation, paratransit, and taxis;
* rural areas;
* residential areas (with light traffic and stop signs);
* small business areas (with heavier traffic and simple traffic lights);
* downtown areas (with heavy traffic and complex traffic lights); and
* commercial modes of travel, such as trains and planes.

Any request to change a Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Blind and Visually Impaired Services, before the change is implemented. The approved VR3472 must be maintained in the provider’s customer case file. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

For information on acceptable signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 5.5 Orientation and Mobility Service Fees.

## 5.2 Qualifications and Training

Before services are provided, the service provider director must:

* approve VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form, which is completed by each of the provider's staff members, such as specialists and interns (the form must include the staff members' qualifications as stated in 5.2.1 and provide evidence that the staff member meets the qualifications); and
* submit the approved form to the provider's assigned contract manager and assigned regional program specialist.

### 5.2.1 Orientation and Mobility Specialist

The O&M specialist must meet one of the following criteria:

* Be certified by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) or the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB)
* Have a degree in O&M from an accredited college or university with an established O&M training curriculum and become certified by ACVREP or NBPCB within one year of being hired by a service provider
* Have at least two years of full-time experience teaching O&M skills for an entity that VR recognizes, such as a rehabilitation center, a Veterans Administration hospital, or an educational system, and:
  + provide three professional references indicating the candidate's ability to teach O&M skills to blind or visually impaired individuals; and
  + be certified by ACVREP or NBPCB within one year of being hired by the service provider.

#### 5.2.1.1 Required Texas Confidence Builders Training for O&M Specialists

In addition to meeting the requirements for education, training, and experience described in 5.2.1 Orientation and Mobility Specialist, all prospective O&M providers must successfully complete the Orientation and Mobility Texas Confidence Builders training before becoming providers.

Texas Confidence Builders training is a two- to three-day training program offered in Austin. While the training is provided free of cost, providers must pay all costs associated with attending the training program. Contact the state office O&M program specialist to schedule the training.

### 5.2.2 Annual Staff Training

To ensure that O&M specialists remain competent in their skills, VR recommends that each O&M trainer complete a minimum of 20 hours of blindfold travel per fiscal year, so that the O&M trainer:

* practices his or her own independent travel skills;
* provides effective role modeling; and
* promotes independent travel as a confidence-building tool for customers.

Examples of recommended activities for blindfold travel include:

* traveling around a city block;
* traveling on an L-shaped sidewalk route;
* traveling to the grocery store; and
* exploring a new neighborhood.

VR also recommends that O&M specialists:

* create a report like the Sample Orientation and Mobility Provider's Independent Travel Activity Report; and
* send a copy of their travel activity report to the assigned regional program specialist for VR.

### 5.2.3 Orientation and Mobility Interns

O&M service providers are ultimately responsible for the monitoring, supervision, and follow-up of the O&M intern during the internship.

O&M service providers using interns to work with vocational rehabilitation (VR) customers must:

* have an O&M specialist with ACVREP or NBPCB certification observe each intern for a minimum of 12 lessons during the internship and document the observations on VR2922, Orientation and Mobility Weekly Internship Observation;
* submit VR2922 to the regional program support specialist each month during the internship; and
* submit VR2923, Orientation and Mobility Internship Performance Evaluation to the designated regional program specialist within 35 days of completion of the internship.

The O&M intern must:

* attend Texas Confidence Builders training in Austin or attend another approved training with the VR in-house O&M designee before working with blind and visually impaired customers;
* be supervised by an approved VR-certified O&M provider for the duration of the internship;
* be observed by a VR-certified O&M provider for a minimum of 12 lessons during the internship; and
* sign and then forward reports to the supervising O&M provider that maintains either the ACVREP or NBPCB for his or her approval.

Note: VR does not pay for any expenses incurred by the intern during the internship.

## 5.3 Orientation and Mobility Assessment

### 5.3.1 Orientation and Mobility Assessment Service Description

The assessment includes an evaluation of the customer's O&M skills in multiple situations in person and cannot be conducted remotely.

Assessments may be conducted using the customer's functional vision. Functional vision refers to the way in which an individual uses whatever vision he or she has in a given travel situation. Assessments provide an opportunity for customers to recognize that their vision might not meet all their travel needs.

Locations for assessments include a combination of:

* the customer's home and immediate surrounding area;
* public areas, such as a church, park, or college campus;
* commercial areas, such as a bank, store, or mall;
* transit systems, such as paratransit or taxis (if available);
* local buses and similar public transportation (if available);
* rural areas (if applicable);
* residential areas (those with light vehicle and foot traffic and some stop signs);
* small business areas (those with heavier traffic and simple traffic lights);
* downtown areas (those with heavy vehicle and foot traffic and complex traffic lights);
* commercial transportation systems, such as buses, trains, and airplanes (if applicable); and
* travel using low-vision devices (if applicable).

For Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) customers, the OIB worker authorizes a maximum of three hours for the initial assessment to be completed.

The O&M specialist must include in the initial assessment observations of and recommendations on white cane skills. The recommended number of hours allowed for training must include the customer's travel needs, regardless of the mobility tool (dog or white cane). Training with a guide dog must not exceed more than four hours and must be preapproved in writing by the VR counselor or OIB worker.

Recommendations for training must be:

* documented under the summary section of VR2894, Orientation and Mobility Assessment; and
* submitted to the VR counselor or OIB worker.

Following the assessment, it is recommended that the O&M specialist reviews the results with the customer and answers any questions that the customer might have about the recommended training.

### 5.3.2 Process and Procedure

The VR counselor or OIB worker completes the VR2897, Orientation and Mobility Referral, leaving no blanks and putting NA (not applicable) as needed. After completion of the form, the VR counselor or OIB worker sends it to the provider that has been chosen by the customer. Included with the referral is information that helps the O&M specialist assess and recommend training for the customer.

The VR counselor or OIB worker is responsible for authorizing an O&M assessment and approving services, including approving the documentation for payment when invoiced.

Based on the results of the O&M assessment, the VR counselor or OIB worker determines the training goal and hours to be funded by VR or OIB. No assessments or training sessions are completed before a service authorization is issued.

After submitting VR2894, Orientation and Mobility Assessment, the O&M specialist must contact the customer's VR counselor or OIB worker to discuss the initial assessment. This discussion must be documented and filed in the O&M provider's customer file.

The discussion includes:

* the O&M specialist's recommendations for training (if any), including the:
  + O&M skills needed;
  + proposed completion date; and
  + number of training hours authorized by the customer's VR counselor or OIB worker;
* anticipated delays in services, if any;
* special considerations or extended direct training dates, if any;
* the customer's readiness to begin nonvisual O&M skills training; and
* the customer's understanding of O&M skills training and its potential benefits.

### 5.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The O&M provider documents in descriptive terms the information required on the VR2894, Orientation and Mobility Assessment, including:

* the O&M specialist's observations and comments;
* recommendations for O&M skills training;
* the number of training hours recommended for each area of training and the total number of training hours recommended;
* the anticipated beginning and ending dates for the recommended training;
* the customer's response to the training recommendations;
* the height of the white cane that is most appropriate for the customer (using the measurement between the customer's chin and nose when the customer is standing up); and
* a description of all travel aids that the customer uses or would benefit from using.

## 5.4 Orientation and Mobility Training

### 5.4.1 Orientation and Mobility Training Service Description

O&M training prepares an individual who is blind or visually impaired to travel independently with competence and confidence.

Based on the results of the evaluation, the VR counselor or OIB worker determines the training goal and hours to be funded by VR or OIB. No training is provided before a service authorization is issued. Training is provided in person and cannot be conducted remotely.

All O&M training services for VR customers are conducted using:

* nonvisual (blindfold) techniques; and
* a rigid (non-folding) white cane with a metal tip.

All O&M training services for OIB customers are conducted using:

* either nonvisual (blindfold) or visual training, whichever better addresses the customer's needs and circumstances; and
* a rigid (non-folding) white cane with a metal tip, unless an alternate cane is needed.

The O&M specialist must discuss the benefits of nonvisual and visual training with each customer. Role modeling and peer support for nonvisual training are encouraged.

The O&M specialist may not conduct more than six hours or fewer than two hours of O&M instruction per day. The O&M specialist cannot conduct more than six hours of training in a day, even if multiple customers are served during that day. Billing for O&M services must not exceed six hours per day. Lessons are at least two hours long unless approved by an obtained VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Blind and Visually Impaired Services.

For Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (ILS-OIB) customers, the length of the training lesson will be determined by the customer’s health, stamina, and ability to participate.

### 5.4.2 Process and Procedure

#### 5.4.2.1 General

The VR counselor or OIB worker is responsible for authorizing O&M training for the customer and approving services, including approving the documentation for payment when invoiced.

The provider must not bill for any services other than Orientation and Mobility training, or Orientation and Mobility group training.

Based on the results of the assessment, the VR counselor or OIB worker determines the training goals and hours to be funded by VR or OIB. No training is provided before a service authorization is issued.

O&M training must not exceed the total number of training hours and type of training authorized by the customer's VR counselor or OIB worker on the service authorization.

Consistent and frequent scheduling is recommended to maximize learning. One two-hour lesson a week is the minimum training allowable. Daily O&M training is considered best practice.

**Note:** For OIB customers, if less than 2 hours of training were provided in one session, the trainer must document on the VR2896 in the Brief Description of how the training lesson affected the customer’s health, stamina, and ability to participate.

Time spent transporting customers does not count toward training time. O&M specialists are not reimbursed for time spent in the car, even when a customer is present.

The O&M specialist must notify the customer's VR counselor or OIB worker within 24 hours about all:

* missed, cancelled, or rescheduled appointments;
* issues, concerns, or circumstances that might impact or delay planned services; and
* incidents or injuries that occur during training that might negatively impact the customer's health and safety.

If services are interrupted and training cannot be completed as planned, or if services are postponed indefinitely because of unexpected circumstances, the O&M provider must notify the customer's VR counselor or OIB worker within 24 hours.

The O&M specialist must submit required forms and complete the required training under the specifications of the referral and the service authorization.

#### 5.4.2.2 Group Training

VR and OIB encourages O&M specialists to coordinate group training sessions (that is, sessions of up to three customers) when it will benefit the instruction process and better meet the needs of the customers.

The O&M specialist must get approval in writing from each customer's VR counselor or OIB worker before providing group training.

An O&M specialist:

* must not enroll more than 25 customers who are blind and visually impaired in active training; and
* must keep all relevant counselors, OIB workers, and assigned regional program specialist informed by email about the total number of customers in active training.

Active training—Any customer who is receiving an O&M assessment or is enrolled in O&M training is in active training.

#### 5.4.2.3 Travel Aids

The VR counselor or OIB worker purchases one rigid, long white cane with a metal tip and sleep shade (blindfold) for each customer who is approved to receive an O&M training.

The O&M specialist gives each customer information about how to purchase a white cane. Customers are responsible for replacing white canes and cane tips, buying backup white canes, and making similar purchases.

VR or OIB does not reimburse the O&M service provider for any items provided to a customer by the specialist.

The O&M specialist may recommend additional travel aids or other items to the customer's VR counselor or OIB worker, but the decision to purchase additional items rests solely with the VR counselor or OIB worker.

If a customer uses a guide dog, the customer is assessed by the O&M specialist to determine whether the customer also has proficient white cane skills. Once assessed, the customer may attend O&M training with either a white cane or a guide dog.

If customers need further assessment of and direct training for a guide dog, they must contact the school from which they obtained the dog.

### 5.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The O&M specialist documents in descriptive terms each customer's monthly training progress and must include:

* the number of training hours provided in each training area;
* a detailed narrative on each skill area addressed during the reporting period and the training location for each lesson;
* a detailed explanation of anticipated training for the upcoming month;
* an explanation of deviations from assessment recommendations, if any; and
* a detailed narrative of cumulative progress, if training is complete.

Monthly progress reports, along with the invoice and any other required supporting documentation, must be submitted within 30 days from the end of each calendar month until the customer's O&M services are completed or services are no longer authorized by the customer's VR counselor or OIB worker.

## 5.5 Orientation and Mobility Service Fee

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **O&M Services** | **Unit Rate** | **Comment** |
| O&M Assessment | $75.00 per hour | Limited to three hours per customer |
| O&M Training–Individualized | $75.00 per hour | * Training sessions must last at least two hours * No more than six hours of training allowed per day   Note: For OIB customers, the length of the training lesson will be determined by the customer’s health, stamina, and ability to participate. |
| O&M Training–Group | * $75.00 per hour for the first customer * $37.50 per hour for each additional customer | * Limit of three customers per group * Training sessions must last at least two hours * No more than six hours of training allowed per day |

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 6: Hearing Aids and Related Accessories

Contract Type: Hearing Aid (6601)

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 6.1 Overview of Services for Hearing Aids and Related Accessories

The standards in this chapter apply to the purchase, in whole or in part, of hearing aids and related accessories for Texas Workforce Commission - Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR) customers.

VR purchases hearing aids only from contracted manufacturers (contractors).

VR may authorize the purchase of rehabilitation technology, such as hearing aids, related accessories, and other forms of rehabilitation technology, only when it is vocationally necessary and is expected to improve the customer's ability to participate in VR services that are required to obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain employment as defined in the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE). For customers in the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program, purchases of this technology may be authorized if listed on the Independent Living Plan (ILP) to assist the customer in living confidently and independently in their homes and communities.

Contractors must comply with Texas Occupations Code §402.1021, Rules for Hearing Instruments, as applicable.

## 6.2 Description of Hearing Aids and Accessories

Accessories for hearing aids are useful add-ons that can be linked to a hearing aid to assist in hearing more clearly in challenging situations. Examples of accessories include Bluetooth devices and frequency modulation (FM) systems. VR does not purchase cosmetic accessories.

Analog hearing aids convert sound waves into electrical signals, which are amplified. Analog hearing aids are customized to meet the needs of each user. The aid is programmed by the manufacturer according to the specifications recommended by a hearing aid dispenser. Analog hearing aids have more than one program or setting and can be adjusted as needed. A hearing aid dispenser can program the aid using a computer, and individuals can change the program for different listening environments (for example, a small, quiet room; a crowded restaurant; and large, open areas, such as a theater or stadium). Analog and/or programmable circuitry can be used in all types of hearing aids.

Behind-the-ear (BTE) hearing aids consist of a hard plastic case worn behind the ear that is connected to a plastic ear mold that fits inside the outer ear. The electronic parts are held in the case behind the ear. Sound travels from the hearing aid through the ear mold and into the ear.

Canal hearing aids fit into the ear canal and are available in two styles. The in-the-canal (ITC) hearing aid is made to fit the size and shape of an individual's ear canal. A completely-in-canal (CIC) hearing aid is nearly hidden in the ear canal. Both types are used for mild to moderately severe hearing loss. Because they are small, canal aids can be difficult for an individual to adjust and remove. Additionally, canal aids have less space available for batteries and additional devices, such as a telecoil. Canal hearing aids are not for individuals with severe to profound hearing loss because their reduced size limits their power and volume.

Contralateral Routing of Signals (CROS) hearing aids treat unilateral hearing loss. The device takes sound from the ear with poorer hearing and transmits the sound to the ear with better hearing. Most systems are wireless and are used either behind the ear or custom built inside the ear. These wireless systems have replaced earlier wired units that were unreliable and bulky. These aids can be incorporated into eyeglasses. Transcranial CROS systems use the conductivity of the skull to transmit sound.

Digital hearing aids convert sound waves into numerical codes, similar to the binary code of a computer, before amplifying them. Because the code includes information about a sound's pitch or loudness, the aid can be specially programmed to amplify some frequencies more than others. Digital circuitry gives the hearing aid dispenser more flexibility in adjusting the aid to a user's needs and to certain listening environments. These aids also can be programmed to focus on sounds coming from a specific direction. Digital circuitry can be used in all types of hearing aids.

In-the-ear (ITE) hearing aids fit completely inside the outer ear and are used for mild to severe hearing loss. The case holding the electronic components is made of hard plastic. ITE aids can have added features installed, such as a telecoil.

Open-fit hearing aids fit completely behind the ear, with only a narrow tube inserted into the ear canal, enabling the canal to remain open. They are often used for individuals who experience a buildup of earwax, since this type of aid is less likely to be damaged by such substances. Some individuals may also prefer the open-fit hearing aid because their perception of their own voice is less distorted.

Telecoil is a small magnetic coil that allows users to receive sound through the circuitry of the hearing aid, rather than through its microphone. This makes it easier to hear conversations over the telephone. A telecoil also helps individuals hear in facilities that have installed special sound systems called induction loop systems. These systems can be found in many churches, schools, airports, and auditoriums.

## 6.3 Returns

Contractors must provide written notification to the VR contact name on the service authorization (SA) that the hearing aid and/or accessories have been returned.

This notice must include the following:

* The SA number associated with the returned item(s);
* A description of the item(s) returned;
* The date the item was received by the contractor; and
* Whether payment has been received for the item(s).

VR staff must submit a new SA for the new item(s) replacing the previously ordered item(s).

## 6.4 Refunds

When hearing aids/accessories are returned to the contractor that are incorrect, defective, or do not function properly for the customer, and payment has been received by the contractor, the contractor shall issue a refund in the form of a physical check for the item(s) within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the item(s) to:

Texas Workforce Commission - Rehabilitation Services Division  
101 E. 15th Street - 144T  
Austin, TX 78778-001  
ATTN: Program Specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Exception to the thirty (30) calendar day refund, refunds may be delayed until such time as the account becomes current if the TWC-VR unit's account is past due. The refund must be supported by documentation identifying the associated SA number and the description of the item(s) being refunded.

## 6.5 Warranty

Hearing aids purchased with VR funds must have a minimum three-year warranty. Hearing aid accessories purchased with VR funds must have a minimum one-year warranty.

No deductibles may be invoiced for hearing aids or hearing aid accessories.

## 6.6 Methodology for Payment

The following established discounts apply to the purchase of all hearing aids and accessories:

* Hearing aid(s) at least 35 percent discount from the manufacturer’s list price; and
* Accessories at least 25 percent discount from the manufacturer’s list price.

## 6.7 Process and Procedure

The contractor provides the Program Specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing with the list price and the VR net price by either supplying a price list or a written quote via email to [VR.DHH@twc.texas.gov](mailto:VR.DHH@twc.texas.gov).

Once the hearing aid recommendations are approved by the VR counselor, an SA will be issued to the contractor for the purchase of the hearing aid(s) and any accessories.

TWC staff will then submit the SA for the hearing aid(s) including accessories, if any, and the completed VR3105D, Hearing Evaluation Report: Hearing Aid Recommendations to the contractor for fulfillment. The contractor ships the hearing aid(s) and any accessories to the hearing aid dispenser for dispensing.

## 6.8 Outcomes Required for Payment

For the contractor to receive payment, the contractor must do the following:

* Provide new hearing aid(s) and accessories as specified on a SA at the rate established in 6.6 Methodology for Payment (used or refurbished aids may not be used to meet this requirement);
* Deliver the products to the specified address on the date and time mutually agreed upon by the VR counselor, customer, and contractor within 10 days of receipt of the SA date or notify the VR staff member listed on the SA of the estimated delivery date upon receipt of the SA;
* Deliver the products in an assembled and fully functional state, including adaptations or fabrication of parts (parts and labor) necessary to meet the described individual needs of the customer; and
* Provide a warranty as described in 6.5: Warranty

The contractor must submit an invoice for payment that must comply with the requirements explained in Chapter 3: Basic Standards, and must include the warranty coverage date or warranty expiration date.

The date when the customer receives the hearing aid, as noted on the VR3105E, Hearing Aid Fitting and Post-Fitting Report, will be the date used for the 30-day return policy.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 7: Diabetes Self-Management Education Services

Contract Type: Diabetes Education Training

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 7.1 Overview of Diabetes Self-Management Education Services

Diabetes self-management education is the process of developing the customer's knowledge, skills, and abilities that are necessary to manage diabetes and improve his or her health outcomes. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) customers might require education about diabetes to address the cause of the disease. Diabetes self-management education provides adaptive techniques and/or equipment to help the customer self-manage his or her diabetes.

Assessment and teaching of blood sugar monitoring, medication delivery, and other self-care skills related to diabetes self-management require close, hands-on evaluation and training when working with individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

Diabetes self-management education services are based on the Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialist’s 7 Self-Care Behaviors™, which are:

* healthy eating;
* being active;
* monitoring;
* taking medications;
* healthy coping;
* problem solving; and
* reducing risk.

Diabetes self-management education services are for customers who:

* are newly diagnosed;
* need surgery or a medical procedure and are at risk of further complications because of poor diabetes management;
* are unable to maintain employment because of their diabetes;
* need additional training about diabetes management after losing their sight;
* must self-manage diabetes for admittance to training programs and for full participation in training such as that offered by the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center;
* cannot benefit from community-based educational programs; and/or
* have unique needs that cannot be met through medical providers paid through the Maximum Affordable Payment Schedule.

Any request to change a Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Blind and Visually Impaired Services, before the change is implemented. The approved VR3472 must be maintained in the provider’s customer case file. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

For more information on acceptable signatures, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 7.6 Diabetes Self-Management Service Fees.

## 7.2 Staff Qualifications and Training

Before any services are provided, the service provider director must approve the VR3455, Provider Staff Information form, completed by staff such as a trainer and aides, and submit the approved form to the provider's assigned contract manager and assigned regional program specialist. The VR3455 documents the provider's qualifications and provides evidence of meeting those qualifications by providing the:

* provider’s staff résumé demonstrating diabetes education experience as an essential function of the job; and
* documentation of required continuing education hours on diabetes education topics.

### 7.2.1 Diabetes Educators

A diabetes educator must have the following criteria:

* at least one year of paid experience or two years of documented voluntary experience providing diabetes education as an essential function of the job or responsibilities while holding a current, active, unrestricted license in Texas as one of the following:
  + A clinical psychologist;
  + A Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC);
  + An occupational therapist;
  + An optometrist;
  + A pharmacist;
  + A physical therapist (PT);
  + A physician (MD or DO);
  + A podiatrist;
  + A registered nurse (RN) (includes nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists);
  + A dietitian or dietitian nutritionist holding active registration with the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR);
  + A physician assistant (PA) holding active registration with the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA);
  + An exercise physiologist holding active certification as an American College of Sports Medicine Certified Clinical Exercise Physiologist (ACSM-CEP®);
  + A health educator holding active certification as a Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES®) from the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC);
  + A health professional with a minimum of a master’s degree in social work;
  + A certified diabetes care and education specialist (CDCES); or
  + A holder of the Board Certified – Advanced Diabetes Management (BC-ADM) credential;
* 15 hours of continuing education units (CEUs) within the 12 months immediately preceding the application for contract and/or the submission of the individual VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form as outlined in VR-SFP 7.2.2; and
* Completed the Texas Confidence Builders as outlined in VR-SFP 7.2.3.

**Note:** In lieu of paid diabetes education experience, evidence of two years of documented voluntary diabetes education experience will be considered. Examples of appropriate documentation include training on an evidence-based diabetes education curriculum; letters of recommendation describing the volunteer work from two individuals who oversaw the diabetes education, including the program leader; or evaluations of the diabetes education with the volunteer’s name visible and the protected information redacted.

### 7.2.2 Annual Training

The diabetes educator must maintain the qualifications in VR-SFP 7.2.1 and maintain continuing education units (CEUs) in diabetes self-management education topics from an agency approved by the diabetes educator's licensing or certifying body. The CEUs may not include the Texas Confidence Builder training.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Diabetes Educator** | **CEUs Required** | **Frequency** |
| * + Clinical psychologist   + Occupational therapist   + Optometrist   + Pharmacist   + Physical Therapist   + Physician (MD or DO)   + Podiatrist;   + RN (includes nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists)   + Dietitian or dietitian nutritionist holding active registration with the CDR   + PA holding active registration with the NCCPA   + Exercise physiologist holding active certification as an ACSM-CEP®   + Health educator holding active certification as an MCHES® from the NCHEC   + A health professional with a minimum of a master’s degree in social work | 15 | * Within the 12 months immediately preceding the application for contract and/or submission of the individual’s VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form; and * 15 hours every 2 years beginning on the date the contract is awarded |
| * CDCES * BC-ADM | 10 | Within the 12 months immediately preceding the contract date and an additional 10 hours every two years beginning on the date the contract is awarded |

### 7.2.3 Texas Confidence Builder Training

All diabetes educators must attend and participate in the VR Texas Confidence Builder Training. This 14-hour training is completed before a contract is awarded or before services are provided by the diabetes educator, and the training must be retaken every two years.

If the Texas Confidence Builder training is not available at the two-year renewal date, the VR diabetes program specialist and the contract manager must request that the requirement be waived or postponed. The request must be documented and approved by the VR director using VR3490, Temporary Waiver of Credentials.

VR does not pay the provider's travel costs for transportation, food, and lodging to attend Texas Confidence Builder Training or other trainings.

## 7.3 Assessment of Diabetes Self-Management

### 7.3.1 Assessment of Diabetes Self-Management Service Description

A diabetes self-management assessment is the diabetes educator's evaluation of a customer's ability to manage the diabetes. The assessment must gather information about the customer's:

* medical history;
* age;
* cultural influences;
* beliefs and attitudes about maintaining good health; and
* knowledge about diabetes.

A diabetes self-management assessment is provided in person with the trainer and customer at the same location. The diabetes self-management assessment may be provided remotely only with a VR director approved VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Blind and Visually Impaired Services. Remote services must follow VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

It is recommended that the diabetes educator use adaptive equipment and disposable supplies for demonstration during the assessment. The suggested items include:

* a talking blood-glucose meter;
* an insulin-measuring device, such as Count-A-Dose, which allows a blind or vision-impaired individual with diabetes to fill an insulin syringe without assistance;
* a syringe magnifier;
* a portion-control plate, such as Meal Measure;
* an insulin pen (or other injectable device for demonstration purposes);
* a talking blood-pressure monitor; and
* disposable supplies such as test strips, syringes, and insulin.

The customer and instructor develop an education and support plan that is created from evidence-based approaches for effective health communication and education while taking into consideration the customer's barriers to self-management, abilities, and expectations as well as information from the diabetes self-management assessment. (ADA, 2016)

The initial diabetes self-management assessment helps the diabetes educator recommend the skills training from which the customer would benefit. The training areas include information and skills relating to:

* an overview of the pathophysiology of diabetes;
* nutrition;
* exercise and activity;
* blood-glucose monitoring and how to use the monitoring results;
* diabetes-related complications;
* management of sick days;
* medical treatment;
* medication;
* foot, skin, and dental care;
* preconception care, pregnancy, and gestational diabetes, if applicable;
* insulin;
* use of the health care system;
* community resources;
* stress and psychosocial adjustment;
* goal setting;
* employment aspects and/or barriers related to diabetes; and
* adaptive diabetes self-management equipment and tools.

The initial assessment should evaluate all the above topics. The training plan should recognize the partial or complete deficits in self-management knowledge and identify the specific deficits that should be addressed. If the results of the initial diabetes self-management assessment warrant, training may begin immediately if:

* an initial diabetes self-management assessment was conducted in the previous 12 months;
* no significant change to the customer's medical status, including no new medications or new complications, has occurred;
* a service authorization has been issued; and
* the service provider has adequate information to begin skills training based on the results of the Initial Diabetes Self-Management Assessment.

Should the provider of the diabetes education training be different from the provider who conducted the initial assessment, the VR2888, Diabetes Self-Management Education Assessment, and the VR2901, Diabetes Self-Management Pre- and Post-Assessment, should be reviewed by the new provider prior to initiating diabetes education training.

If the new diabetes educator does not agree with the original assessment recommendations, a consultation between the VR counselor, new diabetes educator, and state office program specialist for diabetes education is scheduled to establish an agreement on appropriate diabetes education for the VR customer.

### 7.3.2 Process and Procedure

The initial diabetes self-management assessment may be conducted before or after eligibility is determined.

The diabetes self-management assessment provider begins services once a signed VR service authorization and a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services form, completed by the VR counselor, or the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (ILS-OIB) worker, have been received.

The VR5000, Referral for Provider Services form:

* indicates why the customer is referred for diabetes education evaluation; and
* describes issues and/or questions that are addressed in the diabetes educator's report.

The initial diabetes self-management assessment must not exceed two hours and must be held for each customer individually.

The provider must discuss additional hours with the VR counselor or the ILS-OIB worker and the VR diabetes program specialist. The request must be documented and approved by the VR director using VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Blind and Visually Impaired Services.

### 7.3.3 Education and Support Plan

The diabetes educator develops a written education and support plan in the Overall Recommendations section of VR2888, Diabetes Self-Management Education Assessment.

VR staff and the diabetes educator ensure that the education and support plan is appropriate, based on the customer's:

* age;
* type of diabetes (1 or 2);
* history of diabetes;
* cultural influences;
* learning abilities; and
* disability.

Diabetes educators must use the talking blood-glucose meter recommended by the VR state office diabetes program specialist to:

* assess the customer's glucose (blood sugar) level;
* assess the customer's understanding of how to check blood sugar properly; and
* provide skills training to the customer.

If the diabetes educator recommends using a different type of talking meter, the VR diabetes program specialist must authorize the purchase before the equipment is purchased and skills training occurs.

The diabetes educator completes the assessment of the customer's ability to manage the diabetes and makes recommendations for training, equipment, and services using VR2888, Diabetes Self-Management Education Assessment. The assessment report must be submitted to VR within 35 days of completion of the assessment.

Behavior change goal setting empowers the customer to fully engage in personal problem solving to change behavior and improve outcomes. Using person centered, informed decision making, the diabetes educator guides the customer in the skill of goal setting by assisting them to

* select an activity that best suits the customer’s self-management needs,
* help the customer identify strategies and resources for success as well as barriers, and
* plan a course to achieve the goal.

An initial behavior change goal must be set at the initial assessment. This is the customer’s goal and action plan.

If the diabetes educator cannot schedule the visit with the customer to initiate the assessment within three calendar weeks, then the educator must notify the VR counselor by email, paper mail, or fax. VR may determine that it is necessary to cancel the service authorization and identify a new provider.

### 7.3.4 Outcomes Required for Payment

The diabetes educator documents the two-hour initial diabetes self-management assessment and other findings for each customer on the:

* VR2888, Diabetes Self-Management Education Assessment; and
* VR2901, Diabetes Pre- and Post-Assessment.

All forms must be completed in their entirety for the provider to be paid. As appropriate, the provider uses the following notations:

* N/A for "not applicable"
* N/D for "not disclosed by customer"
* N/E for "not evaluated"

The initial assessment fields are completed on the VR2901. The form is saved electronically so that the post-assessment fields can be completed later.

The VR2888, Diabetes Self-Management Education Assessment, reports the information that the diabetes educator captured during the initial assessment as well as the recommendations for equipment and training.

The VR2901, Diabetes Pre- and Post-Assessment, allows a comparison of the customer's knowledge of diabetes management before and after training.

## 7.4 Diabetes Skills Training

### 7.4.1 Diabetes Skills Training Service Description

Diabetes skills training is provided by a diabetes educator who instructs and counsels the customer and family by means of individual and/or group skills training sessions that have been authorized by means of a service authorization.

Initial Diabetes skills training is provided in person with the trainer and customer at the same location and covers the following topics:

* Equipment training (whether purchased by TWC or using comparable benefits)
* The first hour of healthy eating
* The first hour of discussing patterns and trends
* The first half hour of being active
* The first quarter hour of foot care

The initial diabetes skills training may be provided remotely only with a VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Blind and Visually Impaired Services approved by the VR director before services begin. Remote services must follow VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

After initial diabetes skills training is provided, additional teaching for review or reinforcement may be completed in person, by phone, or by video conference. Training topics may include the following:

* Introduction to diabetes or prediabetes
* Healthy coping
* Taking medication
* Reducing risk
* Problem solving

Diabetes skills training is intended to:

* provide self-management education;
* identify best methods for managing diabetes medication(s); and
* help the customer identify barriers, solve problems, and develop coping skills to achieve effective self-care and behavior changes.

Diabetes skills training helps customers set goals and make effective health and care decisions that fit their values and lifestyles. Diabetes educators help customers:

* develop a plan to improve their health;
* develop goals through individualized problem solving;
* provide motivation; and
* incorporate health recommendations into daily life.

The number of training hours recommended for individual diabetes self-management is based on:

* the initial assessment; and
* the topics covered that are related to the customer's vocational goals.

Up to 12 hours of skills training for diabetes self-management can be provided:

* individually;
* in a group of two to eight customers; or
* as a combination of one-on-one and group training sessions

Diabetes educators are reimbursed only for the time spent teaching customers. Trainers are not reimbursed for:

* planning time, such as attending meetings or talking with VR staff; or
* time spent completing and submitting the required paperwork.

### 7.4.2 Process and Procedure

The VR counselor or the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (ILS-OIB) worker submits a referral and issues service authorizations for diabetes skills training.

The diabetes educator must divide all diabetes skills training into one to two-hour segments to ensure that the segments do not fatigue the customer and consequently reduce the benefit of the skills training. If a segment is less than two hours, the provider must document on the VR2884, in the Observations and Comments section how this meets the customer’s individual needs.

The diabetes educator helps the customer develop specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals.

A new behavior-change goal should be set at each visit between the educator and the customer and achievements evaluated at the next visit. The diabetes educator helps the customer overcome barriers to success and employ problem-solving strategies.

It is recommended that the diabetes educator use adaptive equipment and disposable supplies for demonstration during training such as:

* a talking blood-glucose meter;
* an insulin measuring device, such as Count-A-Dose, that allows a blind or vision-impaired individual with diabetes to fill an insulin syringe without assistance;
* a syringe magnifier;
* a portion-control plate, such as Meal Measure;
* an insulin pen (or other injectable device for demonstration purposes);
* a talking blood pressure monitor; and
* disposable supplies such as test strips, syringes, and insulin.

The diabetes educator documents the provision of education materials, resources, and referrals on [VR2884, Diabetes Self-Management Educator Notes](https://www.twc.texas.gov/vocational-rehabilitation-service-forms).

The VR counselor or the ILS-OIB worker is responsible for approving the purchase of the recommended equipment or supplies. Documentation should identify:

* what was taught;
* what the customer gained from the instruction; and
* any barriers or gaps in knowledge.

If the customer is unable to participate in skills training on diabetes self-management because of his or her health, the diabetes educator must inform the VR counselor by email, paper mail, or fax within three business days. The diabetes educator must document such notification in the customer's file.

### 7.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

Service providers must document each two-hour skills training session provided to each customer using VR2884, Diabetes Self-Management Educator Notes.

A complete and accurate invoice may be submitted after completion of the services. All required documentation must be submitted within 35 calendar days of the date that the service is provided, including initial assessment, skills training, and post-training assessment.

If the diabetes self-management education services include providing the customer with a talking blood-glucose meter or other diabetes equipment, the diabetes educator must:

* coordinate receipt of the equipment with the local field office that purchased the service;
* submit a VR2889, Diabetes Self-Management Education Services Adaptive Diabetes Equipment Receipt;
* deliver the equipment or supplies to the customer;
* have the customer sign the VR2889 to acknowledge receipt of equipment or supplies;
* fill out the manufacturer's warranty card by mail or online; and
* document on VR2889 that the warranty card has been submitted.

## 7.5 Post-Training Assessment

The post-training assessment is the final meeting provided for diabetes services. In this one-hour assessment, the customer and diabetes educator develop a follow-up plan for ongoing support. The plan includes information about goals, educational and equipment outcomes, and ongoing needs.

### 7.5.1 Post-Training Assessment Service Description

The diabetes educator conducts post-training assessments no sooner than 30 calendar days after the skills training is complete.

As part of the post-training assessment, the diabetes educator:

* reviews the skills training provided; and
* reinforces the behavioral changes.

The post-training assessment must be completed for all customers 30 days after the last training session. The post-training assessment may be completed in person, by phone, or by video conferencing with the customer as described in VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery. The preferred method to complete the post-training assessment is in person. If a post-training assessment must be provided sooner than 30 calendar days after the skills training, the trainer must request approval from the referring VR counselor or the OIB worker before the post assessment being completed. The VR counselor or OIB worker requests approval from the VR director using VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Blind and Visually Impaired Services.

### 7.5.2 Post-Training Assessment Process and Procedure

To document the one-hour post-training assessment, the diabetes educator completes the:

* VR2900, Diabetes Self-Management Education Post-Training Assessment; and
* VR2901, Diabetes Pre- and Post-Assessment.

To evaluate the customer's progress, the post-assessment fields are completed on the same VR2901, Diabetes Pre-and Post-Assessment that was submitted at the initial assessment.

### 7.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The following documentation must be submitted within 35 calendar days of completion of the post-training assessment:

* Initial assessment
* Skills training
* Post-training assessment

The provider documents all conversations that he or she has had with the VR counselor, the OIB worker, and other staff about customers whom that provider is serving.

## 7.6 Diabetes Self-Management Education Service Fees

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Diabetes Self-Management Education Services** | **Unit Rate** | **Comment** |
| Diabetes Self-Management Assessment | $117.00 per hour | * Two-hour initial assessment * Includes only the time spent assessing the customer |
| Diabetes Skills Training (Individualized Services Only) | $117.00 per hour | * Includes only the time spent teaching skills to the customer * Each session should be two hours |
| Diabetes Skills Training (Group Services Only) | $60.00 per hour | * Includes only the time spent teaching skills to the customer * Group services require a minimum of two customers and no more than eight customers per group |
| Post-training Assessment | $117.00 per hour | * One-hour post-assessment session 30 days after completion of training * Includes only the time spent assessing the customer |

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 8: Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

Contract Type: DME (Durable Medical Equipment)

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 8.1 Overview of Durable Medical Equipment

The standards in this chapter apply to contracted durable medical equipment (DME) purchased by the Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR) for customers.

TWC-VR may only purchase the DME described in this chapter from contracted providers.

The VR counselor may authorize the purchase of DME described in this chapter only when it is vocationally necessary and is expected to improve the customer's ability to participate in VR services that are required to obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain employment as defined in the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE).

## 8.2 DME Contractor Qualifications

A contract with TWC-VR is required to provide the goods listed in 8.3 Description of DME.

The contractor is required to:

* have staff license(s) and/or certification(s) related to the DME, as set by the industry standards;
* have either a store front and/or have the ability to deliver and set-up functional and calibrated DME for the customer's use; and
* maintain an accessible business location, which allows TWC-VR customers to obtain, return or be fitted for the DME.

## 8.3 Description of DME

TWC-VR may purchase the following DME on a contract basis, including parts and accessories, when the medical prescription for the customer is less than six months old:

* Rehabilitation or hospital beds;
* Manual and power wheelchairs;
* Bathroom assistive devices;
* Patient lifts (manual or power);
* Seating and positioning systems;
* Scooters;
* Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machine; and
* Bilevel Positive Airway Pressure (BiPAP) machine.

DME may be purchased or rented from a noncontracted provider when the cost:

* is less than the available contract rate; and
* does not exceed the rates listed in TWC-VR's Maximum Affordable Payment Schedule (MAPS).

Note: TWC-VR may purchase other types of DME (not listed) using TWC-VR's MAPS.

The provider determines the specific equipment needed based on professional recommendations, the customer's prescription and additional information from the VR counselor.

A provider will deliver prescribed DME that is fully functional, calibrated, set up, and ready for immediate use by the customer in accordance with the TWC-VR approved recommendations and the service authorization issued by TWC-VR. As requested by the customer or TWC-VR, the TWC-VR contractor must be able to make necessary adjustments when setting up the equipment.

### 8.3.1 Professional Recommendations

The DME provider obtains written recommendations that include the specifications (type, size, and special features) of the equipment prescribed.

* A physiatrist, physical or occupational therapist, rehabilitation engineer, or assistive technology professional not affiliated with the contractor must complete the evaluation and/or reevaluation of the following:
  + Manual wheelchairs
  + Power wheelchairs
  + Seating and positioning systems
  + Scooters
  + Rehabilitation
  + Hospital Beds
  + Bathroom assistive devices
  + Manual patient lifts
  + Powered patient lifts
* A pulmonologist or medical doctor, preferably certified in sleep medicine must complete the evaluation and/or reevaluation for:
  + CPAP; or
  + BiPAP

### 8.3.2 Existing Equipment

When an existing wheelchair owned by the customer needs to be repaired, TWC-VR obtains an estimate of the cost for repair to the original chair from the local provider of wheelchair repair services. TWC-VR applies best value principles in considering whether repair or replacement is the more cost-effective course.

### 8.3.3 Fabricated Goods

Fabricated goods must meet the specification approved by the VR counselor. This includes:

* development of schematics, drawings, or other required descriptive materials;
* installation;
* setup and training;
* written instructions on use and maintenance; and
* self-repair information, parts, warranty, and post-warranty repair.

## 8.4 DME Maintenance and Warranty

The contractor gives the VR customer written instructions on how to operate and maintain the purchased equipment.

Based on the product type and the manufacturer's warranty, the contractor provides preventive maintenance at no additional cost to VR:

* at the end of the sixth and 12th months of operation, or when the contractor is notified; and
* within three days of notification by VR, at the customer's home or other address specified by VR.

## 8.5 DME Products Returned

If goods or equipment purchased with VR funds are subsequently returned to the contractor, or exchanged or replaced by the contractor, the contractor must notify the VR office in writing.

The notice must include:

* a description of the item returned;
* the date the item was returned;
* the reason for the return;
* the amount of credit due, if any;
* the customer's name;
* the case ID number; and
* any subsequent actions that were taken (exchanged or replaced by the contractor).

If the item or equipment being returned has a different price or is substantially different from the original item or equipment, then VR will issue a replacement service authorization for the new item or equipment.

When a refund is due, the contractor must by the 15th of each month send a check for the total credit accumulated during the previous calendar month. The payment must be accompanied by supporting documentation and/or credit invoices for each transaction or item for which the credit reimbursement is issued. The supporting documentation and/or credit invoices must include the service authorization number and the customer's case ID number.

## 8.6 DME Methodology for Payment

Contractors agree to provide the contracted DME listed in 8.3 Description of DME at the established 18 percent discount from the manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) for the entire functional unit.

TWC-VR is the payer of last resort. After the customer's primary and/or secondary benefit coverage has been applied, VR pays the contractor an amount equal to the copayment, coinsurance, or deductible due. VR does not pay more than the amount allowed by the customer's insurance or more than the rate specified in the VR contract, whichever is less.

Contracted DME that is vocationally necessary, but that is declined coverage by the customer's primary and/or secondary benefit coverage, is paid at the rate specified in the VR contract only when a service authorization has been issued by VR prior to the purchase.

## 8.7 DME Process and Procedure

VR staff provides the contractor with a copy of the recommendations for the prescriptions and equipment to be purchased.

The contractor determines the specific equipment needed based on professional recommendations, the customer's prescription, and additional information from the VR counselor.

The contractor provides the VR counselor with a cost estimate that includes the:

* manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) minus the established 18 percent discount;
* comparable benefits submission, comparable benefits response, and explanation of benefits (EOB);
* item number and description, matched with the appropriate codes from the Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS); and
* anticipated delivery date.

VR staff issues a service authorization, with the approved estimated cost, to confirm the purchase is approved. Purchase is not authorized until the contractor receives a service authorization from VR.

## 8.8 DME Outcomes Required for Payment

For the contractor to receive payment, the contractor:

* provides new (unused and not refurbished) DME as specified on a VR service authorization at the rate established in 8.6 DME Methodology for Payment;
* delivers the goods to the specified address within 45 days of the service authorization, on the date and time mutually agreed upon by the counselor, customer, and contractor; and
* delivers the goods in an assembled and fully functional state, including adaptations necessary to meet the individual needs of the VR customer as detailed on the service authorization and on the approved specification sheet provided by the contractor.

The contracted DME provider must provide the following:

* The item numbers and descriptions matched with the appropriate Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes;
* MSRP on the manufacturer's price list or the price shown on the order form (the price being billed must be at least the manufacturer's price minus the established 18 percent)
* A copy of the customer's explanation of benefits (EOB) for all primary and secondary payers
* An invoice with the service authorization number, customer's name, customer's case identification (ID) number, VR counselor's name, and date the service was provided

VR staff is authorized to pay the provider for the entire functional unit upon verification the equipment was delivered and all the documentation listed above was received.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 9: Assistive Technology Services for Customers with Visual Impairments

Contract Type: Assistive Technology – Customers with Visual Impairments

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 9.1 Overview of Assistive Technology Services

Assistive technology (AT) services are for customers with visual impairments and services include AT baseline and post -training assessments, AT evaluation, and AT training. These services help a customer who is blind or has a significant visual impairment to make informed choices about which AT products meet his or her needs and how to use them.

Assistive Technology Evaluation and Keyboarding must be provided in person. All other assistive technology services may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR1884, Assistive Technology Services for Customers with Visual Impairments Referral. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

To provide training at the trainer’s AT evaluation and training facility, the training area must be equipped with desks, monitors, and peripherals to use with a customer’s portable or easily transportable assistive technology products. The location where assistive technology services are provided must meet the individual accessibility needs of the customer, so the customer is able to fully engage in the service. See VR-SFP 3.3 Contractor Standards for Physical Locations.

Any request to change a Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Blind and Visually Impaired Services, before the change is implemented. The approved VR3472 must be maintained in the provider’s customer case file. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 9.6 Assistive Technology Service Fees.

## 9.2 Staff Qualifications and Training

Before services are provided to customers, the Assistive Technology service provider director must approve the VR3455, Provider Staff Information form completed by staff, and submit the approved form to the provider's assigned Texas Workforce Commission VR regional program specialist. The VR3455, Provider Staff Information form must document qualifications and provide evidence of meeting all qualifications, such as transcripts, diplomas, reference letters, credentials, or licenses.

To provide AT evaluation or AT training, the provider’s staff member must pass the proficiency tests for AT evaluation and/or AT training.

Within 30 days of contract signature and 10 business days of an inventory change, the AT evaluation provider director must submit an inventory report of AT products from the Evaluation Products List to the Assistive Technology Unit (ATU) and the assigned RPSS.

### 9.2.1 Assistive Technology (AT) Evaluators

An AT evaluator must have:

* completed high school or attained a GED;
* six months full-time work experience in a responsible position that provided services to individuals who are blind or have visual impairment;
* passed the Assistive Technology Unit’s (ATU) proficiency tests for AT evaluators and trainers; and
* be approved by ATU to provide AT evaluations.

An individual who attended a state school for the blind and visually impaired or who completed a state or federal training program for the blind and visually impaired, may substitute for work experience six months personal experience as an end-user of magnification or reader software including JAWS, ZoomText, and Fusion.

AT evaluation proficiency tests cover each of the AT evaluation product categories.  An AT evaluator is approved to evaluate by product category after passing the evaluation proficiency test for each specific product category.  For example, an AT evaluator who has passed the proficiency test for screen readers is approved to evaluate customers using products in the screen reader category.

To maintain approval to provide AT evaluations, an AT evaluator must be employed as an AT evaluator within one year of passing the proficiency tests. An AT evaluator who is not employed as an AT evaluator for one year or longer must retest to regain approval status. A person who fails an ATU proficiency test must obtain permission to retest from the ATU manager.

For more information about ATU’s proficiency tests or to obtain a list of approved AT evaluators, contact ATU at [VR.ATU@twc.texas.gov](mailto:VR.ATU@twc.texas.gov).

### 9.2.2 Assistive Technology (AT) Trainers

An AT trainer must have:

* completed high school or attained a GED;
* six months full-time work experience in a responsible position that provided services to individuals who are blind or have visual impairment;
* passed the Assistive Technology Unit’s (ATU) proficiency tests for AT trainers; and
* be approved to provide AT training by ATU.

An individual who attended a state school for the blind and visually impaired or who completed a state or federal training program for the blind and visually impaired, may substitute for work experience six months personal experience as an end-user of magnification or reader software including JAWS, ZoomText, and Fusion.

An AT trainer is only approved to train in specific products for which the trainer has passed a proficiency test. When a product significantly changes, an AT trainer must pass an updated category proficiency test to continue training in that product.

To maintain approval to provide AT training, an AT trainer must be employed as an AT trainer within one year of passing the proficiency tests. An AT trainer who is not employed as an AT trainer for one year or longer must retest to regain approval status. A person who fails an ATU proficiency test must obtain permission to retest from the ATU manager.

For more information about ATU’s proficiency tests, to schedule a test, or to obtain a list of approved AT trainers, contact ATU at [VR.ATU@twc.texas.gov](mailto:VR.ATU@twc.texas.gov).

### 9.2.3 Annual Training

Assistive technology (AT) evaluators and trainers must attend the annual Train-the-Trainer seminar for AT service providers presented by the Assistive Technology Unit (ATU). VR does not pay or reimburse the AT service provider or the provider’s staff members for costs associated with required training or testing.

If an AT evaluator or AT trainer is unable to attend the Train-the-Trainer seminar, the provider service director must request that the requirement be waived or postponed or that the trainer be allowed to attend an alternate training approved by ATU. The request must be documented and approved by the VR director using VR3490, Temporary Waiver of Staff Qualification.

For more information about ATU’s required annual training, contact ATU at [VR.ATU@twc.texas.gov](mailto:VR.ATU@twc.texas.gov).

## 9.3 Baseline and Post-training Assessments

### 9.3.1 Baseline and Post-training Assessments Service Description

A VR counselor must purchase a baseline assessment when purchasing training services.  A VR counselor can purchase a baseline assessment from an AT evaluator or AT trainer as a separate service without purchasing other services.

The baseline assessment is used to measure the customer’s ability to use technology. Completion of the post-training assessment is the final step in the AT training process and is used to report progress and to estimate potential training needs.

The results of the baseline assessment help the AT trainer modify training to meet the customer’s unique training needs. Combined with the post-training assessment, it provides a point of comparison to measure the customer’s progress. An AT evaluator can also use the results of a baseline assessment to recommend training in a VR1886, Assistive Technology Evaluation.

The baseline assessment and post-training assessment must be provided as indicated in VR1884, Assistive Technology Services for Customers with Visual Impairments Referral or the service authorization. Remote services must be provided following VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.  The trainer must document the results of the baseline assessment and post-training assessment in VR2902, Assistive Technology Training Baseline Assessment and Post-training Assessment.

### 9.3.2 Process and Procedure

To authorize services for a customer, the VR counselor sends the AT evaluator or AT trainer a referral packet that includes:

* the VR1884, Assistive Technology Services for Customers with Visual Impairments Referral; and
* an EAS report or basic consultation report.

The AT evaluator or AT trainer must not provide services until the AT evaluator or AT trainer receives a referral packet with a service authorization.

The AT evaluator or AT trainer must:

* maintain a one-AT evaluator-to-one-consumer or one-AT trainer-to-one-customer ratio;
* document observations from the assessment in VR2902, Assistive Technology Training Baseline Assessment and Post-training Assessment; and
* sign the original VR2902.

### 9.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The AT evaluator or AT trainer documents the required information in VR2902, Assistive Technology Training Baseline Assessment and Post-training Assessment to verify that the AT evaluator or AT trainer:

* delivered the service as indicated in VR1884, Assistive Technology Services for Customers with Visual Impairments Referral;
* delivered training without exceeding the one-AT evaluator to customer or one-AT-trainer-to-one customer ratio;
* provided all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques necessary to enable the customer to participate in the assessment;
* measured and documented the customer's performance, skills, and progress; and
* completed a post-training assessment.

The AT evaluator or AT trainer must submit a completed report within 10 business days from the completion date of the assessment to the customer's VR counselor.

Payment for the baseline assessment is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR2902, Assistive Technology Training Baseline Assessment and Post-training Assessment completed for the Baseline Assessment; and
* an invoice.

Payment for the post-training assessment is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR2902, Assistive Technology Training Baseline Assessment and Post-training Assessment completed for the Post-training Assessment;
* VR2868, Assistive Technology Training Report; and
* an invoice.

An assessment is an outcome-based service. The VR counselor cannot pay for incomplete services. All topics in the service description and service authorization must be addressed.

## 9.4 Assistive Technology Evaluations

### 9.4.1 Assistive Technology Evaluations Service Description

An assistive technology (AT) evaluation provides a VR customer an opportunity to compare AT products under the unbiased guidance of an AT evaluator. The AT evaluation enables the customer to make informed choices about which products might best help the customer succeed in work, school, or vocational training.

An AT evaluation must include:

* an interview,
* an assessment,
* a post-evaluation discussion, and
* documentation.

A baseline assessment is not required for an AT evaluation.

The AT evaluator documents the evaluation results in VR1886, Assistive Technology Evaluation.

### 9.4.2 Process and Procedure

The VR counselor sends the AT evaluator a referral packet with the following:

* VR1884, Assistive Technology Services for Customers with Visual Impairment Referral;
* an Employment Assistance Specialist (EAS) report or a basic consultation report (if required), and
* service authorization.

An EAS report or basic consultation report is required for all AT evaluations except those limited to handheld magnifiers.

The AT evaluator must:

* provide AT evaluation in person at the AT evaluator’s facility;
* maintain a one-AT evaluator-to-one-customer ratio;
* limit the AT evaluation to product categories listed in the employment assistance specialist (EAS) report or basic consultation report;
* show at least two products per category unless the product is in a category of its own on the Evaluation Products List (EPL);
* discuss the results of the AT evaluation and review the customer’s product selections with the customer;
* answer questions the customer has regarding the evaluation process and/or the products the customer selected; and
* document the AT evaluation in VR1886, Assistive Technology Evaluation.

The AT evaluator and customer must sign the original VR1886, Assistive Technology Evaluation.

The AT evaluator must not suggest to the customer that the VR counselor or the customer’s employer will purchase a product.

For a copy of the latest Evaluation Products List refer to 9.7 Resources.

### 9.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The AT evaluator documents the information required by the service description on the VR1886, Assistive Technology Evaluation to show that the AT evaluator:

* provided the AT evaluation in person at the AT evaluator’s facility without exceeding one-evaluator-to-one-customer ratio;
* documented the results of the AT evaluation in VR1886, Assistive Technology Evaluation; and
* indicated clearly which products the customer selected.

An AT evaluation is strictly limited to the product categories indicated on the EAS report or basic consultation report. All product categories shown to a customer must be on the Evaluation Products List (EPL).

The AT evaluator must clearly indicate in the AT evaluation report if a customer refused to evaluate a product or product category listed on the EAS report or basic consultation report or if the customer requested to evaluate additional products.

The AT evaluator must not show additional categories to the customer without a new service authorization and revised EAS report or basic consultation report that indicates the additional categories.

The AT evaluator must submit to the customer’s VR counselor a completed report within 10 working days from the date of the AT evaluation.

The VR counselor pays for the AT evaluation after approving the report and receiving an invoice. The VR counselor approves only reports that are accurate, complete, and meet all service requirements including evaluation category limits indicated in the referral information.

An AT evaluation is an outcome-based service. The VR counselor cannot pay for incomplete services. All topics in the service description and service authorization must be addressed.

For a copy of the latest Evaluation Products List refer to 9.7 Resources.

## 9.5 Assistive Technology Training

### 9.5.1 Assistive Technology Training Service Description

Assistive Technology (AT) training is a service provided by an AT trainer who teaches a customer how to use AT products, measures the customer’s progress, and reports the results of the training to the customer’s VR counselor.  AT training helps a customer learn how to use specialized equipment, devices, and software designed specifically to mitigate the effects of significant visual impairment.

An AT trainer can provide keyboarding skills training in a facility using the trainer’s equipment and software with up to three customers per trainer or in a customer’s home with a one-trainer-to-one-customer ratio.

All other AT training must be provided:

* using the customer’s portable or easily transportable AT products at the AT trainer’s authorized facility, or in the customer's home, school, or workplace depending on the customer’s needs; and
* with a one-trainer-to-one-customer ratio.

Keyboarding skills training must be provided in person. All other AT training may be provided remotely when the VR counselor indicates approval of remote service delivery in VR1884, Assistive Technology Services for Customers with Visual Impairment Referral. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

An AT trainer cannot provide more than eight hours of training per day per customer. Training can include trainer-guided individual practice time.

AT training includes:

* a baseline assessment;
* planning;
* training sessions with the customer;
* monthly reporting;
* a post-training assessment; and
* final training reporting.

The AT trainer documents:

* assessments result in VR2902, Assistive Technology Training Baseline Assessment and Post-training Assessment; and
* training results in the VR2868, Assistive Technology Training Report.

For a copy of the Assistive Technology Training Guide (ATTG) with a complete list of training subjects and descriptions refer to 9.7 Resources.

### 9.5.2 Process and Procedure

The VR counselor sends the AT trainer a referral packet with the following:

* VR1884, Assistive Technology Services for Customers with Visual Impairment Referral;
* an employment assistance specialist (EAS) report or basic consultation report;
* VR1886, Assistive Technology Evaluation; and
* a service authorization.

The AT trainer uses the information in the referral packet, the Assistive Technology Training Guide, and the customer’s baseline assessment results to modify training to meet the customer’s individual needs.

The baseline and post-training assessment are essential to planning and measuring the effectiveness of AT training and are purchased with all AT training.

All service authorizations for AT training must include a line item for each of the following:

* AT training by subject,
* baseline assessment; and
* post-training assessment.

A valid service authorization may include a line item for trainer-guided individual practice time.

The AT trainer must review the referral packet and valid service authorization carefully and contact the VR counselor to report any missing or incomplete documentation. The trainer must not provide services until the VR counselor sends a complete referral packet with a valid service authorization.

If the AT trainer discovers a problem with the customer's equipment, hardware, or software that prevents the trainer from providing training, the trainer may spend up to two hours of training time troubleshooting the problem to resolve it. If the trainer is unable to resolve the issue within two hours, the trainer must contact the customer's VR counselor by email to report the problem and seek assistance. The trainer must document the details of the problem on the in VR2868, Assistive Technology Training Report, including the amount of time the trainer spent troubleshooting.

The AT trainer must document training results on the:

* VR2902, Assistive Technology Training Baseline Assessment and Post-training Assessment; and
* VR2868, Assistive Technology Training Report;

For a copy of the Assistive Technology Training Guide (ATTG) with a complete list of training subjects and descriptions refer to 9.7 Resources.

### 9.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The AT trainer documents the information required by the service description in VR2902, Assistive Technology Training Baseline Assessment and Post-training Assessment, and VR2868, Assistive Technology Training Report, to verify the AT trainer:

* provided training without exceeding the trainer-to-customer ratio indicated in the Assistive Technology Training Guide (ATTG);
* provided all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques to enable the customer to participate in the training;
* measured and documented the customer's performance, skills, and progress; and
* completed a post-training assessment.

The trainer must submit the final training report within 10 business days from the date of the last service. The VR counselor pays the invoice after he or she verifies that all training objectives and outcomes are met, and approves the following required documentation:

* VR2902, Assistive Technology Training Baseline Assessment and Post-training Assessment;
* VR2868, Assistive Technology Training Report; and
* an invoice.

AT training is an outcome-based service. The VR counselor cannot approve required documentation that is incomplete. All topics in the service description and service authorization must be addressed.

If a customer fails to complete the training or fails to meet training objectives, a trainer may request payment for the training hours the customer completed by submitting the required training reports and an invoice. The trainer must explain why the training was unsuccessful.

## 9.6 Assistive Technology Service Fees

### 9.6.1 Assistive Technology Service Fees Description

VR pays for AT services according to the AT evaluator- or AT trainer- to- customer ratio, subject, and location of service delivery.

A customer site includes a customer’s home, school, or workplace.

A facility is a service provider’s authorized AT services location.

### 9.6.2 Assistive Technology Service Fees Table

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Service** | **Ratio** | **Location** | **Unit Rate** | **Hourly Rate** |
| AT Evaluation | 1:1 | Facility | $125 | NA |
| AT Training | 1:1 | Customer site | NA | $75 |
| AT Training | 1:1 | Facility | NA | $40 |
| Baseline Assessment | 1:1 | Customer site | $37 | NA |
| Baseline Assessment | 1:1 | Facility | $20 | NA |
| Post-training Assessment | 1:1 | Customer site | $37 | NA |
| Post-training Assessment | 1:1 | Facility | $20 | NA |
| Keyboarding Pre-training Assessment | 1:1 | Customer site or facility | NA | $5 |
| Keyboarding Skills Training | 1:1 | Customer site | NA | $20 |
| Keyboarding Skills Training | Up to 1:3 | Facility | NA | $10 per customer |
| Trainer-guided Independent Practice Time | 1:1 | Customer site or facility | NA | $10 |

## 9.7 Resources

* [Approved Trainers List](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/assistive-technology-trainer-list-twc.xlsx)
* [Assistive Technology Training Guide](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/assistive-technology-training-guide-twc.docx)
* [Evaluation Products List](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/assistive-technology-evaluation-product-list-twc.xlsx)
* [Assistive Technology Unit Proficiency Tests](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/proficiency-test-list-ptl-twc.xlsx)

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 10: Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 10.1 Overview of Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind

Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind (ILS-OIB) focuses on adjustment to blindness and development of skills so that customers can live confidently and independently in their homes and communities. The program's goals are to empower individuals with disabilities; maximize their leadership potential, independence, and productivity; and ensure their integration and full inclusion in society.

The ILS-OIB program promotes independent living by encouraging self-control, self-help, and self-determination, and by promoting equal access and individual and systemic advocacy. The program assists customers address the impact of their loss of vision so that each customer can achieve their independent living goals.

ILS-OIB helps customers:

* who are age 55 and older;
* whose have significant visual impairment;
* whose ability to function independently in the home, family, or community is substantially limited due to visual impairment; and
* for whom the delivery of independent living (IL) services will substantially improve their ability to function, continue functioning, or move toward functioning independently in the home, family, or community.

IL services provided by a contractor can only be provided when authorized by the TWC-VR OIB worker to address goals in a customer’s Independent Living Plan (ILP).

IL services are provided in person with the trainer and customer at the same location. IL services within this chapter cannot be provided remotely.

Any request to change a Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Blind and Visually Impaired Services, before the change is implemented. The approved VR3472 must be maintained in the provider’s customer case file. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

A provider's services can include one or more of the following:

* IL Skills Training
* Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training
* Diabetes Management Training
* Braille Instruction
* Equipment
* Guide Services
* Reader services
* Transportation
* Information and Referral (I&R)
* Peer counseling
* Individual and family advocacy training
* Advocacy training for the family
* Transition services, for moving a customer from a nursing home or other institution to the customer's home or other residence in the community, along with the necessary individual support services

For information on O&M training and Diabetes Management Training, see Chapter 5: Orientation and Mobility Services and Chapter 7: Diabetes Self-Management Education Services.

Other services include referral to and information to outreach services such as visual screening, surgery, or therapeutic treatment to prevent, correct, or modify disabling eye conditions, and hospitalization related to these services.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 10.6 IL Skills Training Service Fees.

For information on acceptable signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

## 10.2 Staff Qualifications

All IL skills trainers must have accomplished the following:

* Earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a concentration in rehabilitation, education, psychology, sociology, or a related field and obtained:
  + one year of work experience in rehabilitation teaching, rehabilitation, or education of people with disabilities, or
  + two years' work experience in general education or other related field; and
* Presented written and/or hands-on training sessions on IL skills. Sessions must be observed and determined qualified by the ILS-OIB program specialist's designee. Preference is given to candidates who have experience providing individual, hands-on training to individuals who are blind and/or visually impaired.

**Note:** Twelve Semester hours of graduate study from an accredited college or university may be substituted for each year of the required qualifying experience. One additional year of full-time qualifying work experience may be substituted for the course concentration requirements for the bachelor’s degree.

## 10.3 Independent Living Skills Training

### 10.3.1 Service Description

#### Scope of Services

Providers of IL skills services offer a variety of services in the customer's home or community.

Providers may provide one or more of the following, as authorized by the OIB worker:

* Application Assessment—the process of gathering referral data and information about the customer's preliminary need for services. The information, along with eye medical reports, is used by the OIB worker to determine an individual's eligibility for the ILS-OIB program.
* Comprehensive Assessment—the process of working with the customer to identify the issues that prevent him or her from functioning independently. The assessment, which occurs after the OIB worker determines eligibility, can also help a customer maintain or increase his or her independence. Comprehensive assessment includes listening to the customer describe problems related to the loss of vision, conducting an in-depth interview to gather information, observing as the customer demonstrates his or her skills at home, and talking with family members or caregivers to gather any additional information. The comprehensive assessment is used by the OIB worker to develop the Independent Living Plan (ILP).
* Independent Living Skills Training—training in techniques that enable a customer to perform daily living skills in alternative ways. IL skills are divided into the following categories:
  + Personal management—including grooming, eating, health, safety, clothing identification and coordination, and the use of medications
  + Home management—including sewing, cleaning of clothing, housekeeping, meal preparation and kitchen safety skills, planning for grocery shopping, and minor home maintenance
  + Communication—including telling time and time management, using the telephone, money management, writing, organization, and using adaptive devices
  + Information access and technology—including training on the use of magnifiers, CCTVs, and other devices for low-vision, as well as adaptations of computers and other types of technology.
* Information and Referral (I&R) —services that help the customer identify and use alternative resources, such as Meals on Wheels and the Texas State Library to meet his or her individual needs. I&R services can be provided at any point in the independent living process.

### 10.3.2 Process and Procedure

#### Directing IL Skills Training

The OIB worker coordinates casework and directs the IL skills provider in the provision of services.

The OIB worker:

* sends referrals to the IL skills provider for initial contact and application assessment;
* enters application information into the electronic case management system;
* determines customer eligibility for IL services;
* refers eligible customers to the IL skills provider for comprehensive assessment;
* develops the ILP with the customer and enters it into the electronic case management system;
* authorizes IL skills training hours;
* manages case records;
* reviews the documentation of services provided by the IL skills provider;
* authorizes the purchase of recommended equipment and services;
* documents the purchase of equipment and services in each customer's ILP; and
* arranges or provides for more complex services, including (but not limited to) braille instruction, orientation and mobility training within the customer's community, and diabetes education and training.

#### Case Management

The OIB worker:

* determines a customer's eligibility for IL services;
* refers an eligible customer to the IL skills provider for specific IL services;
* manages case records for an eligible customer;
* reviews and approves individual training programs jointly developed by the IL skills provider and the customer;
* incorporates approved individual training programs into each customer's ILP;
* reviews documentation on the IL services provided by the IL skills provider;
* authorizes the purchase of recommended equipment and services;
* documents the purchase of equipment and services in each customer's ILP; and
* arranges or provides for more complex services, including braille instruction, orientation and mobility training within the customer's community, and diabetes education and training.

#### IL Skills Provider Responsibilities

The authorized IL skills provider:

* completes the application assessment;
* provides services as directed by the OIB worker and as described under the scope of services identified in the assessment;
* conducts a comprehensive assessment;
* submits the appropriate documentation for each type of service to the OIB worker for review and approval;
* provides training in basic independent living skills, as described in the comprehensive assessment and ILP;
* periodically assesses each customer's progress toward goals and timelines with the OIB worker;
* submits appropriate recommendations for purchasing products and services for each customer to the OIB worker; and
* provides the OIB worker with a written report of each contact and includes details of the assessment or service provided and the outcome.

#### Initial Contact

The IL skills provider must make the initial contact with a customer who is referred for independent living skills training within 15 working days of the referral.

#### Application Assessment

The application assessment must be completed within one to two hours of the initial contact.

The initial contact and application assessment must be conducted individually and must be documented using the following forms:

* VR5051, Application for Services
* VR5053, Application Statement—ILS-OIB
* VR5060, Permission to Collect Information
* VR5061, Notice and Consent for Disclosure of Personal Information
* VR2891, Customer Services Report: ILS-OIB Progress Report

#### Comprehensive Assessment

The IL skills provider must contact a customer who is referred for a comprehensive assessment within 30 calendar days of the referral.

The IL skills provider must document the comprehensive assessment on VR2954, Comprehensive Assessment for Independent Living Program. The recommendations section of the form must list the IL skills training sessions and services that the IL skills provider has identified for inclusion in the customer's ILP.

#### Independent Living Skills Training

After the OIB worker has developed the ILP, the IL skills provider provides monthly training services as authorized by the OIB worker. The OIB worker documents the services each month using VR2891, Customer Services Report: ILS-OIB Progress Report.

The monthly progress report (VR2891) must:

* detail the services provided to the customer;
* document the outcome of each service; and
* include any recommendations for changes to the ILP.

#### Provider Authorization

Services must not begin until a service authorization has been issued.

Providers must have written authorization from ILS-OIB before providing services to a customer. If a service is provided before a service authorization is issued by ILS-OIB and received by the provider, ILS-OIB will not authorize payment for the service.

For additional information about provider authorization, see

* Chapter 1: Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation,
* Chapter 2: Obtaining a Contract for Goods and Services, and
* Chapter 3: Basic Standards.

### 10.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

To facilitate payment after the assessment and/or training period, the provider of IL skills services submits the following (as applicable) at least every 35 days, using clear and descriptive terms:

* VR5053, Application Statement—ILS-OIB—after an application assessment is completed
* VR2954, Comprehensive Assessment for Independent Living Program—after a comprehensive assessment is completed
* VR2891, Customer Services Report: ILS-OIB Progress Report—at the end of the assessment and/or training period

The information entered must demonstrate the following:

* Attendance was recorded (include the total number of hours that the customer participated in services).
* All necessary accommodations were provided, compensatory techniques were used, and special needs were met for the customer to successfully participate in the services.
* The customer's performance, skills, and needs were assessed and the results summarized for the reporting period.
* The goals and objectives were measurable and established for all skills to be addressed.
* A projected timeline, including training hours, was established for each goal.

ILS-OIB does not pay fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

Payment for IL skills services is made when the OIB worker approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* invoice; and
* form (as applicable):
  + VR5053, Application Statement; and/or
  + VR2954, Comprehensive Assessment for Independent Living Program; and/or
  + VR2891, Customer Services Report: ILS-OIB Progress Report.

## 10.4 Orientation and Mobility Services

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) services prepare blind and visually impaired customers to travel independently with competence and confidence. O&M trainers offer complex, interrelated services designed to enable customers to travel independently. O&M training begins with an assessment and may include training held in environments frequently visited by the customer.

For the description of O&M services and for information on related guidelines, processes, and fees, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 5: Orientation and Mobility Services.

## 10.5 Diabetes Education Services

Diabetes self-management and education services are used to:

* assess the customer's ability to independently manage his or her diabetes at home;
* assess the customer's ability to independently manage his or her diabetes in the workplace;
* prepare a customer to make informed choices about his or her diabetes; and
* help the customer develop the confidence and skills to implement his or her choices.

For the description of this service and for information on related guidelines, processes, and fees, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 7: Diabetes Self-Management Education Services.

## 10.6 IL Skills Training Service Fees

The fee for providing IL skills training—that is, training the customer directly or discussing the customer's training with the OIB worker—is $75 per hour.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 11: Supportive Residential Services for Persons in Recovery

Contract Subject:  Room, Board and Supervised Living

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 11.1 Service Overview

The goal of Supportive Residential Services is to assist customers who are in recovery to maintain stability, control, and abstinence from use of substances so they will be able to gain competitive integrated employment. This service is intended to provide a supervised, stable living environment, with additional supports to assist the customer in pursuit of a successful competitive integrated employment outcome in a timely manner.

VR does not sponsor Supportive Residential Services until

* after the customer has been determined eligible for VR services, and
* the service is included on the customer's IPE or IPE amendment.

Supportive Residential Services are NOT intended to serve as a medical detox. For additional information regarding VR-sponsored medical services, refer to Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-700: Medical Services.

Vocational Rehabilitation will only support customers with substance use related to the following classifications:

* Alcohol – Usually composed of ethanol or ethyl liquid that when ingested acts as a psychoactive drug that acts as a depressant on the central nervous system (Caron 2016)
* Cannabis – Dried flowering tops of Cannabis Stavia plant. Smoked or ingested to induce psychotomimetic effects to the central nervous system. Usually goes under the name "Marijuana"
* Hallucinogens – Plant or synthetic compounds capable of causing functional disturbances in the form of psychoses, mainly hallucinations
* Inhalants – Chemical vapors that are inhaled for delusional effects on the central nervous system
* Phencyclidine – Intravenous antiseptic that causes delusions and hallucinations. Usually goes under the name "PCP" or "Angel Dust"
* Opioids – A pain-attenuating peptide, synthetic or natural, that triggers the brain to release analgesia
* Sedatives – Usually combination of drugs used to calm or relax patients
* Stimulants – A drug or other substance used to accelerate or excite the central nervous system

Drug classifications that do not qualify for rehabilitation services:

* Caffeine – A stimulant made of a crystalline compound that affects the central nervous system (Farlex)
* Tobacco – Prepared leaves of certain plants; some having narcotic properties, used for chewing, smoking or sniffing

This chapter outlines VR standards that must be followed by VR-funded facilities providing Supportive Residential services for customers with a history of substance use to ensure the health, safety, and quality of services a customer will receive.

Personal Social Adjustment Training, Vocational Adjustment Training, Job Placement, Job Skills Training Services, and other VR services may be purchased in conjunction with Supportive Residential Services for Persons in Recovery.

Any facility providing services under this chapter shall be remain responsible for compliance with applicable federal, state, or local laws, codes, rules, or ordinances.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 11.4.5 Supportive Residential Service Fees.

## 11.2 Staff Qualifications

All staff must meet the standards and qualifications outlined in the Texas Administrative Code for Chemical Dependency Treatment Facilities and the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) as required to maintain licensure. Additional information can be found in section 11.3 Facility Requirements.

If other VR services are also being provided, such as Personal Social Adjustment Training, Vocational Adjustment Training, or any Employment Services qualifications applicable to those services must be met.

The staff-to-customer ratios found in section 11.4 Program Requirements must be maintained.

## 11.3 Facility Requirements

Each facility must obtain and maintain Texas Department of State Health Services -Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities Licensure. For more information, go to Texas Department of Health and Services Chemical Dependency Treatment Facilities at https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/health-care-facilities-regulation/chemical-dependency-treatment-facilities

Facilities must be compliant with all rules, laws, codes and ordinances outlined in the:

* [Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Title 25 Chapter 448](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=25&pt=1&ch=448); and
* [Texas Health & Safety Code - Chapter 464](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.464.htm).

VR will not refer new customers to a facility under an action by Texas Department of State Health Services in which it is seeking to deny, suspend or revoke a facility's license, or is refusing to renew, unless and until such action has been resolved with a final Order ensuring continued operations. A facility currently providing services to VR customers is required to notify TWC VR of any such action by TDSHS within ten (10) business days of receiving notification by TDSHS. A facility which fails to timely notify TWC VR of the filing of any such action by TDSHS is considered out of compliance with contract terms and conditions.

VR will only sponsor licensed Treatment Program Services titled "Supportive Residential" in [25 TAC, Chapter 448, Sub Chapter I Treatment Program Services](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=25&pt=1&ch=448&rl=903) and expects [TAC §448.901](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=25&pt=1&ch=448&rl=901) Requirements Applicable to All Treatment Services" to be followed.

To be eligible to provide services to VR customers, facilities must allow the use of facility vehicles and/or staff to transport VR customers to and from appointments and activities included within the program, such as AA meetings, in compliance with [25 TAC §448.510](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=25&pt=1&ch=448&rl=510) and Chapter 3: Basic Standards of this manual.

VR mandates that, in addition to complying with [25 TAC, Chapter 448, Subchapter L. Residential Physical Plant Requirements](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=25&pt=1&ch=448&sch=L&rl=Y), the location where services are provided must meet the individual accessibility needs of the customer, so the customer is able to fully engage in the service. See VR-SFP 3.3 Contractor Standards for Physical Locations.

Each facility is expected to maintain compliance with [25 TAC, Chapter 448, Subchapter G, 448.704 Program Rules](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=25&pt=1&ch=448&rl=704). VR requires each facility to establish clear policies regarding the use or possession of controlled substances within the facility. These policies must include:

* clearly defined circumstances under which such substances are allowed in the facility;
* provisions for storage of allowable substances; and
* clearly articulated consequences for residents who violate the facility's controlled substance policies.

The facility must report, in writing, any use of a controlled substance that is not prescribed by a physician, to the VR counselor within one (1) business day of discovery.

The following Subchapters of the Texas Administrative Code, 25 TAC Chapter 448 Substance Abuse Standards of Care do not apply to VR customers in Supportive Residential Services for Persons in Recovery:

* SUBCHAPTER M. COURT COMMITMENT SERVICES
* SUBCHAPTER N. THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES
* SUBCHAPTER O. FAITH BASED CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY PROGRAMS

The contractor maintains proof of a current TDSHS Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities License with the assigned TWC VR contract manager and Regional Program Specialist.

When the facility is inspected, the contractor is required to provide any monitoring/inspection reports by other agencies to the assigned TWC VR Contract Manager and Regional Program Specialist within five business days of receiving the report.

## 11.4 Program Requirements

### 11.4.1 Service Description

Supportive Residential Services for Persons in Recovery must include 24 hours per day, 7 days per week of a structured therapeutic environment that ensures the health and safety of the customer while he or she is maintaining abstinence from the use of controlled substances. Supportive Residential Services include: housing, meals, medication supervision, and structured treatment services.

VR will only pay for days the customer is actively in the facility and will not pay for unexcused or excused absences.

Supportive Residential Services must be provided by a facility that is licensed by the Texas Department of State Health Services as a Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, which maintains compliance with TDSHS regulations and which does not have a current action with TDSHS involving license suspension, revocation or denial of renewal.

Supportive Residential Programs providing treatment services as specified in [25 TAC §448.903, Requirements Applicable to Residential Services](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=25&pt=1&ch=448&rl=903) must provide and document at least six hours of treatment services per week for each customer, comprised of at least:

* three hours of chemical dependency counseling (one hour per month of which shall be individual counseling); and
* three hours of additional counseling, chemical dependency education, life skills training, and relapse prevention education.

Personal Social Adjustment Training, Vocational Adjustment Training, Job Skills Training and Job Placement services can be provided simultaneously by VR if the facility has an Employment Services contract with TWC or if partnering with another approved service provider. All requirements outlined in the Standards for Providers chapters related to the service must be met by either party.

The ratio of direct care staff-to-customer ratio must be at least 1:20 when customers are awake and 1:50 during sleeping hours, as specified in [25 TAC §448.903 (h)](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=25&pt=1&ch=448&rl=903).

VR may purchase up to 90 days of residential treatment, in 30-day increments, when the customer demonstrates progress towards established goals and objectives as outlined in the treatment plan and the VR3384, Supportive Residential Progress Report.

The customer must participate in a recovery program, abide by residential rules, and be actively working towards mastering work readiness skills or obtaining competitive integrated employment for additional time to be approved.

If there is a need for VR sponsored residential services for more than 90 days:

* VR supervisor review and approval is required in 30 day increments for continued sponsorship to ensure that the customer is continuing to make measurable, predefined progress towards established goals and objectives, and
* VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request must be submitted and approved prior to services being authorized.

For additional information about Contract Service Modifications, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

### 11.4.2 Process and Procedure

#### 11.4.2.1 Referral

The provider receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services and any documentation that will prepare the provider to better work with the customer, such as medical or psychological reports or case notes and service authorization for up to 30 days.

#### 11.4.2.2 Treatment Plan

The provider and customer develop a treatment plan as outlined in [25 TAC §448.804](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=25&pt=1&ch=448&rl=804) identifying:

* goals based on the customer's needs, strengths, and preferences;
* objectives that are individualized, realistic, measurable, time specific, appropriate to the level of treatment and stated in behavioral terms;
* strategies to be used describing the type and frequency, to help the customer achieve the identified goals; and
* discharge criteria, including initial discharge plan.

The discharge plan must identify:

* where the customer will live and work after completion Supportive Residential Services; and
* specific supports that will be necessary for maintaining the progress made in Supportive Residential Services.

#### 11.4.2.3 Reporting Progress

The provider provides services in accordance with [25 TAC §448.903](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=25&pt=1&ch=448&rl=903) and completes the VR3384, Supportive Residential Services Progress Report. The treatment plan and VR3384 is reviewed monthly (every 30 days) to:

* evaluate the customer's progress toward their goals;
* determine if the treatment plan needs to be updated prior to a service authorization being issued to approve additional days; or
* determine if the customer's Supportive Residential Services are complete.

The provider must complete the VR3384, Supportive Residential Services Progress Report and update the treatment plan at least monthly and submit with an accurate invoice.

### 11.4.3 Discharge Notice

The facility is required to provide advance notice to the customer, the customer's care giver (when applicable), and VR office before discharging the customer. When notifying a caregiver, the facility uses the current address/phone number/email address of record provided by the customer/caregiver for purposes of notice. When notifying the VR office, the notification must be made by phone during regular business hours.

The only exception to the advance notice requirement is when there is a documented concern about the customer's safety or wellbeing or the safety or wellbeing of other individuals at the facility. These concerns must be communicated to VR immediately and efforts must be made to ensure that the customer's care giver is present at the time of discharge.

### 11.4.4 Outcomes Required for Payment

The provider documents, in descriptive terms, all the information required by the Service Description on the VR3384, Supportive Residential Services Progress Report, including evidence that:

* services were provided in accordance with [25 TAC §448.903](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=25&pt=1&ch=448&rl=903);
* the customer's attendance at the facility without elopement or unauthorized weekend passes outside the scope of recovery was recorded;
* the customer's attendance in at least the six hours of required treatment services each week was recorded;
* the customer is abstaining from any controlled substances and maintaining medication as prescribed;
* the customer is maintaining adherence to residential rules;
* goals and objectives identified in the treatment plan were addressed and progress documented on the VR3384, Supportive Residential Services Progress Report; and
* customer satisfaction was verified through either a signature on VR3384, Supportive Residential Services Progress Report or by VR staff members' contact with the customer.

VR will not pay any fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

Payment for Supportive Residential Services for Persons in Recovery is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* treatment plan;
* VR3384, Supportive Residential Services Progress Report; and
* invoice.

## 11.5 Supportive Residential Service Fees

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Service Name** | **Unit Rate** | **Comments** |
| Supportive Living for Recovery | $35.00 per day | * Contractor must not collect money from a VR customer or from the customer's family for any service charge in excess of VR fees. * If VR and another resource are paying for a service for a customer, the total payment must not exceed the fee specified in the VR Standards for Providers. |

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 12: Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)

Contract Subject: VR WRAP

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 12.1 Wellness Recovery Action Plan Service

Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is an evidence-based system that is used worldwide by individuals who are experiencing mental health and other kinds of wellness challenges. It is a unique form of mental health support that is peer-led and self-directed. WRAP elements and strategies are trademarked by the [Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery](https://copelandcenter.com/)  (Copeland Center) to help adults with a mental health disability to identify and learn:

* triggers;
* early warning signs that their mental health is worsening;
* wellness tools such as coping strategies; and
* resources to use when things are breaking down.

WRAP is a strategy that helps counselors establish customer stability for possible employment and cannot be provided simultaneously with other therapies.

Customers referred to WRAP must be experiencing difficulties in one or more of the following areas:

* Unable to manage their own recovery
* Self-identifying the need for the service
* Developing self-advocacy skills to increase independence
* Developing and maintaining relationships
* Participating in activities within the community
* Adjusting to physical changes or limitations
* Learning from peer modeling to take increased responsibility for his or her own recovery

WRAP services are for customers who:

* are at least 18 years of age;
* have a  disability such as schizophrenia, major depression, bipolar disorder, or another severely disabling psychological disorder that meets the diagnostic criteria specified in the DSM-5;
* have substance abuse disorders or developmental disorders that co-occur with another diagnosable severe mental illness;
* have functional impairments resulting from a mental illness that substantially interferes with or limits two or more major life activities;
* require crisis resolution, long-term support, and treatment to manage the mental illness; and
* are adjusting to or considering physical lifestyle changes.

## 12.2 Staff Qualifications

Before any services can be provided, the employment service provider director must approve the VR3455, Provider Staff Information form, completed by each staff member, and submit the approved form to the provider's assigned contract manager and assigned regional program specialist. The VR3455 must document qualifications and provide evidence that each staff member meets all qualifications.

### 12.2.1 WRAP Facilitator

Facilitators must have and maintain a current WRAP certification from the Copeland Center to be eligible to contract with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) throughout the life of their contract.

As part of the licensing requirement, the WRAP facilitator:

* must comply with the Copeland Center Code of Ethics and report any violations to TWC-VR contract oversight and support;
* cannot be a family member of the customer;
* must provide proof of certification of completion of Advanced Level WRAP Facilitator training recognized by the Copeland Center;
* must be registered on the [Copeland Center Advanced Level Facilitator list](https://copelandcenter.com/find-facilitator/advanced-level-wrap-facilitators) Copeland Center Advanced Level Facilitator list; and
* must complete a refresher certification course from the Copeland Center every two years.

For more information on the Copeland Advanced Level WRAP Facilitator training, see the [Copeland Center](https://copelandcenter.com/) website.

## 12.3 Wellness Recovery Action Plan

### 12.3.1 Service Description

The Copeland Center's WRAP process and concepts must be followed in the implementation of WRAP with vocational rehabilitation (VR) customers. The customer curriculum is found in the [WRAP Recovery Book](https://www.wellnessrecoveryactionplan.com/). The full WRAP curriculum must be offered in its entirety.

Coursework includes structured lectures, group discussions, personal examples from the lives of the WRAP facilitator and participants, individual and group exercises, and homework assignments. The customer is provided at least 20 hours of services in an individual or group setting.

Coursework must include wellness tools that allow the customer to move forward in recovery by:

* developing natural supports;
* learning appropriate coping skills;
* developing self-management skills;
* identifying uncomfortable and distressing feelings and/or behaviors; and
* developing crisis plans.

WRAP services must include instruction in the following areas:

* Wellness—what an individual is like when he or she is presenting at his or her "best" by the customer's definition.
* Wellness Toolbox—a general list of strategies that an individual knows will help keep him or her well. These strategies might also include negative environments, events, and individuals the customer should avoid.
* Daily Maintenance—a list of responsibilities that a customer must do daily, weekly, or monthly to stay well, such as:
  + establishing a consistent routine;
  + taking medication at the same time each day;
  + going to bed at the same time each day;
  + getting out of bed at the same time each day; and
  + exercising at the same time each day.
* Triggers—external events or circumstances that make a customer feel less well.  A customer writes down his or her personal triggers and then writes an action plan of what to do if these triggers were to occur.
* Early Warning Signs—the subtle internal signs of change that indicate to an individual that well-being is becoming compromised. A customer writes a list of these personal signs of change with an action plan of what to do if they occur.
* When Things Are Breaking Down—feelings and behaviors that indicate to an individual that his or her condition is more serious and immediate action is needed to prevent things from worsening. A customer writes a list of signs that things are breaking down and an action plan of what to do if that occurs.
* Crisis Plan—a comprehensive plan, written when the individual is well, telling others how he or she would like to be cared for when self-care is no longer possible. There are several sections to this plan and individuals are encouraged to adapt it to their needs in a time of crisis.
* Post-Crisis Plan—a plan of how others will know when they no longer need to take over the care of the customer. It also includes a plan for reducing support as the customer starts to take back responsibilities and recover from the crisis and reintegrate into a productive life within the community setting. The ratio between customers and WRAP facilitators cannot be greater than eight customers to one WRAP facilitator.

WRAP services can be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. For more information refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

Any request to change the WRAP Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request form, before the change is implemented. For more information refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

### 12.3.2 Process and Procedure

A WRAP provider receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. The provider also receives a service authorization and documentation, such as medical and/or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, housing, and/or employment data collected by VR that prepare the provider to better work with the customer.

WRAP training must consist of a minimum of 20 hours of instruction and be individualized to the customer's needs and abilities. Instruction can range between four to eight weeks, with meeting times ranging between two to four hours per day or can be provided in a three-day configuration, depending on the participation abilities of the customer.

The WRAP trainer is responsible for:

* providing or coordinating all reasonable and necessary accommodations to ensure full access and participation for each customer;
* contacting the customers to notify them of the dates and times for the classes;
* facilitating a minimum of 20 hours of training in the eight areas defined in the Service Description using the Copeland Center's WRAP process and concepts;
* using various instructional approaches to meet the customer's learning styles and preferences;
* supplying materials necessary for the customer to engage in training;
* completing the VR3381, WRAP Report; and
* maintaining attendance records and documentation as proof that the training was administered and that it covered all required training topics.

All documentation must be available for review by VR staff members upon request.

### 12.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The WRAP trainer documents in descriptive terms all the information required by the service description on the VR3381, WRAP Report, including evidence that:

* the training was provided without exceeding the ratio of eight customers to one WRAP trainer;
* the training was provided in the environments approved by the VR counselor on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services;
* the attendance record confirms that the customer participated in a minimum of 20 hours of training;
* the training included the eight required elements described in the service description;
* all necessary accommodations, compensatory techniques, and special needs were provided, as necessary for the customer, to participate in training;
* various instructional approaches were used to meet the customer's learning styles and preferences;
* all supplies were provided so that the customer could participate in the training; and
* customer satisfaction and delivery of service as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on VR3381, WRAP Report, or with VR staff contact with the customer.

For information on acceptable signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment for WRAP is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3381, WRAP Report; and
* invoice.

VR does not authorize payments or associated fees for any excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

## 12.4 Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Service Fees

A provider cannot collect money from a VR customer or the customer's family for any service charged in excess of VR fees. If VR and another resource are paying for a service for a customer, the total payment must not exceed the fee as specified in the VR Standards for Providers manual.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Service** | **Unit Rate** | **Restrictions** |
| Wellness Recovery Action Plan | $500.00 | The fee is paid only one time per customer.  No partial payments are permitted.  Services must be provided in the environment(s) indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services.  VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. |

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services

Contract Type: Employment Services

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 13.1 Overview of Work Readiness Services

Work Readiness Services prepare participants to excel in their abilities to successfully obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides and purchases services related to disability issues, interpersonal skills training, daily living skills, and issues that interfere with obtaining or maintaining employment to support customers in achieving work readiness. Work Readiness Services benefits customers who have never worked, have not worked for a long time, or have a sporadic work history, and it prepares customers for successful employment so that they can manage or address vocational impairments and be self-sufficient.

Work Readiness Services are offered in groups and individually. The services can be held at the provider's facility or within the community. To meet the maturity and educational levels and safety needs of customers who are served in a group setting, it might be necessary to designate groups exclusively for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), that is, students who have disabilities and who are age 22 or younger.

This chapter includes the following Work Readiness Services:

* Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT)
  + Personal Social Adjustment Training Evaluation (PSAT Evaluation)
  + Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT)
* Work Adjustment Training (WAT)
  + Work Adjustment Training Evaluation (WAT Evaluation)
  + Work Adjustment Training (WAT)
* Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT)
  + VAT Explore the "You" in Work
  + VAT Soft Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success
  + VAT Soft Skills for Work Success
  + VAT Entering the World of Work
  + VAT Preparing for a Job Search Training—(Pre-ETS) Customers Only
  + VAT Disability Disclosure Training
  + VAT Money Smart—A Financial Education Training
  + VAT Public Transportation Training
  + VAT Specialized Evaluation
  + VAT Specialized
  + VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training

Individuals who are actively receiving Supported Employment Services are not eligible for Work Readiness Services.

PSAT, WAT, and VAT trainers implement curriculum and activities using various instructional approaches, such as:

* discussions;
* PowerPoint presentations;
* inquiry-based instructions;
* hands-on experiments;
* project- and problem-based learning;
* computer-aided instructions;
* handouts;
* exercises;
* journaling activities; and
* extension activities.

Journaling activities allow customers to gain insight into their thoughts, feelings, and opinions about the content being taught and to identify skills to improve their success.

Extension activities reinforce skills and knowledge learned in the core activities offered in the service. Examples of extension activities include field trips, guest speakers, and videos that are not required in the core curriculum.

When the customer’s referral form indicates the services can be provided remotely, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery for requirements. The service descriptions below will indicate when remote service delivery is allowed.

Any request to change a Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Work Readiness Services, before the change is implemented. The approved VR3472 must be maintained in the provider’s customer case file. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 13.8 Work Readiness Service Fees.

Premiums may be available for some Work Readiness Services. Premiums are paid after all deliverables for the service have been made. For more information about premiums, refer to Chapter 20: Premiums.

## 13.2 Staff Qualifications

Before services are provided to customers, the employment service provider director must approve the VR3455, Provider Staff Information form completed by staff, and submit the approved form to the provider's assigned Texas Workforce Commission contract manager and assigned VR regional program specialist. The VR3455, Provider Staff Information form must document qualifications and provide evidence of meeting all qualifications, such as transcripts, diplomas, reference letters, credentials, or licenses.

Staff qualification for each service is described below. University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE) Texas Credential information can be found at [UNT CRP Training](https://wise.unt.edu/crptraining).

A noncredentialled provider staff member can provide services to a VR customer only when the Temporary Waiver of Employment Services Credential Standards are followed. For more information, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 3: Basic Standards, 3.4.5 Temporary Waiver of Staff Qualifications.

Premiums may be available for some Work Readiness Services. Premiums are paid after all deliverables for the service have been achieved. For more information about premiums, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 20: Premiums.

### 13.2.1 Personal Social Adjustment Training General Staff Qualifications

The personal social adjustment trainer must have:

* a master's degree in rehabilitation, counseling, education, social services, sociology, or psychology; or
* a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation, counseling, education, social services, sociology, or psychology and one year of full-time experience performing Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT) or similar duties.

For residential substance-abuse programs only, a personal social adjustment trainer may have instead of the above qualifications:

* a License Chemical Dependence Counselor (LCDC); or
* a certification by the Texas Certification Board of Addiction Professionals (found at https://www.tcbap.org/page/certification) in one of the following:
* Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor - (AADC)
* Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Counselor - (ADC)
* Advanced Certified Prevention Specialist - (ACPS)
* Certified Prevention Specialist - (CPS)
* Certified Chemical Dependency Specialist - (CCDS)
* Certified Compulsive Gambling Counselor - (CCGC
* Certified Criminal Justice Addictions Professionals - (CCJP)
* Certified Clinical Supervisor - (CCS).

A personal social adjustment trainer cannot supervise more than two aides in any class.

The personal social adjustment aide must have:

* one year of work experience in vocational areas directly related to PSAT or similar duties in a rehabilitation agency or organization; or
* completion of a minimum of 20 college credit hours in rehabilitation, counseling, education, social services, sociology, or psychology.

The personal social adjustment aide must work under the supervision of the personal social adjustment trainer.

### 13.2.2 Work Adjustment Training General Staff Qualifications

The work adjustment trainer must meet one of the following qualifications:

* a master's degree in rehabilitation, counseling, education, social services, sociology, or psychology; or
* a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation, counseling, education, social services, sociology, or psychology and one year of full-time experience performing work adjustment services or similar duties; or
* a combination of six years of training and experience performing work adjustment services or similar duties with a minimum of two years' successful history providing services to individuals with disabilities.

A work adjustment trainer must not supervise more than two aides in any class.

The work adjustment training aide must have:

* one year of work experience in vocational areas directly related to WAT or similar duties; or
* completion of a minimum of 20 college credit hours in rehabilitation, counseling, education, social services, sociology, or psychology.

The work adjustment training aide must work under the supervision of the work adjustment trainer.

### 13.2.3 Vocational Adjustment Trainer Staff Qualifications

Vocational adjustment trainers must meet the qualifications below:

* completion of at least 60 college credit hours; and
* an UNTWISE Texas Work Readiness Credential.

## 13.3 Personal Social Adjustment Training Evaluation

### 13.3.1 Personal Social Adjustment Training Service Description

A Personal Social Adjustment Training Evaluation (PSAT Evaluation) is designed to evaluate the customer's skills related to acceptable work behaviors and interpersonal skills that interfere with the customer's ability to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment.

Examples of skills assessed during an evaluation include:

* personal adjustment, which can include:
  + self-evaluation;
  + developing or restoring self-confidence;
  + self-advocacy;
  + disability management;
  + motivation;
  + personal health and hygiene; and
  + personal appearance and grooming;
* social adjustment, which can include:
  + establishing basic etiquette;
  + social relationships and/or interpersonal skills;
  + conflict resolution and problem solving;
  + time and schedule management;
  + developing socially acceptable behaviors;
  + effective communication;
  + workplace interaction; and
  + acceptable work behaviors.

The personal social adjustment trainer evaluates the customer for up to five days, for no more than a total of 10 hours, and completes the VR3137A, Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT) and Work Adjustment Training (WAT) Evaluation.

This service can be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR3121, Referral for Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Training. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

The PSAT Evaluation is purchased one time for each customer. The personal social adjustment trainer must conduct the PSAT Evaluation and develop the training plan before the customer receives PSAT.

### 13.3.2 Process and Procedures

An employment service provider receives a VR3121, Referral for Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Training. The referral and service authorization (SA) may identify skills to be evaluated and addressed in PSAT. The personal social adjustment trainer evaluates skills related to any of the areas listed in the service description, but must address all skills listed in the referral or SA.

The personal social adjustment trainer's responsibilities during the evaluation are to:

* remain on-site supervising all PSAT services, including the evaluation;
* supervise qualified aides and maintain the ratio below:
* one trainer to no more than six customers without an aide; or
* one trainer and one aide to no more than 10 customers;
* maintain written proof by means of attendance records that are made available upon request that the ratio of customer to trainer and aide is maintained;
* identify appropriate and inappropriate personal social adjustment behaviors using existing records, personal observations, and conversations with the VR counselor, customer, family members, and others;
* review the customer's strengths, challenges, training plan, and recommendations with the customer; and
* develop (in coordination with the customer and the VR counselor) a VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan that includes measurable goals, objectives, and timelines.

Any meeting related to the training plan between customer, provider, customer’s circle of supports and VR staff may be conducted remotely. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

The personal social adjustment trainer, the customer, and the VR counselor must sign the original and updated VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan to document understanding and agreement of the training plan. For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

No training can be provided until an SA for PSAT is issued after the completion of the PSAT Evaluation and the VR counselor has approved the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan.

### 13.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

For payment, the personal social adjustment trainer who completed the evaluation documents in descriptive terms all information required by the Service Description on the VR3137A, Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT) and Work Adjustment Training (WAT) Evaluation and VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan at the end of the evaluation period demonstrating evidence that:

* attendance was recorded and includes the number of hours the customer participated in the evaluation;
* the evaluation was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff to no more than six customers without an aide or one trainer and one aide to no more than 10 customers;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were provided, and special needs were met for the customer to participate successfully in the evaluation;
* the customer's performance, skills, and needs were evaluated and results summarized;
* the goals and objectives are measurable and established for all skills to be addressed;
* a projected achievement date has been set for each goal;
* a projected number of training hours has been established for each goal; and
* the customer's satisfaction and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP was verified by customer's signature on the VR3137A and VR3137B or by VR staff member’s contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

VR will not pay any fees related to excused absences, unexcused absences, or holidays.

Payment for the PSAT Evaluation is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3137A, Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT) and Work Adjustment Training (WAT) Evaluation;
* VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan; and
* invoice.

## 13.4 Personal Social Adjustment Training

### 13.4.1 Personal Social Adjustment Training Service Description

Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT) is designed to teach skills related to acceptable work behaviors and to improve interpersonal skills that interfere with the customer's ability to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment.

PSAT is a structured service designed to meet the needs of individuals and to address vocational impediments. VR sponsorship is limited to 20 hours of PSAT per week.

PSAT can be used to reinforce behaviors and skills, which the customer failed to master in previous training.

All PSAT services are based on the goals outlined on the VR3137A, Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT) and Work Adjustment Training (WAT) Evaluation and VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan. The number of PSAT hours a customer receives is based on the measurable goals included in the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan and the SA.

This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR3121, Referral for Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Training. For information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

Training areas, which may be addressed in PSAT include:

* personal adjustment, which can include:
* self-evaluation;
* developing or restoring self-confidence;
* self-advocacy skills;
* disability management;
* personal health and hygiene; and
* personal appearance and grooming.
* social adjustment, which can include:
* establishing basic etiquette;
* social relationships;
* conflict resolution;
* appropriate use of time and schedule management;
* developing socially acceptable behaviors;
* workplace interaction;
* acceptable work behaviors; and
* time and schedule management.

All PSAT instruction must be outlined with lesson plans. VR can review lessons plans used with customers at any time.

A lesson plan must include:

* a description of skills being taught or reinforced; and
* specific resources used in the instruction (for example, curriculum, activities, guest speakers, books, films, and field trips).

The provider provides all supplies and resources for the training at no cost to the customer.

### 13.4.2 Process and Procedures

PSAT is provided to the customer as defined in the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan and authorized by an SA. PSAT hours will be authorized per week for up to a month (four weeks or 28 days) at a time after the PSAT trainer, customer, VR counselor have developed the VR3137B. The PSAT trainer, customer, and VR counselor are jointly involved in planning and monitoring service goals and objectives identified on the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan. VR sponsors no more than 20 hours per week of PSAT.

Goals and objectives can be updated, added, or changed throughout the training cycle with the submission and approval by the VR counselor of a new VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan.

The personal social adjustment trainer, customer, and VR counselor review the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan at least every four weeks (every 28 days) to:

* evaluate the customer's progress toward the goals;
* determine whether the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan must be updated before an SA is issued to approve additional hours; or
* determine whether the customer's PSAT is completed.

Any meeting related to the training plan between customer, provider, customer’s circle of supports and VR staff may be conducted remotely. For information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

A summary of all communication with VR staff, and notations that the VR3137B Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan was updated, must be entered in the Additional Comments section of the VR3138, Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Report.

If the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan is updated, the personal social adjustment trainer, customer, and VR counselor must sign the updated VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan to document agreement of the updated training plan.

PSAT is not authorized until the VR counselor approves the updated VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan. The personal social adjustment trainer must complete the VR3138, Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Report at least every four weeks (28 days).

The personal adjustment trainer's responsibilities are to:

* remain on-site supervising all PSAT services;
* supervise qualified aides and maintain the ratio of one trainer to no more than six customers without an aide or one trainer and one aide to no more than 10 customers;
* provide written proof by means of attendance records that are made available upon request that the ratio of customer to trainer and aide is maintained;
* monitor the VR3137B to determine progress toward identified goals;
* determine whether the VR3137B needs to be updated;
* report to the VR counselor on the customer's progress toward goals and objectives on the VR3138; and
* coordinate PSAT with such other services provided by the employment service provider as WAT, when applicable.

### 13.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

For payment, the personal social adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms, at a minimum of every 28 days, all information required on the VR3138, Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Report and SA, including evidence that:

* the training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to no more than six customers without an aide or one trainer and one aide to no more than 10 customers;
* the customer's attendance and the total number of hours the customer participated in the training were recorded;
* goals and objectives addressed in training are recorded on the VR3138 and are included on the most recently approved VR3137B Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan;
* the customer's performance and skills were documented for the reporting period;
* the status, including a narrative description for each goal and objective, was documented for the reporting period;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* communications with the VR counselor and customer, and notation of updates made to the VR3137B Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan, and are documented in the Additional Comments section; and
* the customer's satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP, was verified by customer's signature on the VR3138, Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Report, and VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan, or by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

VR will not pay any fees related to excused absences, unexcused absences, or holidays.

Payment for PSAT is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3138, Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Report;
* VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan; and
* invoice.

## 13.5 Work Adjustment Training Evaluation

### 13.5.1 Work Adjustment Training Evaluation Service Description

Work Adjustment Training Evaluation (WAT Evaluation) is designed to evaluate the customer's work behaviors and interpersonal skills that are transferable to future competitive integrated employment. This service cannot be provided remotely.

Examples of skills assessed during an evaluation include:

* acceptance of supervision and directions;
* daily living skills;
* effective communication;
* goal setting;
* appropriate grooming and hygiene, work attire, and dress code;
* motivation;
* problem solving;
* self-regulation and self-reliance;
* social skills;
* understanding roles and responsibilities in the workplace;
* good work ethics;
* good work practices and productivity (including safety and speed); and
* work tolerance.

The work adjustment trainer evaluates a customer for up to 10 days and for no more than 25 hours and completes the VR3137A, Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Training Evaluation and VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan. VR does not pay for over 25 hours per week.

The evaluation must be completed in a competitive integrated work environment where the customer's work produces compensation for both the provider's business and the customer. The customer will be paid at least minimum wage for all hours worked.

The WAT Evaluation is purchased one time for each customer. The WAT trainer must conduct the WAT evaluation and develop the training plan before WAT is provided.

### 13.5.2 Process and Procedure

An employment service provider receives a VR3121, Referral for Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Training, and an SA. The referral and SA may identify skills to be evaluated and assessed in the WAT Evaluation. The work adjustment trainer evaluates skills related to any of the areas listed in the service description, but must address all skills listed in the referral or SA.

The work adjustment trainer's responsibilities during the evaluation are to:

* remain on-site supervising all WAT services, including the evaluation;
* supervise qualified aides and maintain the ratio of one trainer to no more than six customers without an aide or one trainer and one aide to no more than 10 customers;
* provide written proof that the ratio of customer to trainer and aide is maintained by means of attendance records that are made available upon request;
* identify appropriate and inappropriate work behaviors using existing records, personal observation, and conversations with the VR counselor, customer, family members, and others;
* review the customer's strengths, challenges, training plan, and recommendations with the customer; and
* develop (in coordination with the customer and the VR counselor) a VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan, which includes measurable goals and objectives as well as timelines.

The work adjustment trainer, customer, and VR counselor must sign the original and updated VR3137B to document understanding and agreement of the training plan.

No training can be provided until an SA for WAT is issued after the VR counselor approves the completion of the WAT Evaluation and the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan.

### 13.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

For payment, the work adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms all information required by the Service Description section of the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan at the end of the evaluation period demonstrating evidence that:

* attendance was recorded and includes the total number of hours the customer participated in the evaluation;
* the evaluation was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff to no more than six customers without an aide or one trainer and one aide to no more than 10 customers;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were provided and special needs were met for the customer to successfully participate in the evaluation;
* the customer's performance, skills, and needs were evaluated and results summarized;
* goals and objectives are measurable and established for all skills to be addressed;
* a projected achievement date has been set for each goal and objectives;
* a projected number of training hours has been established for each goal and objectives; and
* the customer's satisfaction and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP was verified by customer's signature on the VR3138 and VR3137B or by VR staff member’s contact with the customer.

The work adjustment trainer, customer, and VR counselor must sign the original and updated VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan to document agreement to the training plan. No WAT is authorized until the VR counselor approves the VR3137B and an SA is received. For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

VR will not pay any fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

Payment for the WAT Evaluation is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3137A, Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT) and Work Adjustment Training (WAT) Evaluation;
* VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan; and
* invoice.

## 13.6 Work Adjustment Training

### 13.6.1 Work Adjustment Training Service Description

Work Adjustment Training (WAT) is designed to improve work behaviors and enhance interpersonal skills of the customer while he or she performs competitive employment in a structured environment. Each customer participates in a WAT Evaluation before participating in WAT. This service cannot be provided remotely.

The training must be provided in a work setting where the customer's work produces compensation for both the provider's business and the customer. The customer will be paid at least minimum wage for all hours worked.

The provider must offer WAT with a minimum of 25 hours per week, using competitive employment. If a holiday or business closure occurs, the minimum number of hours may be adjusted. A calendar of hours the WAT program offered services for the customer to attend must be maintained and made available to VR upon request. The provider can invoice for the number of hours a customer participated in WAT, up to 25 hours per week. VR will not pay for additional hours.

The qualified work adjustment trainer or aide must conduct WAT. A work adjustment trainer must supervise all aides.

Hours are approved per week for a month (four weeks or 28 days) at a time and must correlate with the approved VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan. Total WAT hours, outlined in the VR3137B, may be increased or decreased as appropriate for the customer as progress is made in his or her skills and abilities when approved by the VR counselor and on the SA.

WAT environments must be flexible enough to meet customer needs and allow the opportunity to develop skills in the following areas when indicated on the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan:

* acceptance of supervision and directions;
* daily living skills;
* effective communication;
* goal setting;
* grooming, hygiene, work attire, and/or dress code;
* motivation;
* problem-solving;
* self-regulation and self-reliance;
* social skills;
* understanding roles and responsibilities in the workplace;
* work ethics;
* work practices and productivity (including safety and speed); and
* work tolerance.

### 13.6.2 Process and Procedures

WAT is provided to the customer as defined in the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan and authorized by an SA. WAT hours will be authorized per week for up to a month (four weeks or 28 days) at a time after the work adjustment trainer, customer, and VR counselor have developed the VR3137B.

The work adjustment trainer, customer, and VR counselor are jointly involved in planning and monitoring service goals and objectives identified on the VR3137B. Goals and objectives can be updated, added, or changed throughout the training cycle with the submission and approval of a new VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan.

The work adjustment trainer, customer, and VR counselor review the VR3137B at least every four weeks (28 days) to:

* evaluate the customer's progress;
* determine whether the VR3137B must be updated before an SA is issued to approve additional hours; and/or
* determine if the customer's WAT is completed.

A summary of communication with VR staff, and notations that the VR3137B was updated, must be documented in the Additional Comments section of the VR3138, Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Report.

If the VR3137B is updated, the work adjustment trainer, customer, and VR counselor must sign the updated VR3137B to document agreement of the updated training plan. WAT is not authorized until the VR counselor approves the updated VR3137B and issues and submits an SA.

The work adjustment trainer must complete VR3138, Personal Social Adjustment Training and Work Adjustment Report at least every four weeks (28 days).

The work adjustment trainer's responsibilities are to:

* remain on-site to supervise all WAT services;
* ensure that the competitive work environment meets the customer's needs outlined in the VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan;
* supervise qualified aides and maintain the ratio of one trainer to no more than six customers without an aide or one trainer and one aide for no more than 10 customers;
* provide written proof by means of attendance records that are made available upon request that the ratio of customer to trainer and aide are maintained;
* monitor the VR3137B to determine progress toward identified goals;
* determine whether the VR3137B should be updated;
* report to the VR counselor on progress toward planned goals and objectives on the VR3138; and
* coordinate WAT with other services provided by the employment services provider, when applicable.

### 13.6.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

For payment, at least every four weeks (28 days) the work adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms all information required on the VR3138, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Report, and SA, including evidence that:

* the training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to no more than six customers without an aide or one trainer and one aide to no more than 10 customers;
* the customer's attendance and the total number of hours the customer participated in the training were recorded;
* goals and objectives addressed in training are recorded on the VR3138 and are included on the most recently approved VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan;
* the customer's performance and skills were documented for the reporting period;
* the status, including a narrative description for each goal and objective, is recorded on the most recently approved VR3138, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Report;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* communications made with the VR counselor and the customer, and notation of any updates made to the VR3137B, are documented in the Additional Comments section; and
* the customer's satisfaction and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on the VR3138 and VR3137B or by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

VR will not pay any fees related to excused absences, unexcused absences, or holidays.

Payment for WAT is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3138, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Report;
* VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan; and
* invoice.

## 13.7 VAT Explore the "You" in Work

### 13.7.1 VAT Explore the "You" in Work Service Description

Explore the "You" in Work curriculum helps customers to learn and understand their own work personalities, interests, values, and transferable skills.

The vocational adjustment trainer creates and facilitates training curriculum of at least 10 hours with various instructional approaches that include the four modules listed below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Modules** | **Topic Description** |
| Work Personality | Customers can identify their basic work personality and demonstrate an understanding of how this affects their employment. |
| Work Interests | Customers can identify their work interests and demonstrate an understanding of how the interests affect their employment. |
| Work Values | Customers can identify their work values and demonstrate an understanding of how the values affect their employment. |
| Identification of Transferable Skills | Customers can identify their transferable skills and demonstrate an understanding of how transferable skills affect their employment. |

The training curriculum must include the following activities to allow the customer to understand personal work personalities, interests, values, and transferable skills:

* Self-assessment(s)
* Individual and group discussions
* Journaling activities
* One extension activity

This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

Resources that might be helpful in the development of the curriculum include:

* Texas CARES online to find inventories on work interests, work values, and transferable skills for each customer;
* [TCI+ - LMI | WINTAC](https://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/tci-plus-lmi) for occupational and labor market information;
* TWC's Succeed at Work is available online through Texas Work Prep at [texasworkprep.com](https://texasworkprep.com/) and in paper format at [Labor Market and Career Information](https://lmci.state.tx.us/parents/parents.asp); and
* [O\*NET](https://www.onetcenter.org/tools.html)  online interest inventories, work values inventories, and ability profilers at [O\*NET Center](https://www.onetcenter.org/tools.html).

### 13.7.2 Process and Procedure

An employment service provider receives a VR5000 Referral for Provider Services with an SA and special directions related to the delivery of the services, including information about the customer to individualize the curriculum.

The vocational adjustment trainer is responsible for:

* preparing the curriculum and lesson plans to meet the VAT Explore the "You" in Work Service Description;
* facilitating and documenting the 10-hour training curriculum that includes:
* the four modules in the Service Description;
* a minimum of one extension activity; and
* journaling activities offered throughout the training;
* completing the VR3122, VAT Explore the "You" in Work; and
* maintaining attendance records, the curriculum, lesson plans, and documentation as proof that required training topics were completed and staff ratios were maintained.

All curriculum lesson plans and attendance records must be available for review by VR staff members upon request.

### 13.7.3 VAT Explore the "You" in Work Outcomes Required for Payment

The vocational adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms all information required on the VR3122, VAT Explore the "You" in Work, and SA, including evidence that:

* training was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services;
* the training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to six customers;
* the attendance records show a minimum of 10 hours of training;
* the customer's training included:
  + four required modules outlined in the curriculum;
  + one required extension activity; and
  + journaling activities were offered;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* various instructional approaches were used to meet the customer's learning style;
* all supplies and resources were provided; and
* customer satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on VR3122, VAT Explore the "You" in Work, or by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment will not be made if the customer's excused absence, unexcused absence, or holiday results in failure to attend the minimum number of required training hours.

Payment for VAT Explore the "You" in Work is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3122, VAT Explore the "You" in Work; and
* invoice.

## 13.8 VAT Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success

### 13.8.1 VAT Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success Service Description

Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success is a curriculum developed by the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). The curriculum is designed to teach skills to youth and adults in the following six areas:

* Communication
* Enthusiasm and attitude
* Teamwork
* Networking
* Problem-solving and critical thinking
* Professionalism

Note: Training must be at least 20 hours and include all 30 activities in the ODEP curriculum, with a minimum of four extension activities and journaling activities offered throughout the training.

Only one of the following VAT Work Readiness Services may be purchased for a customer:

* Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success; or
* Soft Skills for Work Success.

This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

### 13.8.2 Process and Procedure

An employment service provider receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, along with an SA and special directions related to the delivery of the services, including information about the customer that is needed to individualize the curriculum.

The vocational adjustment trainer is responsible for:

* facilitating and documenting all 30 activities in the 20-hour curriculum found at [www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/softskills.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/individuals/youth/development-leadership);
* offering journaling activities;
* facilitating a minimum of four extension activities in individual settings or group settings;
* completing the VR3124, VAT Soft Skills to Pay the Bills; and
* maintaining attendance records, lesson plans, and documentation as proof that required training topics were completed and staff ratios were maintained.

All lesson plans and attendance records must be available for review by VR staff members upon request.

### 13.8.3 VAT Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success Outcomes Required for Payment

The vocational adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms all the information required on the VR3124, VAT Soft Skills to Pay the Bills and SA, including evidence that:

* training was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services;
* the training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to no more than six customers;
* the attendance record indicates a minimum of 20 hours of training;
* the customer's training included:
  + 30 required activities outlined in the curriculum;
  + four required extension activities; and
  + journaling activities;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* various instructional approaches were used to meet the customer's learning styles and preferences;
* all supplies and resources were provided so the customer could participate in the training; and
* customer satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on the VR3124, VAT Soft Skills to Pay the Bills or by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment will not be made if the customer's excused absence, unexcused absence, or holiday results in him or her not attending the minimum number of required training hours.

Payment for the VAT Soft Skills to Pay the Bills is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3124, VAT Soft Skills to Pay the Bills; and
* invoice.

## 13.9 VAT Soft Skills for Work Success

### 13.9.1 VAT Soft Skills for Work Success Service Description

The Soft Skills for Work Success curriculum helps the customer learn and demonstrate the soft skills needed to be successful at work. The training focuses on developing essential skills related to:

* effective communication;
* problem-solving;
* work habits; and
* a strong work ethic.

The vocational adjustment trainer creates and facilitates a training curriculum of at least 13 hours, with various instructional approaches, that includes the four modules listed below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Modules** | **Module Description** |
| Interpersonal Communication | * Effective listening * Following and giving instructions and feedback * Conflict resolution * Nonverbal communication * Speaking and appropriate language used in the workplace * Cooperating/working as a team member * Providing good customer service * Dealing with different personality styles * Dealing with questions about one's disability with coworkers * Do's and don'ts related to behaviors in the workplace * Communicating issues and concerns with the employer and/or supervisor |
| Work Habits and Conduct | * Work dress and personal presentation (includes good grooming and hygiene) * Time management * Professionalism * Balancing work and home life * Concepts related to effective time scheduling * Importance of punctuality and attendance * Workplace behaviors and attitudes |
| Work Ethic | * Characteristics of a good work ethic * How to create and improve a good work ethic * What unethical behavior is in the workplace * Characteristics of a negative work ethic |
| Problem-Solving and Decision-Making | * Steps in the problem-solving process: define the problem, gather facts, generate alternative options, evaluate and implement the most appropriate option, and monitor solutions, reevaluating as necessary * Steps in the decision-making process: identify the goal, gather information for weighing options, consider consequences, and evaluate decisions * Problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making related to work-related assignments and barriers |

The training curriculum must include the following activities:

* Self-assessments;
* Individual and group discussions;
* Journaling activities; and
* One extension activity.

This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

Resources that might be helpful in developing the curriculum include the TWC curriculum, [Succeed at Work](https://texasworkprep.com/), available online through Texas Work Prep at <https://texasworkprep.com/>. The curriculum can be printed at [Labor Market and Career Information (state.tx.us)](https://lmci.state.tx.us/counselors/counselors.asp).

Only one of the following VAT Work Readiness Services can be purchased for a customer:

* Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success; or
* Soft Skills for Work Success.

### 13.9.2 Process and Procedure

An employment service provider will receive a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, along with an SA and special directions about the delivery of services, including information about the customer that is needed to individualize the curriculum.

The vocational adjustment trainer is responsible for:

* preparing the curriculum to meet the VAT Soft Skills for Work Success Service Description;
* facilitating and documenting the training curriculum that includes:
* the four modules in the Service Description;
* a minimum of one extension activity; and
* journaling activities offered throughout the training;
* Completing the VR3123, VAT Soft Skills for Work Success; and
* maintaining attendance records, curriculum, lesson plans, and documentation as proof the required training topics were completed and staff ratios were maintained.

All curricula and attendance records must be available for review by VR staff members upon request.

### 13.9.3 VAT Soft Skills for Work Success Outcomes Required for Payment

The vocational adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms the information required on the VR3123, VAT Soft Skills for Work Success, and SA, including evidence that:

* training was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services;
* training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to no more than six customers;
* attendance records indicate a minimum of 13 hours of training;
* the customer's training included:
  + four required modules outlined in the curriculum;
  + one required extension activity; and
  + journaling activities;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* various instructional approaches were used to meet the customer's learning styles;
* all supplies and resources were provided; and
* customer satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on the VR3123, VAT Soft Skills for Work Success, or by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on acceptable signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment will not be made if the customer's excused, unexcused absence, or holiday results in failure to attend the minimum number of required training hours.

Payment for the VAT Soft Skills for Work Success is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3123, VAT Soft Skills for Work Success; and
* invoice.

## 13.10 VAT Entering the World of Work

### 13.10.1 VAT Entering the World of Work Service Description

The VAT Entering the World of Work curriculum helps the customer learn and demonstrate knowledge and skills related to workplace expectations, rules, and laws.

The vocational adjustment trainer creates and facilitates a training curriculum of at least 10 hours with various instructional approaches, which includes the three modules, journaling activities, and extension activities listed below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Modules** | **Module Description** |
| Health and Safety in the Work Setting | * Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) * Safe working conditions * Hazards that can be unsafe work conditions * Taking responsibility for your own health and safety * Disclosing illness or injuries to your employer * Rules about disclosing your disability to an employer * Explaining disability support needs in terms employers understand * Employer's responsibilities and rights to manage workplace risks, including the health and safety of employees * Employer's responsibility to provide employees with the information, instruction, and training they need to do their job safely and without damaging their health * Harassment * Workers' compensation |
| Work Rules and Expectations | * Attendance and promptness * Use of telephones and electronic devices * Confidentiality * Drug and alcohol policies for employees * Employee identification * Workplace privacy * Dress codes * Breaks and meals * Illness * Supervisors' roles * Worker rights * Employer rights * Reasonable accommodations * Requesting accommodations from employer |
| Employer Benefits, Payroll, and Paycheck Basics | * How to complete a W-4 * How to complete an I-9 and identify the required supporting documentation * How to read a pay statement and paycheck * Employer handbooks * Wage deductions * Texas employee rights * Types of employee benefits (health, dental, and life insurance, a 401(k) plan, retirement, and leave) * Time off and leave |

This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000 Referral for Provider Services. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

Resources that may be helpful in the development of the curriculum include the TWC curriculum, "Succeed at Work," available online through Texas Work Prep at [www.texasworkprep](https://texasworkprep.com/). com and in paper format at [Labor Market and Career Information (state.tx.us)](https://lmci.state.tx.us/counselors/counselors.asp).

### 13.10.2 Process and Procedure

An employment service provider will receive a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, along with an SA and special directions related to the delivery of services, including information about the customer needed to individualize the curriculum.

The vocational adjustment trainer is responsible for:

* preparing the curriculum to meet the VAT Entering the World of Work curriculum Service Description;
* facilitating and documenting the curriculum that includes:
* the three modules in the VAT Entering the World of Work Curriculum Service Description;
* a minimum of one extension activity; and
* journaling activities offered throughout the training;
* completing the VR3125, VAT Entering the World of Work; and
* maintaining attendance records, curriculum, lesson plans, and documentation as proof required training topics were completed and staff ratios were maintained.

All curricula and attendance records must be available for review by VR staff upon request.

### 13.10.3 VAT Entering the World of Work Outcomes Required for Payment

The vocational adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms the information required on the VR3125, VAT Entering the World of Work, and SA, including evidence that:

* training was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services;
* training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one trainer to no more than six customers;
* attendance records show a minimum of 10 hours of training;
* the customer's training included:
  + three required modules outlined in the curriculum;
  + one required extension activity; and
  + journaling activities were offered;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* various instructional approaches were used to meet the customer's learning styles;
* all supplies and resources were provided; and
* customer satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on the VR3125, VAT Entering the World of Work, or by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment will not be made if the customer's excused absence, unexcused absence, or holiday results in failure to attend the minimum number of required training hours.

Payment for VAT Entering the World of Work is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3125, VAT Entering the World of Work; and
* invoice.

## 13.11 VAT Job Search Training—for Pre-Employment Transition Services Customers Only

### 13.11.1 VAT Job Search Training—for Pre-Employment Transition Service Description

The VAT Job Search Training curriculum helps the customer learn and demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to prepare for a job search to obtain employment in entry-level positions. The VAT Job Search Training is only for Pre-ETS students ages 22 and younger.

This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. For information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

The vocational adjustment trainer creates and facilitates a training curriculum of at least 20 hours, with various instructional approaches that include the nine modules listed below with their subjects, and journaling and extension activities:

#### Module One: Exploring Careers

The vocational adjustment trainer and the customer use either the O\*Net, CareerOneStop, Texas Careers, Occupational Outlook Handbook, or other similar tools to complete career exploration activities.

In the exploration, the vocational adjustment trainer and the customer include industry and occupation information that identifies:

* description or video of the occupation;
* job duties and responsibilities;
* work environments;
* knowledge, skills, and abilities related to occupation;
* education and training requirements;
* pay;
* projection for occupational growth; and
* similar occupations.

#### Module Two: Completion of the VR1850, Employment Data Sheet or equivalent

* Demographics
* Arrest and conviction history, if any
* Paid work history
* Volunteer history
* References
* Employment skills
* Career objectives
* Training history
* Occupational license or certification
* High school and GED information
* College education history

#### Module Three: Résumé Training

* Identification of different types and purposes of résumés
* Collect résumé contents, such as education, work experience, credentials, and achievements that are used to apply for jobs
* Completed résumés that are tailored for the customer's employment goal
* How to create a résumé for specific jobs

#### Module Four: Job Applications Training

* Identification of job application process for paper, website, and kiosk applications
* How to identify appropriate responses to questions on job applications
* How to write clear descriptive responses to questions, avoiding spelling and grammatical errors in an application
* Identification of strategies to address employment barriers demonstrated by the customer
* Successful completion of paper, website, and kiosk job applications

#### Module Five: Job References and Written Correspondence Training

* Purpose of professional and personal employment references
* How and when to request a person to be a professional and/or personal employment reference
* How and when to provide professional and personal employment references to potential employers
* How references will be used for background verifications
* Using effective written correspondence when job searching
* How to write cover letters for applications and résumés
* How to write thank-you letters related to employer correspondence, meetings, or interviews
* How to use and write email correspondence during the job search
* How to use and write written correspondence sent via the US Postal Service

#### Module Six: Interview Training

* Purpose of interview process
* Types and purpose of interviews, for example, screening, telephone, panel and/or group, behaviorally based, case, situational, and technical
* Creation of a 30–60 second "elevator speech" that summarizes why the customer is a good candidate for the job
* Delivery of the "elevator speech"
* How to research businesses and positions before an interview
* Identifying and answering typical interview questions asked by the business for the industry of the customer's employment goals
* Identifying questions to ask the business when interviewing
* Identifying and responding to questions related to protected classes and disclosure
* How to request assistance (to advocate for oneself), including disability etiquette
* How to respond to complicated questions addressing such employment barriers as gaps in work history, criminal background history, limited work experience, and accommodation needs
* Personal presentation for interviews such as grooming, dress, and manners
* Completing and critiquing at least two video-recorded mock interviews

Note: The VR counselor may request to review the recorded mock interview

#### Module Seven: Pre-Employment Testing Training

* Purpose of aptitude, skills, and literacy testing and how the testing is conducted
* Purpose of personality testing and how the testing is conducted
* Purpose of physical ability testing that measures an applicant's ability to perform tasks and physical functions of the job
* Purpose of drug testing and how the testing is conducted
* Accompanying the customer, as applicable, to preemployment testing if it is required for a job

#### Module Eight: Job Searching Training

* How to research the needs of businesses that are related to the customer's employment goals
* How to use job websites and employer job boards to search for jobs related to the customer's employment goals
* How to network with individuals who might know of an unposted employment opportunity
* How to register for and use WorkInTexas.com to search for jobs

#### Module Nine: Preparing for the First Day of Work

* Identification of the customer's accommodation needs that improve performance in the work setting
* How and when to request accommodations
* How to secure transportation to work site
* Appropriate personal appearance necessary for the position (dress, hygiene, and manners)
* Securing all documents necessary to "on board" the first day on the job
* Securing and demonstrating use of necessary items such as uniform and alarm clock
* How to communicate individual needs to an employer
* Expected behavior when working at the job site

Non-bundled and Bundled Job Placement services may be purchased after the completion of VAT Job Search Training without a reduction payment, for students and youth with disabilities.

### 13.11.2 Process and Procedures

An employment service provider will receive a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, along with an SA and special directions related to the delivery of services, including information about the customer that is needed to individualize the curriculum.

The vocational adjustment trainer is responsible for:

* preparing the curriculum and lesson plans to meet the VAT Job Search Training curriculum Service Description;
* facilitating and documenting the 20-hour training curriculum that includes:
* the eight modules in the VAT Job Search Training Curriculum Service Description;
* a minimum of one extension activity; and
* journaling activities offered throughout the training;
* completing VR3126, VAT Job Search Training; and
* maintaining attendance records, curriculum, lesson plans, and documentation as proof required training topics were completed and staff ratios were maintained.

All curricula and attendance records must be available for review by VR staff upon request.

### 13.11.3 VAT Job Search Training—for Pre-Employment Transition Outcomes Required for Payment

The vocational adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms the information required on the VR3126, VAT Job Search Training SA, including evidence that:

* training was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services;
* training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one trainer to no more than six customers;
* attendance records indicate a minimum of 20 hours of training;
* the customer's training included:
* eight required modules outlined in the curriculum;
* one required extension activity; and
* journaling activities were offered;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* various instructional approaches were used to meet the customer's learning styles;
* all supplies and resources were provided; and
* customer satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on the VR3126, VAT Job Search Training, or by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment will not be made if the customer's excused absence, unexcused absence, or holiday results in failure to attend the minimum number of required training hours.

Payment for the VAT Job Search Training is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3126, VAT Job Search Training; and
* invoice.

## 13.12 VAT Disability Disclosure Training

### 13.12.1 VAT Disability Disclosure Training Service Description

VAT Disability Disclosure Training provides information to customers to help them make informed, beneficial decisions about disclosing their disability and about their educational, employment, and social lives.

This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

The 411 on Disability Disclosure Workbook curriculum (PDF) consists of the eight units listed below:

#### Unit 1 Self-Determination—The Big Picture

Introduction to the process and value of self-determination.

Required activities:

* Just What Do You Know About Yourself and Your Disability?
* Self-Determined Short-Term Goals

#### Unit 2 Disclosure—What Is It and Why Is It So Important?

Introduction to the concepts of disclosure.

Required activity:

* Describing Your Disability, Disability Needs, Skills, and Abilities

#### Unit 3 Weighing the Advantages and Disadvantages of Disclosure

Required activities:

* Employment Scenario
* Postsecondary Education Scenario
* Social Setting Scenario
* Famous People Matching

#### Unit 4 Rights and Responsibilities under the Law

Overview of the system and protective laws as one leaves high school and enters the adult world. Includes an overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act and how it pertains to an individual with a disability.

Required activities:

* Defining Your Disability
* Recognizing Discrimination
* Collage Activity
* Identifying Adult Service Providers and Eligibility Criteria

#### Unit 5 Accommodations

Introduction to the concept of accommodations and to the identification of accommodations that a customer might need.

Required activities:

* Job Accommodation Network (JAN) found at http://askjan.org/
* Situations and Solutions at School and Work

#### Unit 6 Postsecondary Disclosure—Why, When, What, to Whom, and How

Overview of the need to disclose personal information to receive reasonable accommodations in higher education, in a technical school, and in an adult education center.

Required activities:

* Course for Disclosure Examples
* Exploring Disability Support Services
* My Practice Script

#### Unit 7 Disclosure on the Job—Why, When, What, to Whom, and How

Overview of the need to disclose personal information to receive a reasonable accommodation in a work setting.

Required activities:

* Course for the Disclosure Examples
* My Practice Script
* Visit Your Local One-Stop Career Center

#### Unit 8 Disclosure in Social and Community Settings—Why, When, What, to Whom, and How

Explores the needs and circumstances that pertain to the customer's disclosure of disability information to community members and friends in social situations.

Required activities:

* Course for the Disclosure Examples
* My Practice Script

Note: The training must be at least 20 hours and include all 21 activities in the [411 on Disability Disclosure workbook](https://youth.gov/shared-resources/411-disability-disclosure-workbook-youth-disabilities), with a minimum of three extension activities, and journaling activities offered throughout the training.

### 13.12.2 Process and Procedures

An employment service provider receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, along with an SA and directions for the delivery of services, including the information about the customer that is needed to individualize the curriculum.

The vocational adjustment trainer is responsible for:

* facilitating and documenting the 20 hours training curriculum that includes
* facilitating eight units and the 21 activities in the curriculum found at [http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/411\_Disability\_Disclosure\_complete.pdf](https://youth.gov/shared-resources/411-disability-disclosure-workbook-youth-disabilities);
* facilitating a minimum of three extension activities in individual settings or group settings; and
* offering journaling activities;
* completing VR3132, VAT Disability Disclosure Training; and
* maintaining attendance records, lesson plans, and documentation as proof that required training topics were completed and staff ratios were maintained.

All lesson plans and attendance records must be available for review by VR staff upon request.

### 13.12.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The vocational adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms all the information required on the VR3132, VAT Disability Disclosure Training, and SA, including evidence that:

* training was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services;
* training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one trainer to no more than six customers;
* attendance records indicate a minimum of 20 hours of training;
* the customer's training included:
  + eight required units and 21 activities outlined in the curriculum;
  + three required extension activities; and
  + journaling activities;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* various instructional approaches were used to meet the customer's learning styles;
* all supplies and resources were provided; and
* customer satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on the VR3132, VAT Disability Disclosure Training, by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment will not be made if the customer's excused absence, unexcused absence, or holiday results in failure to attend the minimum number of required training hours.

Payment for the VAT Disability Disclosure Training is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3132, VAT Disability Disclosure Training; and
* invoice.

## 13.13 VAT Money Smart—A Financial Education Training

### 13.13.1 VAT Money Smart—A Financial Education Training Service Description

[Money Smart—A Financial Education Program](https://www.fdic.gov/resources/consumers/money-smart/index.html) curriculum developed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) teaches customers basic behaviors about responsible handling of money and finances, including how to create positive relationships with financial institutions.

The instructor-led curriculum consists of 14 training modules that delivers unbiased, relevant, and accurate financial education. The instructor will use the Instructor Guide, PowerPoint Slides and the Participant Guide covering all modules.

The Vocational Adjustment Trainer should use various teaching and training strategies when implementing the prescribed curriculum to address accommodation and learning needs of each participant in a class. This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. Refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

Below is the Money Smart—A Financial Education Program curriculum for adults:

* Module 1: Your Money Values and Influences
* Module 2: You Can Bank On It
* Module 3: Your Income and Expenses
* Module 4: Your Spending and Saving Plan
* Module 5: Your Savings
* Module 6: Credit Reports and Scores
* Module 7: Borrowing Basics
* Module 8: Managing Debt
* Module 9: Using Credit Cards
* Module 10: Building Your Financial Future
* Module 11: Protecting Your Identity and Other Assets
* Module 12: Making House Decisions
* Module 13: Buying a Home
* Module 14: Disasters-Financial Preparation and Recovery

The Instructor Guide, PowerPoint Slides and the Participant Guide can be found at [https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/adult.html](https://www.fdic.gov/resources/consumers/money-smart/index.html). The instructor guide, PowerPoint slides and participant guide are used to facilitate the 14 modules of Money Smart.

The VAT Money Smart—for Adults must be at least 30 hours and includes all 14 modules, one extension activity, and journaling activities offered throughout the training. VAT Money Smart—for Adults can be facilitated to both Pre-ETS and adult VR customers.

### 13.13.2 Process and Procedures

An employment service provider receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, along with an SA and special directions related to the delivery of services, including information about the customer needed to individualize the curriculum.

The vocational adjustment trainer is responsible for facilitating the 30-hour training curriculum that includes:

* the 14 modules listed in the Service Description section;
* a minimum of one extension activity; and
* journaling activities offered throughout the training;
* completing VR3133, VAT: Money Smart—A Financial Education Training; and
* maintaining class attendance records, lesson plans, and documentation as proof that required training topics were completed and staff ratios were maintained.

All lesson plans and class attendance records must be available for review by VR staff upon request.

### 13.13.3 VAT Money Smart—A Financial Education Training Outcomes Required for Payment

The vocational adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms all the information required on the VR3133, VAT: Money Smart—A Financial Education Training, and SA, including evidence that:

* training was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services;
* training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one trainer to no more than six customers;
* attendance records document a minimum of 30 hours of training;
* the customer's training included:
  + fourteen required modules outlined in the curriculum;
  + one required extension activity; and
  + journaling activities;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* various instructional approaches were used to meet the customer's learning style;
* all supplies and resources were provided; and
* customer satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on the VR3133, VAT: Money Smart—A Financial Education Training, or by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment will not be made if the customer's excused absence, unexcused absence, or holiday results in failure to attend the minimum number of required training hours.

Payment for the VAT: Money Smart—A Financial Education Training is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3133, VAT: Money Smart—A Financial Education Training; and
* invoice.

## 13.14 VAT Public Transportation Training

### 13.14.1 VAT Public Transportation Training Service Description

VAT Public Transportation Training teaches customers essential skills for traveling by the customer's preferred mode of public transportation in the customer's community. Destinations can include school, work sites, and an independent living center. This service cannot be provided remotely.

The vocational adjustment trainer creates and facilitates the training curriculum and lesson plans with various instructional approaches that include, but are not limited to:

* public transportation options available in the customer's community, including fixed bus routes, paratransit, taxi, rideshare, streetcar, rail transport, and rural transportation options;
* how to obtain passes and tickets;
* how to use schedules and route maps;
* how to contact public transportation providers (bus, rideshare, taxi);
* how to plan a trip using public transportation options (bus, rideshare, taxi);
* how to travel safely as a pedestrian when using transportation options;
* how to wait for transportation;
* how to board and disembark (including use of wheelchair lifts as appropriate);
* how to pay a fare;
* how to use signal cords;
* how to navigate aisles, stairs, and seats;
* how to listen for announcements of stops;
* how to use landmarks to assist with travel;
* how to communicate effectively with drivers and other riders;
* how to respond when a problem occurs (for example, no curb ramp, blocked entrance, or late buses);
* how to problem-solve a solution if lost or confused during travel; and
* how to make bus connections.

The training is provided on an hourly basis and includes the topics listed above. Throughout the training time, a minimum of one extension activity must be completed and journaling activities must be offered.

Resources that might be helpful in developing the curriculum include training manuals, curricula, and resources offered by local transportation authorities.

### 13.14.2 Process and Procedures

An employment service provider receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services and an SA and special directions related to the delivery of the services, including information about the customer needed to individualize the curriculum.

The vocational adjustment trainer is responsible for:

* preparing the curriculum to meet the VAT Transportation Training Service Description;
* facilitating and documenting the training curriculum that includes:
* the topics listed in the Service Description;
* a minimum of one extension activity; and
* journaling activities offered throughout the training;
* completing VR3134, VAT Public Transportation Training; and
* maintaining attendance records, curriculum, lesson plans, and documentation as proof that required training topics were completed and staff ratios were maintained.

All curricula and attendance records must be available for review by VR staff upon request.

### 13.14.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The vocational adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms all information required on the VR3134, VAT Public Transportation Training, and SA, including evidence that:

* training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one trainer to four customers;
* the customer's training included:
* curriculum topics;
* one required extension activity; and
* journaling activities;
* the customer's skill level was rated for the curriculum topics;
* the progress log includes all required elements listed on the VR3134, including a description of the services provided and the customer's performance of skills;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* the trainer used instructional approaches that met the customer's learning styles and preferences;
* all supplies and resources were provided so the customer could participate in the training; and
* customer satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on the VR3134 or by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

VR does not pay fees related to excused absences, unexcused absences, or holidays.

Payment for the VAT Public Transportation Training is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3134, VAT Public Transportation Training; and
* invoice.

## 13.15 VAT Specialized Evaluation

### 13.15.1 VAT Specialized Evaluation Service Description

VAT Specialized Evaluation is designed to evaluate and identify a lack of skills that impede the customer's ability to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment.

A VAT Specialized Evaluation should be purchased for a customer only when another structured VAT cannot meet the customer's needs. Services included in the training plan should be skills:

* that are not taught in another VAT service; or
* that the customer failed to master in previous training.

A justification for the VAT Specialized Evaluation service that includes the skills to be addressed must be on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services.

Examples of skills addressed during an evaluation include, but are not limited to:

* balancing life and work;
* career exploration;
* child care management;
* community resources;
* conflict resolution;
* daily living skills;
* decision-making;
* disability awareness;
* effective communication;
* financial management;
* goal setting;
* grooming and hygiene;
* household management;
* housing opportunity;
* independent living;
* interpersonal communication;
* leadership; and
* stress management.

The vocational adjustment trainer evaluates the customer for up to five days and for no more than 10 hours and completes the VR3135A, Vocational Adjustment Training Specialized Evaluation.

This service can be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

The VAT Specialized Evaluation is purchased once for each customer. The vocational adjustment trainer must conduct the VAT Specialized Evaluation and develop the training plan before VAT-Specialized (VAT-S) is provided.

### 13.15.2 Process and Procedure

An employment service provider receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, and an SA that identifies the skills to be evaluated and addressed in the VAT-S Evaluation. The vocational adjustment trainer evaluates the skills listed in the referral and SA.

Vocational adjustment trainer job responsibilities during the evaluation are to:

* identify impediments to employment based on needs listed in the referral and/or existing records, observations by the trainer, and/or obtained in conversations with the VR counselor, customer, family members, and others;
* develop (in coordination with the customer and the VR counselor) a VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training Specialized Training Plan for the customer, including measurable goals, objectives, and timelines; and
* review the customer's strengths, challenges, training plan, and recommendations with the customer.

The vocational adjustment trainer, the customer, and the VR counselor must sign the original and updated VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan to document understanding and agreement of the training plan.

Any meeting related to the training plan between customer, provider, customer’s circle of supports and VR staff may be conducted remotely. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

No training may be provided until an SA for Specialized Vocational Adjustment Training is issued after the completion of the VAT-S Evaluation and the VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan is approved by the VR counselor.

### 13.15.3 VAT Specialized Evaluation Outcomes Required for Payment

For payment, the vocational adjustment trainer who completed the evaluation documents in descriptive terms all information required by the Service Description on the VR3136, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Report, at the end of the evaluation period, demonstrating evidence that:

* training was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services;
* attendance was recorded and includes the total number of hours the customer participated in the evaluation;
* the evaluation was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to no more than six consumers;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* the customer's performance, skills, and needs were evaluated and results summarized;
* goals and objectives are measurable and established for all skills to be addressed;
* a projected achievement date is established for each goal;
* a projected number of training hours is established for each goal; and
* the customer's satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP was verified by customer's signature on the VR3136, or by VR staff member’s contact with the customer.

The vocational adjustment trainer, customer, and VR counselor signs the original and updated VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan to document agreement of the training plan. No VAT-S is authorized until the VR counselor approves the VR3135B and an SA is received. For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

VR does not pay any fees related to excused absences, unexcused absences, or holidays.

Payment for the Vocational Adjustment Training Evaluation is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3136, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Report; and
* invoice.

## 13.16 Vocational Adjustment Training Specialized

### 13.16.1 Vocational Adjustment Training Specialized Service Description

VAT-S services are designed to teach skills and knowledge to reduce impediments to success in obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment. VR sponsors no more than 25 hours per week of VAT-S.

VAT Specialized Training should be purchased for a customer only when another structured VAT cannot meet the customer's needs. Services included in the training plan should be skills that are not taught in another VAT service or skills the customer failed to master in previous training.

This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

A justification of the need to reinforce skills already taught in other VAT services should be indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, and include a description of the skills that will be taught.

All VAT-S services are based on goals outlined on the VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan. The number of VAT-S hours a customer receives will be based on the measurable goals included in the VR3135B and the SA.

Examples of skills addressed during training include:

* balancing life and work;
* career exploration;
* child care management;
* community resources;
* conflict resolution;
* daily living skills;
* decision-making;
* disability awareness;
* effective communication;
* financial management;
* goal setting;
* grooming and hygiene;
* household management;
* housing opportunity;
* independent living;
* interpersonal communication;
* leadership; and
* stress management.

All VAT-S instructions must be outlined in a lesson plan. VR may request at any time to review lessons plans used with customers.

A lesson plan must include:

* a description of skills being taught or reinforced; and
* resources used in the instruction (for example, curriculum, activities, guest speakers, books, films, and field trips).

All supplies and resources for the training are provided by the provider at no cost to the customer.

### 13.16.2 Process and Procedures

VAT-S is provided to the customer as defined in the VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan and authorized by service authorizations. VAT-S hours will be authorized per week for up to a month (four weeks or 28 days) at a time after the VAT trainer, customer, and the VR counselor have developed and agreed to the VR3135B. The VAT trainer, customer, and VR counselor are jointly involved in planning and monitoring the service goals and objectives identified on the VR3135B.

Goals and objectives can be updated, added, or changed throughout the training cycle with the submission and approval by the VR counselor of a new VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan.

The VAT trainer, customer, and VR counselor review the VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan at least every four weeks (28 days) to:

* evaluate the customer's progress toward the goals;
* determine whether the VR3135B should be updated before an SA is issued to approve additional hours; and/or
* determine that the customer's Specialized Vocational Adjustment Training is completed.

A summary of all communication with VR staff as well as notations that the VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan was updated must be written in the Additional Comments section of the VR3136, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Report.

If the VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan is updated, the VAT trainer, customer, and VR counselor must sign the updated VR3135B to document agreement of the updated training plan. VAT is not authorized until the VR counselor approves the updated VR3135B. The VAT trainer must complete the VR3136 at least every four weeks (28 days).

Any meeting related to the training plan between customer, provider, customer’s circle of supports and VR-Staff may be conducted remotely.  For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

Vocational adjustment trainer job responsibilities are to:

* provide written proof by means of attendance records that are made available upon request that the ratio of customers to trainer is maintained;
* monitor the VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan to determine progress toward identified goals;
* determine whether the VR3135B should be updated;
* report to the VR counselor on customer progress toward planned goals and objectives on the VR3136, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Report; and
* when applicable, coordinate VAT-S with other services such as WAT or job placement services.

### 13.16.3 Vocational Adjustment Training Specialized Outcomes Required for Payment

To be paid, the vocational adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms at least every four weeks (28 days) all information required on the VR3136, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Report and SA, including evidence that:

* training was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services;
* training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to no more than six customers;
* the customer's attendance and the total number of hours the customer participated in the training were recorded;
* goals and objectives were addressed in training and recorded on the VR3136, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Report, and are included on the most recently approved VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan;
* the customer's performance and skills was documented for the reporting period;
* the status, including a narrative description, for each goal and objective is recorded on the most recently approved VR3136;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
* communications made with the VR counselor and customer, and notation of updates made to the VR3136, are documented in the Additional Comments section; and
* the customer's satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on VR3136 or by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

VR does not pay fees related to excused absences, unexcused absences, or holidays.

Payment for VAT is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3136, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Report;
* VR3135B, Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan updated, as applicable; and
* invoice.

## 13.17 VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training

### 13.17.1 VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training Service Description

The Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training curriculum helps customers understand postsecondary education, financial aid, and the services that are available to support students in postsecondary education and training. The Vocational Adjustment trainer creates and facilitates a training curriculum of at least 10 hours with various instructional approaches that include the four modules listed below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Modules** | **Module Description** |
| Explore Postsecondary Programs | Customers will understand what types of postsecondary education and training are available. |
| Disability Support Services in Postsecondary Programs | Customers will understand the differences between high school and college accommodations, and what services are available to support students in postsecondary education and training. Customers will demonstrate an understanding of:   * common college accommodations; * procedures to request accommodations; * disability documentation requirements; and * differences between accommodations in high school and those in postsecondary environments. |
| Skills to Succeed | Customers can identify their transferable skills and understand what skills are important for college readiness and success. |
| Applying to and Paying for College | Customers will understand the process of applying to and paying for college, including how to:   * access postsecondary education and training; * pay for college; * select appropriate types of financial aid; * stay aware of important timelines; and * apply to college and training programs. |

The training curriculum must include the following activities to allow the customer to understand personal work personalities, interests, values, and transferable skills:

* Self-assessment(s)
* Individual and group discussions
* Journaling activities
* One extension activity

Resources that might be helpful in the development of the curriculum include the following:

* NTACT Resources: Postsecondary Education, [Postsecondary Education - NTACT:C (transitionta.org)](https://transitionta.org/topics/postsecondary-education/)
* Get Ready for College: A Resource for Teens with Disabilities, <https://centerontransition.org/getReady>—Self-paced virtual course for high school students with disabilities who are interested in college
* National Center for College Students with Disabilities Clearinghouse, [Future College Students | National Center for College Students with Disabilities (umn.edu)](https://nccsd.ici.umn.edu/resources/audience/prospective-college-students)
* [Home | Think College](https://thinkcollege.net/)—Resource for developing, expanding, and improving inclusive higher education options for individuals with intellectual disabilities
* [Explore Education - Texas Career Check](https://texascareercheck.com/Home/ExploreEducation)
* [College Disability Services: 7 Things Parents Should Know | Understood](https://www.understood.org/en/articles/7-things-to-know-about-college-disability-services)

This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

### 13.17.2 Process and Procedure

An employment service provider receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, along with a SA and special directions related to service delivery, including customer information necessary to individualize the curriculum.

The vocational adjustment trainer is responsible for:

* preparing the curriculum and lesson plans to meet the VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training Service Description;
* facilitating and documenting the 10-hour training curriculum that includes:
  + the four modules in the Service Description;
  + a minimum of one extension activity;
  + journaling activities offered throughout the training; and
  + completion of the VR3139, VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training; and
* maintaining attendance records, the curriculum, lesson plans, and documentation as proof that required training topics were completed and staff ratios were maintained.

All lesson plans and attendance records must be available for VR staff to review upon request.

### 13.17.3 VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training Outcomes Required for Payment

The vocational adjustment trainer documents in descriptive terms all information required on the VR3139, VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training, including evidence that:

* training was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services;
* the training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to six customers;
* the attendance records show a minimum of 10 hours of training;
* the customer's training included:
  + four required modules outlined in the curriculum;
  + one required extension activity; and
  + journaling activities;
* all necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer for successful participation in the training;
* various instructional approaches were used to meet the customer's learning style;
* all supplies and resources were provided; and
* customer satisfaction and service delivery, as described in the VR-SFP was verified by the customer's signature on the VR3139, VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training, or by VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment will not be made if the customer's excused absence, unexcused absence, or holiday results in failure to attend the minimum number of required training hours.

Payment for VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3139, VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training; and
* invoice.

## 13.18 Work Readiness Service Fees

A provider cannot collect money from a VR customer or the customer's family for any service charged in excess of VR fees. If VR and another resource are paying for a service for a customer, the total payment must not exceed the fee specified in the VR Standards for Providers manual.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Personal-Social Adjustment Training (PSAT)** | **Unit Rate** | **Comments** |
| PSAT Evaluation | $21.00 per hour | * The evaluation period is up to five days and may be for no more than 10 hours. * Evaluation is purchased one time for any customer. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. * There must be one trainer to no more than six customers without an aide or one trainer and one aide to no more than 10 customers. |
| PSAT | $21.00 per hour | * [VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan](https://twc.texas.gov/vocational-rehabilitation-service-forms), must be approved by the VR counselor before training. * No more than 20 hours of service per week are permitted. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. * There must be one trainer to no more than six customers without an aide or one trainer and one aide to no more than 10 customers. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT)** | **Unit Rate** | **Comments** |
| VAT Explores the "You" in Work | $420.00 | * There may be no more than six customers in a group. * Training must be at least 10 hours. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. |
| VAT Soft Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success | $839.00 | * There may be more than six customers in a group. * Training must be at least 20 hours. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. |
| VAT Soft Skills for Work Success | $629.00 | * There may be no more than six customers in a group. * Training must be at least 13 hours. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. |
| VAT Entering the World of Work | $420.00 | * There may be no more than six customers in a group. * Training must be at least 10 hours. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. |
| VAT Job Search Training | $839.00 | Training for Pre-ETS customers only   * There may be no more than six customers in a group; available before ETS (Employment Training Services) only. * Training must be at least 20 hours. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. |
| VAT Disability Disclosure | $839.00 | * There may be no more than six customers in a group. * Training must be at least 20 hours. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. |
| VAT Money Smart | $1,259.00 | * There may be no more than six customers in a group. * Training must be at least 30 hours. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. |
| VAT Public Transportation Training (Individual) | Negotiated up to $46.00 per hour | * There may be no more than four customers to one trainer. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. * This service cannot be provided remotely. |
| VAT Public Transportation Training (Group) | Negotiated up to $23.00 per hour, per customer | * There may be no more than four customers in a group. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. * This service cannot be provided remotely. |
| VAT Specialized Evaluation | $21.00 per hour | * The evaluation period is up to five days and may be no more than 10 hours. * There may be no more than six customers in a group. * Evaluation is purchased one time per customer. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. |
| VAT Specialized | $21.00 per hour | * The VR counselor must approve [VR3135B, Vocational Training, Specialized Training Plan](https://twc.texas.gov/vocational-rehabilitation-service-forms) before the training. * There may be no more than six individuals in a group. * The number of hours provided may not be greater than the amount approved on the VR3135B. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. |
| VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training | $420.00 | * There may be no more than six customers in a group. * Training must be at least 10 hours. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Work Adjustment Training (WAT)** | **Unit Rate** | **Comments** |
| Work Adjustment Evaluation | $9.00 per hour | * The evaluation period is up to 10 days and may be no more than 25 hours. * The evaluation may be purchased only once. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. * This service cannot be provided remotely. * There must be one trainer to no more than six customers without an aide, or one trainer and one aide with no more than 10 customers. |
| Work Adjustment Training | $9.00 per hour | * The VR counselor must approve [VR3137B, Personal Social Adjustment and Work Adjustment Training Plan](https://twc.texas.gov/vocational-rehabilitation-service-forms) before the training. * A minimum of 25 hours must be offered per week. * VR pays for no more than 25 hours per week per customer. * VR does not pay for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences. * This service cannot be provided remotely. * There must be one trainer to no more than six customers without an aide or one trainer and one aide to no more than 10 customers. |

Premium Services may be available for some Work Readiness Services. Premium Services are paid after all deliverables for the service have been made. For more information, refer to [Chapter 20: Premiums](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-20).

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 14: Work Experience Services

Contract Type: Employment Service

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 14.1 Overview of Work Experience Services

Work Experience services allow a customer to be placed at a business or agency within the community to learn skills for long-term, competitive, integrated employment. These entities are referred to as "Work Experience sites." Work Experience services are intended to be short term (12 or fewer weeks) and part-time. Work Experience can take place in a volunteer, internship, or temporary short-term paid-work setting.

Work Experience services are available for students or youth with disabilities and basic Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) customers and may be used as trial work to determine a customer’s eligibility for VR.

Work Experience may assist in:

* determining if a customer is ready for competitive, integrated employment;
* evaluating if, after a change in the customer’s abilities or newly acquired vocational barriers, the customer continues to have the capacity to work in a particular field;
* exploring a customer's career options;
* developing skills to increase a customer's employability; and/or
* giving a customer additional experience related to vocational training or a degree.

Work Experience services provide an opportunity for customers to:

* learn and experience work culture;
* identify career interests;
* explore potential career goals;
* identify on-the-job support needs;
* develop employability skills and good work habits;
* gain an understanding of employer expectations;
* build self-confidence;
* develop soft and hard skills;
* gain work experience and competencies in a vocation;
* develop an understanding of the workplace; and/or
* gain the connection between working and earning.

A customer must have valid, unexpired employment authorization documents to participate in Work Experience services.

Texas Workforce Solutions VR (TWS-VR) can pay the wages for customers participating in a Paid Work Experience, but a provider should not offer this option when negotiating a Work Experience Placement without prior written approval on the VR1601, Work Experience Plan and Placement Report. A VR3142, Worksite Agreement for Wage Services – WorkQuest, between the Work Experience site and TWS-VR must be signed by the Work Experience site when TWS-VR sponsors the payment of the customer’s wage and associated costs, including workers’ compensation during the participation in a Work Experience Placement.

This chapter defines two services that are included in Work Experience:

* Work Experience Placement (section 14.3): Assists the customer in securing and setting up an appropriate Work Experience site; and
* Work Experience Training (section 14.4): Provides:
  + monitoring to ensure the customer meets the Work Experience site’s expectations and has supports and accommodations necessary to be successful; and/or
  + training at the Work Experience site.

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor is not required to purchase Work Experience Placement before authorizing Work Experience Training. However, VR may place the customer and then purchase Work Experience Training, when applicable.

VR will not pay any provider for Job Placement services, including Supported Employment services, if a customer is hired into permanent employment by the Work Experience site during or after Work Experience services. If necessary, job skills training can be purchased when the customer begins a permanent employment placement.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 14.5 Work Experience Service Fees.

Premiums may be available for Work Experience services. Premiums are paid after all deliverables for the service have been achieved. For more information about premiums, see Chapter 20: Premiums.

Any request to change a Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment in this chapter must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Work Experience Services, before the change is implemented. The approved VR3472 must be maintained in the provider’s customer case file. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

## 14.2 Staff Qualifications

Before any services are provided to customers, the Employment Service Provider's (ESP) director must approve the VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form, completed by each staff member, and submit the approved forms to the provider's assigned VR regional quality assurance program specialist or regional program support specialist. The VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form, must document qualifications and provide evidence of meeting all qualifications, such as transcripts, diplomas, reference letters, credentials, or licenses.

Staff qualifications for each service are described below. University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Suitable Employment (UNTWISE) Texas credential information can be gained at <https://wise.unt.edu/crptraining>.

A non-credentialed provider staff member can provide services to a VR customer only when the Temporary Waiver of Employment Services Credential Standards are followed. For more information, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 3: Basic Standards, 3.4.5 Temporary Waiver of Staff Qualifications.

The Work Experience specialist must meet the qualifications and credentials of a job placement specialist.

The Work Experience trainer must meet the qualifications and credentials of a job skills trainer.

## 14.3 Work Experience Placement

### 14.3.1 Work Experience Placement Service Description

The Work Experience specialist assists the customer in the process of locating and setting up a Work Experience site that meets the criteria documented on the VR1601, Work Experience Plan and Placement Report.

The VR counselor will indicate on VR1601 how services may be provided, either in person only or remotely and in person. The method services are delivered may be updated by the counselor using the VR1601 or the service authorization.

In person services may be provided at or away from the work site. Remote services must follow VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

A planning meeting is held with the VR counselor, customer, Work Experience specialist, and any circle of supports to complete the VR1601, Work Experience Plan and Placement Report. This meeting may be conducted remotely.

Work Experience Placement must meet the following criteria outlined on the VR1601, Work Experience Plan and Placement Report:

* One six-digit Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code listed in the work experience goals section of the form
* 100 percent of the nonnegotiable work experience conditions
* 50 percent or more of the negotiable work experience conditions
* Service delivered as indicated in the Service Delivery section (in person only or remotely and in person) or service authorization

A customer's Work Experience Placement must be at a site where the environment is considered integrated, unless otherwise indicated on the VR1601, to meet the customer's individual needs. When the customer is paid a wage, the wage must be competitive. For the federal definition of competitive wages, see Competitive Integrated Employment.

While securing and setting up a Work Experience Placement for the customer, the Work Experience specialist, as applicable, may perform and/or assist the customer with:

* researching and identifying potential Work Experience sites;
* completing any tasks necessary to secure the Work Experience site such as:
  + attending classes or meetings;
  + completing applications;
  + obtaining references;
  + interviewing;
  + obtaining criminal background checks;
  + obtaining health checks;
  + completing testing (personality, drug, and skills);
  + identifying accommodation needs;
  + assisting the customer with disability disclosure when applicable; and
* the steps necessary to follow up on potential Work Experience site or opportunities.

Once a Work Experience site has been secured, the Work Experience specialist assists the customer with the arrangement of transportation to get to and from the work site.

During the first five shifts or days, for no more than five total hours, the Work Experience specialist accompanies the customer to the work site and may perform and/or assist:

* the customer with:
  + advocating for the customer to receive the opportunity to gain skills, support, and mentoring, when necessary, to foster a positive outcome at the Work Experience site;
  + orientation to workplace roles and responsibilities;
  + understanding expectations related to work performance, behavior, and social interactions at the Work Experience site;
  + disability disclosure, setting up accommodations or support needs, including Work Experience training at the Work Experience site; and
  + understanding the purpose of the Work Experience trainer, when applicable, including trainer roles and responsibilities; and
* the employer by:
  + educating the Work Experience site and employees in disability-related issues, such as disability awareness, disability etiquette, the Americans with Disabilities Act, disability accommodations; and
  + educating the Work Experience site on the roles of the Work Experience trainer, when applicable.

When a Work Experience trainer is going to work with a customer, the Work Experience specialist works with the VR counselor, the customer, and the Work Experience site to identify goals to be addressed in the Work Experience training. When necessary, the Work Experience specialist and Work Experience trainer can work simultaneously with a customer for up to five hours. When the Work Experience Specialist is providing both the Work Experience Placement and Work Experience Training, they cannot bill time for both simultaneously. The Work Experience Placement should include the initial set-up of the work experience at the work experience site, and the Work Experience Training begins when the Work Experience trainer is addressing training goals on the VR1600, Work Experience Referral.

The Work Experience Placement is achieved after the customer completes five days or shifts at the Work Experience site.

Multiple Work Experience Placements for the same customer are allowed if they are necessary to meet the customer's goals. Each Work Experience Placement must aid in the development of soft and hard skills that the customer has not yet mastered and that will assist the customer with career exploration and development of work-readiness skills. A customer should not be placed in the same type of position more than once at the same Work Experience site. If a provider assists with multiple Work Experience Placements, a service authorization is issued for each Work Experience Placement after the VR1601 is completed.

A Work Experience Placement can be an internship, paid, or volunteer position. When a customer obtains a Work Experience Placement, it is the responsibility of the Work Experience site to determine, based on labor laws, whether the placement will be:

* volunteer;
* compensated or uncompensated internship; or
* short-term, temporary work paid by the Work Experiencer site or sponsored by TWS-VR.

Work Experience Placements are classified into three levels based on the O\*NET (Occupational Information Network) My Next Move Job Zones at <https://www.onetonline.org/find/zone>. The following is an overview of each level.

#### Entry Level

* Includes O\*NET's My Next Move Job Zones one and two
* Used for the following reasons:
  + To determine if the customer is ready for competitive, integrated employment
  + To explore possible career options for the customer; and/or
  + To develop skills to increase the customer's employability
* Customers typically have the following knowledge, experience, responsibilities, and level of supervision needs:
  + Little or no previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience
  + Some transferable skills or basic knowledge from experience
  + Knowledge of the tasks, duties, and responsibilities related to the position
  + Follows standard procedures and written instructions to accomplish assigned tasks
  + Work is routine and tasks are standardized and/or
  + Works under direct supervision
* Customers typically have a high school diploma or GED certificate
* Examples of positions can be found at [Job Zone One](https://www.onetonline.org/find/zone?z=1&g=Go) and [Job Zone Two](https://www.onetonline.org/find/zone?z=2&g=Go)
* Gross income earned by the customer will be $10.90 per hour

#### Intermediate Level

* Includes O\*NET's My Next Move Job Zone three
* Used for the following reasons:
  + To demonstrate skills and gain experience related to vocational training or an associate degree
  + To evaluate if a customer still has capacity to continue to work in a field due to acquired vocational barrier(s).
* Customers typically have the following knowledge, experience, responsibilities, and level of supervision needs:
  + Previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience (for example, completion of training program)
  + Demonstrates and applies the fundamental concepts, practices, and procedures of a particular field of specialization
  + Performs varied work that may be somewhat difficult; and/or
  + With minimum supervision, performs work that is somewhat difficult and requires limited responsibility
* Customers typically have completed an apprenticeship, have one or two years of vocational training (for example, a certificate program or on-the-job training), or have an associate degree
* Examples of positions can be found at [Job Zone Three](https://www.onetonline.org/find/zone?z=3&g=Go)
* Gross income earned by the customer will be $13.92 per hour

#### Advanced Level

* Includes O\*NET's My Next Move Job Zone four
* Used for the following reasons:
  + To demonstrate skills and gain experience related to a degree; and/or
  + To evaluate if a customer with vocational barriers still has the capacity to continue to work in a particular field
* Customers typically have the following knowledge, experience, responsibilities, and level of supervision needs:
  + Works with general supervision
  + Possesses and applies a broad knowledge of principles, practices, and procedures of a particular field of specialization to the completion of difficult assignments
  + Work responsibilities may be broad in nature; and/or
  + Competent in skills and may assist or teach others
* Customers typically have completed a four-year bachelor or higher degree
* Examples of positions can be found at [Job Zone Four](https://www.onetonline.org/find/zone?z=4&g=Go); and
* Gross income earned by the customer will be $20.32 per hour

The Work Experience specialist who is assisting the customer in gaining a Work Experience Placement should refer the Work Experience site to the following links if they have questions regarding how to classify the customer's work experience:

* For information on volunteering and federal labor law—[Volunteering and Federal Labor Law](https://webapps.dol.gov/elaws/whd/flsa/docs/volunteers.asp).
* For information on internship and the Federal Labor Act—[Internship and the Federal Labor Act](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/71-flsa-internships).

With volunteer positions, it is important the customer understands they will not be paid for their time.

With internships, it is important the customer understands what, if any, compensation they will receive by completing the internship.

With Paid Work Experience positions, it is important the customer understand that they will be paid by either:

* the Work Experience site; or
* TWS-VR, when approved by the VR counselor on the VR1601, Work Experience Plan and Placement Report.

TWS-VR can sponsor paid wages for a customer participating in a Paid Work Experience, but a provider cannot offer this option when negotiating a placement without prior written approval on the VR1601, Work Experience Plan and Placement Report.

When TWS-VR sponsors payment of a customer's wages and associated costs, including workers' compensation during the participation in a Work Experience Placement, the VR3142, Worksite Agreement for Wage Service provided - WorkQuest must be signed by the Work Experience site. The VR3142 indicates that the Work Experience site has agreed that TWS-VR can pay the customer for work performed at the business and that the Work Experience site will report the hours the customer works.  The Work Experience specialist or VR staff may gather the signed VR3142 from the Work Experience site.

VR cannot pay for a Work Experience Placement that is longer than 12 weeks unless there is a vocational need and it is approved by the VR counselor's supervisor. When a supervisor approves increasing the length of a Work Experience, a VR3472 is not required.

### 14.3.2 Process and Procedure

The provider receives the VR1600, Work Experience Referral, from the VR counselor. The referral must identify the date, time, and location for the Work Experience planning meeting.

Before any Work Experience Placement services are provided, a planning meeting must be held with the VR counselor, customer, and Work Experience specialist to complete the VR1601, Work Experience Plan and Placement Report, which outlines the criteria for the Work Experience Placement. The VR1601 will indicate if TWS-VR will sponsor wages and associated costs, including workers' compensation.

The Work Experience specialist assists the customer with securing a Work Experience Placement as described in section 14.3.1 Service Description. When applicable the Work Experience specialist assists in the arrangement of transportation for the customer to get to and from the work site, as well as obtaining the VR3142, Worksite Agreement for Wage Service provided - WorkQuest form signed by the employer.

After the Work Experience site has been secured, during the first five shifts/days for no more than five total hours of the work experience, the Work Experience specialist accompanies the customer to the work site to assist both the customer and the business in setting up the Work Experience, as described in section 14.3.1 Work Experience Placement Service Description.

The provider submits a complete and accurate VR1601, Work Experience Plan and Placement Report, and invoice after the customer works or volunteers five days or shifts at the Work Experience site. Once the form and invoice have been approved by the VR counselor, the invoice is paid.

### 14.3.3 Work Experience Placement Outcomes Required for Payment

The Work Experience specialist documents in descriptive terms the information required on the VR1601, Work Experience Plan and Placement Report, including:

* information describing the Work Experience site;
* evidence of how the Work Experience Placement was secured and that it meets the criteria established on the VR1601, including:
  + one six-digit SOC code listed in the Work Experience Goals section;
  + 100 percent of the nonnegotiable work experience conditions;
  + 50 percent or more of the negotiable work experience conditions; and
  + Services delivered as indicated in the Service Delivery section (in person only or remotely and in person) or as indicated on the service authorization.
* evidence that the customer has participated in the Work Experience Placement, being on-site, working, volunteering, or completing an internship for at least five days or shifts;
* evidence that the Work Experience specialist assisted the customer in securing the Work Experience site;
* evidence that the Work Experience specialist accompanied the customer to the Work Experience site during the first day(s), for no more that up to five hours total, to provide assistance, training, and support to both the customer and the Work Experience site;
* evidence that the Work Experience specialist identified and requested additional support from VR, such as Work Experience training, as necessary to ensure the customer's success; and
* evidence that a signed VR3142, Worksite Agreement for Wage Service provided - WorkQuest was obtained from the Work Experience site, when applicable.

The customer's satisfaction and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP can be verified by customer's signature on the VR1601 or by VR staff member’s contact with the customer. For information refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment for Work Experience Placement is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR1601, Work Experience Plan and Placement Report;
* VR3142, Worksite Agreement for Wage Services – WorkQuest from the Work Experience site, when applicable; and
* invoice.

## 14.4 Work Experience Training

### 14.4.1 Work Experience Training Service Description

Work Experience training services are provided by a Work Experience trainer when a customer needs:

* monitoring to ensure the customer is meeting expectations of the Work Experience site and has the supports and accommodations necessary to be successful; and/or
* more training and support than what is occurring at the Work Experience site.

Training provided by the Work Experience trainer can include:

* teaching skills;
* reinforcing skills;
* establishing and setting up accommodations and/or compensatory techniques to increase the customer's independence and ability to meet the Work Experience site's expectations; and
* monitoring to ensure the customer's and the employer's needs are being met.

All Work Experience Training is goal-focused, with the customer's goals and abilities documented on VR1600, Work Experience Referral and VR1604, Work Experience Training Report.

Work Experience trainers can also work with employers to address topics such as disability education, accommodations and advocacy.

Work Experience trainers should not interrupt daily business operations.

Work Experience Training should be used for temporary work, seasonal work, internships, and volunteer opportunities. Work Experience Training should not support the customer in a job that will be used to successfully close the VR case, unless the work experience site offers the customer permanent employment.

Work Experience Training provides training tailored to the needs of the customer in either one to one or group setting at or away from the work experience site (includes working from home). Work Experience trainers may first complete a job analysis to identify the work experience duties, processes, employer culture, followed by developing a specific plan as to how they can best train the customer to meet the employer's expectations. Training should allow the customer to receive immediate feedback, assistance, and follow-up as they are learning skills such as, but not limited to, work experience responsibilities and interpersonal communication, behavior management, or use of transportation resources. Work Experience Training should be provided through the least intrusive method possible. The amount of Work Experience Training is gradually reduced, when applicable, when the customer becomes better adjusted and more independent and no longer needs training support or monitoring. Training can be performed in a relatively informal way or with specific structured interventions covering topics such as:

* identifying accommodations and supports the employee can use to be successful, such as work experience work aids and natural supports;
* providing on-site training that reinforces the employer's expectations and procedures;
* supporting the customer in acclimating to the work experience site's culture and etiquette;
* addressing interpersonal skills necessary to be accepted as a worker at the work experience site and in related community contacts;
* facilitating communication between co-workers and supervisors;
* identifying cost effective assistive technology or other aides that will help the employee perform work experience functions;
* training natural support working with the customer to foster success at the work experience site; and/or
* addressing travel training and other issues related to maintaining the work experience.

There are times when providing Work Experience Training onsite may not be possible and/or preferred. A customer with a disability may not wish to have an onsite Work Experience trainer, for example, because they do not want to draw attention from fellow coworkers or be the subject of a stigmatizing belief of coworkers. At times, a work experience site may not be able to accommodate onsite Work Experience Training due to security requirements. When these situations occur, and onsite Work Experience Training is not ideal, remote work experience training may be a good solution.

The first Work Experience Training session must be held in person, at or away from the worksite, to evaluate the customer's and employer's training needs and to set-up the necessary equipment and software necessary to facilitate the remote service delivery.

VR1600, Work Experience Referral or the service authorization must indicate whether the Work Experience Training can be done as a combination of remote and in-person training for a customer or if the training should all be done in person. The counselor, customer, provider, and the employer are all be involved in the decision to allow remote Work Experience Training at a worksite. The business must agree to allow use of the technology, internet and/or devices to be used by the customer at the work experience site. The use of the technology, internet and/or devices should not exclude or stigmatize the customer. If the referral indicates remote Work Experience Training is to be provided when the customer is at the work experience site and the business does not allow for use of technology, internet and/or devices, the Work Experience trainer must notify the VR counselor to discuss the delivery of the training and receive a service authorization or an updated referral indicating how services can be delivered.

Any remote Work Experience Training should be able to address the following when it is associated with a customer's Work Experience Training goal(s):

* meet the support and communication needs of the customer;
* be suitable for the customer's work experience environment;
* should fit within the customer's work environment (can include telework environments);
* allow for "normal" work site routines without disruption;
* allow for observation of interpersonal interactions (verbal and non-verbal) between customer, co-worker and supervisors; and
* allow for training, use of natural supports and foster the customer's acceptance at the work experience site.

Examples of Work Experience Training using technology and applications on smart devices, tablets, or similar devices include:

* programming smart devices for To-Do lists, reminder alerts, or to identify a sequence of steps in a process;
* use a video camera and microphone to model new tasks, observe task demonstration, or communicate feedback;
* use video calls to communicate with the customer to provide assistance with problem solving any unexpected situations that arise at work.

Remote Work Experience Training can be facilitated using a computer-based training platform that allows for face-to-face and/or real time interaction and use video telecommunication services and software such as Video Relay Services or FaceTime.

TWC-VR does not allow use of non-video telecommunication or text messages to customers for training purposes.

Any remote training must be in compliance with VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery and VR-SFP 3.2.7 Confidentiality.

Work Experience Training occurs after Work Experience Placement services are secured, when necessary. Work Experience Training can be authorized when the customer has a Work Experience site:

* on his or her own;
* with the assistance of a teacher, friend, or family member;
* with the assistance of a Employment Services Provider through Work Experience Placement;
* through the Summer Earn and Learn program; or
* through other programs arranged by VR staff.

When necessary, the Work Experience trainer and the Work Experience specialist can simultaneously work with a customer for up to five hours.

VR cannot pay for a Work Experience Training longer than 12 weeks for each Work Experience Placement unless there is a vocational need and the additional training time is approved by a VR Supervisor.

### 14.4.2 Work Experience Training Process and Procedure

Work Experience training can be authorized for a customer based on the amount of assistance, supervision, and/or monitoring a customer needs to meet a Work Experience site's expectations. VR counselors determine when Work Experience training is needed and the number of hours to be included in the service authorization.

The VR counselor, with input from the customer, work site, and Work Experience trainer, identifies on the VR1600, Work Experience Referral or the service authorization comment line:

* the goals to be addressed with the customer; and
* how the Work Experience Training can be delivered (in person and/or a combination of remote and in-person training).

When additional goals are identified, the Work Experience trainer adds them to the VR1604, Work Experience Training Report. An updated service authorization may identify the method (in person, combination) Work Experience Training is to be provided when the customer's circumstances are different than what was anticipated when the referral was completed.

The Work Experience trainer provides the training as identified on the referral, service authorization and by the goals on the VR1600 and VR1604. The Work Experience trainer records the customer's abilities and challenges as well as observations and recommendations related to the Work Experience training goals on the VR1604, Work Experience Training Report. Only one Work Experience trainer can document on the VR1604. When a service authorization approves a premium to be purchased with the Work Experience Training, the applicable requirements outlined in VR-SFP Chapter 20: Premiums must be followed.

The provider must submit a complete and accurate VR1604, Work Experience Training Report, with the invoice. Once the form and invoice have been approved by the VR counselor, the invoice is paid.

### 14.4.3 Work Experience Training Outcomes Required for Payment

The Work Experience trainer must:

* address the goals on the VR1600, Work Experience Referral, and any additional goals or focus areas that may be necessary to meet a customer's individual needs;
* use structured intervention techniques or informally train a customer to implement the most effective and least intrusive methods at or away from worksite, in person or combination as indicated on the VR1600 or in the service authorization;

Note: the first Work Experience Training session must be held in person, at or away from the worksite, to evaluate the customer's and employer's training needs and to set up the necessary equipment and software necessary to facilitate the remote service delivery;

* provide training to help the customer learn the essential soft and hard skills of the work experience and/or the skills necessary to arrange and use transportation to get to and from the worksite;
* work with the customer, work site, and VR staff members to establish the support services, accommodations, compensatory techniques, and training necessary to address barriers and ensure successful employment for the customer;
* observe the customer to identify and solve potential problems related to the customer's employment success before the problem becomes an issue for the customer, worksite, or coworkers;
* monitor the customer's performance to ensure improvement in the customer's work experience performance; and
* gradually reduce the time spent with the customer at the Work Experience site when applicable, as the customer becomes better adjusted and more independent and no longer needs training support or monitoring.

For payment of Work Experience Training, the Work Experience trainer must do the following:

* Document in descriptive terms the information required on VR1604, Work Experience Training Report, including:
  + The Work Experience Training goals
    - as identified on VR1600, Work Experience Referral;
    - as identified on the service authorizations, when applicable; and
    - that emerged during the training, when applicable;
  + The method training was facilitated, individual or group in person or combination of in person and remote or service authorization;
  + The customer's progress for each training session, with each entry including:
    - date the service was provided (xx-xx-xx);
    - start time of session (x:xx a.m. or p.m.);
    - end time of session;
    - record the total number of minutes of each session ;
    - number of goals addressed in the training session; and
    - a narrative description of the services provided by the Work Experience trainer and the customer's performance of skills related to the customer's goals.
  + Total the amount of time for all training provided for the reporting period using quarter-hour (.25) increments. Round the total up when equal to or greater than 8 minutes and round down for 7 or less minutes, for example the total time was 68 minutes which is equivalent to 1.25 hours. (Note: .25 = 15 minutes, .50 = 30 minutes, .75 = 45 minutes, and 1.0 = 60 minutes.
  + Premiums, when applicable.
  + Customer satisfaction and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP can be verified through either a signature on the VR1604, or a VR staff member's contact with the customer.
* Submit a complete and accurate invoice.

For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment for Work Experience Training is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR1604, Work Experience Training Report; and
* invoice.

VR will not pay any fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

## 14.5 Work Experience Service Fees

A provider cannot collect money from a VR customer or the customer's family for any service. If VR and another resource are paying for a service for a customer, the total payment must not exceed the fee specified in the Standards for Providers manual.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Services** | **Unit Rate** | **Comment** |
| Work Experience Placement | $919.00 per placement | Can be purchased multiple times for a customer |
| Work Experience Training– Individual | $46.00 per hour |  |
| Work Experience Training–Group | $23.00 per hour, per individual | No more than four individuals in a group |

Premium Services may be available for some Work Experience Services. Premium Services are paid after all deliverables for the service have been made. For more information, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 20: Premiums.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 15: Pre-Employment Transition Services

Contract Type: Pre-Employment Transition Services

The contractor and contractor's staff members who provide the services described in this chapter must also comply with Chapters 1–3 of this manual.

## 15.1 Overview of Pre-Employment Transition Services

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are provided to transitioning individuals who meet the definition of a "student with a disability."

Federal regulations at 34 CFR §361.5(c)(51) define a "student with a disability" as:

" . . . an individual with a disability in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program who -

(A)(1) Is not younger than the earliest age for the provision of transition services under section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)); or

(2) If the State involved elects to use a lower minimum age for receipt of pre-employment transition services under this Act, is not younger than that minimum age; and

(B)(1) Is not older than 21 years of age; or

(2) If the State law for the State provides for a higher maximum age for receipt of services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), is not older than that maximum age; and

(C)(1) Is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.); or

(2) Is a student who is an individual with a disability, for purposes of section 504."

In Texas, the relevant age range is 14–22 years old. For more information, refer to Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual (VRSM) C-1300: Transition Services for Students and Youth with Disabilities.

All services included in a Pre-ETS contract must address one of the key categories defined in the Pre-ETS requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

As set out in 34 CFR §361.48(a)(2), the five key Pre-ETS required categories are:

"(1) job exploration counseling;

(2) work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;

(3) counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;

(4) workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and

(5) instruction in self-advocacy (including instruction in person-centered planning), which may include peer mentoring (including peer mentoring from individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment)."

## 15.2 Staff Qualifications

Before a provider is authorized to provide services to students, the provider must complete a VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form for each staff member who will provide Pre-ETS training to students.

The VR3455 must document the staff member’s qualifications and provide evidence that the provider’s staff member meets all qualifications, including requiring the staff member to provide relevant documentation, such as transcripts, diplomas, reference letters, credentials, and licenses.

The individual designated as the director must also submit a VR3455 along with documentation that they hold a UNTWISE Director Credential. For more information, refer to Chapter 3: Overview of the Basic Standards.

All Pre-ETS trainers must meet the minimum qualifications of having earned the following:

* High school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate
* At least one of the following:
  + Two years of experience working with students with disabilities, as verified with pay statements or a letter of verification, and a minimum of 30 semester hours of college credit with a minimum of 15 semester hours in special education, specific disabilities, social work, counseling, business, or a related field
  + 60 hours of college credit in special education, specific disabilities, social work, counseling, business, or a related field. Related fields must be approved by the statewide transition specialist.

Exceptions may be granted for an individual who does not meet the educational requirements above if the total of that individual's work experiences clearly demonstrates that he or she is experienced in working with individuals with disabilities, especially transition-age individuals with disabilities.

Exceptions to staff qualifications must be:

* documented in writing by the program manager for transition; and
* kept in the provider’s records.

To request a review of an individual's credentials and experience, send a request to the Pre-ETS mailbox at vr.pre-ets@twc.texas.gov.

## 15.3 Pre-ETS Service Description

When applying for a Pre-ETS contract, the provider indicates which of the five Pre-ETS categories the provider intends to provide. An executed contract for Pre-ETS indicates which of the five Pre-ETS categories the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has approved for the provider.

More than one Pre-ETS category may be listed on the same contract, but individual categories must adhere to the limits in this chapter. Exceptions to these limits must be approved by the director of TWC's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) division.

The five Pre-ETS categories are:

1. Job exploration counseling—may be provided in a classroom or community setting and include information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, as well as nontraditional employment, labor market composition, administration of vocational interest inventories, and identification of career pathways of interest to the students. Job exploration counseling provided on an individual basis might be provided in a classroom or in the community and may include discussions on the results of the student's vocational interest inventory and the in-demand occupations, career pathways, and local labor market data that apply to the student's interests.
2. Work-based learning—may be offered in a group setting and may include a school-based program of job training and informational interviews to research potential employers, work site tours to learn about necessary job skills, job shadowing, or mentoring in the community. For information about services that allow a student to be placed in a paid or unpaid short-term experience, refer to Chapter 14: Work Experience.
3. Counseling on post-secondary opportunities—may include information on course offerings, career options, the types of academic and occupational training needed to succeed in the workplace, and postsecondary opportunities associated with career fields or pathways. Counseling may include advising students and parents or representatives on academic curricula, college application and admissions processes, completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and providing information on or access to resources that may support a student's success in education and training, including support services for students with disabilities.
4. Workplace readiness training—may include programming to develop social and independent living skills, such as communication and interpersonal skills, financial literacy, orientation and mobility skills, job-seeking skills, understanding employer expectations for punctuality and performance, as well as other "soft" skills necessary for employment.
5. Self-advocacy—may include generalized classroom lessons in which students learn about their rights, their responsibilities, and how to request accommodations, services, and other forms of support needed during the transition from secondary to postsecondary education and employment.

Pre-ETS services are limited to the following:

* No more than 30 hours each for job exploration counseling, work-based learning, counseling on postsecondary opportunities, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy, per state fiscal year.

When authorized by the VR counselor, the provider may provide up to the maximum number of hours per category per state fiscal year to provide the service.

The ratio of students to trainers must not be greater than six students to one trainer.

When completing the VR1824, Referral for Contracted Pre-ETS Services, the VR counselor indicates whether they are requesting services that are provided remotely, in a setting where the trainer and student are in the same location, or a combination of both.

It is the responsibility of the Pre-ETS trainer to ensure the approved environment(s) are used in the delivery of the services. For more information refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

Items such as uniforms, transportation, and required tools and equipment may be authorized by the VR counselor to support a student's participation in Pre-ETS training if such items are necessary and are supported by the documented employment goal. Items are considered on an item-by-item basis and may be provided only for students who have been determined to be eligible for VR services, not those who are receiving Pre-ETS as potentially eligible.

Items purchased as an incentive for individuals to attend Pre-ETS programs or trainings, such as tablets, gift cards, or other prizes, including food, may not be purchased with TWC funds. If the provider intends to provide incentives, they must be able to show that the items were purchased with funds from other sources.

No supported employment assessments or benchmarks are included in Pre-ETS.

To change a Pre-ETS Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment, the VR division director must approve the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request, before the change is implemented. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

### 15.3.1 Similar Contracted Services

Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT) and Work Experience (WE), described in VR-SFP Chapters 13 and 14, are also considered Pre-ETS when provided to students with disabilities. VAT and WE may be purchased as Pre-ETS.

When a provider holds a contract for VAT or WE, it is not necessary to also have a contract in place for Pre-ETS unless the way the service is being provided will fall outside the standards for those services.

Examples:

A provider wants to provide workplace readiness training and self-advocacy instruction to students, but the curriculum that the provider uses falls outside of the VAT policies. In this instance, a Pre-ETS contract would allow the provider to offer the service with the provider's preferred curriculum. Note: All other standards outlined in this chapter must be met.

A provider wants to provide job exploration counseling, workplace readiness training, and work-based learning to students with disabilities. The provider wants to use a curriculum that falls outside of the VAT policies, and the provider does not have a contract for Work Experience. In this instance, a Pre-ETS contract would allow the provider to use their preferred curriculum and offer work-based learning using one contract.

A provider wants to provide instruction in work readiness and self-advocacy for two weeks and then place students in short-term employment to apply what they learned. In this case, the provider would need a Pre-ETS contract for work readiness and for self-advocacy and a work experience contract to place students in short-term employment.

Send questions related to the Pre-ETS standards to the Pre-ETS mailbox at vr.pre-ets@twc.texas.gov.

### 15.3.2 Curriculum Requirements

Pre-ETS providers are permitted to choose their own curriculum or combine parts of different curricula containing one or more of the five Pre-ETS categories.

Each curriculum included in the training:

* must be designed for transition-age individuals, preferably with references to disabilities;
* must take into account cognitive ability and reading level, when targeting a specific disability group;
* must not be one of the curricula included in the policy on VAT published in Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services. If the curriculum is included in VAT, the provider must pursue a VAT contract.

When applying for a Pre-ETS contract, and any time the curriculum changes or additional information is requested, the provider must submit the VR1825, Pre-ETS Curriculum Checklist, which includes:

* information about the curriculum;
* an outline of the training objectives for each curriculum being employed; and
* environment(s) in which each Pre-ETS service will be provided:
  + remotely;
  + in a setting where the trainer and student are in the same location; or
  + a combination of both.

At times, a copy of the curriculum may be requested by the State Office Transition Team reviewing the packet.

Send changes to curricula that have already been approved to the Pre-ETS mailbox at vr.pre-ets@twc.texas.gov.

## 15.4 Process and Procedure

Once the contract has been issued, the provider must receive a valid service authorization and a VR1824, Referral for Contracted Pre-ETS Services, for each student before providing services.

Services must be provided consistent with this chapter and the provider’s approved VR1825, Pre-ETS Curriculum Checklist.

An accurate invoice is paid once the VR counselor has verified the student's attendance and progress documented on the VR1823, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Progress Report.

## 15.5 Outcomes Required for Payment

Providers are paid only for time attended by students. For fewer than one hour, payment is rounded to the nearest quarter hour and prorated accordingly.

When multiple students attend, the provider submits a VR1823, Pre-ETS Progress Report for each student.

The VR1823, Pre-ETS Progress Report, must include evidence that:

* the training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one trainer to six students;
* the training was provided in the environment(s) approved by the VR counselor on the VR1824, Referral for Contracted Pre-ETS Services;
* the training was provided without exceeding the approved number of hours on the service authorization;
* the student's training included only Pre-ETS categories included in the contract, for example:
  + job exploration counseling;
  + work-based learning;
  + counseling on postsecondary opportunities;
  + workplace readiness training; and/or
  + self-advocacy; and
* the customer’s satisfaction and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP can be verified through either a signature on the VR1823 or VR staff member contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR1823, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Progress Report; and
* invoice.

## 15.6 Pre-Employment Transition Service Fees

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Services** | **Unit Rate** |
| Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities | $42.00 |
| Workplace Readiness Training | $42.00 |
| Self-Advocacy | $42.00 |
| Career Exploration Counseling | $42.00 |
| Work-Based Learning | $42.00 |

The Pre-ETS activity description, including the rate, is printed on the service authorization.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 16: Project SEARCH Services

Contract Subject: Project SEARCH

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 16.1 Overview of Project SEARCH Services

Project SEARCH is an international initiative that supports partnerships among businesses (employers), local school districts, vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies, and other entities that serve individuals with disabilities, including intellectual and developmental disabilities. Project SEARCH promotes the successful long-term employment of VR customers in jobs that are stable, meaningful, integrated, and competitively compensated.

The program takes place in business settings where total immersion in the workplace facilitates teaching and learning. The program enables participating VR customers to develop marketable work skills and increase their employability. Each customer has the opportunity to participate in three internships in order to explore a variety of career paths. The customer works with a team that includes the customer's family and partnering agencies. The team helps the customer create an employment goal and supports the customer during the transition from school to work.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 16.6 Project SEARCH Service Fees.

Any request to change a Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Project SEARCH Services, before the change is implemented. The approved VR3472 must be maintained in the provider’s customer case file. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

## 16.2 Staff Qualifications and Training

The Employment Service Provider director must approve the VR3455, Provider Staff Information form completed by each staff member, before providing any services to customers and must submit the approved form to the provider's assigned TWC contract manager and regional program specialist. The VR3455, Provider Staff Information form, must document qualifications and provide evidence, such as transcripts, diplomas, reference letters, credentials, or licenses, of meeting all qualifications. The form and supporting documents must be retained and provided to TWC staff upon request.

Provider staff qualifications for each service are described below. If a qualification requires a University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE) credential, additional information can be obtained at [Texas Credential Training | Workplace Inclusion & Sustainable Employment](https://wise.unt.edu/crptraining).

Non-credentialed provider staff may provide services to a VR customer only when the Temporary Waiver of Employment Services Credential Standards are followed. For more information, refer to Chapter 3: Basic Standards, 3.4.5 Temporary Waiver of Staff Qualifications.

### 16.2.1 Skills Trainer General Qualifications

The following are the qualifications for skills trainers:

* A UNTWISE Job Skills Training credential is required.
* An additional UNTWISE Supported Employment credential is preferred.
* A High school diploma or GED is required.
* A Bachelor's degree or at least one year of documented experience working with individuals with disabilities is preferred.

### 16.2.2 Job Placement Specialist General Qualification

The following are the qualifications for job placement specialists:

* A UNTWISE Job Placement credential is required.
* An additional UNTWISE Supported Employment credential is preferred.
* A High school diploma or GED is required.
* A Bachelor's degree or at least one year of documented experience working with individuals with disabilities is preferred.

## 16.3 Project SEARCH Asset Discovery

### 16.3.1 Project SEARCH Asset Discovery Service Description

The process used to collect information from a customer who is selected as an intern in the Project SEARCH program is called "asset discovery." The skills trainer meets with the customer to collect information about the customer's skills, interests, abilities, learning styles, and support needs. The trainer also gathers information on the internship opportunities and needs of the participating host business. The skills trainer provides the collected information to the Project SEARCH team to help determine appropriate internships.

### 16.3.2 Project SEARCH Asset Discovery Process and Procedure

The provider receives VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, and a service authorization (SA) for asset discovery as soon as the customer is selected by the team to be an intern for the upcoming school year.

The assigned skills trainer:

* reviews the customer's Project SEARCH referral and, if available, the Project SEARCH application;
* schedules a meeting with the customer and his or her circle of supports to collect the information necessary to answer interview questions identified on the VR3361, Project SEARCH Asset Discovery Report; and
* completes a minimum of four observation sessions with the customer (one-on-one sessions, group sessions with other customers, or both) for a total of at least 20 hours to observe the customer's interests, skills, abilities, challenges, and support needs. Observation sessions may be completed at:
  + the customer's home;
  + places the customer goes for recreation;
  + business sites for tour;
  + environments where the customer's work skills may be simulated; and
  + places where the customer does volunteer work.

Any meeting among the customer, provider, customer's circle of supports, or VR staff may be conducted remotely.

### 16.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The skills trainer must include the following information in descriptive terms on the VR3361, Project SEARCH Asset Discovery Report:

* The case information
* The date, time, location, and summary of all asset discovery sessions completed with the customer;
* Evidence of at least four asset discovery sessions and a total of at least 20 hours of contact with the customer, either individually or in a group setting
* A description of the customer's abilities
* Confirmation that services provided comply with all applicable standards
* Customer satisfaction and service delivery, which may be verified by VR staff contact with the customer or the customer's signature on the form

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment for Project SEARCH Asset Discovery is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated VR3361, Project SEARCH Asset Discovery Report, and an invoice.

## 16.4 Project SEARCH Skills Training Services

### 16.4.1 Project SEARCH Skills Training Service Description

Project SEARCH services are based on experiential learning at a host business with support from the business and Project SEARCH team and are most effective when provided in person. When a host business does not allow interns or staff on-site for safety or other reasons, the Project SEARCH team may develop an alternate training method that must be noted by the VR counselor on VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. If the change in service delivery happens after the referral form was submitted, then an updated referral form should be completed and provided to the Employment Service provider. Remote services must follow guidance in VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

Skills Training Services include training and establishing accommodations and/or compensatory techniques as needed to increase a customer's independence and improve the customer's ability to demonstrate soft and hard skills to meet the expectations and production standards of a host business.

Examples of Skills Training Services include:

* providing skills training as needed throughout the internship;
* establishing compensatory techniques and accommodations; and
* training individuals who are supporting the customer at the host business.

The skills trainer must provide services in coordination with:

* a teacher from the local school district;
* a paraprofessional from the school district; and
* designated supervisors from the host business.

Skills trainers must provide goal-directed services and support as outlined in VR3362, Project SEARCH Progress Report.

### 16.4.2 Project SEARCH Skills Training Process and Procedure

The customer, customer's legal guardian or representative (if applicable), VR counselor, and Project SEARCH team must meet to develop goals for the customer and document these goals on the VR3362, Project SEARCH Progress Report.

The skills trainer must:

* work with the customer, the customer's mentors, and the Project SEARCH team to help the customer achieve his or her goals;
* attend meetings related to the customer, as established by the Project SEARCH team, and indicate relevant customer updates on VR3362;
* work as an active team member with the other partners to ensure that the most suitable internship is provided to enhance the customer's employability skills; and
* help the Project SEARCH team with providing training to the host business.

No invoice may be paid until the VR counselor receives and approves a complete and accurate VR3362, Project SEARCH Progress Report, with an invoice.

Any meeting among the customer, provider, customer's circle of supports, or VR staff may be conducted remotely.

### 16.4.3 Project SEARCH Skills Training Outcomes Required for Payment

VR3362, Project SEARCH Progress Report, is submitted:

* at the conclusion of each internship rotation or throughout the rotation if the provider has arranged this with the VR counselor; and
* any time a change in the customer's needs or circumstances affect the customer's ability to continue participating in the internships.

For payment, the skills trainer must:

* document in descriptive terms all the information on VR3362, Project SEARCH Progress Report, including:
  + evidence that goals were established and addressed for the reporting period;
  + information describing the current internship;
  + the date range of the start date, end date, and total hours provided during that date range;
  + a summary of the services the skills trainer and Project SEARCH team provided and the customer's performance toward his or her goals for each date range entry;
  + affirmation that at least three hours of training were provided each week for the eight–12 week internship rotation;
  + evidence that the customer's soft and hard skills were evaluated and scored during the internship; and
  + customer satisfaction and service delivery, which may be verified by the customer's signature on the associated form or by VR staff contact with the customer.

For information on signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

No invoice may be paid until the VR counselor receives and approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated VR3362, Project SEARCH Progress Report, and an invoice.

## 16.5 Project SEARCH Job Placement

### 16.5.1 Project SEARCH Job Placement Service Description

When the customer has participated in at least one internship rotation or, at any time during the rotations, the team determines job placement opportunities are available to the customer, the job placement specialist and Project SEARCH team help the customer find employment.

The goal is to place the customer in a competitive and integrated work setting either with the host business or a business in the community that:

* meets the customer's employment goal and employment conditions;
* allows the customer to apply his or her unique strengths, interests, abilities, and capabilities;
* is permanent, rather than temporary or seasonal; and
* pays a customary wage for the same or similar work performed by employees who do not have disabilities.

Job placement specialists are responsible for:

* providing initial instruction;
* providing assistance to reinforce learned skills;
* monitoring the customer to ensure that the customer is demonstrating the skills learned; and
* using resources or tools necessary to help the customer secure employment.

Project SEARCH Job Placement Services may not be purchased with on-the-job training services, Job Skills Training, Non-bundled Job Placement Services, Bundled Job Placement Services, Work Experience Services and/or Supported Employment.

There are times when participation in Work Experience or Supported Employment Services may benefits a customer after participation in Project SEARCH skills training. If this service is needed for a customer to help increase his or her employment opportunities, then an approved VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request, is required. Job placement specialists are paid only once for each benchmark completed by a Project SEARCH customer, even if the customer loses a job after the completion of a benchmark.

The customer must work 90 days in the same position. If a customer loses a job before the 90-day benchmark, the customer's progression towards completion of the benchmark ends. When the customer becomes employed again, the day count will start at day 1 for the new position.

Each benchmark is paid only once for each customer between Active Status (customer has an Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE)) and Closure Status of a VR case. On a case-by-case basis, when the VR counselor determines the provider should be paid for making a second placement a VR3472 must be approved by the VR Director prior to the service authorization being issued.

The job placement specialist:

* verifies a customer's employment through employer or customer contact; and
* documents the verification on the appropriate form when invoicing VR.

If the employer has classified the customer as an employee during an orientation period, the orientation period counts as part of the customer's 90 days of cumulative employment. The time spent in a Project SEARCH internship rotation cannot be included in the job placement's 90-day count.

### 16.5.2 Project SEARCH Job Placement Process and Procedure

#### Job Placement Planning Meeting

The customer, VR counselor, job placement specialist, and any other Project SEARCH team members, meet to develop and complete VR3363, Project SEARCH Job Placement Services Plan:

* at the end of the third internship rotation; or
* at any time during the three rotations when the team determines job placement opportunities are available to the customer because of skills gained in the internships.

VR3363 must only be completed one time and updated as needed.

The purposes of this meeting are to:

* review and clarify employment-related support and training that the customer needs to find employment;
* identify the customer's skills, abilities, experiences, training, education, attributes and/or barriers related to employment;
* identify negotiable and nonnegotiable employment conditions; and
* document the customer's identified employment goals and the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes and O'NET description of the job tasks responsibilities for each employment goal.

Any meeting among the customer, provider, customer’s circle of supports, or VR staff may be conducted remotely.

VR3363, Project SEARCH Job Placement Services Plan, explains how services may be provided either in person, remotely, or a combination of both.

Remote services must follow guidance in VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

All parties attending the meeting must sign VR3363 at the end of the meeting. Signatures on the VR3363, Project SEARCH Job Placement Plan, may be obtained by following the steps in VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

After the Project SEARCH job placement plan meeting, VR staff:

* issues an SA to the provider for Benchmark A; and
* files the VR3363 in the customer's file.

The SAs for Benchmarks B and C are issued after the customer achieves Benchmark A.

#### Job Placement

The job placement specialist uses resources and tools necessary to help the customer find a job that meets the criteria outlined in the VR3363, Project SEARCH Job Placement Services Plan.

Once the customer is employed, the job placement specialist monitors the customer's progress on the job by:

* providing initial job coaching instruction to reinforce learned skills;
* monitoring the customer to ensure that the customer is demonstrating the skills that he or she learned and to ensure that the customer is successful; and
* determining whether there is a need for the Project SEARCH team to provide the employer with training and/or education on disability and accommodation issues.

If Job Skills Training is necessary to supplement the training provided by the employer, the Project SEARCH provider includes it as part of Job Placement Services and may not bill it separately.

The customer must work 90 days in the same position.  When a customer is placed in a new position with the same or new employer, a new 90-day count of employment is required to complete Project SEARCH Job Placement Services.

If a customer loses a job before the 90-day benchmark, the customer's progression towards completion of the benchmark ends. When the customer becomes employed again, the day count will start at day 1 for the new position.

The 90-day count for successful closure will start over anytime a customer:

* Loses their job;
* Changes employers;
* Changes positions with same employer;
* Receives a promotion; or
* Quits their job voluntarily.

Each benchmark is paid only once for each customer between Active Status (customer has an IPE) and Closure Status of a VR case. On a case-by-case basis, when the VR counselor determines the provider should be paid for making a second placement a VR3472 must be approved by the VR Director prior to the service authorization being issued.

If the customer loses the job, the customer's progression toward completion of the benchmark ends and the job placement specialist must meet with the customer and VR counselor to:

* evaluate the reason(s) the customer lost the job and develop a plan to address any identified issues; and
* review and update a new VR3363, Project SEARCH Job Placement Services Plan, when new employment conditions or goals need to be established.

When a job is lost, the customer begins with Benchmark A to secure another position.  The count begins over at day one and continues through the benchmarks until the customer reaches 90 days of employment in the new position. The provider must resubmit an updated VR3364 for each benchmark. Each Benchmark is paid only once for each customer.

Additionally, any extended support or long-term support services that the customer needs to maintain successful long-term employment must be established by the job placement specialist and Project SEARCH team before the customer achieves Benchmark C.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 16.6 Project SEARCH Service Fees.

### 16.5.3 Project SEARCH Job Placement Outcomes Required for Payment

For a provider to be paid for services, the job placement specialist must:

* as described in VR3363, Project SEARCH Job Placement Service Plan, ensure the customer has worked 90 days in the same position with the same employer and that the job meets:
  + 100 percent of the nonnegotiable employment conditions;
  + at least 50 percent of the negotiable employment conditions;
  + all six digits of one of the SOCs listed within the employment goals based on the job tasks the customer is performing which are included in the O'Net description (not based on the customer's job title); and
  + services delivered as indicated on VR3363;
* for Benchmark C, accurately document in descriptive terms on VR3364, Project SEARCH Placement Report, all extended services necessary for the customer to maintain long-term competitive integrated employment after VR closes the case; and
* verify customer satisfaction and service delivery by the customer's signature on the associated form or by VR staff contact with the customer.

For information on acceptable signatures refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

No payment may be made for the achievement of a benchmark until the VR counselor receives and approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3363, Project SEARCH Job Placement Services Plan (This form does not need to be resubmitted for Job Placement if the VR counselor has obtained a copy earlier in the internship.);
* VR3364, Project SEARCH Job Placement Report; and
* an invoice.

Each benchmark is paid only once for each customer between Active Status (customer has an IPE) and Closure Status of a VR case.

## 16.6 Project SEARCH Service Fees

A provider cannot collect money from a VR customer or the customer's family for any service charged in excess of VR fees. If VR and another resource are paying for a service for a customer, the total payment must not exceed the fee specified in the VR Standards for Providers manual.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project SEARCH Services** | **Unit Rate** | **Comments** |
| Asset Discovery | $613.00 | * Once per customer. VR3361, Project SEARCH Asset Discovery, must be completed. * Requires four observations with a total of 20 hours. * Partial payments are not allowed. |
| Skills Training | Must not exceed $1,684.00 per customer for an eight–12 week internship rotation | * No more than three rotations per customer for each school year. VR3362, Project SEARCH Progress Report, must be completed. * Partial payments are allowed. Divide the maximum amount ($1,684) by the number of weeks in the rotation. For example, the partial payment for one week of a 10-week rotation is $168.40. * Requires a minimum of three reporting hours each week per intern. |
| Job Placement and Arrangement of Retention Services (Benchmark A) | $919.00 | * Payable when the customer is placed in a job that meets the criteria on VR3363, Project SEARCH Job Placement Services Plan, and the customer has worked five days on the job. * Submit an invoice for payment the day after the fifth day of employment. The Benchmark A section of VR3364, Project SEARCH Job Placement Report, must be completed. * Partial payments are not allowed. * Each benchmark is paid only once. |
| Job Placement and Arrangement of Retention Services (Benchmark B) | $919.00 | * Payable when the customer completes 45 cumulative calendar days of employment in the same position with the same employer in a job that meets the criteria in VR3363, Project SEARCH Job Placement Services Plan. * Submit an invoice for payment the day after the 45th day of employment. The VR3364, Project SEARCH Job Placement Report, Benchmark B section must be completed. * Partial payments not allowed. * Each benchmark is only paid once. |
| Job Placement and Arrangement of Extended Services (Benchmark C) | $1,225.00 | * Payable when the customer completes 90 cumulative calendar days of employment in the same position with the same employer in a job that meets the criteria in VR3363, Project SEARCH Job Placement Services Plan, and verification that the extended services are arranged and documented on VR3364, Project SEARCH Placement Report. These services are required for the customer to stay employed after VR closes the case. * Submit an invoice for payment the day after the 90th day of employment. The Benchmark C section of the VR3364, Project SEARCH Job Placement Report, must be completed. * Partial payments are not allowed. * Each benchmark is only paid once. * Customers must work 90 cumulative calendar days before achieving Benchmark C when the customer changes positions with the employer or obtains employment with another employer before achieving Benchmark C. |

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services

Contract Subject: Employment Services (formerly Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) and VR Job Readiness/Job Placement)

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 17.1 Overview of Basic Employment Services

Basic employment services include employment assistance that:

* trains and prepares customers for the job search;
* helps customers obtain positions that meet their individual needs; and
* assists customers with Job Skills Training, when necessary, to keep a job.

A customer's job placement must match customer needs and business needs.

A customer's job placement must be in a work environment that is:

* integrated;
* competitive;
* full-time or part-time, based on customer informed choice; and
* permanent, not temporary or seasonal.

See VR-SFP 1 Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation for the definition of Competitive Integrated Employment.

Prior to paying for any VR services, the VR counselor will ensure the customer is placed in competitive integrated employment. WIOA emphasizes a work unit in the definition of competitive integrated employment. A “work unit” may refer to all employees in a particular job category or to a group of employees working together to accomplish tasks, depending on the employer's organizational structure (81 FR at 55643). The level of integration experienced by all individuals with disabilities employed by an organization is not the same and is dependent on the circumstances of the particular job within each work unit of the organization. Therefore, some employment opportunities offered by organization may be considered to be in "integrated locations," and thus satisfy the definition of "competitive integrated employment," while others may not. If placement occurs with an employer who complies with a mandated direct labor-hour ratio of persons with disabilities, VR staff must complete a CIE checklist to determine if the employment is competitive integrated employment prior to any benchmark payments being made.

All services are based on a customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

This chapter includes information on the following services:

* Non-bundled Job Placement
* Bundled Job Placement
* Job Skills Training

Any request to change a Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services, before the change is implemented. The approved VR3472 must be maintained in the provider’s customer case file. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP Basic Employment Services Fees.

Premiums may be available for some employment assistance services. Premiums are paid after all deliverables for the service have been achieved. When a service authorization (SA) for the Autism premium is issued, the VR1882, Autism Premium Report, must be submitted with each benchmark. For more information about premiums, refer to Chapter 20: Premiums.

## 17.2 Staff Qualifications and Training

Before any services are provided to customers, the employment service provider's (ESP) director must:

* approve the VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form, completed by each staff member; and
* submit approved forms to the provider's assigned TWC contract manager and assigned Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) regional program specialist.

The VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form, must document qualifications and provide evidence of meeting all qualifications such as transcripts, diplomas, reference letters, credentials, and licenses.

Staff qualification for each service is described in 17.2.1 Job Placement Specialist General Qualifications and 17.2.2 Job Skills Trainer General Qualifications. University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE) Texas Credential Information can be found at [Texas Credential Training](https://wise.unt.edu/crptraining).

A noncredentialled provider staff member can provide services to a VR customer only when the VR3490, Temporary Waiver of Credentials, is approved prior to any services being provided. For more information, see standards in VR-SFP 3.4.5 Temporary Waiver of Staff Qualifications.

### 17.2.1 Job Placement Specialist General Qualifications

The qualifications for a job placement specialist are as follows:

* A University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Suitable Employment (UNTWISE) Texas Job Placement credential is required.
* A high school diploma or GED is required.
* A bachelor's degree in rehabilitation, business, marketing, or related human services is preferred.

### 17.2.2 Job Skills Trainer General Qualifications

The required qualifications for a job skills trainer are as follows:

* A current UNTWISE Texas Job Skills Training credential
* A high school diploma or GED

It is preferred, but not required, that the job skills trainer have:

* a varied and successful work history; and
* experience working with individuals with disabilities.

## 17.3 Non-bundled Job Placement

### 17.3.1 Non-bundled Job Placement Service Description

This section includes the following Non-bundled Job Placement services:

* Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training; and
* Interview Training

A customer can receive one or more of the Non-bundled Job Placement services.

Each Non-bundled Job Placement service can be purchased only once for a customer.

Non-bundled Job Placement services can be purchased with On-the-Job Training (OJT), Apprenticeship, and Job Skills Training when determined appropriate by the VR counselor.

Non-bundled Job Placement services are purchased when a customer does not need assistance from a provider to be placed in a job.

Non-bundled Job Placement services must not be purchased when Bundled Job Placement services or Supported Employment services will be or have been purchased unless a VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services has been approved.

For students or youths with disabilities, Non-bundled Job Placement services can be purchased after VAT Preparing for a Job Search Training has been previously purchased, when the student’s or youth’s circumstances indicate a need for additional training to achieve their IPE goals.

### 17.3.2 Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training

#### 17.3.2.1 Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training Service Description

This service is designed to teach customers the knowledge and skills necessary to complete job applications and résumés.

A job placement specialist will assist the customer in the completion of:

* the VR1850, Personal Employment Data Sheet or equivalent;
* a paper job application, kiosk job application, or electronic (online) job application; and
* a résumé, when applicable.

All required elements described in the VR-SFP must be addressed in a curriculum that includes a module for each required area defined in the VR-SFP (for example, a module for each of the following: Employment Data Sheet, Job Application, Résumé Training, etc.). A manual must be maintained by the provider that includes the curriculum and supporting documentation such as activity materials/resources, lesson plans, and attendance records. When using a standardized published curriculum (not created by the provider), identify the source and keep a copy of the curriculum in the manual. TWC-VR can request to review a curricula manual at any time.

The job placement specialist must implement training activities to meet the customer's needs, including, but not limited to, literacy and disability needs. While all training must be individualized, it may be provided in an individual or group setting. When the service is provided in a group setting, a ratio of one job placement specialist to no more than six customers must be maintained.

This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services or SA. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

A copy of the customer's completed VR1850, Personal Employment Data Sheet or equivalent and a completed résumé (if requested on the referral form), must be submitted with the invoice.

The job placement specialist must train the customer in all of the following areas.

##### Completion of the VR1850, Personal Employment Data Sheet, or Equivalent

The job placement specialist must evaluate the train the customer on how to gather the necessary information in the areas below:

* demographic information;
* arrest and conviction history, if any;
* paid work history;
* volunteer history;
* references detail;
* employment skills;
* career objectives;
* training history;
* occupational license or certification;
* high school and GED information; and
* college education history.

When the customer's employment goal supports the need for a résumé, as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services or SA, the following must be addressed:

* identification of résumé types and purposes;
* collection of résumé contents such as education, work experience, credentials, and achievements;
* completion of résumés tailored to the customer's employment goals; and
* how to update résumés for specific jobs.

##### Job Applications

Job applications training includes:

* identification of the job application process for paper, website (online), and kiosk applications;
* how to identify appropriate responses to questions on job applications;
* how to write clear descriptive responses to questions and how to avoid spelling and grammatical errors in an application;
* identification of strategies to address employment barriers demonstrated by the customer; and
* successful completion of paper, website (online), and kiosk job applications.

##### Job References and Written Correspondence

Job references and written correspondence training include:

* explanation of the purpose of professional and personal employment references;
* how and when to request an individual to be a professional and/or personal employment reference;
* how and when to provide professional and personal employment references to potential employers;
* how references are used for background verifications;
* use of effective written correspondence when job searching;
* how to write cover letters for applications and résumés;
* how to write thank-you letters in response to employer correspondence and after meetings or interviews;
* how to use and write email correspondence during the job search; and
* how to use and write written correspondence sent through the US Postal Service.

The Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training as described above is purchased when a job placement provider will not be used to obtain a job placement for a customer. When a customer's circumstances indicate that Bundled Employment Services need to be purchased after Non-bundled Job Placement Services have been provided, a reduction of payment will be applied to the fee of the Bundled Employment Service.

#### 17.3.2.2 Process and Procedure

A Basic Employment Services provider receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services form that indicates if résumé training is required and if any premiums for Non-bundled services are appropriate, as well as an SA. The VR5000 includes any documentation that will prepare the provider to better work with the customer, such as medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, and employment data collected by VR staff.

The job placement specialist supplies all training materials, prepares the training materials, and facilitates the training, following the curriculum, covering all requirements listed in 17.3.2.1 Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training Service Description.

The job placement specialist provides initial instruction and monitoring and/or guidance and, when necessary, assists the customer to complete a:

* VR1850, Personal Employment Data Sheet, or equivalent personal data sheet;
* paper application, kiosk job application, or an electronic (online) job application; and
* résumé(s), (when requested on the referral form).

When necessary, the job placement specialist may complete tasks for a customer to meet the customer's individual needs.

The job placement specialist completes and submits the VR1841, Non-bundled Job Placement Services Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training Report, documenting the assistance, training, or support provided by the job placement specialist in clear, descriptive terms.

The Basic Employment Services provider must maintain attendance records and documentation of completed lesson plans and customer completed activities to ensure the job placement specialist is teaching the required core curricula, and shall make the documentation available for review by VR staff members upon request.

#### 17.3.2.3 Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training Outcomes Required for Payment

The job placement specialist documents, in descriptive terms, all the information required by the service description on the VR1841, Non-bundled Job Placement Services Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training Report, demonstrating evidence that:

* all required training topics were covered;
* the training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to six customers;
* the service was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, –Referral for Provider Services or SA (in person only or remotely and/or in person);
* all accommodations, compensatory techniques, and special needs were provided, as necessary, for the customer to successfully learn the skills;
* various instructional approaches were used to meet customer's learning styles and preferences;
* all supplies and resources were provided to the customer; and
* customer satisfaction and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP can be verified through either a signature on the VR1841, Non-bundled Job Placement Services Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training Report, or by a VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

For payment, the job placement specialist must submit all of the following:

* the completed and signed VR1850, Personal Employment Data Sheet, or equivalent;
* a résumé(s), when requested on the referral form;
* VR1841, Non-bundled Job Placement Services Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training Report; and
* an invoice

This is an outcome-based service; therefore, VR will not pay unless all topics in the service description and SA were addressed.

### 17.3.3 Interview Training

#### 17.3.3.1 Interview Training Service Description

Interview training is designed to teach customers the knowledge and skills necessary to complete a job interview and use an "elevator speech" successfully. Interview training services are not purchased with Bundled Job Placement. The VR counselor may request on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services or SA, that mock interviews be video-recorded. A written copy of the customer's elevator speech must be submitted with the invoice.

The job placement specialist must train the customer in all of the following areas:

* the purpose of the interview process;
* the types and purpose of interviews, for example, screening, telephone, panel and/or group, behaviorally based, case, situational, and technical;
* the creation and delivery of a 30–60-second elevator speech that summarizes why the customer is a good candidate for the job;
* how to research businesses and employment positions before an interview;
* identifying and answering typical interview questions asked in the field relevant to the customer's employment goals;
* identifying questions to ask the employer when interviewing;
* identifying and responding to questions related to protected classes and disclosure;
* how to request assistance (advocate), including disability etiquette;
* how to respond to complicated questions addressing employment barriers, such as gaps in work history, criminal background history, limited work experience, and accommodation needs;
* personal presentation for interviews such as grooming, dress, and manners; and
* completion and critiquing a minimum of two mock interviews.

All required elements described in the VR-SFP must be addressed in a curriculum that includes a module for each required area defined in the VR-SFP. A manual must be maintained by the provider that includes the curriculum and supporting documentation such as activity materials/resources, lesson plans, and attendance records. When using a standardized published curriculum (not created by the provider), identify the source and keep a copy of the curriculum in the manual. TWC-VR can request to review a curricula manual at any time.

The job placement specialist must implement training activities to meet the customer's needs, including, but not limited to, literacy and disability needs. This service may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services or SA. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery. While all training must be individualized, it may be provided in an individual or group setting.

A ratio of one job placement specialist to no more than six customers must be maintained if the training is conducted in a group environment.

The Interview Training described above is purchased when a job placement provider will not be used to obtain a job placement for a customer. When a customer's circumstances indicate that Bundled Employment Services need to be purchased after Non-Bundled Job Placement Services have been provided, a reduction of payment will be applied to the fee of the Bundled Employment Service.

#### 17.3.3.2 Process and Procedure

An Employment Services Provider (ESP) receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services and an SA. The referral form will indicate when video-recorded mock interviews are required and what premiums, if any are applicable, and includes documentation that will prepare the provider to better work with the customer, such as medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, and employment data collected by VR staff.

The job placement specialist supplies all training materials, prepares the training materials, and facilitates the training covering all requirements listed in 17.3.3.1 Interview Training Service Description.

The job placement specialist provides initial instruction, monitoring and/or guidance, and, when necessary, assists the customer to develop an "elevator speech" and suitable responses to interview questions. When necessary, the job placement specialist may complete tasks for a customer to meet the customer's individual needs.

The job placement specialist completes and submits the VR1842, Non-bundled Job Placement Services Interview Training Report, documenting the assistance, training, and/or support provided by the job placement specialist in clear, descriptive terms.

The ESP must:

* maintain attendance records and documentation of completed lessons and customer completed activities to ensure the required core curricula are being taught; and
* make the documentation available for review by VR staff members upon request.

#### 17.3.3.3 Interview Training Outcomes Required for Payment

The job placement specialist documents, in descriptive terms, all the information required by the service description on the VR1842, Non-bundled Job Placement Services Interview Training Report, demonstrating evidence that:

* all required training topics were covered;
* the training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to six customers;
* the service was delivered as indicated on the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services or SA (in person only or remotely and/or in person);
* all accommodations, compensatory techniques, and special needs were provided as necessary for the customer to successfully learn the skills;
* various instructional approaches were used to meet each customer's learning styles and preferences;
* all supplies and resources were provided so that the customer could participate in the training; and
* customer satisfaction and delivery of service as described in the VR-SFP can be verified through either a signature on the VR1842, Non-bundled Job Placement Services Interview Training Report, or by a VR staff member's contact with the customer.

For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

For payment, the job placement specialist must submit the following:

* a completed and signed VR1842, Non-bundled Job Placement Services Interview Training Report;
* a copy of the customer's "elevator speech;"
* a video copy of the recorded mock interviews when VR5000, Referral for Provider Services or SA indicates the videos are required; and
* an invoice

This is an outcome-based service; therefore, VR will not pay unless all topics in the service description and SA are addressed.

## 17.4 Bundled Job Placement Services

### 17.4.1 Bundled Job Placement Services Service Description

Bundled Job Placement is a benchmark service that assists customers in preparing for and completing the job search process. Job placement may be in a new position or an advancement in current employment when the customer requires training and/or assistance in the areas listed below. Bundled Job Placement helps customers obtain a job that meets their needs as outlined in the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report.

The customer must work 90 days in the same position. When a customer is placed in a new position with the same or a new employer, a new 90-day count is required to complete Bundled Job Placement services.

Any meeting between the customer, the provider, the customer’s circle of supports, and VR staff may be conducted remotely. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

Before assisting a customer in obtaining a job, the provider must train and assist the customer in all the following areas, as described under Benchmark A-Service Description:

* VR1850, Employment Data Sheet or equivalent that includes all topics addressed on the VR1850;
* Résumés, as indicated on the VR1845B;
* Job applications;
* Job references and written correspondence;
* Interviews;
* Pre-employment testing;
* Job searching; and
* Job acceptance and preparing for the first day on the job.

The training and assistance provided should align with the basic or enhanced service definition and the customer's scores on the Support Needs Assessment in VR1845A, Bundled Job Placement Services Placement Plan–Part A.

All required elements described in the VR-SFP must be addressed in a curriculum that includes a module for each required area defined in the VR-SFP (For example: all areas listed above). A manual must be maintained by the provider that includes the curriculum and supporting documentation such as activity materials/resources, lesson plans, and attendance records. When using a standardized published curriculum (not created by the provider), identify the source and keep a copy of the curriculum in the manual. TWC-VR may request to review a curricula manual at any time.

The job placement specialist must implement training activities to meet the customer's needs, including, but not limited to, literacy and disability needs. While all training must be individualized, it may be provided in an individual or group setting. When the service is provided in a group setting, a ratio of one job placement specialist to no more than six customers must be maintained.

The Employment Services provider must:

* maintain attendance records, documentation of completed lessons, and customer completed activities showing the required core curricula are being taught; and
* make the documentation available for review by VR staff members upon request.

Before an SA is issued, the VR counselor, customer, and job placement specialist must attend the job placement plan meeting. At the job placement plan meeting, VR staff will complete the following forms:

* VR1845A, Bundled Job Placement Services Placement Plan–Part A; and
* VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report.

The results of the Support Needs Assessment in the VR1845A determine whether a customer receives basic or enhanced Bundled Job Placement, as follows:

* Basic Bundled Job Placement, a customer must score a total of 15 or less; or
* Enhanced Bundled Job Placement, a customer must score a total of 16 or greater.

Basic Bundled Job Placement and Enhanced Bundled Job Placement contain the following three payment benchmarks in this outcome-based service:

* Benchmark A: Job Placement—After the completion of the 5th day/shift of paid employment, invoiced on or after the 6th day of paid employment
* Benchmark B: Job Placement—After completion of the 45th day of paid employment, invoiced on or after the 46th day of paid employment
* Benchmark C: Job Placement—After completion of the 90th day of paid employment, invoiced on or after the 91st day of paid employment

Benchmark outcome payments are made when the provider achieves the outcomes required for each benchmark.

The customer's job must:

* be full-time or part-time based on customer's choice;
* exist in a competitive, integrated work setting; and
* be permanent, not seasonal.

If a business hires a customer in a temp-to-hire position, the job is acceptable if not considered short-term or project specific employment that will end upon completion of the project. A customer may be employed by a third party such as a temp agency when this is a prerequisite for continued employment after the probationary period ends. Pro re nata (PRN) or “as needed” employment is allowed, as long as the customer can achieve all employment conditions outlined on the VR1845B. VR will not accept seasonal employment placements or placements where the customer receives an IRS 1099 form, (i.e., self-employment), unless approved by the VR Director using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request form. Seasonal employment pertains to labor performed at certain seasons or periods of the year, which may not be continuous or carried out throughout the year.

VR pays for job placement only if the customer is placed in a competitive integrated work setting with an organization or business that is not owned, operated, controlled, or governed by the service provider providing the job placement service. Service providers that are state agencies, state universities, or facilities that are a part of a state university system are exempt from this requirement. A VR competitive integrated checklist may need to be completed prior to the provider’s invoice being paid to determine whether the position meets the criteria for a competitive integrated work setting.

The job placement count begins on the first day worked by the customer for the employer in the current position or the day after the VR1845B is updated so all non-negotiable employment conditions, 50% of negotiable employment conditions, and an employment goal are achieved.

If a customer is not working the required number of weekly hours or meeting non-negotiable employment conditions as outlined in the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report, the customer's progression within the benchmark is frozen until:

* the customer begins working the required hours and is achieving all non-negotiable employment conditions; or
* the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report, is amended.

When a customer accepts a new position with the same employer or obtains employment with a new employer, the customer must work 90 days in the new position. The count starts over on the first day of the customer’s new position and continues until the customer reaches 90 days of employment in the new position.  The provider must resubmit an updated VR1845B for each benchmark.

Bundled Job Placement Services cannot be purchased with On-the-Job Training (OJT), Apprenticeship, or Supported Employment. Job Skills Training can be purchased with Bundled Job Placement Services when determined appropriate by the VR counselor.

A customer who has received or is receiving basic or enhanced Bundled Job Placement Services cannot be transferred into Non-bundled Job Placement Services, unless a VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services has been approved by the VR Director.  The VR3472 must explain the customer’s individualized circumstances sufficiently enough to support the transfer of the service from Bundled to Non-bundled Job Placement.

When a customer's circumstances indicate that Bundled Employment Services need to be purchased after Non-bundled Job Placement Services have been provided, a reduction of payment will be applied to the fee of the Bundled Employment service.

### 17.4.2 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark A

#### 17.4.2.1 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark A Service Description

The job placement specialist will conduct job development and job search activities directed toward obtaining employment that meets the customer's individualized skills, interests, goals, and needs as outlined in the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report.

Before the customer obtains employment, the job placement specialist must train and assist the customer in all the areas described below in the Benchmark A Service Description.  If the customer obtains employment before the training is completed the training must be completed prior to invoicing for the Benchmark A.

##### Completion of the VR1850, Employment Data Sheet or Equivalent

The job placement specialist must train the customer on how to gather the necessary information in the areas below:

* demographic information;
* arrest and conviction history, if any;
* paid work history;
* volunteer history;
* references detail;
* employment skills;
* career objectives;
* training history;
* occupational license or certification;
* high school and GED information; and
* college education history.

Note: Any equivalent used in place of the VR1850 must include all topics addressed on the VR1850.

When the customer's employment goal supports the need for a résumé, as indicated on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report, all of the following must be addressed:

* identification of different résumé types and purposes;
* collection of résumé contents, such as education, work experience, credentials, and achievements;
* completion of résumés tailored for the customer's employment goals; and
* updating résumés for specific jobs

##### Job Applications

Job applications training includes:

* identification of the job application process for paper, website (online), and kiosk applications;
* how to identify appropriate responses to questions on job applications;
* how to write clear, descriptive responses to questions, avoiding spelling and grammatical errors in an application;
* identification of strategies to address employment barriers demonstrated by the customer; and
* successful completion of paper, website (online), and kiosk job applications.

##### Job References and Written Correspondence

Job references and written correspondence training includes:

* explanation of the purpose of professional and personal employment references;
* how and when to request an individual to be a professional and/or personal employment reference;
* how and when to provide professional and personal employment references to potential employers;
* how references are used for background verifications;
* use of effective written correspondence when job searching;
* how to write cover letters for applications and résumés;
* how to write thank-you letters in response to employer correspondence and after meetings or interviews;
* how to use and write email correspondence during the job search; and
* how to use and write written correspondence sent through the US Postal Service.

##### Interviews

Interview training includes:

* the purpose of the interview process;
* the types and purposes of interviews, for example, screening, telephone, panel and/or group, behaviorally based, case, situational, and technical;
* the creation of a 30–60-second "elevator speech" that summarizes why the customer is a good candidate for the job;
* delivering the elevator speech;
* how to research businesses and employment positions before an interview;
* identifying and answering typical interview questions asked in the field relevant to the customer's employment goals;
* identifying questions to ask the employer when interviewing;
* identifying and responding to questions related to protected classes and disclosure;
* how to request assistance (advocate), including disability etiquette;
* how to respond to complicated questions addressing employment barriers, such as gaps in work history, criminal background history, limited work experience, and accommodation needs;
* personal presentation for interviews, such as grooming, dress, and manners; and
* completing and critiquing a minimum of two mock interviews.

Note: The VR counselor will indicate on the VR1845B when the mock interviews must be video-recorded.

##### Pre-employment Testing

Pre-employment testing training includes:

* the purpose of aptitude, skills, and literacy testing, and how the testing is conducted;
* the purpose of personality testing and how the testing is conducted;
* the purpose of physical ability testing measuring an applicant's ability to perform the tasks and physical functions of a job;
* the purpose of drug testing and how the testing is conducted; and
* accompanying the customer, as applicable, to pre-employment testing, when required for a job.

##### Job Searching

Job search training includes:

* how to research a business's unmet needs in relation to the customer's employment goal;
* how to use job websites and employer job boards to search for jobs related to the customer's employment goal;
* how to network with individuals who may know about an unposted employment opportunity; and
* registering for and using [WorkInTexas.com](https://www.workintexas.com/vosnet/Default.aspx) to search for jobs.

##### Job Acceptance and Preparing for the First Day on the Job

Job acceptance and preparing for the first day on the job training includes:

* learning about wages associated with the position, as the wages relate to the customer's skills and to the employer's location;
* identification and use of basic salary negotiation techniques;
* identification of the customer's job responsibilities and the employer's performance requirements for the position;
* identification of the customer's accommodation needs that can improve performance in the work setting (for example, environmental changes, assistive technology devices, and work process);
* how and when to request accommodations to address the customer's disability needs when necessary;
* how to secure transportation to the worksite;
* appropriate personal appearance necessary for the position (dress, hygiene, and manners);
* securing all documents necessary for the first day on the job;
* securing and demonstrating use of necessary items such as uniform and alarm clock;
* how to communicate individual needs to an employer; and
* expectations and expected behaviors when working at a job site.

Described below is the level of support the customer will receive for:

##### Bundled Basic Job Placement Services

The customer approved for Bundled Basic Job Placement Services will receive:

* instruction;
* assistance to learn skills;
* monitoring to ensure that the customer is demonstrating necessary skills;
* resources to assist the customer in the completion of tasks; and
* assistance with obtaining employment.

##### Bundled Enhanced Job Placement Services

The customer approved for Bundled Enhanced Job Placement Services will receive:

* repeated or hands-on instruction;
* extensive and comprehensive ongoing assistance to learn skills;
* assistance with tasks completed partially or fully by the job placement specialist, as necessary; and
* assistance with obtaining employment.

For both Basic and Enhanced Job Placement to meet Benchmark A, the customer must

* complete all training; and
* obtain a job and work five days (not cumulative calendar days) or five shifts at the job, with the customer working in a job that is achieving:
  + the employment goal, as identified on the VR1845B by matching one of the six-digit standard occupational classification codes (SOCs);
    - based on the job tasks the customer is performing which are included in the O'Net description (not based on the customer's job title);
  + 100 percent of the non-negotiable employment conditions; and
  + 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions identified on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan-Part B and Status Report.

The VR counselor will indicate on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan Part B and Status Report, how Benchmark A services may be provided, either in person at or away from job site, remotely, or combination, in person and remotely. The method services are delivered may be updated by the counselor using the VR1845B or SA.

In-person services may be provided at or away from the job site. Remote services must follow VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

#### 17.4.2.2 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark A Process and Procedure

The Employment Services Provider (ESP) receives the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. The referral form includes any documentation that will prepare the job placement specialist to better work with the customer, such as medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing results, and employment data collected by VR staff. The referral establishes the date and time for the Job Placement planning meeting, if known. When developing or amending the VR1845A or VR1845B a meeting is conducted in person or remotely.

The Job Placement planning meeting is held so that the customer, the VR counselor, and the job placement specialist can complete the:

* VR1845A, Bundled Job Placement Services Placement Plan–Part A; and
* VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report.

VR staff:

* complete each form electronically
* print the forms to obtain required signatures from the job placement specialist and the customer, and:
* provide signed copies to the customer and Job Placement Specialist and electronic fillable (Microsoft Word) form to the Job Placement Specialist.

VR1845A, Bundled Job Placement Services Placement Plan–Part A, determines whether the customer will receive Basic or Enhanced Job Placement Services and identifies the customer’s skills, abilities, experience, training, and education that relate to the training and job to be obtained.

VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report, determines:

* negotiable and non-negotiable employment conditions;
* when resume training is required;
* when mock interviews must be video recorded;
* up to three (3) employment goals, each including a six-digit SOC code and O’Net description of the job tasks and responsibilities; and
* any premiums that the ESP may be eligible to receive on completion of Benchmark C.

VR staff members and the customer will make the final decisions related to the employment goal, non-negotiable conditions, and Support Needs Assessment results found on the VR1845A, Bundled Job Placement Services Placement Plan–Part A, and the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report.

If, at any time, the customer's employment goal changes or non-negotiable conditions become negotiable or do not match the current VR1845B on file, an updated VR1845B must be completed via a meeting with the VR counselor, customer, and provider before the customer obtains employment.

If the customer obtains employment before the VR1845B is updated, and the VR counselor determines the job is appropriate for the customer, the VR counselor, customer, and job placement specialist will update and sign the VR1845B in a Job Placement plan meeting. The day after the date of the VR counselor's signature on the updated VR1845B will be used as the first date of employment.

The job placement specialist provides services to the customer meeting or exceeding the requirements in the Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark A service description.

It is expected that the job placement specialist will:

* network with businesses to identify employment opportunities;
* provide potential job leads to the customer; and
* assist the customer in pursuing job leads as the individual customer's needs dictate, and, when necessary, represent the customer to the business.

The customer may obtain the job on their own or through networking with friends, family, and other contacts using the skills obtained in training from the job placement specialist.

The job placement specialist completes the VR1846, Bundled Job Placement Services Benchmark A Training Report, and records the customer's status at Benchmark A completion on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report.

The job placement specialist is responsible for communicating all successes and challenges to the VR counselor. The job placement specialist also maintains routine communications as defined on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Benchmark Service Plan–Part B and Status Report.

When the customer requires additional services from VR to ensure long-term employment success, such as Job Skills Training or uniforms, the job placement specialist assists the customer in requesting the service from the VR counselor.

The job placement specialist documents the achievement of outcomes on the required forms using a computer and secures the required signatures, on or after the fifth day worked, before submitting a complete and accurate invoice.

#### 17.4.2.3 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark A Outcomes Required for Payment

To meet Benchmark A, the customer:

* must work five shifts on five different days, achieving the following as identified on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan-Part B and Status Report:
  + the employment goal on the form by matching one of the six-digit SOCs based on the job tasks the customer is performing which are included in the O’Net description (not based on the customer’s job title),
  + 100 percent of the non-negotiable employment conditions; and
  + 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions identified on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan-Part B and Status Report.

Payment for Benchmark A requires that the job placement specialist do the following:

* Document in descriptive terms all the information required by the Service Description on the VR1846, Bundled Job Placement Services Benchmark A Training Report, demonstrating evidence that:
  + all required training topics were covered;
  + the training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to six customers;
  + all necessary accommodations, compensatory techniques, and special needs were provided as necessary for the customer to learn the skills;
  + various instructional approaches were used to meet the customer's learning styles; and
  + all supplies and resources were provided so that the customer could participate in the training.
* Submit required copies of the customer's completed:
  + VR1850, Employment Data Sheet or equivalent that includes all topics addressed on the VR1850;
  + résumé, when required on the VR1845B;
  + written copy of the elevator speech; and
  + video-recorded mock interviews, when requested on the VR1845B.
* Provide the required training and support, as outlined in the service description and the VR1845A, Bundled Job Placement Services Placement Plan–Part A, the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report.
* Document, in descriptive terms, the information required on VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report, including:
  + information describing the current employer;
  + information describing the customer's employment, work setting, and environment;
  + date employment began;
  + evidence that the customer has worked at the job site for at least five days and/or shifts;
  + evidence that the placement secured meets:
    - one of the six-digit SOCs listed within the employment goals based on the job tasks the customer is performing which are included in the O’Net description (not based on the customer’s job title);
    - 100 percent of the non-negotiable employment conditions; and
    - 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions;
  + services delivered as indicated in the Service Delivery section of the VR1845B or SA (in person at or away from job site, remotely, or combination, in person and remotely);
  + evidence that the job placement specialist assisted the customer in job development activities necessary for securing the job placement;
  + any accommodations, compensatory techniques, or special training that the customer needs to increase performance, if any;
  + any consultations made with the business, if any;
  + customer satisfaction and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP may be verified through either a signature on the VR1845B or by a VR staff member's contact with the customer; and
* Submit a complete and accurate invoice.

For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

This is an outcome-based benchmark service; therefore, VR will not pay the invoice unless all outcomes in the service description are achieved.

### 17.4.3 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark B

#### 17.4.3.1 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark B Service Description

To meet Benchmark B, the customer must:

* Maintain a job 45 days, with the customer working in a job with same employer in the same position, achieving the following as identified on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan-Part B and Status Report:
  + the employment goal on form by matching one of the six-digit SOCs based on the job tasks the customer is performing which are included in the O’Net description (not based on the customer’s job title);
  + 100 percent of the non-negotiable employment conditions; and
  + 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions identified on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan-Part B and Status Report.

When a customer accepts a new position with the same or new employer, the customer must work 45 days in the new position. The count begins over at day one and continues until the customer reaches 45 days of employment in the new position prior to achievement of Benchmark B.  The provider must resubmit an updated VR1845B for each benchmark.

The job placement specialist must have at least two visits with the customer between the 6th day of employment and the 45th day of employment, and must monitor the customer's job placement to ensure the customer:

* continues to meet the employer's expectations; and
* receives all the necessary accommodations and training to ensure long-term employment success.

VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan—Part B and Status Report or SA will indicate whether the visits can be done in person at or away from job site, remotely, or combination, in person and remotely.

Remote visits may be facilitated using a computer-based platform that allows for face-to-face and/or real time interaction and use video telecommunication services and software such as Video Relay Services or FaceTime.

TWC-VR does not allow use of non-video telecommunication (phone) or text messages to customers to be used to conduct visits.

For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery for requirements and 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

#### 17.4.3.2 Process and Procedure

The customer continues his or her employment, working the required hours each week. The job placement specialist monitors the customer to ensure he or she continues to work and is meeting the expectations of the employer and ensuring all non-negotiable, 50% of negotiable conditions and employment goal continue to be met.

If the customer loses the job, the customer's progression toward completion of the benchmark ends. The job placement specialist must meet with the customer and VR counselor to:

* evaluate the reason(s) the customer lost the job and develop a plan to address any identified issues; and
* review and update a new VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report, when new employment conditions or goals need to be established.

Before submitting an accurate invoice, the job placement specialist documents the achievement of outcomes on VR1845B using the form sent by the VR staff and secures the required signatures on or after the 45th day of employment.

When a job is lost, the customer begins with Benchmark A  to secure another position.  The training is only required if the customer needs to reenforce skills taught prior to the first placement.  The provider is not paid a second time for Benchmark A.

#### 17.4.3.3 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark B Outcomes Required for Payment

The customer must maintain competitive integrated employment for 45 cumulative calendar days at the same employer, in the same position, working in a job achieving:

* one of the six-digit SOCs listed within the employment goals based on the job tasks the customer is performing which are included in the O'Net description (not based on the customer's job title);
* 100 percent of the non-negotiable employment conditions; and
* 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions identified on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report.

For payment for Benchmark B, the job placement specialist must do the following:

* Document in descriptive terms the information required on VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report, including:
  + verification of the customer’s placement and employer information is updated and accurate in the Job Placement Information section of the form;
  + verification the customer has worked 45 cumulative calendar days;
  + evidence the placement secured continues to meet:
    - one of the six-digit SOCs listed within the employment goals based on the job tasks the customer is performing which are included in the O’Net description (not based on the customer’s job title),
    - 100 percent of the non-negotiable employment conditions; and
    - 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions;
  + evidence the job placement specialist made at least two visits with the customer, in person at or away from the job site, remotely, or combination, in person and remotely, as indicated on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan—Part B and Status Report or SA, between the sixth day and/or shift of employment and the 45th day of employment;
  + evidence the job placement specialist monitored the customer's job placement to ensure the customer continues to meet the employer's expectations and has the accommodations and training necessary to ensure long-term employment success;
  + description of contacts made with the business;
  + customer satisfaction and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP may be verified through either a signature on the VR1845B, or by a VR staff member's contact with the customer; and
* Submit a complete and accurate invoice.

For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

This is an outcome-based benchmark service; therefore, VR will not pay the invoice unless all outcomes in the service description are achieved.

### 17.4.4 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark C

#### 17.4.4.1 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark C Service Description

To meet Benchmark C, the customer must:

* Maintain a job 90 days, with the customer working in a job with same employer in the same position, achieving the following as identified on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan-Part B and Status Report:
  + the employment goal on form by matching one of the six-digit SOCs based on the job tasks the customer is performing which are included in the O’Net description (not based on the customer’s job title);
  + 100 percent of the non-negotiable employment conditions; and
  + 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions identified on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan-Part B and Status Report.

When a customer accepts a new position with the same or new employer,  the customer must work 90 days in the new position. The count begins over at day one and continues until the customer reaches 90 days of employment in the new position prior to achievement of Benchmark C. The provider must resubmit an updated VR1845B for each benchmark.

The job placement specialist must have at least two visits with the customer between the 45th and 90th day of employment and monitor the customer's job placement to ensure the customer:

* continues to meet the employer's expectations; and
* receives all the necessary accommodations and training to ensure long-term employment success.

VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan—Part B and Status Report or SA will indicate whether the visits can be done in person at or away from job site, remotely, or combination, in person and remotely.

TWC-VR does not allow use of non-video telecommunication (phone) or text messages to customers to be used to conduct site visits.

For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery for requirements and 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

#### 17.4.4.2 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark C Process and Procedure

The customer continues his or her employment, working required hours each week. The job placement specialist monitors the customer to ensure he or she continues to work and is meeting the expectations of the employer ensuring all non-negotiable, 50% of negotiable conditions, and employment goal continue to be met.

Before submitting an accurate invoice, the job placement specialist documents the achievement of outcomes on VR1845B using the form sent by VR staff, and secures the required signatures on or after the 90th day of employment before submitting an accurate invoice.

If the customer loses the job, the customer's progression toward completion of the benchmark ends and the job placement specialist must meet with the customer and VR counselor to:

* evaluate the reason(s) the customer lost the job and develop a plan to address any identified issues; and
* review and update a new VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report, when new employment conditions or goals need to be established.

When a job is lost, the customer begins with Benchmark A to secure another position. The training is only required if the customer needs to reenforce skills taught prior to the first placement.

When Employment Services premiums have been authorized and the requirements are met, the provider is paid upon achievement of Benchmark C.

#### 17.4.4.3 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark C Outcomes Required for Payment

The customer must maintain competitive integrated employment for 90 cumulative calendar days with the same employer, in the same position, working in a job achieving:

* one of the six-digit SOCs listed within the employment goals, based on the job tasks the customer is performing which are included in the O’Net description (not based on the customer’s job title);
* 100 percent of the non-negotiable employment conditions; and
* 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions identified on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan-Part B and Status Report.

For payment for Benchmark C, the job placement specialist must do the following:

* Document in descriptive terms the information required on VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report, including:
  + verification of the customer’s placement and employer information is updated and accurate in the Job Placement Information section of the form;
  + verification the customer has worked for at least 90 cumulative calendar days in the same position with the same employer
  + evidence the placement secured continues to meet:
    - all six-digits of the SOCs listed within the employment goals based on the job tasks the customer is performing which are included in the O’Net description (not based on the customer’s job title),
    - 100 percent of the non-negotiable employment conditions; and
    - 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions;
  + evidence the job placement specialist made at least two visits with the customer, in person at or away from job site, remotely, or combination, in person and remotely as indicated on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan–Part B and Status Report or SA comments, between the 46th day of employment and the 90th day of employment;
  + evidence the job placement specialist monitored the customer's job placement to ensure the customer continues to meet the employer's expectations and has the accommodations and training necessary to ensure long-term employment success;
  + customer satisfaction and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP can be verified through either a signature on the VR1845B, or by a VR staff member's contact with the customer;
  + description of contacts made with the business; and
* Submit a complete and accurate invoice.

For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

This is an outcome-based benchmark service; therefore, VR will not pay unless all outcomes in the Service Description are achieved.

## 17.5 Job Skills Training

### 17.5.1 Job Skills Training Service Description

Job Skills Training:

* teaches skills;
* reinforces skills; and
* develops or sets up accommodations and/or compensatory techniques to increase the customer's independence and ability to meet the employer's expectations.

All Job Skills Training is goal-focused, with the customer's goals and abilities documented on VR3314, Job Skills Training—Referral and VR3315, Job Skills Training Progress Report. Job Skills Training is limited to 200 hours per customer for the life of the customer's VR case.

Job Skills Trainers can also work with employers to address topics such as disability education, accommodations, and advocacy.

Job Skills Training should not interrupt daily business operations.

Job Skills Training is only used with job placements and job retention when the customer's placement is related to permanent employment towards VR closure.  Work Experience Training should be used for temporary work, seasonal work, internships, and volunteer opportunities.

VR purchases Job Skills Training when a customer needs more training and support than provided by the employer. The business, customer, job skills trainer, and VR counselor are involved in the training plan and monitor the customer's performance.

All Job Skills Training is goal-focused, with the customer's goals and abilities documented on VR3314, Job Skills Training—Referral and VR3315, Job Skills Training Progress Report. Job Skills Training is limited to 200 hours per customer for the life of the customer's VR case.

Job Skills Training provides training tailored to the needs of the customer in either one to one or group setting at or away from the job site (includes working from home). Job Skill Trainers may first complete a job analysis to identify the job duties, processes, employer culture, followed by developing a specific plan as to how they can best train the employee to meet the employer's expectations. Training should allow the customer to receive immediate feedback, assistance, and follow-up as they are learning skills such as, but not limited to, job responsibilities and interpersonal communication, behavior management, or use of transportation resources. Job skills training should be provided through the least intrusive method possible. The amount of Job Skills Training is gradually reduced, when applicable, when the customer becomes better adjusted and more independent and no longer needs training support or monitoring. Training can be performed in a relatively informal way or with specific structured interventions covering topics such as:

* identifying accommodations and supports the employee can use to be successful, such as job aids and natural supports;
* providing on-site training that reinforces the employer's expectations and procedures;
* supporting the customer in acclimating to the workplace culture and etiquette;
* addressing interpersonal skills necessary to be accepted as a worker at the job site and in related community contacts;
* facilitating communication between co-workers and supervisors;
* identifying cost effective assistive technology or other aides that will help the employee perform job functions;
* training natural and extended support providers who will provide long-term supports to the customer to foster long-term employment; and/or
* addressing travel training and other work issues related to maintaining the employment.

There are times when providing job skills services onsite may not be possible and/or preferred. A customer with a disability may not wish to have an onsite Job Skills Trainer, for example, because they do not want to draw attention from fellow coworkers or be the subject of a stigmatizing belief of coworkers. At times, an employer may not be able to accommodate onsite Job Skills Training due to security requirements. When these situations occur, and onsite Job Skills Training is not ideal, remote Job Skills Training may be a good solution.

The first Job Skills Training session must be held in person, at or away from the job site, to evaluate the customer's and employer's training needs and to set-up the necessary equipment and software necessary to facilitate the remote service delivery.

VR3314, Job Skills Training—Referral or SA must indicate whether the training can be done as a combination of remote and in-person training for a customer or if the training should all be done in person. The VR counselor, customer, provider, and the employer must all be involved in the decision to allow remote Job Skills Training when at a job site. The employer must agree to allow use of the technology, internet and/or devices to be used by the customer at the job site. The use of the technology, internet and/or devices should not exclude or stigmatize the customer. If the referral indicates remote Job Skills Training is to be provided when the customer is at the job site and the business does not allow for use of technology, internet and/or devices, the Job Skills Trainer must notify the VR counselor to discuss the delivery of the training and receive an SA or an updated referral indicating how services can be delivered.

Any remote Job Skills Training should be able to address the following when it is associated with a customer's Job Skills Training goal(s):

* meet the support and communication needs of the customer;
* be suitable for the customer's work environment;
* should fit within the customer's work environment (can include telework environments); and
* allow for "normal" employer routines without disruption;
* allow for observation of interpersonal interactions (verbal and non-verbal) between customer, co-worker and supervisors;
* allow for training, use of natural supports and foster the customer's acceptance in the work environment.

Examples of Job Skills Training using technology and applications on smart devices, tablets, or similar devices include:

* programming smart devices for To-Do lists, reminder alerts, or to identify a sequence of steps in a process;
* use a video camera and microphone to model new job tasks, observe task demonstration, or communicate feedback;
* use video calls to communicate with the customer to provide assistance with problem solving any unexpected situations that arise at work.

Remote Job Skills Training can be facilitated using a computer-based training platform that allows for face-to-face and/or real time interaction and use video telecommunication services and software such as Video Relay Services or FaceTime.

TWC-VR does not allow use of non-video telecommunication or text messages to customers for training purposes.

Any remote training must be in compliance with VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery and 3.2.7 Confidentiality.

For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery for requirements and 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

VR pays for job skills only if the customer is placed in competitive, integrated employment in an organization or business that is not owned, operated, controlled, or governed by the service provider providing the Job Skills Training service. Service providers that are state agencies, state universities, or facilities that are a part of a state university system are exempt from this requirement.

#### 17.5.1.1 Purchasing Job Skills Training for Extended Services for Youth with Disabilities

VR may provide Extended Services to VR customers who are youth with disabilities for a period of up to four years or until the youth reaches age 25 and no longer meets the definition of a "youth with a disability," whichever occurs first. (See Glossary for definition of "youth with disabilities.")

A VR counselor can only purchase Job Skills Training as an Extended Service when all other available resources for Extended Services, such as Medicaid Waiver Programs, natural supports, other public agencies, and/or private nonprofit organizations are not available for a customer. The goals for Job Skills Training must address the Extended Service needs of the customer. The customer must achieve Supported Employment Job Stability status, before the VR counselor can purchase Job Skills Training for Extended Services. Extended Services may be purchased simultaneously only with the Supported Employment Benchmark 6 Case Closure and not for any Supported Employment Benchmarks prior to Benchmark 6.

Job Skills Training for Extended Services can be provided either at the employment site or off-site when necessary to maintain employment. Examples of Extended Services that can be provided through Job Skills Training include, but are not limited to:

* training to assist with development of soft and hard skills to ensure the customer is meeting the expectation of the employer;
* setting up accommodations;
* transportation;
* Social Security income reporting; and
* managing the customer's work schedule.

Both the Job Skills Trainer and VR counselor should continually evaluate the customer's need for Extended Services and the availability of resources other than VR's sponsorship of Job Skills Training to provide the Extended Services.  VR must stop purchasing Job Skills Training for Extended Service when the customer:

* no longer needs Extended Services to maintain employment;
* can receive Extended Services from another resource(s);
* has received Job Skills Training for a total period of four years;
* has reached the age of 25; or
* no longer meets the definition of a "youth with a disability."

Before a Job Skills Trainer can provide Job Skills Training for Extended Services to a customer, a VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services must be approved by the VR division director. A new VR3472 must be approved by the VR division director for every 200 hours of Job Skills Training authorized for the customer.

### 17.5.2 Job Skills Training Process and Procedure

The VR counselor, with input from the customer, job site, and Job Skills Trainer, identifies on the VR3314, Job Skills Training—Referral or the services authorization comment line:

* the goals to be addressed with the customer; and
* how the Job Skills Training can be delivered (in person and/or a combination of remote and in-person training).

When additional goals are identified, the job skills trainer adds them to the VR3315, Job Skills Training Progress Report.

An updated SA may identify the method (in-person, combination) job skills training is to be provided when the customer's circumstances are different than what was anticipated when the referral was completed.

The Job Skills Trainer provides the training as identified on the VR3314, SA and addresses the goals on the VR3314 and VR3315.  The first Job Skills Training session must be held in person, at or away from the job site, to evaluate the customer's and employer's training needs and to set-up the necessary equipment and software necessary to facilitate the remote service delivery.

When the training is complete, the Job Skills Trainer records on the VR3315 the customer's abilities and challenges as well as observations and recommendations related to the Job Skills Training goals. Only one Job Skills Trainer can document on the VR3315.

When an SA approves a premium to be purchased with the Job Skills Training, the applicable requirements outlined in the VR-SFP Chapter 20: Premiums must be followed. For example, the VR1882, Autism Premium Report, must be submitted each time the VR3315 is submitted.

When additional hours of Job Skills Training are necessary for the customer to achieve his or her goals, the provider must receive an updated SA for additional hours before any service delivery occurs.

The provider must submit a complete and accurate VR3315 with the invoice. Once the form and invoice have been approved by the VR counselor, the invoice is paid.

### 17.5.3 Job Skills Training Outcomes Required for Payment

The job skills trainer must:

* use structured intervention techniques or informally train a customer to implement the most effective and least intrusive methods at or away from job site, in-person or combination as indicated on the VR3314 or in the SA;
* provide training to help the customer learn the essential soft and hard skills of the job and/or the skills necessary to arrange and use transportation to get to and from the job site;
* work with the customer, employer, and VR staff members to establish the support services, accommodations, compensatory techniques, and training necessary to address barriers and ensure successful employment for the customer;
* observe the customer to identify and solve potential problems related to the customer's employment success before the problem becomes an issue for the customer, employer, or coworkers;
* monitor the customer's performance to ensure improvement in the customer's job performance; and
* gradually reduce the time spent with the customer when applicable in the delivery of Job Skills Training, as the customer becomes better adjusted and more independent.

For payment of Job Skills Training, the job skills trainer must do the following:

* Document in descriptive terms the information required on VR3315, Job Skills Training Progress Report, including:
  + The Job Skills Training goals
    - as identified on VR3314, Job Skills Training—Referral;
    - as identified on the SA, when applicable; and
    - that emerged during the training, when applicable.
  + The method training was facilitated, individual or group, in person or a combination of in person and remote;
  + The customer's progress for each training session, with each entry including:
    - date the service was provided (xx-xx-xx);
    - start time of session (x:xx a.m. or p.m.);
    - end time of session;
    - record the total number of minutes of each session;
    - number of goals addressed in the training session; and
    - a narrative description of the services provided by the job skills trainer and the customer's performance of skills related to the customer's goals.
  + Total the amount of time for all training provided for the reporting period using quarter-hour (.25) increments. Round the total up when equal to or greater than 8 minutes and round down for 7 or less minutes. For example, the total time was 68 minutes, which is equivalent to 1.25 hours. (Note: .25 = 15 minutes, .50 = 30 minutes, .75 = 45 minutes, and 1.0 = 60 minutes.)
  + Premiums, when applicable.
  + Customer satisfaction and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP can be verified through either a signature on the VR1845B, or a VR staff member’s contact with the customer.
* Submit a complete and accurate invoice.

For more information, refer to VR-SFP sections 3.2.14 Documentation and 3.2.16 Signatures.

Payment for Job Skills Training is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3315, Job Skills Training Progress Report; and
* invoice.

VR will not pay any fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays. When an SA for the Autism Premium is issued, the VR1882, Autism Premium Report must be submitted each time the VR3315 is submitted. For more information, see VR-SFP Chapter 20: Premiums.

## 17.6 Basic Employment Service Fees

A provider cannot collect money from a VR customer or the customer's family for any service. If VR and another resource are paying for a service for a customer, the total payment must not exceed the fee specified in the Standards for Providers manual.

Premium Services may be available for some Basic Employment Services. Premium Services are paid after all deliverables for the service have been made. For more information, refer to Chapter 20: Premiums.

### 17.6.1 Non-Bundled Employment Services

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Services** | **Unit Rate** | **Comment** |
| Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training Service | $459.00 | Can only be purchased one time per customer |
| Interview Training Service | $368.00 | Can only be purchased one time per customer |

### 17.6.2 Basic Job Placement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Bundled Employment Services** | **Unit Rate** | **Comment** |
| Benchmark A: Job Placement—5 days | $1103.00 | * Reduction payment applies if a Non-Bundled Job Placement Service was previously purchased for an adult VR customer. Students or youth with a disability may receive Non-Bundled and Bundled Job Placement services when necessary for the customer to achieve his or her vocational goals. |
| Benchmark A: BASIC Job Placement—5 days PRORATED when VAT Job Search Training previously purchased | $263.00 |  |
| Benchmark A: BASIC Job Placement—5 days PRORATED when Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet, Application, Resume Training previously purchased | $643.00 |  |
| Benchmark A: BASIC Job Placement—5 days PRORATED when Non-Bundled Interview Training previously purchased | $735.00 |  |
| Benchmark A: BASIC Job Placement—5 days PRORATED when both Non-Bundled services-Employment Data Sheet Application and Resume and Interviewing Training previously purchased | $276.00 |  |
| Benchmark B: Job Placement—45 days | $551.00 | * Customer must work at least 45 days in the same position with the same employer before achievement of Benchmark B. |
| Benchmark C: Job Placement—90 days | $1103.00 | * Customer must work at least 90 days in the same position with the same employer before achievement of Benchmark C. |

### 17.6.3 Enhanced Job Placement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Benchmark** | **Unit Rate** | **Comment** |
| Benchmark A: Job Placement—5 days | $1,470.00 | * Reduction payment applies if a Non-Bundled Job Placement services was previously purchased for an adult VR customer. Students or youth with a disability may receive Non-Bundled and Bundled Job Placement services when necessary for the customer to achieve their vocational goals. |
| Benchmark A: ENHANCED Job Placement—5 days PRORATED when VAT Job Search Training previously purchased | $631.00 |  |
| Benchmark A: ENHANCED Job Placement—5 days PRORATED when Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet Application, and Resume Training previously purchased | $1011.00 |  |
| Benchmark A: ENHANCED Job Placement—5 days PRORATED when Non-Bundled Interview Training previously purchased | $1103.00 |  |
| Benchmark A: ENHANCED Job Placement—5 days PRORATED when both Non-Bundled services-Employment Data Sheet, Application and Resume and Interviewing training previously purchased | $643.00 |  |
| Benchmark B: Job Placement—45 days | $735.00 | * Customer must work at least 45 days in the same position with the same employer before achievement of Benchmark B. |
| Benchmark C: Job Placement—90 days | $1,470.00 | * Customer must work 90 days in the same position with the same employer before the achievement of Benchmark C. |

### 17.6.4 Job Skills Training

Note: The maximum total of hours of Job Skills Training is 200. This total includes both Individual and Group Job Skills.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Service** | **Unit Rate** | **Comments** |
| Individual Job Skills Training | $46.00 per hour | * For a maximum of 200 hours |
| Group Job Skills Training | $23.00 per hour | * No more than four individuals in a group * For a maximum of 200 hours per individual in the group |
| Job Skills Training for Extended Services for Youth with Disabilities | $45.00 per hour | * An approved VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services required before the purchase. * A new VR3472 required before every 200 hours issued with an SA |

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 18: Supported Employment Services

The contractor and contractor staff that provide services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1-3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

## 18.1 Supported Employment Overview

Supported Employment (SE) services are based on a “Place, Then Train” model, designed to provide customers with the most significant disabilities the supports they need to achieve competitive integrated employment. SE services include individualized job development and placement services, ongoing supports such as intensive job skills training, and arrangement of extended services (funded, paid, and/or natural supports) to help customers sustain meaningful long-term employment.

For additional information about SE, refer to VR-SFP 18.10: SE Resources.

SE is an all-inclusive service. Therefore, the following Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services may not be purchased while a customer is receiving SE services from an Employment Services Provider:

* Bundled Job Placement
* Job Skills Training\*
* Non-bundled Job Placement
* On-the-Job Training (OJT)
* Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT)
* Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT)
* Environmental Work Assessment
* Vocational Evaluation
* Project SEARCH
* Work Adjustment Training (WAT)
* Work Experience Services (WE)

\*Under special circumstances, VR may purchase job skills training as an extended service for VR customers who are youth with disabilities. For information on how job skills training can be used as an extended service for VR customers who are youth with disabilities, refer to VR-SFP 18.7.1.1: Youth with Disabilities and VR-SFP Chapter 17, Section 17.5.1.1 Purchasing Job Skills Training for Extended Services for Youth with Disabilities.

Any request to change any SE Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services, before the change is implemented. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 18.9 Benchmark and Service Fees.

## 18.2 Staff Qualifications

Before services are provided to customers, the service provider's director must approve the VR3455, Provider Staff Information, completed by each staff member and submit approved forms to the provider's assigned VR regional quality assurance specialist or designee. The staff member's qualifications must be documented on VR3455 and provide evidence, such as transcripts, diplomas, reference letters, credentials, and/or licenses, of meeting all qualifications. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.4 Staff Required Documentation.

It is preferred, but not required, that the provider staff has a varied and successful work history and experience working with individuals with disabilities.

An SE specialist must have:

* a current University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion & Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE) Supported Employment Specialist credential; and
* a high school diploma or GED; however, a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation, business, marketing, or related human services is preferred.

NOTE: If an UNTWISE Supported Employment Specialist credential was obtained before February 1, 2022, then TWC-VR Supported Employment Training administered by UNTWISE must be successfully completed before the delivery of SE services.

A job skills trainer must have:

* a current UNTWISE Job Skills Training credential; and
* a high school diploma or GED.

## 18.3 Referral to Supported Employment Services

A Career Planning Assessment (CPA) must be completed before referring a customer to SE. If an Environmental Work Assessment (EWA) was conducted, then payment for the CPA may be prorated. When payment for the CPA is prorated, the work skills assessment is not completed on the CPA. For more information on EWAs and CPAs, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 4: Employment Assessments.

VR staff sends VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, and a service authorization (SA) to the SE specialist before the SE Plan meeting. The VR counselor should provide relevant documentation, such as a Benefits Planning Query (BPQY); case notes; psychological, vocational, or medical evaluations; and a copy of the CPA and EWA (if done by a different provider), to prepare the provider to work with the customer.

## 18.4 Supported Employment Plan

### 18.4.1 Supported Employment Plan Service Description

The SE Plan provides the framework for how the SE specialist will help the customer achieve competitive integrated employment. The SE Plan is completed during the SE Plan meeting by the VR counselor, using person-centered approaches, in collaboration with the customer, the customer’s circle of support, and the SE specialist. The SE Plan must align with the customer’s interests, preferences, potential job tasks, and identified employment conditions. The SE Plan also identifies the customer’s resources, support needs, extended services (both available and needed), potential employers, and any available premiums. VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report, must be reviewed and agreed upon by the customer, the SE specialist, and the VR counselor.

### 18.4.2 Supported Employment Plan Process and Procedure

When developing or amending the SE Plan, a meeting is conducted in person or remotely.

#### 18.4.2.1 Developing the Supported Employment Plan

When developing the SE Plan, the VR counselor must:

* review VR1630, Career Planning Assessment;
* complete VR1632 with the customer, SE specialist, and circle of support;
* maintain a signed version of VR1632 in the VR case file;
* provide a signed copy of VR1632 to the customer and SE specialist;
* provide an electronically fillable copy of VR1632 to the SE specialist; and
* request that VR staff issue SAs to the SE specialist for:
  + supported employment job development and placement benchmark; and
  + any relevant premiums.

#### 18.4.2.2 Amending the Supported Employment Plan

The SE Plan is amended when supported by the VR counselor and based on the customer’s informed choice and decision to change the preferences, interests, potential job tasks, and employment conditions listed on VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report.

To amend the SE Plan, the VR counselor must:

* contact the customer to determine whether an update to the SE Plan is needed;
* request that VR staff issue an SA to the SE specialist for the SE Plan Update Meeting;
* schedule the meeting to update the SE Plan;
* revise VR1632 with the customer, SE specialist, and circle of support;
* obtain new signatures;
* file the updated, signed copy of VR1632 in the customer’s VR case file;
* provide an updated, signed copy of VR1632 to the customer and SE specialist;
* provide the updated, electronically fillable copy of VR1632 to the SE specialist; and
* ensure all required SAs are up to date.

The SE specialist must follow the procedures in VR-SFP 18.4.3 to invoice for any additional SE Plan meetings.

### 18.4.3 Supported Employment Plan Outcomes Required for Payment

During the development or amendment of the SE Plan, the SE specialist must participate in and contribute to the discussion during the meeting as indicated by his or her signature on VR1632.

After any SE Plan meeting, the provider submits an invoice for participation in the meeting. The date of the SE Plan meeting is used as the date of service on the invoice.

## 18.5 Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark

### 18.5.1 Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark Service Description

The SE specialist conducts job development and placement activities consistent with the customer’s preferences, interests, potential job tasks, and employment conditions identified in the SE Plan.

### 18.5.2 Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark Process and Procedure

During the job development and placement benchmark process, the SE specialist contacts employers that may have job opportunities for the customer that are consistent with the SE Plan. The SE specialist contacts employers that are within the customer’s preferred geographic region, including businesses known to the customer and his or her circle of support, previous employers, and networking communities. The SE specialist conducts job preparation activities with the customer, such as interview preparation, application completion, and résumé development.

The provider ensures the customer is placed in competitive integrated employment consistent with the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable conditions identified on VR1632. The job development and placement benchmark is not achieved until the customer works a minimum of five shifts on five different days.

Once the customer is placed, VR counselor must request that VR staff issue SAs to the SE specialist for one or two job retention periods, based on the customer’s needs.

The SE specialist completes a job analysis to identify the:

* customer’s essential and episodic work tasks and responsibilities;
* physical, environmental, and work pace demands of the job;
* social interactions in the workplace;
* supervision at the worksite;
* employer’s orientation, training and supports;
* customer’s response to the job; and
* training and supports needed for ongoing supports and extended services.

After the job analysis is complete, the SE specialist identifies goals on the training plan to be used in the delivery of ongoing supports during job retention.

There are times when providing ongoing supports at a jobsite may not be possible or preferred. A customer with a disability may not wish to have an onsite job skills trainer, for example, because they do not want to draw attention from fellow coworkers or be the subject of a stigmatizing belief of coworkers. At times, an employer may not accommodate onsite training and support due to security requirements or safety. When these situations occur, and onsite training and support is not ideal, remote training and support may be a solution. Any remote training and support should align with a customer’s goals on the training plan and be designed to:

* meet the support and communication needs of the customer;
* be suitable for the customer's work environment;
* fit within the customer's work environment (can include telework environments);
* allow for "normal" work routines without disruption;
* allow for observation of interactions (verbal and non-verbal) between customer, coworkers, and supervisors; and
* allow for training, use of natural supports and foster the customer's acceptance in the work environment.

For additional information about remote services, refer to VR-SFP 18.10: SE Resources.

Any remote training must be in compliance with VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery and 3.2.7 Confidentiality.

When the customer’s situation requires remote service delivery and the VR counselor supports the delivery of remote training, as indicated on the VR1632, the SE specialist evaluates the customer's and employer's training needs during the job analysis. The SE specialist must coordinate the equipment and software necessary to facilitate remote service delivery during job retention.

Once the customer is placed, the SE specialist and/or the job skills trainer provides ongoing supports at or away from the jobsite. Ongoing supports may include a variety of support activities chosen by the provider to help the customer maintain employment, such as:

* job orientation and assessment;
* transportation or travel training;
* evaluating the customer’s training and support needs;
* intensive job skills training;
* developing and maintaining production levels as expected by the employer;
* advocating for the acceptance of the worker and his or her integration into the workplace;
* advocating in support of the customer’s employment to his or her support network, treatment service providers, and benefits program coordinators;
* helping the customer understand employment benefits (for example, vacation, sick leave, and insurance);
* discussing reasonable accommodations with the employer;
* developing a support network that accommodates and positively reinforces the customer’s role as an employee; and
* communicating with the VR counselor regarding the job development and placement.

The SE specialist completes VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report; VR1633, Supported Employment Job Development and Job Analysis Report; and the training plan section on VR1634, Supported Employment Training Plan and Job Retention Report.

### 18.5.3 Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark Outcomes Required for Payment

The SE specialist documents all information require on VR1632, VR1633, and VR1634, as well as verifies that the customer:

* has worked a minimum of five shifts on five different days; and
* is working in competitive integrated employment that meets the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions identified in the SE Plan.

The VR counselor must verify that the customer is working in competitive integrated employment and meeting the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions on the VR1632 before payment of a benchmark.

For payment, the provider submits:

* a signed, accurate, and complete VR1632, VR1633, and VR1634; and
* an invoice.

## 18.6 Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark

### 18.6.1 Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark Service Description

The job retention benchmark begins the day after the customer has achieved the job development and placement benchmark. During the job retention benchmark, the customer receives ongoing supports provided by the SE specialist and/or job skills trainer, under the supervision of the SE specialist, including intensive job skills training and the development of extended supports.

Ongoing supports are provided at or away from the jobsite through the least intrusive method possible and should be gradually reduced when the customer becomes better adjusted and more independent.

Ongoing supports address the goals in the training plan and may be provided in a relatively informal way or with specific structured interventions covering topics such as:

* identifying accommodations and supports the employee can use to be successful, such as job aids and natural supports;
* providing onsite training that reinforces the employer's expectations and procedures;
* supporting the customer in acclimating to the workplace culture and etiquette;
* addressing interpersonal skills necessary to be accepted as a worker at the jobsite and in related community contacts;
* facilitating communication between coworkers and supervisors;
* identifying cost effective assistive technology or other aides that will help the employee perform job functions;
* training natural and extended support providers who will provide long-term supports to the customer to foster long-term employment;
* addressing travel training and other work issues related to maintaining the employment;
* helping the customer understand employment benefits (e.g., vacation, sick leave, insurance);
* advocating in support of the customer’s employment to his or her support network, treatment service providers, and benefits program coordinators; and
* communicating with the VR counselor regarding the job development and placement.

Each job retention benchmark consists of 28 cumulative calendar days during which the SE specialist must:

* visit the customer in person a minimum of two times at or away from the jobsite, however, the provider should visit multiple times to:
  + provide ongoing supports;
  + ensure that the customer is meeting the employer’s expectations; and
  + ensure that extended supports have been identified.
* make a minimum of one contact with the employer to ensure employer satisfaction; and
* verify that the customer has competitive integrated employment consistent with the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions identified on VR1632.

The job retention benchmark may be purchased multiple times until the customer either achieves job stability or to reestablish job stability.

### 18.6.2 Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark Process and Procedure

#### 18.6.2.1 Providing Ongoing Supports

During the job retention benchmark period, the SE specialist and/or job skills trainer, under the direction of the SE specialist, continues to provide ongoing supports at or away from the jobsite and documents services provided on VR1634, Supported Employment Training Plan and Retention Report. The goals listed on VR1634 are updated throughout job retention. Ongoing supports may include a variety of support activities identified by the provider to help the customer retain the job, such as:

* intensive job skills training;
* establishing natural supports from supervisors, coworkers, community members, friends, or family members who provide mentoring, training, inclusion in social activities at work, transportation, skills development, and feedback on job performance; or
* coordinating a plan for transition with the customer’s extended service providers.

NOTE: Natural supports that are more permanent may serve as a form of long-term support needed to establish job stability.

When the SE specialist cannot contact the employer based on the customer’s informed choice, a VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services, must be approved by the VR director.

If a customer requires more than two job retention benchmark periods, the SE specialist must request a job stability review meeting.

During the job retention benchmark, the VR counselor:

* reviews all documentation submitted by the provider;
* requests VR staff issue SAs to the SE specialist for the job stability review meeting; and
* when requested by the provider, schedules the job stability review meeting with the SE specialist and the customer.

### 18.6.3 Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark Outcomes Required for Payment

During each 28-day job retention benchmark period, the SE specialist meets with the customer and employer and documents on VR1634:

* a minimum of two in-person visits with the customer, at or away from the jobsite;
* a minimum of one contact with the employer in order to monitor the employer’s satisfaction with the customer’s performance during the SE benchmark period; and
* any updates to the training plan, additional training sessions, and the reporting period summary.

The SE specialist documents on VR1632:

* the verification that the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions continue to be met on VR1632;
* any updates to the extended services section, if necessary; and
* any updates to the employment information section for the reported period.

For payment, the provider submits:

* a signed, accurate, and complete VR1632 and VR1634; and
* an invoice.

The VR counselor must:

* ensure that extended services (funded, paid, and/or natural supports) are arranged, as necessary; and
* verify that the customer is working in competitive integrated employment and meeting the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions on VR1632 before payment of a benchmark.

## 18.7 Supported Employment Job Stability Review

### 18.7.1 Supported Employment Job Stability Review Service Description

A job stability review is completed when the customer:

* appears he or she will be job stable at the completion of the current job retention benchmark; or
* appears to need additional job retention services after two 28-day job retention benchmark periods.

The customer must complete at least one 28-day job retention benchmark to be eligible for job stability. To establish job stability, the provider must be prepared to transition any remaining support needs to a funded, paid, and/or natural support extended service provider and notify the VR counselor.

Job stability occurs when the customer:

* is satisfied with the employment;
* continues to work in a job that meets the definition of competitive integrated employment;
* is meeting the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions on VR1632;
* has reliable transportation to and from the jobsite with a backup plan;
* is meeting the employer’s expectations regarding job performance;
* is meeting the physical and environmental demands of the job;
* has all necessary accommodations in place and working;
* has extended services (funded by other local or state agencies or Social Security, private pay, and/or natural supports) in place to ensure continued employment with this support; and
* has achieved all goals, unless a goal has been determined to be “no longer applicable” or is scheduled to be transferred to extended services, on VR1634.

The VR counselor and customer make the final determination about job stability and the purchase of any job retention benchmarks. The VR counselor must consult with the VR supervisor for six or more job retention benchmarks.

#### 18.7.1.1 Youth with Disabilities

When all other available resources for extended services, such as Medicaid Waiver programs, natural supports, other public agencies, and/or private nonprofit organizations are not available to the customer, TWC-VR can provide extended services to VR customers who are “youth with a disability.” When individuals are in the 14-24 age range and have a disability, they will meet the “youth with a disability” definition. The disability must be considered “most significant” if the youth is participating in Supported Employment services. Services can be provided for a period not to exceed four years or until the youth reaches the age of 25 and no longer meets the definition of a "youth with a disability," whichever occurs first.

When VR sponsors extended services for youth with disabilities, the case must continue to maintain job stability status. Job skills training is how TWC-VR purchases extended services for a customer. For information on how job skills training may be used as an extended service, refer to VR-SFP Chapter 17, Section 17.5.1.1 Purchasing Job Skills Training for Extended Services for Youth with Disabilities.

### 18.7.2 Supported Employment Job Stability Review Process and Procedure

The provider notifies the VR counselor that the customer needs a job stability review meeting.

The VR counselor arranges for a job stability review meeting either in person or remotely to determine whether the customer has achieved job stability status or whether there is a need for an additional job retention benchmark. The meeting is held at least one week before the current job retention benchmark ends in order to prevent any gap in the timeline or SAs.

#### 18.7.2.1 Supported Employment Job Stability Review Meeting

During the job stability review meeting, the VR counselor, SE specialist, customer, and circle of support discuss and review the customer’s employment and whether the customer meets the service definition of “job stability” or needs one additional job retention benchmark.

During the job stability review meeting, the VR counselor:

* evaluates the customer’s job stability status, as defined in the service definition section in 18.7.1;
* reviews and discusses the VR1632 (employment conditions, extended services, and employment information sections) and VR1634 (training plan section) for the current job retention benchmark period;
* communicates with the provider and customer regarding the need for an additional job retention benchmark;
* provides counseling and guidance, per VRSM C-1206-4;
* documents:
  + one additional job retention benchmark, if approved; or
  + job stability status; and
* requests that VR staff issue SAs to the SE specialist for:
  + either one job retention benchmark before the next job retention benchmark begins or the SE closure benchmark; and
  + any relevant premiums.

The job stability date is the day after the current job retention benchmark is completed.

Once job stability is determined, the customer remains in job stability status for at least 90 cumulative calendar days unless the status of job stability is lost. When job stability status is lost, it must be reestablished.

It is a best practice to schedule the SE closure meeting at the job stability review meeting when the job stability date is set.

##### Reestablishing Job Stability

Loss of job stability occurs if the:

* customer requires ongoing support services, such as additional job skills training by the SE specialist;
* extended services (funded, paid, and/or natural supports) are not working and the customer requires ongoing supports, such as additional job skills training by the SE specialist;
* customer loses the job;
* customer obtains a new position or new job;
* employer is not satisfied with the customer’s performance; and/or
* job no longer meets the preferences, interests, potential job tasks, and nonnegotiable employment conditions on VR1632.

If job stability is lost, the SE specialist communicates with the VR counselor and provides the needed interventions via one or more job retention benchmarks. This intervention is necessary to ensure that the customer’s performance meets the employer’s expectations and the extended services (funded, paid, and/or natural supports) are established and trained. It may be necessary to review and update the SE Plan and the training goals on VR1634. Once the additional job retention benchmarks are completed and the SE specialist’s and/or job skills trainer’s services have decreased to the level necessary for the customer to maintain employment, then another job stability review meeting is held to reestablish the customer’s job stability. At least 30 cumulative calendar days must pass before job stability is reestablished with a new job stability meeting.

To reestablish job stability, the VR counselor:

* requests that VR staff issue an SA to the provider for the SE specialist to participate in another job stability review meeting;
* schedules an job stability review meeting; and
* follows the procedures for establishing job stability listed in VR-SFP 18.7.2.1.

### 18.7.3 Job Stability Review Outcomes Required for Payment

During the job stability review meeting, the SE specialist participates in and contributes to the discussion.

After any job stability review meeting, the provider submits an invoice for participation in the meeting. The job stability review meeting date is used as the date of service on the invoice.

## 18.8 Supported Employment Closure Benchmark

### 18.8.1 Supported Employment Closure Benchmark Service Description

The SE closure benchmark is completed when the customer has maintained job stability for 90 cumulative calendar days and the SE closure meeting has been completed.

Every 30 days during the 90 days between job stability and SE closure, the SE specialist must:

* visit the customer in person a minimum of two times at or away from the jobsite to ensure the customer maintains competitive integrated employment;
* make a minimum of one contact with the employer to ensure employer satisfaction;
* monitor the extended services (funded, paid, and/or natural supports) to ensure that the customer maintains competitive integrated employment while receiving the necessary supports, training, and accommodations outlined on VR1632; and
* verify the customer is in competitive integrated employment that is consistent with the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions identified on VR1632.

To establish SE closure, the provider notifies the VR counselor, and the VR counselor arranges for the SE closure meeting. The VR counselor and customer make the final determination about SE closure.

### 18.8.2 Supported Employment Closure Benchmark Process and Procedure

It is a best practice to schedule the SE closure meeting at the job stability review meeting when the job stability date is set.

The VR counselor schedules the SE closure meeting, which must occur after the customer’s 90th day of employment after job stability has been determined.

The SE specialist must provide the updated and complete VR1632 to the VR counselor without signatures before or at the meeting.

During the SE closure meeting, the VR counselor, SE specialist, customer, and circle of support discuss the customer’s employment after 90 cumulative calendar days and review the case for SE closure to ensure that the customer:

* is satisfied with the employment;
* continues to work in a job that meets the definition of “competitive integrated employment”;
* is meeting the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions on VR1632;
* has reliable transportation to and from the jobsite with a backup plan;
* is meeting the employer’s expectation regarding job performance;
* is meeting the physical and environmental demands of the job;
* has all necessary accommodations in place and working;
* has extended services (funded by other local or state agencies or Social Security, private pay, and/or natural supports) in place to ensure continued employment with this support; and
* verifies that the employment information, wages, and start date recorded on VR1632 is accurate.

NOTE: Signatures on VR1632 are obtained at the SE closure meeting.

### 18.8.3 Supported Employment Closure Benchmark Outcomes Required for Payment

Every 30 cumulative calendar days between job stability and SE closure, the SE specialist meets with the customer and employer and documents on VR1632:

* a minimum of two in-person visits with the customer, at or away from the jobsite;
* a minimum of one contact with the employer to monitor the employer’s satisfaction with the customer’s performance during the benchmark period; and
* the verification of the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions continue to be met on VR1632.

For the SE closure meeting, the SE specialist must:

* provide the updated and complete VR1632 to the VR counselor without signatures before or at the SE closure meeting; and
* contribute to the discussion during the SE closure meeting.

The VR counselor makes the determination that the case meets the SE closure benchmark by verifying that the customer has all extended services in place and is working in competitive integrated employment that meets the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions identified in the SE Plan.

For payment, the provider submits:

* a signed, accurate, and complete VR1632; and
* an invoice.

The SE closure meeting date is used as the date of service on the invoice.

## 18.9 Benchmark and Service Fees

A provider may not collect money from a VR customer or the customer's family for any service. If VR and another resource are paying for a service for a customer, the total payment must not exceed the fee specified in the Standards for Providers manual.

Premium Services may be available for some SE services. Premium Services are paid after all deliverables for the service have been made. For more information, refer to Chapter 20: Premiums.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Services** | **Unit Rate** | **Comments** |
| Supported Employment Plan Meeting | $184 | May be purchased multiple times when authorized by an SA. |
| Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark | $1,875 | May be purchased multiple times when authorized by an SA. |
| Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark | $1,838 | With SA, may be purchased multiple times and is paid every 28 cumulative calendar days. |
| Supported Employment Job Stability Review | $184 | May be purchased multiple times when authorized by an SA. |
| Supported Employment Closure Benchmark | $3,675 | May be purchased multiple times when authorized by an SA. |

## 18.10 SE Resources

* [Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Related to Supported Employment](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-cfr-se-twc%20.pdf)
* [Extended Services: Texas Health and Human Services Medicaid Waivers](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-extended-services-hhs-medicaid-waivers-twc.pdf)
* [Reference Sheet for Employers](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-sfp-ref-sheet-employers-twc.pdf)
* [Reference Sheet for Natural Support](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-sfp-ref-sheet-natural-support-twc.pdf)
* [SE Definitions](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-se-definitions-twc.pdf)
* [SE Provider Diagram](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-se-provider-diagram-twc.pdf)
* [SE Provider Diagram (accessible version)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-se-provider-diagram-access-twc.docx)
* [Supported Employment FAQ](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-se-faq-twc.pdf" \o "https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-se-faq-twc.pdf" \t "_blank)

* [Supported Employment Transition](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-sfp-se-transition-twc.docx)
* [Supporting Individuals with Significant Disabilities: The Roles of a Job Coach](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-supporting-individuals-significant-disabilities-roles-job-coach-twc.pdf)
* [Tips and Steps for Job Skills Training](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-tips-steps-job-skills-training-twc%20.pdf)
* [TWS-VRS & HHS Waiver Sequencing of Services](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-tws-vrs-hhs-sequencing-services-twc.pdf)
* [WINTAC Core Features of Quality Supported Employment Services](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/vr-wintac-core-features-quality-supported-employment-services-twc.pdf)
* [Supported Employment Extended Services Overview](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FZlAuF_jtz2A&data=05%7C01%7Cheather.cooke%40twc.texas.gov%7Ce23336c7eed2401e38d508dbeacf5f6f%7Cfe7d3f4f241b4af184aa32c57fe9db03%7C0%7C0%7C638361948594346082%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Uo%2BQ9u35jnmQVU%2BgyyvwyG3DGIExDvLC7kCSoZQ%2F6x0%3D&reserved=0)

### SE Case Study

* [SE Case Study Marsha](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/se-case-study-marsha-twc.docx)
* [1 Case Study VR1632 SE Plan and Employment Report Marsha- Plan](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/se-1-case-study-vr1632-twc.docx)
* [2A Case Study VR 1632 SE Plan and Employment Report Marsha- Placement](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/se-2a-case-study-vr1632-twc.docx)
* [2B Case Study VR 1633 SE Job Development and Job Analysis Report](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/se-2b-case-study-vr1633-twc.docx)
* [2C Case Study VR1634 SE Training Plan and Job Retention Report at Plan](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/se-2c-case-study-vr1634-twc.docx)
* [3A Case Study VR 1632 SE Plan and Employment Report Marsha 1st Retention](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/se-3a-case-study-vr1632-twc.docx)
* [3B Case Study VR1634 SE Training Plan and Job Retention Report 1st Retention Period](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/se-3b-case-study-vr1634-twc.docx)
* [3C Case Study VR1634 SE Training Plan and Job Retention Report 1st Retention continued](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/se-3c-case-study-vr1634-twc.docx)
* [4A Case Study VR 1632 SE Plan and Employment Report Marsha 2nd Retention](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/se-4a-case-study-vr1632-twc.docx)
* [4B Case Study VR1634 SE Training Plan and Job Retention Report 2nd Retention Period](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/se-4b-case-study-vr1634-twc.docx)
* [5 Case Study VR 1632 SE Plan and Employment Report Marsha- Closure](https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/vr/docs/se-5-case-study-vr1632-twc.docx)

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 19: Self Employment

## 19.1 Overview of Self-Employment Services

Self-employment:

* means the customer solely owns, manages, and operates a business and is not considered an employee of another person, business, or organization;
* exists when the service or product is actively marketed to other potential customers; and
* includes home-based businesses and telecommuting businesses.

Self-employment allows for:

* choice and control;
* the use of natural skills and talents;
* expanded work opportunities;
* accumulation of wealth; and
* independence and creative freedom.

Types of self-employment available to VRS customers include:

* simple self-employment;
* comprehensive self-employment; and
* supported self-employment (SSE).

A customer's employment goal must match the customer's position held in the Business Plan. The customer's self-employment must be in a work environment that is:

* integrated;
* competitive\*;
* full-time or the most hours the customer can work; and
* permanent, not temporary (seasonal).

In the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals without disabilities, who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills.

\*Based on 34 CFR §361.5(c)(9)(i)(C)

All services are based on and consistent with the customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choices. These services can include technical assistance and other consultation services to conduct market analyses, develop business plans, and otherwise provide resources, to the extent those resources are authorized to be provided through the statewide workforce development system, to eligible individuals who are pursuing self-employment or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome.

This chapter includes the following services:

* Technical Assistance for Customer Profile and Self-Employment Exploration
* Technical Assistance for Concept Development and Feasibility Study
* Technical Assistance for Business Plan Development
* Supported Self-Employment (SSE) Staff Qualifications

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 19.7 Self-Employment Service Fees.

## 19.2 Staff Qualifications

All provider staff members must meet the following general standards of service provision:

* maintain effective and professional relationships with customers, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) staff members, and the community;
* provide services as described in the VR Standards for Providers;
* document customer-related and employment-related information and services as described in the VR Standards for Providers; and
* maintain regular and effective verbal and written communication with VRS staff, employers, and customers.

VRS staff members are responsible for overseeing services provided to VRS customers. If the above general standards are not being met, the regional quality assurance specialist reviews staff concerns and may require that the employment services provider or CBTAC develop an action plan to address them. Continued failure to meet these general standards could result in adverse action against the provider.

### Staff Qualifications for Self-Employment Services

The qualifications for a provider staff member to provide self-employment services are as follows:

* A Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant (CBTAC) certified by The Center for Social Capital

### Qualifications for Supported Self-Employment Services

It is preferred that the CBTAC meets the qualifications outlined for a supported employment specialist in VR-SFP 18.2 Staff Qualifications, and must be certified by The Center for Social Capital as a CBTAC.

### Job Skills Trainer

A job skills trainer must meet the qualifications outlined for a Job Skills Trainer in Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services, 17.2.2 Job Skills Trainer General Qualifications. It is a best practice for the Job Skills Trainer to work under the direction of the CBTAC.

## 19.3 Self-Employment Exploration

### 19.3.1 Service Description

Exploration activities include identifying the:

* customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, skills, and preferences;
* customer's education and work experience;
* business ideas and potential businesses for the customer;
* customer's circle of supports and/or potential business team members;
* business tasks and who will perform these tasks;
* business considerations for the customer; and
* customer's potential need for outside services and supports (that is, extended supports).

### 19.3.2 Process and Procedure

A CBTAC receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services and service authorization. The VR5000 includes any documentation that will prepare the provider to better work with the customer, such as medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, or employment data collected by VR staff.

The CBTAC will assist the customer in completing the VR1801, Customer Profile and Self-Employment Exploration.

If the CBTAC finds through the VR1801 the customer would be better served through SSE services, the CBTAC must contact the VR counselor to discuss the need for SSE services. The VR counselor will review the VR1801 and discuss with the CBTAC and customer prior to changing the service to SSE. The final decision is made by the VR counselor and the customer.

### 19.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The CBTAC documents in descriptive terms all the information required on the VR1801, Customer Profile and Self-Employment Exploration demonstrating evidence that:

* all required information required of the form was completed;
* the self-employment business idea(s) was determined; and
* the customer agrees with the business idea(s) recommended.

For payment, the VR counselor approves a completed, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR1801, Customer Profile and Self-Employment Exploration;
* VR1815, CBTAC Support Summary; and
* an invoice.

This is an outcome-based service; VR will not pay unless all topics in the service description and service authorization were addressed to the customer's satisfaction and within a reasonable timeframe as determined by the customer's needs and abilities.

## 19.4 Self-Employment Concept Development and Feasibility Study

### 19.4.1 Service Description

A Feasibility Study is an assessment, with research tools such as surveys or statistical analyses, regarding the likelihood of a business succeeding. The feasibility study is used to determine if the proposed self-employment business proposal is likely to succeed. The CBTAC, customer, and any identified support persons perform research for the business idea(s) identified in the VR1801, Customer Profile and Self-Employment Exploration. The VR1802, Concept Development and Feasibility Study contains elements of the feasibility study and must be thoroughly completed.

### 19.4.2 Process and Procedure

A CBTAC receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services; VR1801, Customer Profile and Self-Employment Exploration; or VR1809, Supported Self-Employment Concept Development and VR1810, Supported Self-Employment Feasibility Study, and service authorization. The VR5000 includes any documentation that will prepare the provider to better work with the customer such as medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, or employment data collected by VR staff.

The CBTAC completes the VR1802, Concept Development and Feasibility Study with the assistance of the customer and any outside supports available. The CBTAC assists the customer to:

* develop a detailed concept;
* gather necessary information to complete the feasibility study; and
* determine if the business concept demonstrates the possibility of success for the business and the customer.

The CBTAC will recommend whether the self-employment being considered should be:

* Simple Self-Employment;
* Comprehensive Self-Employment; or
* SSE.

The VR counselor will review the VR1802 and approve what type of business plan will be required.

If the CBTAC determines the customer would be better served through SSE services, the CBTAC must contact the VR counselor to discuss the need for SSE services. The VR counselor will review the VR1802, Concept Development and Feasibility Study, and discuss with the CBTAC and customer prior to changing the service to SSE. The final decision is made by the VR counselor and the customer.

If the feasibility study demonstrates the business is not going to produce income resulting in a level of support able to sustain the customer and solvency, then the VR counselor must advise the customer the self-employment as proposed will not be approved.

### 19.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The CBTAC documents in descriptive terms all the information required on the VR1802, Concept Development and Feasibility Study, demonstrating evidence that:

* all information required on the form was completed;
* a self-employment business concept has been determined;
* results of the feasibility study that state whether the concept is likely to be successful or not; and
* the customer agrees with the business concept and the results of the feasibility study.

For payment for the Feasibility Study, the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR1802, Concept Development and Feasibility Study, or VR1809, Supported Self-Employment Concept Development; or VR1810, Supported Self-Employment Feasibility Study (whichever is applicable);
* VR1815, CBTAC Support Summary; and
* an invoice.

## 19.5 Self-Employment Business Plan Development

### 19.5.1 Service Description

A business plan precisely defines the business, identifies its goals, and serves as the business's résumé. The business plan includes a:

* business executive summary;
* business description;
* products and services;
* market analysis;
* marketing plan;
* operations and legal considerations;
* financials; and
* extended services and supports.

The business plan provides specific and organized information about the company and how the business will repay borrowed money. A good business plan is a crucial part of any loan application, and helps the business owner:

* allocate resources properly;
* handle unforeseen complications; and
* make good business decisions.

Note: The VR1803, Simple Business Plan; VR1804, Comprehensive Business Plan; and VR1813, Supported Self-Employment Business Plan, are formatted to serve as both a business plan to be submitted to third parties and a report to the VR counselor.

### 19.5.2 Business Plans

There are different types of business plans required for self-employment. For the Texas Workforce Solutions – Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) Self-Employment service, there are three types of business plans:

* Simple Self-Employment business plan, which requires concise:
  + business executive summary;
  + business description;
  + products and services;
  + marketing analysis and plan;
  + operational and legal considerations;
  + financial plans;
  + extended business supports; and
  + appendices.
* Comprehensive Self-Employment business plan, which requires detailed:
  + business executive summary;
  + business description;
  + products and services;
  + marketing analysis;
  + marketing plan;
  + operational and legal considerations;
  + financial plans;
  + extended business supports; and
  + appendices.

Supported Self Employment requires detailed information for the list below with additional information regarding the needed additional long-term supports and extended supports:

* business executive summary;
* business description;
* products and services;
* marketing analysis;
* marketing plan;
* operational and legal considerations;
* financial plans;
* extended business supports; and
* appendices.

Refer to 19.5 Supported Self-Employment.

### 19.5.3 Process and Procedure

A CBTAC receives a VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, and one or more of the following forms as applicable:

* VR1801, Customer Profile and Self-Employment Exploration;
* VR1802, Concept Development and Feasibility Study;
* VR1809, Supported Self-Employment Concept Development, or VR1810, Supported Self-Employment Feasibility Study; and
* service authorization.

The VR5000 includes any documentation that will prepare the provider to better work with the customer, including medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, or employment data collected by VR staff.

After the VR counselor and customer determination, the case should continue to move forward in the process. The provider develops the business plan using the information obtained in the VR1801 and VR1802 or the VR1808, VR1809 and VR1810, and a service authorization.

The CBTAC assists the customer in developing the business plan using the VR1803, Simple Business Plan; VR1804, Comprehensive Business Plan; or VR1813, Supported Self-Employment Business Plan, as approved by the VRC and any other required approvals.

### 19.5.4 Outcomes Required for Payment

The CBTAC documents in descriptive terms all the information required on the VR1803, Simple Business Plan; VR1804, Comprehensive Business Plan; or VR1813Supported Self-Employment Business Plan, demonstrating evidence that:

* all required information required on the form was completed;
* a self-employment business plan has been completed; and
* the customer agrees with the business plan.

For payment for the business plan, within five business days of receipt, the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR1803, Simple Business Plan;
* VR1804 Comprehensive Business Plan; or
* VR1813, Supported Self-Employment Business Plan;
* VR1805, Self-Employment Financial Projections Spreadsheet;
* VR1815, CBTAC Support Summary; and
* an invoice.

Note: Payment of the VR1803, VR1804, or VR1813 does not mean all necessary approvals of the proposed business plan have been obtained or the plan is approved to move forward in the VR process.

## 19.6 Supported Self-Employment

### 19.6.1 Service Description

SSE is like self-employment but incorporates many of the concepts of supported employment, including the provision of ongoing supports throughout the VR case and transitioning to extended services and supports, not funded by VRS, after case closure. Supports may include:

* long-term job coaching supports;
* ongoing case management;
* peer supports, natural supports, family supports; or
* ongoing paid professional services for the business.

SSE businesses are typically small and require a team approach to planning and support. A business team assists in:

* exploration;
* feasibility determination;
* development of the business plan; and
* business launch including:
  + identifying the customer's long-term support needs; and
  + implementing the customer's long-term supports.

SSE services are provided by the CBTAC, who helps the customer (the potential business owner) with SSE by:

* providing technical assistance, including:
  + a SSE assessment;
  + concept development;
  + feasibility study; and
  + Supported Self-Employment Business Plan and financial development;
* completing an SSE services plan;
* assisting with business start-up;
* assisting in business monitoring and maintenance; and
* ensuring business stability (as defined in the IPE) by verifying all necessary long-term and extended supports are in place and working.

VRS purchases SSE services only from Employment Service Providers (ESPs) who have been certified as a CBTAC by The Center for Social Capital.

Customers determined by a VR counselor to be appropriate for SSE services are customers:

* who are eligible for VR services;
* who have a most significant disability and will need extended services and supports to maintain the self-employment outcome once VRS closes the case;
* for whom SSE has been identified as the appropriate employment outcome by the customer and the VR counselor;
* who require considerable help to develop an individualized, profitable, and sustainable business;
* who can maintain a self-employment outcome with necessary supports in place; and
* for whom another person, organization, or other resource agrees to provide the extended services and supports after VR-funded services are complete.

If the CBTAC finds through the VR1801 or VR1802 the customer would be better served through SSE services, the CBTAC must contact the VR counselor to discuss the need for SSE services.

### 19.6.2 Supported Self-Employment Assessment

#### 19.6.2.1 Service Description

If a customer has expressed interest in self-employment and requires additional support, discovery is conducted by a CBTAC. While there is no set standard for how much time a provider spends with a customer during discovery, research suggests that providers should spend as many as 20 hours on the discovery process observing the customer's abilities, challenges, and resources, as well as collecting information from professional and nonprofessional supports in the customer's life to make an informed decision. The discovery process includes:

* exploring options related to self-employment outcomes;
* identifying interests, capabilities, and preferences;
* identifying ongoing support needs; and
* identifying extended services and supports required for business success.

#### 19.6.2.2 Process and Procedure

The employment service provider receives the VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. The referral form includes any documentation that will prepare the CBTAC to better work with the customer, such as medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, employment history, functional capacity exams, business ideas, business plan, and benefits planning reports from community work incentive coordinators that are collected by VR staff.

The CBTAC begins the process by completing the VR1808, Supported Self-Employment Assessment (SSEA).

The discovery process assists the provider in gathering the information necessary to answer all questions on the VR1808, Supported Self-Employment Assessment (SSEA). The report must clearly describe the customer and the customer's business idea(s).

VRS recommends the person-centered planning process be used when collecting information for the SSEA.

The discovery process completed by the CBTAC includes:

* an interview with the customer;
* development of the person-centered plan;
* interviews with members of the customer's circle of support and discussions with any extended services providers the customer will use (see Long Term Supports and Services Quick Reference Guide for additional information);
* observing the customer's work skills, life skills, and behaviors at home and in the community, and touring current or potential work environments with the customer;
* identifying and observing vocational interests, preferences, or themes;
* collecting personal, school, and employer reference information;
* assessing the customer's learning styles and needs for adaptive technology, accommodations, and on-site supports;
* assessing and identifying the customer's strengths, challenges, and transferable skills exploring the customer's interests, capabilities, preferences, motivations, learning styles, challenges, ongoing support needs, and resources;
* employment conditions related to the customer's preferences, resources, and support needs to achieve and maintain employment outcomes (including self-employment outcomes);
* the customer's need for Extended Services and supports at or away from the job site to ensure competitive integrated employment success;
* informational interviews and work skills observation completed by the customer; and
* an assessment summary.

Best practice indicates the discovery process can take up to 20 hours per customer. However, providers must be aware that this process is an individualized one designed to achieve the customer's stated outcome and, therefore, timeframes may vary on an individual basis.

##### Completing the VR1808, Supported Self-Employment Assessment (SSEA)

When completing the VR1808, Supported Self-Employment Assessment (SSEA), the Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant (CBTAC) will incorporate information:

* obtained during the discovery process;
* provided by VRS that relates to benefits planning; and
* gathered regarding the customer's cognitive and physical abilities.

The VR1808, SSEA, must include all information required on the form, including:

* information necessary to proceed to business concept development;
* support needs that family, friends, and professionals provide to help the customer maintain a high-quality life at home and in the community (for example, financial assistance, assistive technology, room and board, supervision for safety, and transportation); and
* extended services and support needs that may be necessary for a successful employment outcome, including self-employment.

##### Holding an SSEA Review Meeting

The SSEA review meeting is held after the discovery process and the VR1808, SSEA, has been completed. The SSEA review meeting is held to determine whether a supported self-employment outcome for the customer will be further explored and confirm the proposed business idea(s) need to be studied, and to identify the next steps that must take place.

The SSEA review meeting must include the:

* VR counselor;
* CBTAC; and
* customer and customer representatives, as appropriate, and the customer's circle of support.

The SSEA meeting must:

* be led by the VR counselor and CBTAC;
* review the SSEA for accuracy and completeness; and
* help determine whether to complete:
  + VR1809, Supported Self-Employment Concept Development;
  + VR1810, Supported Self-Employment Feasibility Study;
  + VR1813, Supported Self-Employment Business Plan; and/or
  + VR1805, Financial Projection Spreadsheet.

#### 19.6.2.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

On the VR1808, SSEA, the CBTAC must clearly identify:

* the customer's interests, assets, and abilities in work and non-work areas that were explored, identified, and appropriately summarized;
* one or more appropriate business ideas;
* information that supports how the business ideas for the customer were gained; and
* specific support needs and/or interventions the customer may require to start and maintain a business.

Payment for SSEA is made:

* after the supported self-employment assessment review meeting, has been held; and
* after the VR counselor receives and approves:
  + a complete, accurate, and signed VR1808, Supported Self-Employment Assessment; and
  + an invoice.

The VR1808, Supported Self-Employment Assessment must be completed electronically. VRS can contact the customer and/or the customer's circle of supports to verify that information on the form is correct.

The VR1808 must be signed by the CBTAC who completed the discovery process with the customer and documented the information on the form.

### 19.6.3 Benchmark 1: Supported Self-Employment Services Plan

#### 19.6.3.1 Service Description

The Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) is completed after the SSEA, Concept Development and Feasibility Study, business plan, and financials are completed and received all required approvals.

The SSESP identifies:

* members of the SSESP team;
* the customer's preferences and interests;
* the customer's assets and abilities;
* negotiable and nonnegotiable employment conditions;
* potential extended services and supports needed by the customer;
* potential business idea for a small business;
* potential products or services to be provided by the small business;
* potential business team members; and
* potential resources to be used to study the small business ideas for feasibility.

##### SSESP Team Members

Members of the customer's SSESP team must include, at a minimum

* the customer;
* the customer's designated representative, if any;
* the CBTAC; and
* the VR counselor.

The team may include other significant people invited by the customer and who may potentially help achieve a successful supported self-employment outcome or be a provider of extended services and supports for the customer after VR case closure. Significant individuals may include:

* parents;
* teachers;
* case managers;
* neighbors;
* counselors;
* siblings;
* friends;
* business owners; and
* church members.

The SSESP team maintains ongoing communication throughout the process to ensure the SSE outcomes are achieved. SSESP team members may become members of the business team for the customer.

The SSESP team members can help:

* identify possible business ideas;
* identify or provide extended services and supports to ensure self-employment success; and
* motivate the customer.

#### 19.6.3.2 Process and Procedure

Benchmark 1 is met by attending the SSESP meeting and by completing the VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report, printing and signing the VR1811 at the meeting.

The VR counselor. or designated VRS staff member assists with completing the VR1811 on a computer during the meeting to ensure all input is captured correctly on the VR1811, SSESP and Benchmark Report. The VR counselor and CBTAC ensure group discussions include recommendations and strategies outlined in the SSEA. The SSESP meeting typically is one to two hours long and is facilitated by the CBTAC and lead by the customer. The SSESP meeting must be held face-to-face to allow all parties to actively participate in the discussion. The CBTAC will not bring a completed SSESP form to the meeting or complete the form after the conclusion of the meeting.

The forms must be:

* completed electronically;
* completed before any SSE services are provided to the customer;
* team-developed with the customer's participation in identifying the required information on the form, with or without assistance from team members; and
* printed by VR staff, upon completion.

Signatures are gathered at the end of the meeting for submission of benchmark paperwork. As needed, update the VR1811 (changes in employment conditions or job tasks) prior to the achievement of any benchmark.

#### 19.6.3.3 Outcomes for Payment

The customer, VR counselor, and CBTAC, along with other invited individuals, have completed the SSESP1 meeting and the VR1811 is complete and demonstrates evidence that:

* all information required on the form was completed;
* a self-employment business concept(s) has been identified; and
* the customer agrees with the SSESP.

For payment of Benchmark 1, the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report; and
* an invoice.

### 19.6.4 Benchmark 2: Supported Self-Employment Start-Up

#### 19.6.4.1 Service Description

The customer achieves Benchmark 2 when:

* the customer starts work consistent with the requirements of the VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report:
  + the business idea is identified and approved on the VR1813, Supported Self-Employment Business Plan;
  + 100 percent the nonnegotiable conditions are met; and
  + at least 50 percent or more negotiable conditions are met.
* The customer has been working in the open business for five days. Do not start the count of days until the VR1811 and VR1813 are submitted and are determined by the VR counselor to be accurate.

To achieve Benchmark 2, the CBTAC must have a minimum of two contacts with the customer to monitor customer and business progress and performance during the benchmark and must:

* complete the VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary (SSESS);
* collect all signatures from the customer and as appropriate, the customer's legally authorized representative on the VR1814; and
* receive approval from the VR counselor.

#### 19.6.4.2 Process and Procedure

The CBTAC must collect all information needed to complete an accurate VR1814, SSESS through interviews and observations with the customer and their circle of support.

To achieve Benchmark 2, the CBTAC submits the VR1811, which is used as the guide and plan for providing services to the customer, and must assist the customer as applicable in activities related to starting a business, including:

* training or consulting in work-related tasks or behaviors such as support for initial advertising, marketing, sales, all licenses, registrations, accounting initiated, and monthly reporting to VRS of net profit or loss;
* training or consulting with paid or natural supports (accountants, employees, etc.), who will be supporting the customer either short-term or long-term in managing the business; and
* transportation training.

At least two business team meetings must be held each month before and during the completion of this benchmark.

##### Required Documentation

Services provided and hours worked must be documented on the VR1814, SSESS. Information documented on the VR1814 must include:

* verification that the customer has been operating the business as scheduled for five days;
* verification that the customer has a business that meets all nonnegotiable employment conditions and meets 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions;
* verification that the provider interacted with the customer at or away from the business in accordance with the support plan defined in the VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report;
* a description of how specific support needs identified in the VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report are being addressed;
* an explanation how emerging support needs are being met;
* a signature by the customer (or customer's legally authorized representative) and the CBTAC; and
* the VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet.

The information included in the VR1814, SSESS documentation must be unique and individualized for the customer. VRS may contact the customer, customer's legally authorized representative (if any), or circle of support to verify the SSESP and the SSESS information is accurate.

The VR1811, SSESP must be updated to be accurate through a new SSESP meeting (see the policy in 19.6.3 Benchmark 1: Supported Self-Employment Services Plan) before any count of days of employment can begin. If the VR counselor and customer or the customer's legally authorized representative do not choose to make changes to the original SSESP, the customer does not achieve all (100 percent) nonnegotiable conditions, and at least 50 percent of the negotiable conditions listed on the VR1811, SSESP, the business start-up will not be accepted by VRS.

#### 19.6.4.3 Outcomes for Payment

The CBTAC has completed the VR1814 demonstrating evidence that:

* all required information required on the form was completed;
* the customer has successfully been employed for five working days in a business described on the VR1811, SSESP.
* the employment conditions and other criteria on the VR1811 have been met; and
* the customer agrees with the VR1814.

Payment for Benchmark 2 is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report;
* VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary (SSESS);
* VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet; and
* invoice.

### 19.6.5 Benchmark 3: Supported Self-Employment Maintenance

#### 19.6.5.1 Service Description

The customer achieves Benchmark 3, Self-Employment Maintenance, when:

* the customer is self-employed in a business listed on the most recent VR1811, SSESP;
* the customer has run a business for 112 calendar days;
* the customer worked full-time or as much time as possible, during the reporting period
* 100 percent non-negotiables are met; and
* at least 50 percent negotiables are met.

To complete Benchmark 3, the CBTAC must have a minimum of two contacts per month with the customer to monitor the customer's performance and business progress. The CBTAC provides necessary assistance and supports during the first 112 calendar days from the day the business opens.

On- and off–job-site supports are provided to help the customer adjust to the demands of running the business. These supports are reduced as the customer's skills and Extended Services and supports are established.

#### 19.6.5.2 Process and Procedure

To achieve Benchmark 3, the CBTAC completes the:

* VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary report that must:
  + verify the customer has been running the business for 112 calendar days;
  + verify the customer has maintained a business that meets all nonnegotiable employment conditions and meets 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions;
  + describe the customer's abilities, challenges, and support needs related to maintaining the business;
  + describe all training and supports the CBTAC, other natural supports, and Extended Services providers delivered to the customer or instructed others to provide to assist the customer;
  + verify the provider interacted with the customer at or away from the business in accordance with the support plan defined in the VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report;
  + describe how specific support needs identified in the VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report, are being addressed;
  + explain how emerging support needs are being met;
  + be signed by the customer (or customer's legally authorized representative) and the CBTAC; and
  + meet the established quality criteria; and
* VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet.

The CBTAC must assist the customer, as applicable, in activities related to running and maintaining a business, including:

* training or consulting in work-related tasks or behaviors such as support for initial advertising, marketing, sales, all licenses, registrations, accounting initiated, and monthly reporting to VRS of net profit or loss to ensure business success;
* training or consulting with paid or natural supports (accountants, employees, etc.) who will be supporting the customer either short-term or long-term in managing the business;
* transportation training;
* problem resolution related to employees or support systems necessary to run the business effectively and efficiently; and
* setting up interventions and services to address the customer's individual needs for extended services and supports necessary to sustain the business once VRS has closed the case.

At least two business team meetings must be held each month during the completion of this benchmark.

#### 19.6.5.3 Outcomes for Payment

Supported Self-Employment Business Maintenance is complete when:

* the customer has maintained a self-employment outcome that:
  + meets all nonnegotiable employment conditions; and
  + meets 50 percent of negotiable employment conditions;
* the business has been operating and open for 112 calendar days;
* the customer has received intensive on- and off–job-site supports, including setting up intervention and services to address long-term extended support needs to help the customer adjust to the demands of running a business as outlined in the Business Plan;
* the CBTAC has had at least two contacts per month with the customer;
* the following documentation has been completed electronically by the CBTAC, signed by the appropriate parties, and approved by the VR counselor:
  + VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary;
  + VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet; and
* the customer agrees with the VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary.

The information documented in the VR1814 and the VR1806 must be unique and individualized for the customer. VRS may contact the customer or customer's legally authorized representative to verify that the VR1814 and VR1806 information is accurate.

Payment for Benchmark 3 is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed and dated:

* VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report;
* VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary (SSESS);
* VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet; and
* invoice.

### 19.6.6 Benchmark 4: Supported Self-Employment Stability

#### 19.6.6.1 Service Description

The customer achieves Benchmark 4 when the:

* customer maintains a business for at least 168 calendar days;
* business meets 100 percent nonnegotiable conditions as identified on the VR1811, SSESP;
* business meets at least 50 percent or more of the negotiable conditions on the VR1811, SSESP;
* customer is performing the duties outlined in the business plan;
* extended services and supports identified on the VR1811 or that have emerged for the customer are in place:
  + customer's long-term supports and services (LTSS); or
  + alternate funding, agencies, or individuals that have been established to provide all extended services for the customer;
* customer's business meets the stability criteria as described in the IPE;
* customer, CBTAC, and any team members attend a Self-Employment Stability meeting with the VR counselor and all agree the business is stable. Extended Service providers are invited to attend, but their attendance is not mandatory;
* customer's wage calculates to be equal to or greater than minimum wage as calculated on the VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet, for at least one month; and
* customer's business has ending cash equal to or greater than one month of operating expenses as calculated on the VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet.

The Extended Services (long-term supports) identified on the VR1811, SSESP, must be in place and working before the VR counselor can determine the customer and business are stable.

#### 19.6.6.2 Process and Procedure

The CBTAC must:

* continue to provide on- and off job-site supports until extended services, long-term supports are being provided by "natural supports" or Extended Service providers, before Self-Employment Stability can be achieved.
* monitor the Extended Services and Supports as outlined in the VR1811, SSESP, to verify the supports are effective and ensure the customer can maintain successful long-term self-employment;
* complete the VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary, in positive, clear, and descriptive English. Details in the report should describe the customer so someone reading the report has a "clear picture" of the customer's support needs, abilities, and challenges related to establishing and maintaining the business and must:
  + verify that the customer has been running the business for 168 calendar days;
  + verify that the business meets all nonnegotiable employment conditions and meets 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions;
  + verify that the provider interacted with the customer at or away from the business in accordance with the support plan defined in VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report;
  + describe how specific support needs identified in the VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report, were addressed;
  + explain how the extended services and supports are working without any intervention from the CBTAC; and
  + be signed by the customer (or customer's legally authorized representative) and the CBTAC; and
* complete the VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet, that must verify the following, for the business to be considered stable:
  + The business has ending cash equal to or greater than one month of operating expenses; and
  + The customer's wage calculates to be equal to or greater than minimum wage.

The VR counselor makes the final decision in determining the Stability Status. A case is considered "Stable" once the Self-Employment Stability date is established through a Supported Self-Employment Stability meeting.

#### 19.6.6.3 Outcomes for Payment

The customer must maintain self-employment a minimum of 168 calendar days consistent with the requirements documented in the VR1811, SSESP, including meeting:

* 100 percent of nonnegotiable; and
* at least 50 percent of negotiable conditions.

The CBTAC must:

* have a minimum of two contacts per month with the customer during the Self-Employment Stability period to monitor the customer's Extended Services, "Natural Supports," and business status; and
* monitor Extended Service providers to ensure the customer maintains the self-employment with the supports, training, and accommodations listed in the VR1811.

The CBTAC cannot provide the long-term support needs, training needs, and/or accommodations unless funding from a source other than VRS is secured.

The CBTAC submits a fully complete (on computer), accurate, signed, and dated VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary (SSESS), and gathers all handwritten signatures.

The completed VR1814 describes the customer's employment, training supports, and accommodations. The form must document the customer has:

* maintained a self-employment outcome that:
  + met all nonnegotiable employment conditions;
  + met at least 50 percent or more of negotiable employment conditions;
  + resulted in an ending cash equal to or greater than one month of operating expenses as calculated on the VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet; and
  + resulted in a wage that calculates to be equal to or greater than minimum wage as calculated on the VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet;
* a business that has been operating and open for at least 168 calendar days;
* received intensive on- and off–job-site supports, including setting up intervention and services to address supports to help the customer adjust to the demands of running a business as outlined in the VR1812, Business Plan Support Summary Report; and
* signed the following documentation completed by the CBTAC:
  + VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary; and
  + VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet.

For payment of Benchmark 4, the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report;
* VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary (SSESS);
* VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet; and
* an invoice.

### 19.6.7 Benchmark 5: Supported Self-Employment Service Closure

#### 19.6.7.1 Service Description

The customer achieves Benchmark 5 when the:

* customer maintains the business for at least 90 days from the established stability date from benchmark 4;
* CBTAC has not provided any services other than monitoring since the established stability date from benchmark 4;
* business meets 100 percent nonnegotiable conditions as identified on the VR1811, SESSP;
* business meets at least 50 percent or more of the negotiable conditions on the VR1811, SSESP;
* customer is performing the duties outlines in the business plan;
* extended services and supports identified on the VR1811 or that have emerged for the customer are in place and working, including:
  + the customer's long-term supports and services (LTSS); or
  + alternate funding, agencies, or people that have been established to provide all extended services for the customer;
* customer's business meets the employment criteria as described in the IPE;
* customer, CBTAC, and any team members attend a Self-Employment Stability meeting with the VR counselor and all agree the business is stable (extended service providers are invited to attend, but their attendance is not mandatory);
* the customer's wage is equal to or greater than minimum wage as calculated on the VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet, for at least one month;
* the customer's business must has ending cash equal to or greater than one month of operating expenses as calculated on the VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet; and
* the business has ending cash equal to or greater than three months (does not have to be consecutive months) of operating expenses for the business for 90 days after stability.

The Extended Services (long-term supports) identified on the VR1811 must be in place and working before the VR counselor can determine the customer and business is stable.

#### 19.6.7.2 Process and Procedure

The CBTAC must:

* monitor the Extended Services and Supports as outlined in the VR1811, SSESP, to verify the supports are effective and ensure the customer can maintain successful long-term self-employment;
* complete the VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary, in positive, clear, and descriptive English. Details in the report should describe the customer so someone reading the report has a "clear picture" of the customer's support needs, abilities, and challenges related to establishing and maintaining the business. The report must:
  + verify the customer has been running the business without any supports from the CBTAC for at least 90 days from the established stability date;
  + verify the business meets all nonnegotiable employment conditions and meets 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions;
  + verify the CBTAC met with the customer at or away from the business at least two times per month;
  + describe how specific support needs identified in the VR1811, Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP), were addressed;
  + explain how the extended services and supports are working without any intervention from the CBTAC; and
  + be signed by the customer (or customer's legally authorized representative) and the CBTAC; and
* complete the VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet, that must verify the following, for the business to be considered stable:
  + the business has ending cash equal to or greater than one month of operating expenses; and
  + the customer's wage calculates to be equal to or greater than minimum wage.

#### 19.6.7.3 Outcomes for Payment

The customer must maintain self-employment a minimum of 90 calendar days after stability with the requirements documented in the VR1811, SSESP, including meeting:

* 100 percent of nonnegotiable conditions; and
* at least 50 percent of negotiable conditions.

The CBTAC must:

* have a minimum of two contacts per month with the customer during the Self-Employment Stability period to monitor the customer's Extended Services, "Natural Supports" and business status; and
* monitor Extended Service providers to ensure the customer maintains the self-employment with the supports, training, and accommodations listed in the VR1811.

The CBTAC cannot provide the long-term support needs, training needs, and/or accommodations unless funding from a source other than VRS is secured.

The CBTAC submits a fully complete (on computer), accurate, signed, and dated VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary (SSESS), and gathers all handwritten signatures.

The completed VR1814 describes the customer's employment, training supports, and accommodations. The form must document the customer has:

* maintained a self-employment outcome that:
  + met all nonnegotiable employment conditions;
  + met at least 50 percent or more of negotiable employment conditions;
  + has ending cash equal to or greater than three months (does not have to be consecutive months) of operating expenses for the business for 90 days after stability as calculated on the VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet; and
* provides the customer a wage calculated to be equal to or greater than minimum wage for three months within a twelve-month period after stability as calculated on the VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet;
* a business that has been operating and open for at least 258 calendar days;
* received intensive on- and off–job-site supports, including setting up intervention and services to address supports to help the customer adjust to the demands of running a business as outlined in the VR1812, Business Plan Support Summary Report; and
* signed the following documentation completed by the CBTAC:
  + VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary; and
  + VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet.

For payment of Benchmark 5, the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR1814, Supported Self-Employment Support Summary (SSESS);
* VR1806, Financial Actual Spreadsheet; and
* invoice.

## 19.7 Self-Employment Service Fees

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Self-Employment Service** | **Unit Rate** | **Comments** |
| Customer Profile & Self-Employment Exploration | $322.00 |  |
| Concept Development - Only – Simple | $230.00 | May be purchased if not also purchasing Feasibility Study |
| Concept Development - Only – Comprehensive | $322.00 | May be purchased if not also purchasing Feasibility Study |
| Concept Development - Only - Supported | $153.00 | Only purchased after completion of Supported Self-Employment Assessment |
| Feasibility Study – Only – Simple | $551.00 | May be purchased if not also purchasing Concept Development |
| Feasibility Study – Only – Comprehensive | $965.00 | May be purchased if not also purchasing Concept Development |
| Feasibility Study – Only – Supported | $1,378.00 | Only purchased after completion of Supported Self-Employment Concept Development |
| Concept Development & Feasibility Study – Simple | $781.00 | If one of these services has already been purchased, a reduction in rate will be applied by reducing the payment for the service already billed |
| Concept Development & Feasibility Study - Comprehensive | $1,286.00 | If one of these services has already been purchased, a reduction in rate will be applied by reducing the payment for the service already billed |
| Business Plan Review – Only – Simple | $230.00 | May be purchased if not purchasing Business Plan |
| Business Plan Review – Only – Comprehensive | $322.00 | May be purchased if not purchasing Business Plan |
| Business Plan - Simple | $919.00 | If this service is chosen after payment for a business plan review, a reduction in rate will be applied by reducing the payment for the plan review already billed |
| Business Plan – Comprehensive | $1,378.00 | If this service is chosen after payment for a business plan review, a reduction in rate will be applied by reducing the payment for the plan review already billed |
| Business Plan – Supported | $1,608.00 | If this service is chosen after payment for a business plan review, a reduction in rate will be applied by reducing the payment for the plan review already billed |
| Financials – Simple | $322.00 | Paid only once |
| Financials – Comprehensive | $551.00 | Paid only once |
| Financials – Supported | $551.00 | Paid only once |
| Supported Self-Employment Assessment | $919.00 | Not paid until after the VR counselor, the customer and CBTAC have met to discuss results and determine if moving forward with Supported Self-Employment Services |
| Benchmark 1: Supported Self-Employment Services Plan | $153.00 | Benchmark paid only once, even if multiple SSESP Meetings occur |
| Benchmark 2: Supported Self-Employment Business Start-Up | $2,021.00 | Business must be operating for at least 5 days prior to achievement of Benchmark |
| Benchmark 3: Supported Self-Employment Business Maintenance | $1,011.00 | Business must be operating for at least 112 days prior to achievement of Benchmark |
| Benchmark 4: Supported Self-Employment Business Stability | $1,011.00 | * Stability Meeting must take place with TWS-VRC to established Stability Date prior to payment of Benchmark * Stability must meet or exceed stability established in IPE * Business must be operating for 168 days |
| Benchmark 5: Supported Self-Employment Service Closure | $3,032.00 | * Business must be operating 90 after Stability with no support or assistance from the CBTAC * Any supports needed must be provided by Extended Service Provider(s) |

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 20: Premiums

## 20.1 Overview of Premiums

Premiums are payments made to contractors in addition to the base rate paid for services.

Premiums are paid to providers when the provider:

* has met the outcomes required for payment for the authorized premium in VR-SFP 20; and
* has obtained the credentials necessary to work with individuals who have disabilities, such as autism or deafness.

Premium payments compensate providers for their additional efforts, such as taking required training that ultimately benefits customers but can increase the costs of providing services. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) encourages all staff of contracted providers to obtain specialty endorsements. The specialty endorsement identifies the individuals working for contractors who possess the necessary knowledge for competent practice related to disability populations and complex employment barriers.

Whether a contractor receives a premium payment depends on a customer's specific vocational needs and barriers to employment. Multiple premiums may be associated with a base rate when vocationally justified. VR counselors are not required to provide premium payments when a direct service provider qualifies for the premium, if the VR counselor determines that extra effort made by the provider, such as taking required training, is not necessary for the specific customer's success. If a customer does not have a vocationally justified need for the service, it will not be approved by the VR counselor. Premiums are paid only when all outcomes for the service have been achieved and the criteria for the premium have been met.

Premium payments must be approved through a service authorization. Premium payments are invoiced as identified in the 20.12 Premium Service Fees below. No partial payments are made.

For outcome-based services such as Supported Employment and Job Placement benchmarks, Vocational Adjustment Training courses and the Career Planning Assessment (CPA), the service authorization will be issued before service delivery and invoiced after the outcome for the base service has been achieved.

For hourly based services, such as Job Skills Training, Work Experience Training, Personal Social Adjustment Training, and Work Adjustment Training, the service authorization will be issued before the service begins and will be invoiced when the services are completed.

Non-Disability Premiums related to Work Experience Placement, Bundled Job Placement and Supported Employment will be paid at the conclusion of the service as specified below.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 20.12 Premium Service Fees.

Any request to change a Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request, before the change is implemented. The approved VR3472 must be maintained in the provider’s customer case file. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

## 20.2 Staff Qualifications

A contracted provider's staff member who provides services directly to the customer must:

* meet the staff qualifications identified for the base service; and
* maintain all staff qualifications required for the premium.

If more than one staff member works with the customer, each staff member must meet the qualifications required for the base service and for any premium authorized. VR does not issue waivers or exceptions for staff qualifications related to specialty endorsements.

See additional staff qualifications under each premium description, as appropriate.

## 20.3 Autism Premium

### 20.3.1 Service Description

A service provider is eligible for the Autism Premium when:

* the customer has been diagnosed with one or more of the following, as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5):
  + Autism spectrum disorder
  + Social communication disorder;
* the counselor determines that the customer requires intervention to remove barriers to employment that are directly related to the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or social communication disorder in any of the following categories:
  + Level of independence
  + Social skill deficits
  + Communication deficits
  + Obsessive thoughts and/or interests, resistance to change
  + Sensory integration issues (such as but not limited to, seeking deep pressure or having sensitivity to lights or noise)
  + Level of anxiety
  + Comorbidities (such as but not limited to, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, depression, and obsessive compulsive disorder); and
* the direct service provider has a University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE) Autism Specialization Endorsement.

The Autism Premium may be available for the services covered in:

* Chapter 4: Employment Assessments
* Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services;
* Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services; and
* Chapter 18: Supported Employment

### 20.3.2 Process and Procedures

A contracted provider's staff member who provides a direct service to the customer must:

* meet the staff qualifications identified for the base service; and
* maintain a current UNTWISE Autism Endorsement.

The contracted provider receives authorization for both the base service and the Autism Premium through a service authorization.

The referral and/or service authorization identifies the categories in which the customer may need intervention to remove barriers related to the customer's diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or social communication disorder.

The provider's staff member:

* ensures that all deliverables for the base service are provided; and
* provides interventions, as needed, to remove any barriers related to the customer's autism spectrum disorder or social communication disorder.

The staff member with the UNTWISE Autism Endorsement assigned to work with the customer must:

* provide the base service, as defined in the VR Standards for Providers (VR-SFP) manual;
* remain on-site providing all necessary interventions, as identified on the referral form and/or service authorization;
* identify interventions and compensatory techniques to address and/or remove the barriers directly related to the customer's diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or social communication disorder; and
* complete and sign VR1882, Autism Service Premium Report.

The VR1882, Autism Service Premium Report, must be submitted each time a deliverable is submitted for the base service as indicated in the Premium fee schedule.

### 20.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The services provider is eligible for an Autism Premium when:

* the VR counselor confirms and approves the customer has achieved all outcomes required for the base service, as outlined in the corresponding chapter of the VR-SFP manual; and
* the staff member providing the base service meets both the qualification for the base service and maintains a current Autism Endorsement.

VRS does not pay for fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

The premium is paid after:

* the documentation required for the base service is approved; and
* the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:
  + VR1882, Autism Service Premium Report; and
  + invoice.

## 20.4 Criminal Background Premium

### 20.4.1 Service Description

A service provider is eligible for the Criminal Background Premium when the customer has criminal background as follows:

* the customer's conditions of probation or parole; or
* a name-based criminal history record or fingerprint record from the Texas Department of Public Safety or equivalent law enforcement agency indicating the customer has a:
  + felony conviction;
  + guilty plea with deferred adjudication for a felony; or
  + no-contest plea with deferred adjudication for a felony.

The VR counselor determines that the customer needs to receive the Criminal Background Premium services to remove barriers to employment that are directly related to customer's criminal background.

A provider will not automatically be eligible for the Criminal Background Premium when a customer has a felony.

An employment service provider is eligible for the Criminal Background Premium when:

* authorization is indicated on the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan Part B and Status Report, or on VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report;
* the provider is authorized by a service authorization received at Bundled Job Placement Benchmark A or Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark; and
* the customer obtains employment that meets all the criteria outlined in VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan Part B and Status Report, or on VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report.

The VR counselor determines whether the type of felony interferes with the customer's ability to obtain competitive integrated employment to meet the goals listed on the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE), based on consideration of such factors as the:

* type of felony and how long ago the felony was committed;
* customer's job history;
* customer's qualifications; and
* local job market conditions.

The premium is paid only once, at the conclusion and achievement of Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark.

### 20.4.2 Process and Procedures

The contracted provider receives authorization for the Criminal Background Premium through a service authorization. The service authorization for the Criminal Background Premium must be received when the service authorization for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark A is received and when Supported Employment Job and Development and Placement Benchmark is received.

The staff member working with the customer must provide the Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment service as required in the VR-SFP manual.

The provider's staff member must complete the required documentation for either Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment, including the section for the Criminal Background Premium. The Criminal Background Premium is paid only after all required outcomes for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark deliverables have been achieved and approved by the VR counselor.

### 20.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The direct services provider is eligible for the Criminal Background Premium when the customer achieves all outcomes required for either Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark, as outlined in the corresponding chapters of the VR-SFP manual.

The service provider is paid for the Criminal Background Premium when the VR counselor confirms and approves that the customer has achieved all outcomes required for the base service, as outlined in the corresponding chapter of the VR-SFP manual.

Payment for the Criminal Background Premium is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* report for the base service, with the Criminal Background section completed; and
* invoice.

## 20.5 Deaf Premium

### 20.5.1 Service Description

A service provider is eligible for the Deaf Premium when:

* the customer's primary mode of communication is a form of sign language (such as American Sign Language, Manually Coded English, Signed Exact English, and/or Pidgin Signed English); and
* services are delivered by a staff member qualified to communicate in the customer's primary mode.

To qualify for this premium, the staff member providing direct services must show proof of proficiency in sign language by providing documentation of certification from the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI), certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), or a Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) rating of intermediate plus.

The Deaf Premium may be available for the services covered in:

* Chapter 4: Employment Assessments
* Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services;
* Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services; and
* Chapter 18: Supported Employment.

For interviews and meetings with an employer, the customer may request an interpreter who is not providing the base service by contacting the customer's VR counselor.

### 20.5.2 Process and Procedures

A contracted provider's staff member who provides direct service to the customer must:

* meet the staff qualifications identified for the base service; and
* be certified by the BEI or the RID or hold an SLPI rating of intermediate plus.

The contracted provider receives authorization for both the base service and the Deaf Premium through a service authorization.

The provider's staff member:

* ensures all outcomes are achieved for the base service; and
* facilitates communication using the customer's primary mode of communication, such as American Sign Language, Manually Coded English, Signed Exact English and/or Pidgin Signed English.

The staff member facilitates communication with or for the customer while:

* providing the base service as defined in the corresponding chapter of the VR-SFP manual; and
* facilitating necessary communication for the customer to participate in the base service.

The provider's staff member must complete the required documentation for the base service, including the section for the Deaf Premium.

### 20.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The services provider is eligible for the Deaf Premium when:

* the VR counselor confirms and approves the customer has achieved all outcomes required for the base service as outlined in the corresponding chapter of the VR-SFP manual; and
* the provider's staff member who facilitates communication attaches the current applicable credential of the staff member's proficiency in sign language.

VRS does not pay fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

The Deaf Premium is paid when the VR counselor:

* verifies communication was facilitated for the customer; and
* approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:
  + report for the base service, with the Deaf Premium section completed; and
  + invoice.

## 20.6 Mileage Premium

This premium is for mileage reimbursement when the provider uses his or her own vehicle to travel to the customer's location to provide services when another provider is not available within 50 miles of the customer's location. This premium does not cover mileage reimbursement when other travel expenses will be reimbursed.

The Mileage Premium may be available to providers serving VR customers receiving the services in the following VR Standards for Providers (VR-SFP) manual chapters:

* Chapter 4: Employment Assessments
* Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services
* Chapter 14: Work Experience Services
* Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services
* Chapter 18: Supported Employment Services
* Chapter 19: Self Employment

### 20.6.1 Definitions

#### Fifty-Mile Radius

To determine whether the contracted provider is outside the 50-mile radius and eligible for a Mileage Premium, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff determines the distance from the provider's location to the location where the service will be provided using the route with the lowest mileage according to MapQuest.

The VR counselor must consult with the regional quality assurance specialist or the regional program support specialist to confirm that there is not another provider within a 50-mile radius of the customer's service location that can meet the customer's needs.

#### Provider Location

The provider's location is defined as the provider's headquarters, as stated in the provider's contract, or the location of the provider's staff that is providing the service, whichever is closest to the location where the service will be provided.

For example, if the provider's headquarters is 75 miles one way from the location where the service will be provided, but the staff member providing the service is located (either his or her residence or a satellite location) 43 miles one way from where the service will be provided, then the provider is not eligible for a Mileage Premium. If the same provider's headquarters is 75 miles one way from where the service will be provided, but the staff member providing the service is located 100 miles one way from where the service will be provided, then the provider's headquarters, as stated on the provider's contract, will be used to calculate the mileage premium since this is the shortest distance.

#### Round Trip

A trip where the starting point and final destination are the same (for example, start and end at the provider's location).

### 20.6.2 Service Description

The Mileage Premium may be available to providers serving VR customers:

* who require an eligible VR-SFP service to achieve the long-term goals as identified on the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE);
* when there is not a qualified VR-SFP provider available within a 50-mile radius of the location where the authorized service is to be provided; and
* who require the provision of a billable service, excluding travel for the sole purpose of obtaining a customer's signature on required documents).

The Mileage Premium amount is based on direct travel for each mile traveled over 50 miles within a round trip. Travel within the customer's community while providing services to the customer is not allowed to be counted when the Mileage Premium payment is calculated. For example, no mileage is calculated when visiting businesses in the community to apply for jobs and/or visiting another customer in the same community, VR only allows the provider to invoice for one round trip per day.

The VR program does not pay a Mileage Premium:

* to transport customers; or
* if the customer does not show up for a scheduled service (referred to as a "no show").

When a provider serves more than one customer within a round trip, the round-trip mileage is based on the travel to each customer's location served during the round trip. (For example, travel is counted from the provider's location to Odessa to Kermit to Pecos and back to the provider location. Travel within each of these towns would not count.)

Calculate Mileage Premium amount as follows:

1. Determine the round-trip mileage from the provider's location to the service location(s) using MapQuest Route Planner, with shortest distance and round-trip options selected;
2. Subtract 50 miles from the round-trip total; then
3. Multiply the total by the state-approved mileage rate.

Mileage is reimbursed at the approved state automobile mileage rate found on the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts webpage: <https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php>.

The amount calculated is the Mileage Premium amount paid to the contracted provider if all other conditions are met and the premium is approved in advance with a service authorization. When multiple consumers are seen during a round trip, the cost of the Mileage Premium will be split between all customers.

All State of Texas travel rules for employees must be adhered to by providers.

### 20.6.3 Process and Procedures

The process and procedures are as follows:

* After the VR counselor and the regional quality assurance program specialist or regional program support specialist have determined there is not a provider to serve the customer within his or her local community, the provider receives a service authorization including the anticipated distance and number of trips to be traveled.
* Provider schedules the services with the customer and makes travel arrangements.
* Provider travels from the defined provider location to the location(s) of the service(s) and provides service(s) before returning to the provider location.
* Provider completes VR3433, Mileage Premium Report.
* Provider obtains required signatures.
* Provider submits the required documentation for payment.
* VR staff reviews documentation, verifies mileage on MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance and round-trip options selected, and authorizes payment if all requirements are met.

### 20.6.4 Outcomes Required for Payment

The service provider is eligible for the Mileage Premium when:

* the customer is provided a billable service, excluding travel for the sole purpose of obtaining a customer's signature on required documents;
* there is no provider for the service within a 50-mile radius of the customer's location, or the provider staff member within the 50-mile radius does not meet the qualifications necessary to provide the service; and
* all information required on VR3433, Mileage Premium Report, is provided.

VR3433, Mileage Premium Report, will include:

* the case ID for all customers served during the round trip;
* the purpose of the visit;
* the provider's location at which the mileage was initiated and completed;
* the mileage for each segment of the round-trip travel according to MapQuest's shortest mileage and route settings, excluding mileage within the local community;
* the mileage calculation for the premium; and
* the required signatures.

Payment for the Mileage Premium is made when the VR counselor verifies the mileage for the trip and approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3433, Mileage Premium Report; and
* invoice.

## 20.7 Professional Placement Premium

### 20.7.1 Service Description

A provider receives a Professional Placement Premium when the customer finds a job that meets all the criteria outlined in VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan Part B and Status Report, or VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report.

In addition to meeting the requirements in VR1845B or VR1632, the position obtained must require at least a bachelor's degree, and the requirement must be stated in the job description or job posting.

The Professional Placement Premium is paid only once, after achievement of the Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark.

### 20.7.2 Process and Procedures

The contracted provider receives authorization for the Professional Placement Premium through a service authorization.

The service authorization for the Professional Placement Premium for Job Placement must be received when the service authorization for Job Placement Benchmark A is received. For Supported Employment, the service authorization must be received when the service authorization for Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark is received.

The provider's staff member working with the customer must provide the Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment service as defined in the VR-SFP manual.

The provider's staff member must complete the required documentation for either Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment, including the section for the Professional Placement Premium. The Professional Placement Premium is paid only after all outcomes have been achieved and approved by the VR counselor for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark.

### 20.7.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The direct services provider is eligible for the Professional Placement Premium when the customer achieves all deliverables required for either Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark, as outlined in the corresponding chapters of the VR-SFP manual.

Proof that a degree is required for the position obtained by the customer must be submitted with the invoice.

The services provider is eligible for the Professional Placement Premium when:

* the VR counselor confirms and approves that the customer has achieved all outcomes required for the base service, as outlined in the corresponding chapter of the VR-SFP manual; and
* proof that a bachelor's degree or higher was required for the position obtained by the customer is demonstrated by either a copy of the job posting or the customer's job description.

The Professional Placement Premium is paid when the VR counselor verifies that the position required a bachelor's degree or higher and approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* report for the base service, with the Professional Placement section completed; and
* invoice.

## 20.8 Wage Premium

### 20.8.1 Service Description

For a customer's case to be eligible for a Wage Premium, a customer must:

* find employment that meets all the outcomes outlined in VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan Part B and Status Report, or VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report;
* earn a gross wage of at least $16 per hour; and
* work a minimum of 20 hours per week.

Proof of the customer's earnings and average hours worked per week must be submitted with the invoice; for example, an itemized pay stub may be used to verify the earning and hours.

The Wage Premium is paid only once, after achievement and completion of Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark.

### 20.8.2 Process and Procedures

The contracted provider receives authorization for the Wage Premium through a service authorization. The service authorization for the Wage Placement Premium for Job Placement must be received when the service authorization for Job Placement Benchmark A is received. For Supported Employment, the service authorization must be received when the service authorization for Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark is received.

The staff member working with the customer must provide the Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment service as defined in the VR-SFP manual. The provider's staff member must complete the required documentation for either Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment, including the section for the Wage Premium.

The Wage Premium is paid only after all outcomes have been achieved and approved by the VR counselor for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark.

### 20.8.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The direct services provider is eligible for the Wage Premium when the customer achieves all deliverables required for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark, as outlined in the corresponding chapters of the VR-SFP manual.

Proof of the customer's earnings and average hours worked per week must be:

* documented in a format such as an itemized pay stub; and
* submitted with the invoice.

The services provider is eligible for a Wage Premium when the VR counselor confirms and approves that the customer:

* has achieved all outcomes required for the base service, as outlined in the corresponding chapter of the VR-SFP manual;
* earns over $16 per hour (gross); and
* works an average of 20 hours per week, as verified by documentation such as an itemized pay stub.

Payment for the Wage Premium is made when the VR counselor:

* verifies that the customer earns over $16 gross per hour and works 20 or more hours per week; and
* approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:
* report for the base service, with the Wage Premium section completed; and
* invoice.

## 20.9 Travel Premium

This Travel Premium allows contracted providers to be reimbursed for mileage and other travel-related costs, such as lodging, food, and third-party transportation. When only mileage travel is being submitted, manager approval is not required. For all other travel expenses, VR manager approval is required before the travel occurs.

The Travel Premium may be available to contracted providers serving VR customers who receive the services described in

* VR-SFP chapters:
  + Chapter 5: Orientation and Mobility Services
  + Chapter 7: Diabetes Self-Management Education Services
  + Chapter 9: Assistive Technology for Sight-Related Disabilities
  + Chapter 10: Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind (ILS-OIB)
* Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual (VRSM) B-403-3: Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation System.

### 20.9.1 Definitions

#### Provider Location

The provider's location is defined as the provider's headquarters, as stated in the provider's contract, or the location of the provider's staff that is providing the service, whichever is closest to the location where the service will be provided.

#### Round Trip

A trip where the starting point and final destination are the same (for example, start and end at the provider's location).

### 20.9.2 Service Description

The Travel Premium is based on round-trip travel and payment can include reimbursement of approved:

* lodging,
* per diem,
* airfare (if necessary),
* mileage when provider's own vehicle is used, and
* transportation by taxi, bus, other form of mass transit, or network transportation driver (for example, Uber or Lyft).

The VR program does not reimburse for travel expenses

* to transport customers; or
* if the customer does not show up for a scheduled service (referred to as a "no show").

Providers do not qualify for a state tax exemption.

The Travel Premium may be available to contracted providers serving VR customers:

* who require an eligible VR-SFP service to achieve the long-term goals as identified on the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE) or independent living goals established under the (IL-OIB) program;
* when there is not a qualified VR-SFP provider available within a 50-mile radius of the location where the authorized service is to be provided; and
* who require the provision of a billable service, excluding travel for the sole purpose of obtaining a customer's signature on required documents).

### 20.9.2.1 Mileage Only

When considering the cost of personal vehicle travel (mileage) as a transportation alternative, the VR provider considers all related costs, such as the cost of meals, parking, vehicle rental, fuel, or taxi.

VR Manager approval is not required for the provider to be reimbursed for mileage only.

The mileage reimbursement is based on direct travel for each mile traveled over 50 miles within a round trip.

Before traveling, the provider must receive a service authorization from VR that includes the anticipated distance and the number of trips to be traveled.

After traveling, the provider must submit VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report with all sections related to the mileage reimbursement completed.

To calculate mileage-only amount of the Travel Premium:

1. Determine the round-trip mileage from the provider's location to the service location(s) (can include travel within the customer's community) using MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance and round-trip options selected
2. Subtract 50 miles from the round-trip total; and
3. Multiply the total by the state-approved mileage rate

Example:

* The provider is located in Lubbock.
* The customer lives in Amarillo (126 miles from Lubbock).
* The provider traveled a total of five (5) miles within Amarillo to provide services at several locations. (e.g. Walmart to United Grocery store for a total of 5 miles),
* The provider returns to Lubbock (126 miles).
* The mileage reimbursement is calculated as follows:

126 + 5 + 126 = 257

257 – 50 = 207 miles

207 x (state-approved mileage rate) will equal the mileage reimbursement.

Mileage is reimbursed at the approved state automobile mileage rate found on the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts webpage: <https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php>.

#### 20.9.2.2 Other Travel Cost (Excluding Mileage)

To be reimbursed for any other travel costs (excluding mileage) such as meals, lodging, and transportation, the provider must submit a VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report, which includes the projected cost of travel for each customer to be served during the trip. The VR counselor and VR Manager review the projected cost on the VR3436 and supporting documentation. When the VR Manager approves projected cost of travel on the VR3436, then a service authorization is received by the provider to authorize travel cost. The service authorization must be received before the travel occurs.

When applicable, the provider must use the guidelines below when completing the VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report. Copies of all receipts for all costs, excluding mileage, must be submitted with the invoice.

#### Lodging

The cost of lodging is reimbursed only if it is incurred at a commercial lodging establishment.

The provider should use the least expensive lodging available. The provider cannot exceed the rates allowed on the published [U.S. General Services Administration’s (GSA) Federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates website](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates?gsaredirect=perdiem). If the city is not listed but the county is listed, use the daily rate of the county found on the GSA Federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates website.

Reimbursement includes:

* the cost of the room;
* city, county, state and other hotel taxes; and
* fee for self-parking when applicable.

#### Meals

Meals are only reimbursed if:

* the provider is away from the identified provider location for at least six consecutive hours, and
* overnight travel is required for the trip.

Receipts are required for meals to be reimbursed.

Gratuities are not reimbursed. Taxes are reimbursed but are already included in the allowed per diem rate. Alcohol expenses are not reimbursed.

To determine the per diem rate, refer to the [Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates?gsaredirect=perdiem) published by the GSA. If the appropriate city is not listed, but the county is listed, the VR counselor uses the daily rate for the county

#### Air Transportation

Airfare can be purchased to meet a provider's transportation needs only if:

* airfare is the most cost-effective method (flying versus driving);
* airfare is an appropriate means of transportation for the provider based on potential disability-related factors; or
* no reasonable alternative exists.

When considering the cost of airfare as a transportation alternative, the VR provider considers all related costs, such as the cost of transportation to and from the airport, parking, vehicle rental, fuel, or taxi. The VR provider documents the cost comparison clearly, including supporting documentation and submits this as an addendum to the VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report. A brief justification for the need for air transportation must be included on the VR3436.

For a provider to be reimbursed for commercial air transportation expenses, a copy of a complete passenger receipt issued by a commercial airline company or an itinerary issued by the company or a travel agency is required.

The commercial air transportation expense receipt or itinerary must include the following:

* name of the provider and airline
* ticket number
* class of transportation
* travel dates
* amount of the airfare
* origin and destination of each flight
* proof of payment

The provider should select the most cost-effective airfare available between the airport closest to the identified provider location and the city where services will be provided.

#### Ground Transportation

A provider may be reimbursed for the actual cost of transportation by taxi, bus, other form of mass transit, form a network transportation driver (for example, Uber or Lyft), if needed for the provider to travel to the location where the service will be provided.

* The most cost-effective mode of transportation available must be used
* Receipts for all travel-related expenses must be provided.

### 20.9.3 Process and Procedures

After the VR counselor and regional quality assurance program specialist or regional program support specialist determines there is not a provider to serve the customer within his or her local community, the following process and procedures apply.

#### 20.9.3.1 Mileage Only Reimbursement

To be reimbursed for mileage only, the provider does the following:

* receives a service authorization including the anticipated distance and number of trips to be traveled;
* schedules the services with the customer(s);
* makes travel arrangements;
* travels from the defined provider location to the location(s) of the service;
* provides the service;
* returns to the defined provider location;
* completes all sections of the VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report that are related to mileage reimbursement;
* obtains required signatures; and
* submits the required documentation for payment.

To calculate mileage reimbursement, use the form and guidelines below:

1. determine the round-trip mileage from the provider's location to the service locations, including travel within the customer's community, using MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance and round-trip options selected;
2. subtract 50 miles from the round-trip total; then
3. multiply the total by the state-approved mileage rate.

After the provider submits all required documentation for payment, a VR staff member:

* reviews the provider's documentation,
* verifies mileage on MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance, and round-trip options selected, and
* authorizes payment if all requirements are met.

#### 20.9.3.2 Reimbursement of Mileage and Other Travel Costs

To be reimbursed for mileage and any other travel costs, such as the costs for meals, lodging, and transportation, the provider and VR staff does the following:

* Provider submits the projected cost on the VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report, to the VR counselor to gain preapproval for travel expenses.
* VR counselor reviews VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report and submits to the VR Manager for review.
* VR Manager approves or disapproves the projected cost by documenting the decision on the VR3436.
* VR counselor issues service authorization or multi-customer service authorization (when multiple customers are to be seen in the round-trip travel) for the approved projected cost, after all appropriate approvals are in place and submits the service authorization to the provider. (The service authorization includes separate line items for each of the allowable expenses. The expenses will be split equally between all customers seen within the round-trip.)
* Provider schedules the services with the customer and makes travel arrangements.
* Provider travels from the defined provider location to the location(s) of the service, provides services before returning to the provider location.
* Provider completes all applicable sections of the VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report recording the actual cost.
* Provider obtains required signatures.
* Provider submits the required documentation for payment.

To calculate mileage reimbursement, use the form and guidelines below:

1. determine the round-trip mileage from the provider's location to the service locations, including travel within the customer's community, using MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance and round-trip options selected;
2. subtract 50 miles from the round-trip total; then
3. multiply the total by the state-approved mileage rate.

When other travel cost such as meals, lodging and transportation are included on the VR3436, the provider follows all instructions on the form and submits copies of all receipts related to:

* lodging,
* meals,
* air transportation, and/or
* ground transportation.

After the provider submits all required documentation for payment, a VR staff member:

* reviews the provider's documentation,
* verifies mileage on MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance, and round-trip options selected (if any),
* verifies all actual travel expenses with receipts and any other required documentation,
* compares actual expense to the approved projected cost recorded on the VR3436 to ensure expenses were allowed, and
* authorizes payment if all conditions are met.

### 20.9.4. Outcomes Required for Payment

The service provider is eligible for the Travel Premium when:

* the customer(s) receives the provision of a billable service, excluding travel for the sole purpose of obtaining a customer's signature on required documents;
* there is no provider for the service within a 50-mile radius of the customer's location, or the staff of the provider within the 50-mile radius do not meet the qualifications necessary to provide the service; and
* all information required on VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report is provided.

The VR3436 must include:

* case ID for all customers served during the round trip;
* purpose of the visit provided;
* provider's location at which travel was initiated and completed;
* all addresses traveled to during the round trip;
* For mileage reimbursement
  + each segment of the round-trip travel according to MapQuest shortest mileage and route settings; and
  + mileage calculation for the premium (Total mileage for the round trip, according to MapQuest shortest mileage and round-trip settings minus 50 miles).
* For other travel cost such as meals, lodging and transportation:
  + VR3436 that includes the Management approval for the projected travel expenses;
  + VR3436 that records the actual expenses, following all requirements in the service description, for the round-trip travel; and
  + copies of receipts and supporting documentation for all expenses.
* Required signatures

The VR program does not reimburse for travel expenses

* to transport customers; or
* if the customer does not show up for a scheduled service (referred to as a "no show").

Providers may not be paid when customers do not show up for scheduled service.

The Travel Premium is paid when the VR counselor verifies the travel reimbursement and approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report;
* required supporting documents, such as receipts; and
* invoice.

## 20.10 Brain Injury Premium

### 20.10.1 Service Description

An acquired brain injury (traumatic and nontraumatic) is an injury to the brain that is not hereditary, congenital, degenerative, or induced by birth trauma. The brain injury occurs after birth.

Examples of injuries that affect the brain or the oxygen supply to the brain include:

* stroke;
* aneurysm;
* tumor;
* infectious disease;
* falls;
* car accident;
* sports injury; and
* lack of oxygen to the brain.

A provider is eligible to provide services for the Brain Injury Premium when:

* the customer has been diagnosed with an acquired brain injury;
* the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor determines that the customer requires intervention to remove barriers to employment that are directly related to the diagnosis of acquired brain injury; and
* the direct service provider has a staff member who will provide the services and either:
  + is certified by the Brain Injury Association of America as a certified brain injury specialist (CBIS) (for information go to [Brain Injury of America](https://www.biausa.org/)); or
  + holds a Brain Injury Endorsement from the University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion & Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE).

The contracted provider receives authorization for the Brain Injury Premium through a service authorization.

The Brain Injury Premium may be available for the services covered in:

* Chapter 4: Employment Assessments;
* Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services;
* Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services; and
* Chapter 18: Supported Employment

### 20.10.2 Process and Procedures

The provider's staff member:

* ensures that all deliverables for the base service are provided; and
* provides interventions, as needed, to remove any barriers related to the customer's acquired brain injury.

The staff member with the UNTWISE Brain Injury Endorsement assigned to work with the customer must:

* provide the base employment service, as defined in the service's associated chapter in the VR-SFP;
* remain on-site (where the employment service is being provided) to provide all necessary interventions, as identified on the referral form and/or service authorization; and
* document in the report for the base service, the interventions and compensatory techniques used to address and/or remove the barriers directly related to the customer's diagnosis of acquired brain injury.

The provider may attend the monthly Employment Supports for Brain Injury (ESBI) interdisciplinary team meeting. The fee to attend is paid one time per month.

### 20.10.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The service provider is eligible for payment of the Brain Injury Premium when:

* the VR counselor confirms and approves that the customer has achieved all outcomes required for the base service, as outlined in the chapter of this manual that corresponds to the base service; and
* the staff member providing the base service meets the qualifications for the base service and maintains a current Brain Injury Endorsement from UNTWISE or is certified by the Brain Injury Association of America as a CBIS.

VR does not pay for fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

The premium is paid after VR approves the documentation that is required for the base service and invoice.

If the provider attends an ESBI interdisciplinary team meeting, the provider must submit a progress note outlining:

* the information obtained by the provider at the meeting; and
* any services that the employment service provider plans to provide in upcoming months.

## 20.11 Blind Premium

### 20.11.1 Service Description

A service provider is eligible for the Blind Premium if:

* The customer has been determined to have one of the following TWC eligibility criteria related to a visual impairment:
  + Blindness - a visual acuity with best correction of 20/200 or less in the better eye; a visual field of 20 degrees or less; or a combination of both;
  + Low vision - a visual acuity with best correction of 20/70 or less in the better eye; a visual field of 30 degrees or less in the better eye; or a combination of both; or
  + Significant Visual Impairment - a condition or disease of the eye that does not meet the definitions of Blind or Low Vision but does create a significant impediment to employment and cannot be corrected with glasses or contact lenses;
* The VR counselor determines that the customer requires intervention to remove barriers to employment that are directly related to a visual impairment; and
* the direct service provider has a current University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE) Blind Premium Endorsement.

The service provider, as needed, removes any barriers related to the customer's visual impairment. Intervention can include, but is not limited to developing compensatory strategies, skills training, and setting up accommodations.  
  
To obtain the UNTWISE Blind Premium Endorsement, the direct service provider must complete the following prerequisite training and receive certificates of completion from:

* the National Rehabilitation Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision (NRTC) trainings, which include:
  + Improving Business Development Skills: A Training for Rehabilitation Professionals (17.25 hours); and
  + Working with Employers: What is Important and What Successful Agencies do (1 hour)

For a contractor to be eligible to invoice for the blind premium, a service authorization must be issued, and the contractors' staff member must:

* maintain the staff member's qualifications for the services being delivered to the customer; and
* have a current University UNTWISE Blind Premium Endorsement.  
  <https://wise.unt.edu/user>.

**Note:** The free, self-paced NRTC Trainings can be found online at <https://nrtc.catalog.instructure.com/>.

The Blind Premium may be available for the services covered in:

* Chapter 4: Employment Assessments
* Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services
* Chapter 14: Work Experience Services
* Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services
* Chapter 18: Supported Employment Services
* Chapter 19: Self Employment

### 20.11.2 Process and Procedures

A contracted service provider's staff member who provides a direct service to the customer must:

* meet the staff qualifications identified for the base service; and
* maintain a current UNTWISE Blind Premium Endorsement.

The contracted service provider receives authorization for both the base service and the Blind Premium through a service authorization.  
The referral and/or service authorization for both the primary employment service and UNTWISE Blind Premium Endorsement identified the categories in which the customer may need intervention to remove barriers related to the customer's visual impairment.  
  
The service provider's staff member:

* ensures all deliverables for the base service are provided as outlined in the VR Standards for Providers;
* must remain onsite or be remotely available to provide interventions, as needed, to remove any barriers related to the customer's visual impairment;
* identifies interventions and compensatory techniques to address and/or remove the barriers directly related to the customer's visual impairment; and
* completes and signs the VR1883, Blind Premium Report.

The VR1883, Blind Premium Report, must be submitted each time the primary service is invoiced.   
  
The Blind Premium is paid only after all outcomes have been achieved and approved by the VR counselor for primary service.

### 20.11.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The service provider is eligible for the Blind Premium if:

* the VR counselor confirms and approves the customer has achieved all outcomes required for the base service, as outlined in the corresponding chapter of the VR- Standards for Providers manual;
* the staff member providing the base service must maintain the current UNTWISE Blind endorsement; and
* the staff member with the current UNTWISE Blind Premium Endorsement provides interventions, as needed, to address any barriers related to the customer's visual impairment.

The premium is paid after:

* the documentation required for the base service is approved; and
* the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:
  + VR1883, Blind Premium Report; and
  + invoice.

Note: VR customers who qualify for the Blind Premium can also qualify for the Deaf Premium simultaneously.  
  
Vocational Rehabilitation Services does not pay for fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

## 20.12 Premium Service Fees

A provider cannot collect money from a VR customer or the customer's family for any service-related charge that exceeds VR's allowable service fees. If VR and another resource are paying for a service for a customer, the total payment must not exceed the fee specified in the VR Standards for Providers.

### 20.12.1 Autism Premium

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Autism Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Career Planning Assessment | $315.00 |
| Career Planning Assessment (prorated when Environmental Work Assessment (EWA) completed | $198.00 |
| Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training | $43.00 |
| Non-Bundled Interview Training | $34.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $551.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $735.00 |
| Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark | $495.00 |
| Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark (every 28 days) | $477.00 |
| Supported Employment Closure Benchmark | $360.00 |
| Job Skills Training (Individual) | $9.00 per hour |
| Job Skills Training (Group) | $4.00 per hour |

### 20.12.2 Criminal Background Premium

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criminal Background Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Supported Employment Closure Benchmark | $613.00 |

### 20.12.3 Deaf Premium

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deaf Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Career Planning Assessment (CPA) | $660.00 |
| Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training | $217.00 |
| Non-Bundled Interview Training | $174.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $1,305.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $1,740.00 |
| Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark | $1,210.00 |
| Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark (every 28 days) | $1,166.00 |
| Supported Employment Closure Benchmark | $880.00 |
| Job Skills Training (Individual) | $22.00 per hour |
| Job Skills Training (Group) | $10.00 per hour |
| VAT-Job Search Training | $478.00 |
| VAT-Disability Disclosure | $478.00 |
| VAT-Entering the World of Work | $239.00 |
| VAT-Explore the You in Work | $239.00 |
| VAT-Money Smart | $717.00 |
| VAT-Public Transportation Training (Group) | $10.00 per hour |
| VAT-Public Transportation Training (Individual) | $22.00 per hour |
| VAT-Soft Skills for Work Success | $358.00 |
| VAT-Soft Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success | $478.00 |

### 20.12.4 Professional Placement Premium

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Professional Placement Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Supported Employment Closure Benchmark | $613.00 |

### 20.12.5 Mileage Premium

Mileage is reimbursed based on the guideline in 20.6 Mileage Premium, at the approved state automobile mileage rate found on the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts webpage: <https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php>.

### 20.12.6 Wage Premium

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Wage Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Supported Employment Closure Benchmark | $613.00 |

### 20.12.7 Travel Premium

Mileage is reimbursed based on the guideline in 20.9.3.1 Mileage Only Reimbursement or 20.9.3.2 Mileage and Other Travel Cost Reimbursement, at the approved state automobile mileage rate found on the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts webpage: <https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php>

Reimbursement for the allowable expenses outlined on VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report, which are based on the guidelines found in section 20.9.3.2 Mileage and Other Travel Cost Reimbursement.

### 20.12.8 Brain Injury Premium

All premiums are paid after the base service deliverables are approved by a VR counselor. Each rate is paid once—except for the hourly rates noted below. The provider may attend interdisciplinary team meetings one time per month.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Brain Injury Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training | $60.00 |
| Non-Bundled Interview Training | $48.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $360.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $480.00 |
| Career Planning Assessment | $245.00 |
| Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark | $385.00 |
| Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark (every 28 days) | $371.00 |
| Supported Employment Closure Benchmark | $280.00 |
| Job Skills Training (Individual) | $6 per hour |
| Job Skills Training (Group) | $3 per hour |
| Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT)—Job Search Training | $120.00 |
| VAT—Disability Disclosure | $120.00 |
| VAT—Entering the World of Work | $60.00 |
| VAT—Explore the You in Work | $60.00 |
| VAT—Money Smart | $180.00 |
| VAT—Public Transportation Training (Group) | $3 per hour |
| VA—Public Transportation Training (Individual) | $6.00 |
| VAT—Soft Skills for Work Success | $90.00 |
| VAT—Soft Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success | $120.00 |
| VAT—Specialized (evaluation and training) | $6 per hour |
| Work Experience Placement | $120.00 |
| Work Experience Training—Individual | $6 per hour |
| Work Experience Training—Group | $3 per hour |
| Attending an ESBI interdisciplinary team meeting (Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan (IAEP) and/or Individual Program Plan (IPP)) | $37.50 per meeting |

### 20.12.9 Blind Premium

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Blind Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Career Planning Assessment | $312 |
| Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Resume Training | $120 |
| Non-Bundled Interview Training | $96 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $720 |
| Bundles Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $960 |
| Job Skills Training | Fee |
| Job Skills Training (Individual) | $12 per hour |
| Job Skills Training (Group) | $6 per hour |
| Customer Profile & Self-Employment Exploration | $84 |
| Concept Development - Only - Simple | $60 |
| Concept Development - Only - Comprehensive | $84 |
| Concept Development - Only - Supported | $36 |
| Feasibility Study - Only - Simple | $144 |
| Feasibility Study - Only - Comprehensive | $252 |
| Feasibility Study - Only - Supported | $360 |
| Concept Development & Feasibility Study - Simple | $204 |
| Concept Development & Feasibility Study - Comprehensive | $336 |
| Business Plan Review - Only - Simple | $60 |
| Business Plan Review - Only - Comprehensive | $84 |
| Business Plan - Simple | $240 |
| Business Plan - Comprehensive | $360 |
| Business Plan - Supported | $420 |
| Financials - Simple | $84 |
| Financial - Comprehensive | $252 |
| Financials - Supported | $144 |
| Supported Self-Employment Assessment | $240 |
| Benchmark 1: Supported Self-Employment Services Plan | $36 |
| Benchmark 2: Supported Self-Employment Business Start-Up | $528 |
| Benchmark 3: Supported Self-Employment Business Maintenance | $264 |
| Benchmark 4: Supported Self-Employment Business Stability | $264 |
| Benchmark 5: Supported Self-Employment Service Closure | $792 |
| Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark | $492 |
| Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark (every 28 days) | $480 |
| Supported Employment Closure Benchmark | $960 |
| VAT - Job Search Training | $120 |
| VAT - Disability Disclosure | $120 |
| VAT - Entering the World of Work | $60 |
| VAT - Explore the You in Work | $60 |
| VAT - Money Smart | $180 |
| VAT - Soft Skills for Work Success | $90 |
| VAT - Soft Skills to Pay the Bills - Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success | $120 |
| VAT - Transportation Training - Individual | $12 per hour |
| VAT - Transportation Training - Group | $6 per hour |
| VAT - Specialized (evaluation and training) | $6 per hour |
| VAT - Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training | $60 |
| VAT - For Younger Students | $90 |
| Work Experience | Fee |
| Work Experience Placement | $240 |
| Work Experience Training - Individual | $12 per hour |
| Work Experience Training - Group | $6 per hour |

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 21: Employment Supports for Brain Injury

## Introduction

The Employment Supports for Brain Injury (ESBI) contract must identify the licensed and certified professionals that the provider plans to use in the delivery of ESBI services.

To obtain an ESBI contract, the provider also must either:

* obtain a contract for Employment Services, which can include Vocational Evaluations, Environmental Work Assessments, Vocational Adjustment Training, Work Experience Services, Job Placement Services, Job Skills Training, and/or Supported Employment; or
* maintain a formal documented partnership and/or subcontract with a Texas Workforce Commission vocational rehabilitation (TWC-VR) Employment Service Provider contractor to provide Vocational Evaluations, Environmental Work Assessments, Vocational Adjustment Training, Work Experience Services, Job Placement Services, Job Skills Training, and/or Supported Employment.

When an ESBI provider chooses to partner with another approved TWC-VR Employment Service provider, the ESBI contract must provide documentation signed by all parties that outlines the relationship and roles of the agreement to the ESBI-assigned contract manager and to the state office program specialist assigned to ESBI. When an ESBI provider subcontracts TWC-VR employment services, the ESBI provider must maintain an Employment Services Contract and must comply with Chapter 3: Basic Standards, 3.1.7.1 Subcontractors.

For more information about the VR standards for providers, the provider can contact a state office program specialist at the [VR Standards Mailbox](mailto:vr.standards@twc.texas.gov).

Definitions of the terms that apply to this contract are listed in the [VR Glossary](https://www.twc.texas.gov/files/jobseekers/vrsm-glossary-12-22-22-twc.docx).

## 21.1 Overview of Employment Supports for Brain Injury Service Model

Employment Supports for Brain Injury (ESBI) is designed to integrate the therapeutic and employment needs of VR customers who have persistent functional limitations resulting from an acquired brain injury (traumatic and non-traumatic injuries). ESBI services are individualized and multidisciplinary with a focus on employment. ESBI may involve the coordinated services of multiple providers for the achievement and retention of competitive integrated employment consistent with the customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Customers may:

* obtain employment on their own or by working with an employment service provider by participating in Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment services while at the same time receiving cognitive and/or other therapeutic services from an ESBI contractor; or
* participate in work or volunteer experiences and other work readiness employment services while also receiving cognitive and/or other therapeutic services before obtaining a permanent job.

ESBI services focus on the customer's ability to obtain, maintain, and advance in employment and to participate in community reintegration activities to prepare for employment by:

* increasing skill development, performance, use of adaptive equipment, and/or assistive technology, and use of compensatory techniques in the following areas:
  + Activities of daily living required for employment
  + Adjustment to disability
  + Behavior management
  + Cognitive performance
  + Endurance
  + Mobility
  + Self-care
  + Speech and communication
* identifying and establishing the use of community resources that increase the customer's independence within the customer's home, community, and work settings; and
* evaluating and accommodating the customer's functional use of the community resources that have been established.

ESBI services can be performed in either a nonresidential or residential setting. The VR counselor and customer will determine which services are necessary to meet the customer's individual employment needs and circumstances.

Both the ESBI therapist and ESBI employment service provider(s) can provide evaluations and services to address the following:

* Determining the customer's abilities as they relate to obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment
* Identifying work tasks and work environments that best align with the customer's skills, abilities, and interests by engaging in:
  + simulated work activities;
  + job samplings;
  + situational assessments;
  + environmental work assessments; and/or
  + volunteer or paid work experiences
* Evaluating the customer's work environments and work tasks, making recommendations to modify and implement strategies to improve the customer's abilities and/or performance (this includes the final job for case closure)
* Teaching the customer's support system, such as parents, friends, spouse, employer, and other professionals how to foster the customer's independence within the work setting, home, and community
* Providing other support services that will address employment barriers and the development of skills necessary to perform effectively in a work setting

ESBI services will include one or more employment services, as described in this manual, such as:

* Environmental Work Assessments;
* Vocational Evaluations;
* Vocational Evaluation - Situational Assessments and Work Samples;
* Work Readiness Services (Vocational Adjustment Training);
* Work Experience (Placement, Training, and Monitoring);
* Bundled Job Placement Services;
* Job Skills Training; and
* Supported Employment Services (Supported Employment Assessment and Placement).

An ESBI employment service provider will assist the customer, when necessary, in obtaining competitive integrated employment for a successful employment outcome.

The customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE), Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan (IAEP), Individualized Program Plan (IPP), and service authorization(s) will identify which assessments, evaluations, and services a customer will receive and who will provide the assessments, evaluations, and services.

The customer's participation in ESBI should lead to the customer obtaining competitive integrated employment, as defined in CFR §361.5(c)(9). The customer must also have unexpired employment authorization documents to participate in the ESBI services.

The VR counselor monitors the customer's progress throughout participation in ESBI services by meeting regularly with the customer and the customer's interested support system, as authorized; the ESBI provider; and other interdisciplinary team members, and by reviewing the documentation submitted.

When rehabilitation treatment is not leading to progress toward employment goals, the VR counselor works with members of the interdisciplinary team (IDT) to develop appropriate modifications to the plan. When this is not possible, the VR counselor may discontinue sponsorship of the treatment and address alternatives for independent living or other services as indicated.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 21.4 ESBI Service Fees.

## 21.2 Staff Qualifications, Ratios, and Training

The contractor and contractor's staff that provides the services described in this chapter also must comply with VR-SFP Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

All staff qualifications and training required by the provider's license, registration, and/or credential must be maintained per applicable regulations and requirements.

Each ESBI provider who has an employment services contract must have a designated director who maintains the University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE) director credential and serves as the primary contact between TWC-VR and the provider. Refer to VR-SFP 3: Basic Standards and 3.4.2 Director for more information.

TWC-VR purchases services only from providers that comply with the appropriate standards in this manual and applicable federal and state licensing standard and/or certification.

### 21.2.1 Licensed and Certified Professionals

The ESBI provider must keep proof of a license or certification on file for any licensed or certified professional and must produce the license or certification at the request of TWC staff.

Below are the qualifications for the licensed professionals who provide ESBI services:

#### Behavior Management Provider

Must be a psychologist or neuropsychologist, a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), licensed professional counselor (LPC), or licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation as a behavior analyst (BA).

#### Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapist

Must be licensed as one of the following:

* Psychologist, with a license from the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists
* Psychiatrist, with a license from the Texas Medical Board
* Occupational therapist, with a license from the Texas Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners
* Speech and language pathologist, licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation

#### Occupational Therapist

Must be licensed by the Texas Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners to practice in the state where services are rendered.

#### Physical Therapist

Must be licensed by the Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners to practice in the state where services are rendered.

#### Psychologist or Neuropsychologist

Must be licensed by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists or licensed to practice in the state where services are rendered (unless exempt). Community-based behavioral health and developmental disability services centers and some state agencies are exempt from the licensing act.

#### Speech and Language Pathologist

Must be licensed as a speech and language pathologist by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

Below are the qualifications for the certified professionals who provide ESBI services.

#### Brain Injury Specialist

Must be certified by the Brain Injury Association of America as a Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS). For information go to the [Brain Injury Association of America](https://www.biausa.org/).

#### Case Manager

Must be certified by the Commission for Case Manager Certification or be a master-level social worker or licensed or certified professional, as listed in this section of the chapter, with a minimum of five years of experience in case management for individuals with brain injury. For information go to the [Commission for Case Manager Certification](https://ccmcertification.org/) website.

#### Therapeutic Recreation Specialist

Must be certified by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification as a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS). For information go to the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification website.

### 21.2.2 Staff Ratios

The ESBI provider must provide sufficient direct-care staff, per state licensure requirements, to manage and supervise customers in accordance with their IPP. The provider must have enough direct-care staff to provide care and services so that customers do not injure themselves or others or destroy property. Special staffing needs identified by the IPP (for example, one-to-one ratios) must be provided. Adequate numbers of direct-care staff must be available to supervise customers during periods of time when other direct-care staff members are unavailable (for example, during breaks, meals, meetings, and training).

### 21.2.3 Employment Service Provider

Any individual who provides employment-related services, via a TWC-VR Employment Services contract, must meet the staff qualifications prescribed for employment services in this manual. When an ESBI contractor subcontracts any service from another approved Employment Services provider, the contractor must ensure that the staff providing the service(s) meets the prescribed qualifications in this manual. To obtain an Employment Services contract for any service, the applicant must have an employee that meets the qualifications of the service.

The provider's director must approve the VR3455, Provider Staff Information Form, completed by each staff member, and submit the approved form to the provider's assigned TWC contract manager and assigned VR regional program specialist.

The links below will take you to the qualifications:

* Vocational Evaluator
* Environmental Work Assessment Evaluator
* Vocational Adjustment Trainer Staff Qualifications
* Job Placement Specialist General Qualifications
* Work Experience
* Job Skills Trainer General Qualifications

#### Supported Employment Specialist

A supported employment specialist must have a:

* current UNTWISE Supported Employment credential; and
* high school diploma or GED, but a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation, business, marketing, or related human services is preferred.

### 21.2.4 Staff Training and Procedures

All direct care staff and Employment Services provider staff members who provide direct services must receive, before assuming any job responsibilities and at least annually thereafter, training in the following areas:

* Reporting of abuse, neglect, or exploitation
* Confidentiality of customer information that includes, but is not limited to, data usage agreement information
* Universal precautions (infection control, per the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](https://www.osha.gov/healthcare))
* Conditions about which they should notify the facility manager or manager of the non-facility program
* Customers' rights
* Emergency and evacuation procedures
* Safety measures to prevent accidents and injuries
* Emergency first-aid procedures, such as the Heimlich maneuver and actions to take when a customer falls, suffers a laceration, or experiences a sudden change in physical and/or mental status
* Managing disruptive behavior
* Emergency restraint behavior management (for example, prevention of aggressive behavior and de-escalation techniques, practices to decrease the frequency of the use of restraint, and alternatives to restraints)
* Fall prevention
* Effective and descriptive documentation

## 21.3 ESBI Provider Qualifications

To provide services in the ESBI model the provider must maintain active TWC-VR contracts for ESBI. For Employment Services, the provider must also maintain a TWC-VR Employment Services contract that includes Supported Employment Services unless the provider has a formal partnership or subcontract with a TWC-VR Employment Services provider that has Supported Employment Services in its contract. The ESBI contractor must provide documentation, signed by all parties, that outlines the relationship and roles of the agreement to the ESBI-assigned contract manager and to the state office program specialist assigned to ESBI.

All residential and nonresidential contractors providing ESBI services must be current in their registration or licensure, with one or more of the following, as applicable and as required by Texas law:

* [Home and Community Support Service Agencies (HCSSA)](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/long-term-care-providers/home-community-support-services-agencies-hcssa)
* [The Texas Board of Physical Therapy and Occupational Examiners](https://ptot.texas.gov/)
* [Assisted Living Facility (ALF)](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/long-term-care-providers/assisted-living-facilities-alf)
* [Health Care Facilities – Required Qualifications](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/health-care-facilities-regulation)

Facilities providing only psychological or neuropsychological services, evaluations and cognitive therapy are waved from the above requirements (registration or licensure) as long as all staff are appropriately licensed or certified, and all other standards and contracting requirements are met. Occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT) services must be provided from a facility with registration.

A residential ESBI provider also must maintain accreditation from:

* the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities;
* the Joint Commission (accreditation of health care organizations); or
* the Disease-Specific Care Certification in brain injury or related rehabilitation program.

TWC-VR may grant a two-year grace period for a residential facility to obtain an accreditation listed above, when the residential facility is a new contractor with TWC-VR.

All contractors must maintain current proof of all required licenses, registrations, and accreditation with the contractor's assigned TWC-VR contract manager and state office program specialist assigned to the ESBI.

When the facility is inspected, the contractor is required to provide any monitoring and/or inspection report summaries by other agencies to the assigned TWC-VR contract manager and the state office program specialist assigned to the ESBI program within five business days of receiving the report.

TWC-VR will not refer new customers to an ESBI contractor whose licensure, registration, or accreditation is under an action to deny or suspend, is revoked, or is not renewed, until such action has been resolved. A facility currently providing services to VR customers is required to notify TWC-VR when the facility's licensure, registration, or accreditation is suspended or revoked within one business day of receiving notification. A facility that fails to timely notify TWC-VR of any such action is considered out of compliance with contract terms and conditions.

TWC-VR mandates that the facility must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and must complete the "ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities," based on the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, found at [ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities](https://www.adachecklist.org/checklist.html). This document must be kept on file and made available to TWC-VR staff upon request.

## 21.4 ESBI Provider Requirements

In addition to this chapter, the provider is responsible for meeting the requirements published in the following:

* VR-SFP Chapter 1: Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation
* VR-SFP Chapter 2: Obtaining a Contract for Goods and Services
* VR-SFP Chapter 3: Basic Standards

Below are additional requirements that apply when a contractor has a contract for the ESBI program.

### 21.4.1 Provider Notifications

The provider must notify (within one business day) the VR counselor when any of the following occur:

* Significant changes in the customer's health and/or condition
* Occurrences or emergencies related to the customer's health and safety
* The customer or the customer's representative requests that services end
* The customer refuses to comply with the IAEP or the IPP
* The customer is absent for more than one day
* The facility believes that a customer's functional needs have changed such that it will impact the customer's level of care
* The facility is notified by regulatory agencies of any enforcement action

### 21.4.2 Provider Vehicles

When an ESBI program owns and operates a vehicle to transport TWC-VR customers, it must ensure that transportation is available in accordance with the ADA and with all applicable state laws. The ESBI program must also comply with SFP 3.4.9 Transportation.

### 21.4.3 Safe and Secure Environment

ESBI contractors must use physical and chemical restraints only when necessary to maintain a customer's safety or the safety of others.

Residential providers must have identified staff trained to administer physical and chemical restraints in an emergency to maintain safety, as allowed by the licensees and certifications held as an ESBI provider.

Nonresidential providers must have identified staff members trained to administer basic physical restraint techniques and use community emergency providers, when necessary to physically and chemically restrain a customer.

All providers must develop policies and procedures and train staff on how to respond to emergency situations. TWC-VR requires that all emergency situations, including use of physical and chemical restraints, be reported as explained in VR-SFP 3.2.9 Safe and Secure Environments. The provider must document the details of the incident in a written report and provide the report to the VR counselor.

When the customer's escalated behaviors can be managed with a behavior plan, a plan must be developed and included as part of the customer's IPP. Refer to VR-SFP 21.8 Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) Service Definition for requirements.

Customers who are assessed to have aggressive or dangerous behaviors to themselves or others that cannot be regulated with medication will be considered not ready to benefit from ESBI services until the behavior issues are resolved. The VR counselor will work with the provider to discharge the customer to a safe environment.

### 21.4.4 Substance Abuse

If the provider observes or has other evidence of the customer's use of alcohol or drugs, the provider must report the observations and evidence within one business day to the VR counselor. The provider must document that the VR counselor was informed of all observations and other evidence of the customer's use of alcohol or drugs.

### 21.4.5 Exceptions and/or Limitations

If a customer requires medical treatment for an injury sustained while receiving ESBI services or requires treatment for an illness derived from participating in services (such as food poisoning, known food allergic reaction from an known allergy) that is not related to the customer's acquired brain injury, the customer's medical services and expenses would be the liability of the contractor and are not covered by the VR program as ESBI services. If for any reason the customer should become unable to participate and/or is not progressing toward goal attainment in the IPP, the IDT will need to prepare the customer for discharge to another appropriate resource.

### 21.4.6 Customer Termination by Provider

If the provider plans termination of services for reasons other than successful employment, the provider must inform the VR counselor that a customer's services are being terminated before the termination takes place. The provider must document that the provider informed the VR counselor about the termination of services to a customer.

The provider must follow the state and federal requirements applicable to the license or certification relating to discharge procedures. The provider must ensure the customer is safe, determine a discharge site, and facilitate placement.

Some reasons for termination before achieving goals include:

* behaviors dangerous to oneself or others;
* no measurable progress being made toward the customer's IPP; or
* refusal to participate in services.

Also refer to VR-SFP 3.4.12 Termination of Service Delivery.

### 21.4.7 ESBI Referrals to VR

Refer to VR-SFP 3.2.6 Referrals to VR by Providers for information.

### 21.4.8 ESBI Program Evaluation

The ESBI provider must comply with VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

ESBI programs are monitored for the success rate of customers obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment while receiving ESBI services and after VR closure.

When applicable, VR-SFP 3.1.3 Contract Noncompliance and Performance Deficiencies will be enforced.

### 21.4.9 Weekly Activity Schedules

The weekly activity schedule for residential and non-residential services must:

* include all core services and goals outlined in the customer's IPP;
* facilitate participation that integrates cognitive skills into all activity engagement;
* demonstrate that the services delivered are focused on preparing the customer to obtain the skills necessary to engage in competitive integrated employment (for example, work simulations, work experience, and volunteer activities);
* be provided to the customer;
* be sent to the VR counselor weekly; and
* be included with the invoice.

Additionally, for residential services, the weekly activity schedule must include activities of daily living, meals, and non-therapy activities focused on further skill development.

### 21.4.10 Weekly Time Logs

Weekly time logs must include all therapy sessions and applicable employment services provided to the customer. Time is recorded in 15-minute increments:

* totaling each type of service provided each day;
* totaling each type of service provided for the week; and
* totaling all services provided for the week.

A week is defined as Sunday through Saturday.

Weekly time logs are submitted to the VR counselor weekly and included with the monthly invoice submitted to the VR unit's purchasing specialist. Services recorded in the weekly time log must match the entries in daily and weekly progress notes for any service provided by licensed and certified professionals. Refer to 21.2.1 Licensed and Certified Professionals for information and requirements for licensed and certified professionals.

### 21.4.11 Progress Reports

Any services provided by licensed and certified professionals must be documented with a daily progress note. All services provided must related to a goal on the customer's IPP. Goals addressed in the daily service must be noted in the documentation. The amount of services provided must be noted in 15-minute increments. Time recorded in the progress report for documentation, communication (for example, email messages and phone calls), and travel time is noted with 0 (zero). Reimbursement for administrative cost related to documentation, email messages and phone calls are included in the rates. Progress reports are submitted weekly to the VR counselor and included with the monthly invoice submitted to the VR unit's purchasing specialist.

### 21.4.12 Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan and Individualized Program Plan Summary Reports

A detailed summary report for each discipline providing service must be completed after each IAEP and IPP meeting. The summary must describe the progress status toward any goals identified on the plans, discharge disposition information, and/or newly identified issues.

## 21.5 Employment Supports for Brain Injury Services

ESBI services are designed to integrate clinical therapies and employment services to result in the customer achieving competitive integrated employment. Clinical therapies are partnered with employment service providers to achieve the goals outlined in an IPP.

Evaluations and assessments are authorized by the VR counselor with a TWC-VR service authorization to determine if ESBI services are necessary. Assessments and evaluations cannot be performed without a service authorization.

When a customer has transferred from another therapy-based service to ESBI services, the evaluation(s) previously completed may be sufficient to determine whether ESBI services are necessary and to develop the customer's ESBI IPP. The IDT recommends when evaluations are necessary. The VR counselor determines the evaluations that will be provided via the service authorization.

The results of the initial assessments identify the goals for cognitive rehabilitation, goals for other therapies and employment services, and the need for any additional supports to be included in the customer's case-managed IPP. The IDT provides services and supports for the customer when authorized by the VR counselor with a service authorization.

Initial and continued funding for ESBI services is contingent on the availability of VR funds and the decision of the VR counselor on the customer's progress toward the established goals of preparing for, securing, retaining, or advancing in employment.

Below are descriptions of services available through ESBI services.

### 21.5.1. Case Management Service Definition

Case management services are client-centered, safe, timely, effective, efficient, and equitable, and are in alignment with customer's IAEP or IPP. Case management services are only available for customers in a nonresidential setting.

Case managers serving customers in a residential setting must provide the same tasks as those described below; the fee to perform the services is included in the residential service base rate.

The case manager may provide the following:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Service** | **Includes Tasks Such As:** | **Allowed Up To** |
| Facilitation of the IAEP  Meeting and Associated Reports | Includes tasks such as the following:   * Receiving the referral and service authorization for case management for nonresidential services   Note: When residential services are recommended, the VR counselor coordinates a referral with a ESBI provider, and case management services begin with the coordination of initial evaluation and associated reports.   * Scheduling the IAEP meeting * Identifying all interdisciplinary team members * Gathering any medical and therapy documentation (evaluation and treatment), as applicable * Ensuring the IAEP is completed and includes all required elements and signatures * Obtaining any required prescriptions * Ensuring the IAEP is updated and the summary report is completed after evaluations are completed | Allowed 1 time per admission |
| Coordination of Initial Evaluation and Associated Reports | Includes tasks such as the following:   * Coordinating insurance and other comparable benefits for primary billing * Gathering any medical and therapy documentation (evaluation and treatment), as applicable * Obtaining any required prescriptions * Obtaining service authorizations for each evaluation * Arranging the customer's admission * Submitting completed evaluation reports to the VR counselor | Allowed 1 time per admission |
| Coordination of Initial IPP and Associated Reports | Includes tasks such as the following:   * Receiving the referral and service authorization * Scheduling the IPP meeting * Identifying all interdisciplinary team members * Ensuring that the IPP is completed and includes all required elements and signatures * Obtaining any required prescriptions and service authorizations for each service in IPP * Coordinating and setting up any Employment Services provider services * Identifying insurance and comparable benefits for primary billing * Arranging admission | Allowed 1 time per admission |
| Coordination of Monthly IPP Reviews and Associated Reports | Includes tasks such as the following:   * Coordinating insurance and other comparable benefits for primary billing * Submitting the weekly activity schedules, time logs, and progress reports for each therapy service listed in the customer's IPP to the VR counselor * Scheduling the monthly IPP meeting * Ensuring all required elements and signatures are included on the IPP * Ensuring the IPP summary report is completed * Obtaining service authorizations and prescriptions for all services for the upcoming month * Communicating any change in the customer's participation, such as absenteeism, illness, injuries, and/or lack of engagement * Coordinating and setting up any Employment Services provider services | Allowed 1 time per month |
| Coordination of Discharge Summary and Associated Reports | Includes tasks such as the following:   * Arranging any services required for the customer to maintain employment, such as long-term supports or adaptive equipment * Scheduling the discharge IPP meeting * Ensuring all required elements and signatures are included on the discharge IPP; * Ensuring the discharge IPP summary report is completed * Submitting all discharge evaluation reports to the VR counselor * Coordinating insurance and other comparable benefits for primary billing * Obtaining the required documentation for the billing process | Allowed 1 time per admission |

#### 21.5.1.1 Process and Procedures

##### Nonresidential

The ESBI provider receives a referral and a service authorization for case management and assigns a case manager.

##### Residential

When residential services are recommended, the VR counselor coordinates a referral with an ESBI provider and case management services begin with the coordination of initial evaluation and associated reports.

##### Nonresidential and Residential

The case manager performs the tasks listed in the service definition by completing a progress report to document the completed task(s).

The case manager ensures the requirements for the following are completed:

* 21.5.2 Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan (IAEP),
* 21.5.4 Individual Program Plan (IPP),
* 21.4.11 Progress Reports,
* 21.4.9 Weekly Activity Schedules,
* 21.4.10 Weekly Time Logs, and
* 21.13 Billing Procedures.

The case manager submits the progress report that describes the tasks completed and submits the invoice.

#### 21.5.1.2 Outcomes Required for Payment

##### Nonresidential

The case manager documents in descriptive terms the tasks completed for the following:

* Facilitation of the evaluation plan meeting and associated reports
* Coordination of the initial evaluation and associated reports
* Coordination of the initial IPP and associated reports
* Coordination of the monthly IPP reviews and associated reports
* Coordination of the discharge summary and associated reports

Payment for the above case management services is made when the VR counselor approves the submitted:

* progress report; and
* invoice.

#### 21.5.1.3 Fee

See:

* 21.12.5 Nonresidential Rate Structure
* 21.12.6 Residential Rate Structure

### 21.5.2 Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan Service Definition

The IAEP is completed to identify any therapy evaluations or employment services to be used to determine the customer's abilities related to obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment. During the meeting any existing evaluation(s) are reviewed to determine what evaluations, if any, need to be completed before the IPP is developed.

The IAEP must include measurable goals that identify:

* the evaluation(s) and assessment(s) that will be completed;
* the focus of each initial assessment(s) and/or evaluation(s);
* the licensed and/or certified professional and/or the qualified employment service provider that will complete the assessment(s) and/or evaluation(s);
* the amount of time approved to complete the assessment(s) and/or evaluation(s);
* the location where the assessment(s) and/or evaluation(s) will be completed (nonresidential or residential); and
* a functional behavior analysis (FBA), if applicable.

#### 21.5.2.1 Process and Procedures

TWC-VR sends a referral packet to the ESBI provider.

The case manager:

* obtains any needed medical records and previously completed assessments and evaluations; and
* arranges the IAEP meeting.

The VR counselor outlines the TWC-VR expectations for the customer's participation in ESBI services.

The IDT completes the IPP.

The case manager obtains the required prescriptions.

TWC-VR issues service authorizations for therapies and employment services for the amount of time described in the IAEP.

#### 21.5.2.2 Outcomes Required for Payment

The case management fee is available only for nonresidential services.

See the requirement for the case management services definitions for:

* facilitation of the evaluation plan meeting and associated reports; and
* coordination of initial evaluation and associated reports.

#### 21.5.2.3 Fees

See:

* 21.12.5 Nonresidential Rate Structure: A case manager can bill for attendance, reporting and documentation related to the IAEP. A licensed and/or certified professional may bill one 15-minute increment for attendance of a customer's IAEP or IPP.
* 21.12. 6 Residential Rate Structure: All IAEP member fees, including the case manager fee, are included in the residential base daily rate.

### 21.5.3 Initial Assessments and Evaluations Service Definition

The assessments and evaluations are performed by licensed and/or certified professionals, as previously defined, and/or by TWC-VR qualified Employment Services providers. Initial assessments are performed for both residential and nonresidential customers, as authorized by the VR counselor and as prescribed by the treating physician. Assessments and evaluations results must identify recommendations for:

* the customer's abilities, deficits, and potential to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment;
* the customer's potential to secure, retain, and advance in employment;
* the customer's employment goal(s), transferable skills, and employment barriers;
* licensed and/or certified professional therapy service(s) and/or employment services to be provided; and
* the customer's measurable goals.

#### 21.5.3.1 Therapy Evaluations

Therapy evaluations include the following:

* Cognitive rehabilitation evaluation
* Occupational therapy evaluation
* Speech therapy evaluation
* Physical therapy evaluation
* Neuropsychological evaluation
* Functional behavior assessment
* Community re-integration evaluation
* Functional capacity assessment
* Situational assessment

#### 21.5.3.2 Employment Service Evaluations

The following employment services can be used to conduct evaluation activities.

Vocational Evaluation is an assessment of an individual's work and training background, general functional capacities, and social and/or behavioral characteristics. The vocational evaluation must contain a detailed description of the customer's behaviors and must describe any implications for the workplace. The evaluation must be designed to determine the customer's present and future vocational potential. For a detailed service description, the process and procedures, and the outcomes required for payment, refer to VR-SFP 4.3 Vocational Evaluation.

Vocational Evaluation—Situational Assessments and Work Samples are tools to help the customer and VR counselor determine the customer's long-term goals related to obtaining competitive integrated employment. The prerequisite is a completed vocational evaluation. For a detailed service description, the process and procedures, and the outcomes required for payment, refer to VR-SFP 4.4 Vocational Evaluation - Situational Assessments and Work Samples.

Environmental Work Assessment (EWA) is a diagnostic tool that assesses how the customer responds to variables in a work environment. The EWA is an accurate assessment of the correlations between a customer's performance and environmental variables and is critical to the customer's ability to obtain and maintain employment. Results of the assessment identify the variables in a work environment that affect the customer's ability to function at the customer's full potential. For a detailed service description, the process and procedures, and the outcomes required for payment, refer to 4.5 Environmental Work Assessment.

Work experience services allow a customer to be placed at a business or an agency within the community to gain short-term experience to obtain skills that are transferable to future long-term competitive integrated employment. Work experience can assist in determining whether a customer is ready for competitive integrated employment; exploring career options; and/or developing skills to include in the individual's résumé for a certain vocation. There are three Work Experience Services. For detailed service descriptions, the process and procedures, and the outcomes required for payment of each service, see the applicable link below:

* VR-SFP 14.3 Work Experience Placement
* VR-SFP 14.4 Work Experience Training

Career Planning Assessment (CPA) is a functional assessment designed to evaluate the customer's work skills, determine support needs, and provide information needed to plan for future employment. The CPA is completed by the CPA evaluator using an individualized and supportive approach. The CPA evaluator conducts the assessment using a variety of strategies, including exploration and work skills assessment. During the CPA, the CPA evaluator conducts interviews, observes the customer in natural environments such as at home or in the community, and assesses the customer in three integrated work settings. The CPA includes multiple visits, which consist of a minimum of three hours of home and community exploration and a minimum of six hours of career exploration and work skills assessments. Interviews with the customer and his or her circle of support may be done in person or remotely. All observations and assessments of the customer's skills and abilities in the community or a work environment must be done in person only. For a detailed service description, the process and procedures, and the outcomes required for payment for each, refer to VR-SFP 4.6 Career Planning Assessment.

#### 21.5.3.3 Process and Procedures

The ESBI service provider and/or employment service provider receives the service authorization(s) for the approved assessment(s) and evaluation(s) identified in the customer's IAEP.

Assessments and evaluations are scheduled.

The assessments and/or evaluations are performed by licensed and/or certified professionals and/or by qualified TWC-VR employment service providers.

Weekly Activity Schedules and Weekly Time Logs are completed.

A licensed and/or certified professional or qualified employment service provider completes the required assessment and/or evaluation reports.

Reports are submitted to the VR counselor.

#### 21.5.3.4 Outcomes Required for Payment

The VR counselor receives the following accurate and descriptive documents associated with the licensed and/or certified professional evaluation or assessment or qualified employment service evaluations:

* A copy of the customer's weekly activity schedule
* A weekly time log recording all billable time for evaluations completed by the licensed and/or certified professional
* Evaluation and/or assessment reports for all evaluations and assessments identified in the IAEP and service authorizations
* Any employment services provided, as identified in the IAEP and service authorization documentation submitted
* The updated IAEP summary, which records the results of completed assessments and evaluations

The assessment and evaluation results contain:

* the customer's abilities, deficits, and potential to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment;
* the customer's potential to secure, retain, and advance in employment;
* the customer's employment goal(s), transferable skills, and employment barriers;
* recommendations for the licensed and/or certified professional therapy service and/or employment services to be provided; and
* the customer's measurable goals.

Assessments and evaluations are paid based on:

* the approved time listed in the IAEP;
* the time recorded on the customer's weekly time log; and
* the time recorded on the assessment and/or evaluation reports.

Payment for assessment and evaluation services are paid when the VR counselor approves the submitted:

* weekly time log(s);
* assessment and/or evaluation reports;
* employment service documentation; and
* invoice.

#### 21.5.3.5 Fees

A case manager can bill for attendance, reporting, and documentation related to the IAEP for Nonresidential services. A licensed and/or certified professional may bill one 15-minute increment for attendance of a customer's IAEP or IPP.

See:

* 21.12.5 Nonresidential Rate Structure
* 21.12.6 Residential Rate Structure

### 21.5.4 Individual Program Plan Service Definition

The IPP is completed to identify any therapy or employment services interventions to be provided to improve the customer's skills and abilities related to obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment. During the initial meeting, goals are established; goal status is reported in monthly meetings; and goals are updated, added, and removed as necessary. The customer's IPP is updated at a minimum of every 30 calendar days or more frequently to respond to a customer's change needs that require immediate attention for safety or continued engagement in the program and at discharge. The completed IPPs must be submitted three business days after the IPP meeting is held. The IPP must be approved and signed by the VR counselor, with a service authorization issued before service delivery.

The IPP must include measurable goals that identify:

* the therapy and/or employment services to be provided;
* the focus of each therapy and/or employment service to be provided;
* the licensed and/or certified professional and/or qualified employment service provider that will provide the therapy and/or employment service;
* the amount of time approved for each therapy and/or employment service;
* the location where the therapy and/or employment service will be completed (nonresidential or residential);
* the discharge location;
* discharge date; and
* a behavior plan, if applicable.

#### 21.5.4.1 Process and Procedures

TWC-VR sends the case manager and the employment service provider the service authorizations.

The case manager arranges the IPP meeting.

The IDT completes and updates the IPP.

The case manager obtains the required prescriptions.

TWC-VR issues service authorization for therapy, employment service, and any ancillary good/service as defined in the IPP.

#### 21.5.4.2 Outcomes Required for Payment

Case management fee is only available for nonresidential services.

See requirement for case management service definition for the following:

* Coordination of Initial IPP and Associated Reports
* Coordination of Monthly IPP Reviews and Associated Reports

#### 21.5.4.3 Fees

See:

* 21.12.5 Nonresidential Rate Structure: Only a case manager can bill for attendance, reporting, and documentation related to the IPP.
* 21.12.6 Residential Rate Structure: All IDT members, including the case manager's fee, are included in the Residential base daily rate.

### 21.5.5 Therapy Services—Definition

Therapy services are performed by licensed and/or certified professionals. Services are performed for both residential and nonresidential customers, as authorized by the VR counselor and prescribed by the treating physician. Residential therapy services are limited to 120 cumulative calendar days of therapy, unless a TWC-VR manager approves additional days of therapy. Nonresidential hours must total 20 hours or fewer per week, for no more than 12 weeks. Additional times require VR manager approval.

Therapy services should develop and improve the customer's:

* abilities, deficits, and potential to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment;
* transferable skills;
* potential to secure, retain, and advance in employment; and
* knowledge and use of adaptive equipment, assistive technology, and compensatory techniques to address employment barriers.

Time spent completing documentation, phone calls, emails, and travel are not counted as therapy services. A licensed and/or certified professional may bill one 15-minute increment for attendance of a customer's IAEP or IPP.

When therapy services are performed in the community setting, the ESBI provider can bill for travel once per day. See 21.12.4 Premium Payments.

Therapy services include, but are not limited to the following:

* Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy (provided by a psychologist, neuropsychologist, OT, PT, or SLP)
* Occupational Therapy(OT) (provided by OT only)
* Speech Therapy (SLP) (provided by a SLP only)
* Physical Therapy (PT) (provided by a PT only)
* Neuropsychological Service (provided by a neuropsychologist only)
* Behavior Interventions (created by a behavior analyst, cognitive therapist; LCSW, LPC, and/or psychologist or neuropsychologist, implemented by the IDT).
* Community Reintegration (provided by an OT, PT, SLP, CTRS, or CBIS)
* Simulated Work Activities (provided by an OT, PT, SLP, CTRS, or CBIS for the purpose of community reintegration)
* Job Samplings (provided by an OT, PT, or SLP)
* Transportation Training (provided by an OT, PT, SLP, CTRS, or CBIS for the purpose of community reintegration)

All services must be prescribed by a treating physician. In the case of cognitive rehabilitation therapy, psychological and neuropsychological services, the neuropsychologist/psychologist is allowed to diagnose and/or provide cognitive therapy without an additional prescription.

#### 21.5.5.1 Process and Procedures

The case manager obtains prescriptions from the treating physician.

Therapy services are scheduled.

Therapy services are provided, as defined in the customer's IPP.

Therapy services are performed by licensed health care professionals and as defined in the customer's IPP.

Weekly activity schedules and weekly time logs are completed.

Licensed and/or certified professionals complete the required progress report describing each treatment session in detail.

Reports are submitted to the VR counselor.

The status of goals is updated in the monthly IPP meetings.

#### 21.5.5.2 Outcomes Required for Payment

VR counselor receives the following complete, accurate, and descriptive documents:

* A copy of the customer's weekly activity schedule
* Weekly time logs recording all billable time for therapies completed by the licensed and/or certified professionals
* Therapy reports for each therapy service provided, as identified in the IPP and service authorization for the reporting period

The therapy documentation contains progress notes and recommendations related to:

* the customer's abilities, deficits, and potential to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment;
* the customer's potential to secure, retain, and advance in employment;
* the customer's employment goal(s), transferable skills, and employment barriers; and
* additional therapy and/or employment services, if necessary.

The time to attend the IPP meeting and update the IPP is not billable.

Therapy services are paid based on:

* the approved time listed in the IPP;
* the time recorded on the customer's weekly time log; and
* the time recorded in the therapy reports.

Payment for therapy services is made when the VR counselor approves the submitted:

* weekly time log;
* therapy report(s); and
* invoice.

## 21.6 Employment Services Definition

Employment services focus on:

* exploring the customer's employment interests and skills;
* developing soft and hard skills related to the customer's employment goal(s);
* securing, retaining, and advancing in employment; and
* setting up employment support services to manage employment barriers.

Employment services, as defined in this manual by the ESBI program, includes the following:

Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT) prepares participants to successfully obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment. There are six VAT services. Use the links below to obtain information on the service description, the process and procedures, and the outcomes required for payment:

* 13.7 VAT Explore the "You" in Work
* 13.8 VAT Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success
* 13.9 VAT Soft Skills for Work Success
* 13.10 VAT Entering the World of Work
* 13.11 VAT Job Search Training—for Pre-Employment Transitional Services Customers Only
* 13.12 VAT Disability Disclosure Training
* 13.13 VAT Money Smart—A Financial Education Training
* 13.14 VAT Public Transportation Training
* 13.15 VAT Specialized Evaluation
* 13.16 Vocational Adjustment Training Specialized

Work Experience Services allow a customer to be placed at a business or an agency within the community to complete short-term experience to gain skills that are transferable to future long-term competitive integrated employment. Work experience can assist in determining whether a customer is ready for competitive, integrated employment; exploring career options for an individual; and/or developing skills to include in an individual's résumé for a certain vocation. There are three Work Experience Services. For a detailed service description, the process and procedures, and the outcomes required for payment of each, see the following:

* 14.3 Work Experience Placement
* 14.4 Work Experience Monitoring
* 14.5 Work Experience Training

Bundled Job Placement is a benchmark service that assists customers in preparing for and completing the job search process. Bundled Job Placement helps customers obtain a job that meets their needs, as outlined in the VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Benchmark Service Plan–Part B and the Benchmark Status Report. For a detailed service description, the process and procedures, and the outcomes required for payment, see Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services, 17.4 Bundled Job Placement Services.

Job Skills Training teaches skills, reinforces skills, and develops or sets up accommodations and/or compensatory techniques to increase the customer's independence and ability to meet the employer's expectations when placed in the final placement for VR case closure. The training is purchased when a customer needs more training and support than is provided by the employer. For a detailed service description, the process and procedures, and the outcomes required for payment, see Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services, 17.5 Job Skills Training.

Supported Employment is an outcome-based system service that uses the Place, Then Train model for employment placement. Supported Employment is for customers with the most significant disabilities. The service includes an assessment, assistance in finding an appropriate job match, support services to learn the job and set-up and establish extended services, sometimes called long-term supports, for the customer to maintain a long-term competitive integrated employment outcome. For a detailed service description, the process and procedures, and the outcomes required for payment, see Chapter 18: Supported Employment Services.

### 21.6.1 Process and Procedures

The service authorization is received.

The services are scheduled and provided, as defined in the customer's IPP.

The employment services are performed by qualified employment service providers that meet the required staff qualifications.

The employment service provider completes the required documentation, as described in this manual.

Reports are submitted to the VR counselor.

The status of goals is updated in the monthly IPP review.

### 21.6.2 Outcomes Required for Payment

Refer to the employment service Outcomes Required for Payment at the service links above.

### 21.6.3 Fees

Employment service fees are not included in the ESBI residential or non-residential rates. Employment services are invoiced separately. The time needed to attend Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan (IAEP) meetings is paid at $37.50 per meeting.

Refer to the employment service fees located at the service links above.

## 21.7 Discharge Service Definition

Providers must develop a discharge summary for each employed customer that includes:

* the strengths, abilities, needs, and preferences of the customer;
* the date of discharge;
* the physical location;
* the amount of supervision that the customer will need for safety, decision-making, and to maintain the skills learned in ESBI services;
* how medical restrictions, precautions, contraindications, and medical care needs will be monitored;
* the family's, caregiver's, and customer's support system training;
* the discharge status of each goal established in the IPP;
* a description of the customer's current employment, including:
  + the employer;
  + the customer's job title;
  + the supervisor's name and title;
  + the customer's soft and hard skills;
  + the work environment; and
  + any compensatory strategies necessary to maintain long-term employment;
* referrals, recommendations, and strategies to help the customer retain and advance in employment.

When the customer is not employed at discharge, the providers must provide a detailed description documenting the following:

* Why the customer is not able to reach a successful employment outcome
* The strengths, abilities, needs, and preferences of the customer
* The date of discharge
* The physical location
* The amount of supervision that the customer will need for safety, decision-making, and to maintain the skills learned in ESBI services
* How medical restrictions, precautions, contraindications, and medical care needs will be monitored
* The family's, caregiver's, and customer's support system training
* The discharge status of each goal established in the IPP
* The alternatives that were tried to achieve employment and the barriers that were identified
* The types of work simulations experienced and the current level of job skills
* Recommendations for suitable work environments
* Recommendations for suitable work tasks
* Recommendations for next steps

### 21.7.1 Process and Procedures

The case manager ensures that the IDT completes the discharge plan, including all required information prescribed in the discharge plan service description.

At discharge, the discharge plan is implemented, and a summary is developed by the case manager, with input from all members of the IDT. Each clinical therapy service must complete and attach a formal discharge summary. For any employment services the provider will attach the required documentation for the applicable service, as defined in this manual's service description, the process and procedures, and the outcomes required for payment.

### 21.7.2 Outcomes Required for Payment

The case manager's completed discharge summary with all required information submitted simultaneously to the VR counselor and the unit program specialist within 10 business days of the customer's discharge.

When case management is not a covered expense by comparable benefit, an invoice must be submitted with the discharge report.

### 21.7.3 Fees

#### Nonresidential Rate Structure (link to 21.12.5 Nonresidential Rate Structure):

Only a case manager can bill for attendance, reporting, and documentation related to the IPP.

#### Residential Rate Structure (link to 21.12.6 Residential Rate Structure):

All IDT members, including the case manager's fee, are included in the Residential base daily rate.

## 21.8 Behavior Intervention Plan Service Definition

A behavior intervention plan (BIP) is a plan designed to teach emotional self-regulation skills and reward positive behaviors. A BIP may include use of therapeutic medications. This can help prevent or stop problem behaviors that will affect a customer's success with maintaining competitive integrated employment. The BIP is based on the results of the Functional Behavior Analysis (FBA). When the IAEP and IPP are being developed and updated, the IDT provides observation and feedback combined with the results of the FBA to develop a BIP that compliments the customer's IPP.

Both the FBA and the BIP can be created, monitored, and updated by a:

* Behavior Analyst; Licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation;
* cognitive therapist;
* psychologist or neuropsychologist; and/or
* LCSW or LPC.

The BIP describes the problem behavior, the reasons the behavior occurs, and the intervention strategies that will address the problem behavior. A BIP can help a customer learn problem-solving skills, coping skills, and use compensatory techniques to better respond to a situation that maybe present as the customer prepares for, obtains, and maintains competitive integrated employment. The plan can also explain who is responsible for helping the customer with each aspect of the BIP.  Refer to 21.4.3 Safe and Secure Environment to ensure compliance with use of physical and chemical restraints.

Customers who are assessed to have aggressive or dangerous behaviors to themselves or others are not ready to benefit from ESBI services until issues have been resolved and the focus can be directed on building appropriate social skills required for work behavior.

### 21.8.1 Process and Procedure

The IDT identifies whether a customer may benefit from a BIP.

Required prescriptions and service authorizations are obtained.

A functional behavior analysis is completed with an assessment report.

As needed, a BIP is created by the FBA evaluator with input from the IDT.

The IDT implements the BIP.

The customer's responses to the BIP are evaluated at the customer's monthly IPP meeting but can be updated more frequently when necessary. BIP progress is documented at the IPP and other times as deemed necessary.

A report of the customer's progress must be submitted any time a behavior management service is invoiced.

### 21.8.2 Outcomes Required for Payment

An FBA is required when a BIP is developed.

Behavior management can be invoiced if the therapy or employment service being provided is solely focused on the BIP implementation.

A progress report describing the professional interventions based on the approved BIP and the customer's response is required.

Time must be documented in the weekly time logs.

### 21.8.3 Fees

Nonresidential Rate Structure (link to 21.12.5 Nonresidential Rate Structure):

Only a case manager can bill for attendance, reporting, and documentation related to the IPP.

#### Residential Rate Structure (link to 21.12.6 Residential Rate Structure):

All IDT members, including the case manager's fee, are included in the Residential base daily rate.

## 21.9 Other Support Goods and Services

Goods and services related to an individual's acquired brain injury, which are not therapy services and are not delivered as part of ESBI nonresidential or residential services, are considered to be supports of ESBI services. The provider must submit an IPP that identifies the goods and services needed for the customer to obtain a service authorization from the VR counselor.

The IPP must include:

* the goods and services recommended;
* a justification of the need related to the established goal (for example, by including assessments and quotes for costs); and
* supporting documentation (such as prescriptions).

 These services may include, but are not limited to:

* orthotics;
* prosthetics;
* psychological services (provided by a psychologist only);
* assistive technology evaluations and devices;
* medications that are not part of an ESBI contract;
* prescribed medical equipment and supplies;
* home and/or vehicle evaluations;
* home and/or vehicle modifications; or
* transportation.

TWC-VR will consider purchasing support services when required to enable participation in an ESBI-approved service. These support services are paid according to the Maximal Affordable Payment Schedule (MAPS) or the durable medical equipment (DME) contract as applicable.

## 21.10 Residential Services

ESBI services are provided at a facility that can address post-acute medical issues, can address rehabilitation issues, and provide 24-hour-a-day support and services that are based on a customer's individual needs. Residential services can be provided while the customer is receiving initial assessments and evaluations, as described in the customer's Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan (IAEP) and/or during the implementation of the customer's Individual Program Plan (IPP). The facility must meet all applicable requirements outlined in 21.3 ESBI Provider Qualifications and 21.4 ESBI Provider Requirements. A service authorization will identify the number of days approved for residential services. The customer must actively participate in the program and make progress toward the goals in either the IAEP or IPP for continued sponsorship of residential services.

The base residential service rate includes administrative costs, room and board, paraprofessional services, medical services (that is, physician and nursing services), dietary and nutritional services, case management, time spent for documentation, communication (such as emails and phone calls), and travel time. When a customer is absent from the facility, the facility is not eligible to invoice for the base service rate. These services may not be billed separately to the VR program. For information about ESBI residential base services, refer to 21.12.6 Residential Rate Structure.

Goods and services related to an individual's acquired brain injury, which are not delivered as part of ESBI residential services, may be considered ancillary if approved by the VR counselor. Refer to 21.9 Other Support Goods and Services.

## 21.11 Nonresidential Services

ESBI services provided as a day program or as outpatient therapy services are nonresidential services. The facility must meet all applicable requirements outlined in 21.3 ESBI Provider Qualifications and 21.4 ESBI Provider Requirements. Nonresidential services can be provided while the customer is receiving an initial assessment or evaluation, as described in the customer's IAEP and/or during the implementation of the customer's IPP. All services provided must be provided by individuals who meet the staff qualifications described in 21.2 Staff Qualifications, Ratios, and Training. A nonresidential service provider must offer cognitive therapy but is not required to provide all of the other core services described in 21.5.2 Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan Service Definition and 21.12.5.1 Core Services. The IDT will be coordinated to include other service providers, as needed.

Time spent for documentation, for communication (such as emails and phone calls), cannot be billed as a core service or as an ancillary service. When a customer is absent from nonresidential services for any reason, the ESBI provider is not eligible to invoice TWC-VR for any fees, including no-show fees. The nonresidential service provider must notify the VR counselor of an absence greater than one day. For information about the ESBI Nonresidential service fees go to 21.12.5 Nonresidential Rate Structure. A service authorization will identify the type and amount of nonresidential services and must be obtained before service delivery. The customer must actively participate in the program and make progress towards the goals in either the IAEP or IPP for continued sponsorship by TWC-VR for Nonresidential Services.

Goods and services related to an individual's acquired brain injury, which are not delivered as part of ESBI nonresidential services, maybe considered ancillary if approved by the VR counselor. Refer to 21.9 Other Support Goods and Services.

## 21.12 ESBI Rates

All rates are inclusive of any administrative activities (such as emails, phone calls and documentation) required to produce the service.

### 21.12.1 Co-treatments with Multi-Clinical Therapists

Two therapists cannot bill for the same period of time. In co-treatments, therapy units and/or time are divided by the number of therapists delivering the service to determine the amount of time to be attributed to each. For example, if a physical therapist and an occupational therapist deliver one hour of individual therapy to a customer together, then the physical therapist's time is billed as 30 minutes and the occupational therapist's time is also billed as 30 minutes.

### 21.12.2 Groups of Customers Seen by One or More Clinical Therapists

A small group is no more than two customers to one licensed or credentialed professional. A group is three and no more than six customers to one licensed or credentialed professional.

Core services must be provided by a contractor's staff member who meets the qualifications prescribed in 21.2.1 Licensed and Certified Professionals.

### 21.12.3 Employment Services Provided by Clinical Therapist

When a clinical therapist provides and employment services as defined in this manual, such as Work Experience, Job Placement, or Supported Employment, it must be provided through an Employment Services Contract and the service can only be invoiced as an employment service. When a clinical therapist co-treats with an employment service provider, the clinical therapist and the employment service provider must be addressing independent goals. The role of a clinical therapist in the co-treatment is to increase the customer's independence related to the disability such as: evaluating safety/cognitive abilities in the employment environment, identifying compensatory techniques and/or use of adaptive equipment that will increase abilities and/or independence, and/or training the customer, employment service provider and/or employer in disability-related issues that will be managed long-term by parties other than the clinical therapist. The role of the employment service provider is to deliver the services as defined in the Standards for Providers achieving all required outcomes for payment.

### 21.12.4 Premium Payments

Premium payments compensate the contractor:

* when an employee maintains approved disability-related credentials;
* for the provision of services performed outside of a contractor's facility and within a community setting; and/or
* for the transportation cost for services provided within the community setting.

Premium payment amounts are:

* added to the licensed and certified professionals rate described in the core services and case management rate tables; and/or
* added as a daily fee, as transportation cost, when any core services is provided within the community setting and transportation cost were incurred by the provider to access the community setting.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Premium Payments** | **Rates** |
| Licensed or Certified Professional who is a CBIS, as described in 21.2.1 Licensed and Certified Professionals | $2.19 per 15-minute increment |
| Community-Based Service | $3.96 per 15-minute increment |
| Transportation costs related to all core services delivered within the community within 24 hours. | $47.08 per day |

### 21.12.5 Nonresidential Rate Structure

#### 21.12.5.1 Core Services

Core services must be provided by a contractor's staff member who meets the qualifications prescribed in 21.2.1 Licensed and Certified Professionals. Nonresidential hours must total 20 hours or fewer per week, for no more than 12 weeks. Additional times require VR manager approval. All rates below are in 15-minute increments.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Core Services (rates set in 15-minute increments)** | **Rates** |
| **Behavior Management** |  |
| Behavior Management Individual | $28.31 |
| **Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy (CRT)** |  |
| Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy Individual | $29.03 |
| Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy Group | $5.81 |
| Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy Small Group | $14.51 |
| **Medical Services Team** |  |
| Attend IDT meeting with customer and family | $28.43 |
| Attend IDT meeting without customer and family | $18.59 |
| **Neuropsychological Services** |  |
| Neuropsychological Services Individual | $32.61 |
| Neuropsychological Services Evaluation | $48.15 |
| Neuropsychological Services Reevaluation | $21.95 |
| Neuropsychological Services Group | $6.52 |
| Neuropsychological Services Small Group | $16.31 |
| **Occupational Therapy** |  |
| Occupational Therapy Individual | $34.38 |
| Occupational Therapy Evaluation | $33.24 |
| Occupational Therapy Reevaluation | $31.32 |
| Occupational Therapy Group | $6.88 |
| Occupational Therapy Small Group | $17.19 |
| **Physical Therapy** |  |
| Physical Therapy Individual | $29.25 |
| Physical Therapy Evaluation | $45.01 |
| Physical Therapy Reevaluation | $43.25 |
| Physical Therapy Group | $5.85 |
| Physical Therapy Small Group | $14.62 |
| **Recreational Therapy (Therapeutic Recreation)** |  |
| Recreational Therapy Individual | $31.17 |
| Recreational Therapy Group | $6.23 |
| Recreational Therapy Small Group | $15.59 |
| **Speech/Language Pathology** |  |
| Speech/Language Pathology Individual | $27.81 |
| Speech/Language Pathology Evaluation | $40.24 |
| Speech/Language Pathology Reevaluation | $33.81 |
| Speech/Language Pathology Group | $5.56 |
| Speech/Language Pathology Small Group | $13.90 |

Licensed and certified professionals may bill one 15-minute increment for attendance of a customer's IAEP or monthly IPP.

#### 21.12.5.2 Example of how to Calculate a Rate

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Occupational Therapy Individual for 45 minutes | 3 X $34.38 | $103.14 |
| Occupational Therapist is CBIS-certified | 3 X $2.19 | $6.57 |
| Occupational Therapy was conducted at the library—customer volunteer learning to perform transferable skills | 3 X $3.96 | $11.88 |
| **Total for the Occupational Therapy Individual Session** |  | $121.59 |

#### 21.12.5.3 Case Management Services

Case management services must be provided by a contractor's staff member who meets the qualifications prescribed in 21.2.1 Licensed and Certified Professionals for a case manager.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Case Management** | **Frequency** |
| Facilitation of the Evaluation Plan Meeting and Associated Reports | * 1 time per admission maximum fee allowed is $400.16 |
| Coordination of Initial Evaluation and Associated Reports | * 1 time per admission; * Maximum fee allowed is $400.16 |
| Coordination of Initial IPP and Associated Reports | * 1 time per admission; * Maximum fee allowed is $400.16 |
| Coordination of Monthly IPP Reviews and Associated Reports | * 1 time per month; * Maximum fee allowed per month is $400.16 |
| Coordination of Discharge Summary and Associated Reports | * 1 time per admission; * Maximum fee allowed is $400.16 |

### 21.12.6 Residential Rate Structure

Residential base rate includes administrative costs, room and board, paraprofessional services, medical services (that is, physician and nursing services), dietary and nutritional services, and case management. These services may not be billed separately to the VR program.

#### 21.12.6.1 Residential Base Rate

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rate Description** | **Amount** |
| Residential Base Rate (1 time per day) | $236.09 |

#### 21.12.6.2 Core Service Rates

A week is defined as Sunday through Saturday.

Most customers should receive a minimum of three hours of core services per day.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Core Services Hour Description** | **Core Services Tier Rate** | **Therapy Evaluation Per Diem** |
| Greater than 0, but fewer than 1 hour of core services | $70.08 | $3.48 |
| Greater than or equal to 1 hour per day, but fewer than 2 hours per day, not exceeding 7 hours per week of core services | $210.24 | $3.48 |
| Greater than or equal to 2 hours per day, but fewer than 3 hours per day, not exceeding 14 hours per week of core services | $350.40 | $3.48 |
| Greater than or equal to 3 hours per day, but fewer than 4 hours per day, not exceeding 21 hours per week of core services | $490.56 | $3.48 |
| Greater than or equal to 4 hours per day, but fewer than 5 hours per day, not exceeding 28 hours per week of core services | $630.72 | $3.48 |
| Greater than or equal to 5 hours per day, but fewer than 6 hours per day, not exceeding 35 hours per week of core services | $770.88 | $3.48 |
| Greater than or equal to 6 hours per day, but fewer than 7 hours per day, not exceeding 42 hours per week of core services | $911.04 | $3.48 |
| Greater than or equal to 7 hours per day, but fewer than 8 hours per day, not exceeding 49 hours per week of core services | $1,051.20 | $3.48 |
| Greater than or equal to 8 hours per day, but fewer than 9 hours per day, not exceeding 56 hours per week of core services | $1,191.36 | $3.48 |

Licensed and certified professionals may bill one 15-minute increment for attendance of a customer's IAEP or monthly IPP. The non-residential quarter hour rate found in 21.12.5.1 Core Services will be used for attendance of IAEP and IPP meetings.

#### 21.12.6.3 Example of How to Calculate Residential Rate for a Day

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rate Description** | **Rate** |
| Residential base rate (1 time per day) | $236.09 |
| Occupational therapy provided for 1 hour;  Physical therapy provided for 1 hour; and  Speech therapy evaluation provided for 30 minutes  Note: No more than 14 hours of care were provided during the week (Sunday–Saturday) | $350.40 |
| Speech therapy evaluation per diem | $3.48 |
| Total Daily Rate: | $589.97 |

#### 21.12.6.4 Employment Services Rates

An employment services provider rate to attend an interdisciplinary meeting (IEAP or IPP) is $37.50 per meeting.

All other employment service rates are found in the SFP chapter associated with the service. See links below.

* Vocational Adjustment Training fees found at 13.17 Work Readiness Services Fee Schedule
* Work Experience Services fees found at 14.5 Work Experience Services Fee Schedule
* Non-bundled and Bundled Job Placement and Job Skills Training fees found at 17.6 Employment Services Fee Schedule
* Supported Employment service fees found at 18.1.13 Supported Employment Fee Schedule
* Brain Injury Premium fees found at 20.11 Brain Injury Premium

## 21.13 Billing Procedures

### 21.13.1 Co-Pay and Coinsurance

If a VR customer has comparable benefits, the provider must bill the comparable benefits before billing the VR program.

If comparable services and benefits are available, the VR program may participate in the cost of services if the combined amount of the VR payment and the comparable benefit payment does not exceed the maximum amount allowed by the following, as appropriate:

* MAPS rate
* Contracted payment rate
* The retail or negotiated lower price (for non-MAPS, noncontract items)

All other pay sources must be exhausted before the VR program is billed for services.

When a customer has health insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid, the ESBI provider first submits a timely claim to these entities, as applicable, for payment of the provided ESBI services. An Explanation of Benefits (EOB) is sent by the insurer to the ESBI provider to document the payment made per benefit coverage and the patient's payment responsibility (the customer's portion). The ESBI provider submits to the VR counselor a copy of the EOB with the provider's invoice in order for the VR payment responsibility to be determined.

If the comparable benefit denies the service, the EOB is reviewed to determine the reason for the denial. If the service was denied for insufficient documentation, the VR counselor contacts the ESBI provider and requests that the provider resubmit the claim with the proper documentation. The VR program is not responsible for payment of services when an ESBI provider fails to file the claim with the comparable benefit in a timely manner.

If the comparable benefit is paid by:

* Major medical insurance, a health maintenance organization, or preferred provider organization—the VR program may pay the customer's portion (co-payment, coinsurance, and any unmet deductible), not to exceed the MAPS rate, contract rate, or retail price, as applicable;
* Medicare—the VR program may pay the customer's portion (co-payment, coinsurance, and any unmet deductible), not to exceed the MAPS rate, contract rate, or retail price, as applicable; or
* Medicaid—the VR program pays nothing. The VR program does not supplement a Medicaid payment for a specific service or procedure.

### 21.13.2 Family Cost Share

In some cases, customers will be required to participate in the cost of services. In those cases, the customer and the provider will be notified of the customer's share. The provider may not bill beyond that cost and will not collect from the customer until the VR payments and/or any comparable benefits payments have been received.

The provider is responsible for billing and collecting or writing off cost-share amounts owed by the liable party.

### 21.13.3 Invoices

For information on VR invoicing requirements, refer to Chapter 3: Basic Standards.

When applicable, billing must be submitted to third-party payers promptly. Billing to VR must be submitted upon partial payment or denial of payment from third-party payers. If the family is required to share in the cost of services, the customer and the provider will be notified of the customer's share. The provider may not bill beyond that cost and will not collect from the customer until the VR payment and/or any comparable benefits payments have been received. When the provider's facility is closed or a customer is not present for the service within a customer's dates of service, payment is not made for that date.

Invoices must be submitted at least monthly, no later than the 15th day of each month, on one of the following forms:

* UB-04 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS 1450)
* Health Insurance Billing Form (CMS 1500)

The provider must submit invoices to the address on the VR service authorization, comply with the terms and conditions of the customer contract, and include, at a minimum, the:

* vendor's complete name and address;
* vendor's 14-digit Texas identification number (TIN) or nine-digit federal employee identification number (FEIN);
* vendor's contact name and telephone number;
* service authorization number;
* delivery address;
* contract number;
* description of the goods or services provided, including CPT codes;
* dates of service;
* quantity and unit-cost being billed, as documented on the service authorization;
* IAEP or IPP signed by the interdisciplinary team (for initial billing for services only);
* weekly time logs;
* Progress reports for services received;
* monthly meeting summaries, signed by the IDT (for monthly services that are not admission or discharge services); and
* customer's discharge summary, signed by the IDT, and the discharge documentation (upon final billing).

The provider must:

* respond to billing-related inquiries from VR program staff members within two business days; and
* submit all documentation requested within five business days following the request.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 22: Vehicle Modifications

## 22.1 Overview of Vehicle Modification Equipment

The contractor and contractor staff that provide the services described in this chapter also must comply with VR-SFP Chapters 1–3 of the VR Standards for Providers manual.

The standards in this chapter apply to contracted vehicle modification equipment (VME) purchased by the Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR) customers.

TWC-VR only purchases VME and associated installation from contracted manufacturers (contractors).

After a driving evaluation has been completed and the customer selects a contractor, then the VR counselor may authorize the purchase of VME and associated installation only when it is vocationally necessary and is expected to improve the customer's ability to participate in VR services that are required to obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain employment as defined in the customer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

## 22.2 Vehicle Modification Equipment Contractor Qualifications

The contractor is required to:

* be an approved Quality Assurance Program (QAP) accredited by the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA);
* have a technician certified by NMEDA on staff for the VME being installed/purchased; and
* have a welder certified by the America Welding Society on staff to perform any welding that may be necessary during VME installation; and
* have the required insurance listed in VR-SFP 22.3 Vehicle Modification Equipment Insurance of this chapter;
* to provide the equipment accepted for purchase as listed on the [TTI/TWC](https://vr.tti.tamu.edu/) website.

## 22.3 Vehicle Modification Equipment Insurance

Contractors must have at a minimum the following insurance required by NMEDA:

* Garage Keeper's Liability insurance; and
* a Product and Completed Operations policy which must be specifically named and listed as a separate coverage. It may be contained in the general liability policy or in the Garage Keeper's policy but must be identified specifically. Product and Completed Operations policies must have limits of $1 million per occurrence. Minimum limits on these policies must be $1 million aggregate and listed on the certificate.

The contractor submits the VR3445, Provider Insurance Verification and a certificate of insurance (ACORD) or other equivalent form detailing coverage and signed by the agent to serve as proof of coverage. The certificate must include a statement that Products and Completed Operations liability coverage is included in the policy.  Addendums, changes, and updates to renewal dates on these insurance policies must be sent to TWC within 30 days of implementation.

## 22.4 Description of Vehicle Modification Equipment and Installation

Contracted VME and associated installation items purchased for customers includes, but are not limited to:

* lowered floor conversions;
* mobility aid hoists;
* mechanical and electronic primary control systems (hand controls);
* reduced effort powered steering;
* access battery systems;
* seating systems; or
* driver and passenger restraint systems.

A complete list of VR vehicle modifications that are accepted for purchase can be found at [Texas A&M Transportation Institute [TTI] Adaptable Vehicles and Equipment](https://vr.tti.tamu.edu/).

Only equipment listed on the TTI/TWC website can be purchased for a customer.

The contractor must:

* modify vehicles according to specifications provided in the TWC Service Authorization associated with the customer;
* follow the manufacturer's recommended warranty schedule;
* follow the manufacturer maintenance recommendation, with minimum maintenance being performed at the end of the 6th and 12th months of operation;
* provide preventive maintenance at no additional cost to VR;
* accept TWC' final payment for services as fulfilling the contractor's claim for those services; and
* not pursue the customer, the customer's parent or guardian, or any other individual for additional payments without prior written approval from TWC.

## 22.5 Maintenance and Warranty

The VME contractor provides written operation and maintenance instructions to the VR customer.

Based on the product type and the manufacturer's warranty, the contractor provides preventive maintenance on the VME in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended schedule.

If the manufacturer does not have a maintenance recommendation, maintenance is performed at the end of the sixth and 12th months of operation. Preventive maintenance must be provided at no additional cost to VR.

## 22.6 Products Returned, Exchanged, or Replaced

Contractors must provide the VR office that issued the service authorization with a written notice of all goods or equipment purchased with VR funds that are subsequently returned to, exchanged, or replaced by the contractor.

This notice must include the:

* description of the item returned;
* date the item was returned;
* reason for the return;
* amount of credit due, if any;
* customer's name;
* case identification number; and
* subsequent actions that were taken (exchanged or replaced).

If the items or equipment are being exchanged or replaced, the contractor must get a new service authorization from the VR staff if the replacement cost of the device is different from the original cost.

When a refund is due, the contractor must remit to VR by the 15th day of each month a check in the amount of the total credit accumulated during the previous calendar month. This payment must be accompanied by supporting documentation and/or credit invoices for each transaction or item for which the credit reimbursement is issued. The supporting documentation and/or credit invoices supplied must include the service authorization number and the customer case ID number.

## 22.7 Vehicle Modification Equipment Method of Payment

Contractors agree to provide contracted VME in accordance with what VR customarily pays across the state, on average.

When the customer is partially responsible for payment for approved VME, VR pays the contractor an amount equal to the service authorization. The customer is responsible for paying the remaining balance to the contractor.

## 22.8 Vehicle Modification Equipment Process and Procedure

After a driving evaluation has been completed and the customer selects a contractor, the VR counselor provides the driving evaluation and/or medical prescription to the contractor and requests that the contractor complete VR3408, Vehicle Modification Evaluation.

Both the VME and VR3408 completion are done at no cost to VR.

If the VME is provided because of an automobile accident, the contractor must list the insurance reimbursement on VR3408.

VR issues a service authorization to confirm that the estimate is approved. The contractor does not begin work until the service authorization has been received from VR.

## 22.9 Vehicle Modification Equipment Outcomes Required for Payment

For the contractor to receive payment, the contractor must:

* provide new, contracted VME as specified on the VR service authorization at the rate established in 22.7 Vehicle Modification Equipment Method of Payment;
* deliver the VME to the contractor's place of business on a date and time mutually agreed upon by the VR counselor, customer, and contractor within 45 days of the service authorization, or notify the caseload-carrying staff of the estimated delivery date before the service authorization is issued;
* deliver the VME in a fully functional state, as detailed in VR3408, Vehicle Modification Evaluation, to meet the VR customer's prescribed needs;
* deliver proof of a successful inspection by assigned VR staff or by TTI; and
* submit an invoice that includes all VME necessary for the customer (should include only the VME approved on the service authorization and be in accordance with VR3408).

Payment is made when the VR counselor verifies:

* the VME delivery, and
* that all documentation listed above has been received.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 23: Placeholder

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 24: Communication Access Services

## 24.1 Overview of Communication Access Services

"Communication access services" is a global term that describes the provision of sign language interpretation, transliteration, and/or Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services to those with hearing and/or speech disabilities.

Sign language interpreting and CART services are provided by qualified individual service providers that facilitate communication between hearing individuals and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. To meet the needs of VR customers who are deaf or hard of hearing, Texas Workforce Commission –VR (TWC-VR) contracts with providers that possess the depth, breadth, and quality of resources necessary to provide communication access services.

Providers are responsible for coordinating and providing VR communication access services according to the needs of the customer as specified on the service authorization. Services must be provided in accordance with the applicable professional and ethical standards of the individual service provider and consist of facilitating communication for customers from a variety of cultures and backgrounds in a variety of settings.

TWC-VR contracts with qualified providers with expertise in the following areas:

* Sign language interpreting services for American Sign Language (ASL) and other forms of sign language, depending on a customer's preferred mode of communication. Also included in this area are Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) services, Trilingual Interpreting services, and Tactile Interpreting services, which uses sign language and touch fingerspelling with one or two hands.
* CART services, which occur when verbal information is converted into text and displayed on a computer, television, or projection screen for an individual to read and follow. Providers must be able to provide services on-site or remotely.

Communication Access Services may be provided to a single customer or multiple customers in various settings. Due to the physical demands of providing these services, with some assignments lasting more than one hour, two or more individual providers may be required. Additionally, circumstances may arise when services must be provided by a noncertified interpreter, which requires TWC-VR approval. For more information, refer to 24.3.1 Service Description.

## 24.2 Staff Qualifications

The contractor and contractor staff members who provide the services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers (VR-SFP) manual.

### 24.2.1 Certified Interpreter

A certified interpreter must hold a current certificate issued by the [Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI)](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/assistive-services-providers/board-evaluation-interpreters-certification-program), or a certificate of interpreter competency issued by the [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)](https://rid.org/). Certified interpreters are governed by the [Code of Professional Conduct of the National Association of the Deaf and by RID](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/assistive-services-providers/board-evaluation-interpreters-certification-program/code-professional-conduct), as adopted by HHS.

### 24.2.2 Certified Deaf Interpreter

Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDIs) must hold a CDI certificate issued by RID.

### 24.2.3 Trilingual Interpreter

A trilingual interpreter must hold an advanced or master trilingual certification issued by the HHS Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI).

### 24.2.4 Noncertified Interpreter

A noncertified interpreter lacks interpreter certification but can interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. A noncertified interpreter may be a hearing interpreter or a deaf interpreter.

### 24.2.5 Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) Provider

A CART provider must hold one of the following:

* A current CART Certification Level I through Level V certificate of competency issued by the [Texas Court Reporters Association](https://www.tcra-online.com/)
* A current [Certified Realtime Reporter (CRR)](https://www.ncra.org/certification/NCRA-Certifications/certified-realtime-reporter) certificate
* A Certified CART Provider (CCP) certificate
* A Certified Broadcast Captioner (CBC) certificate
* A [Certified Realtime Captioner (CRC)](https://www.ncra.org/certification/NCRA-Certifications/certified-realtime-captioner) certificate of competency issued by the National Court Reporter Association

## 24.3 Interpreting Services

### 24.3.1 Service Description

An interpreter conveys messages between individuals without contributing to the dialogue. TWC-VR uses interpreter services to facilitate communication with customers during the rehabilitation process.

Interpreter services are provided by qualified interpreters and include:

* sign language and oral interpretation for customers who are deaf or hard of hearing; and
* tactile interpretation for customers who are deafblind.

Interpreting services include the provision of voice to sign, sign to voice, gestural to sign, sign to gestural, voice to visual, or visual to voice communication access. Qualified individual service providers must receptively and expressively interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. Interpreting services may be provided in an individual or group setting.

An out-of-area assignment occurs when the interpreter's assigned location is more than 20 minutes of driving one way based on the shortest time as determined by [MapQuest](https://www.mapquest.com/); however, if an address is not found on MapQuest, [Google Maps](https://www.google.com/maps/) must be used. Out-of-area travel will be calculated for travel time at the hourly rate charged in 15-minute increments for the time driving to and from the requested out-of-area location.

Interpreting services can vary based on a customer's individual needs. Types of specialized interpreters include, but are not limited to, the following:

#### Tactile Interpreter

A tactile interpreter provides services to a deafblind individual who receives information by sense of touch with one or two hands.

#### Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)

A CDI is a certified interpreter who is deaf or hard of hearing and works in tandem with a hearing interpreter. A CDI possesses native signing ability and lifelong experiences as a deaf or hard-of-hearing individual and has undergone specialized training to become an interpreter.

#### Trilingual Interpreter

A trilingual interpreter is a certified interpreter who is able to meaningfully and accurately understand, produce, and transform conversations between a signed language, the English language, and a language other than English.

A certified interpreter is always preferred; however, a service authorization for the use of a noncertified interpreter may be issued when the following criteria are met:

* Use of a noncertified interpreter is authorized in writing by the customer.
* Use of a noncertified interpreter requires consultation with the VR program specialist for the deaf and hard of hearing. A case note indicating that the consultation has been completed must be entered in ReHabWorks before services are provided.

### 24.3.2 Process and Procedure

The provider is contacted to arrange communication access services. The provider schedules the services for the time and location that meets the customer's needs.

When a noncertified interpreter is used, the customer's signature on a document verifying the time, length, and location of service provision must be received along with the service authorization and written authorization from the customer. The communication access service provider also signs the document and then submits it with an invoice for payment. When the provider is required to travel out-of-area, prior approval must be obtained from VR and shall be based on the hourly rate charged for the interpreter rates from [Texas Health and Human Services (HHS), Communication Services for State Agencies (CSSA), CSSA Maximum Rates](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/business/contracting-hhs/communication-services-state-agencies-cssa/cssa-maximum-rates). For more information on lodging and per diem, refer to 24.5 Communication Access Reimbursement of Travel Costs.

Exception:

Cancellation of services within a period of less than 48 hours of the scheduled service, including cancellation upon arrival.

A cancellation upon arrival occurs when a communication access provider:

* arrives at a scheduled appointment for a VR customer and the customer does not arrive to the scheduled appointment. Provider must wait after scheduled appointment time for at least 30 minutes; and
* does not cancel the services within a period of at least 48 hours of the scheduled service.

### 24.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

For interpreting services, the provider must submit the following for payment:

* Complete and accurate invoice, and
* Documentation on a separate document or on the invoice of the following:
  + Customer name
  + Location where service was provided indicating any service provided remotely
  + Assignment date and time
  + Assignment duration
  + All addresses traveled to during the round-trip (if billing for travel time)
  + Service provider name
  + Service provider certification level

Invoices for cancellation fees, including cancellation upon arrival, must state the fees being billed are cancellation fees and not actual services provided.

## 24.4 Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) Services

### 24.4.1 Service Description

CART services display complete translation of all spoken words and environmental sounds to communicate a message among two or more parties. It entails provision of a word-for-word speech-to-text translation displayed on a screen.

An out-of-area assignment occurs when the CART provider's assigned location is more than 20 minutes of driving one way based on the shortest time as determined by [MapQuest](https://www.mapquest.com/); however, if an address is not found on MapQuest, [Google Maps](https://www.google.com/maps/) must be used. Out-of-area travel will be calculated for travel time at the hourly rate charged in 15-minute increments for the time driving to and from the requested out-of-area location.

### 24.4.2 Process and Procedure

The provider is contacted to arrange communication access services. The provider schedules the services for the time and location that meets the customer's needs.

When the customer receives communication access services, the communication access service provider must obtain the customer's signature on a document verifying the time, length, and location of service provision. The communication access service provider also signs the document and then submits it with an invoice for payment.

When the provider is required to travel out-of-area, prior approval must be obtained from VR and shall be based on the hourly rate charged for the interpreter rates as per [Texas Health and Human Services (HHS), Communication Services for State Agencies (CSSA), CSSA Maximum Rates](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/business/contracting-hhs/communication-services-state-agencies-cssa/cssa-maximum-rates). For more information on lodging and per diem, refer to 24.5 Communication Access Reimbursement of Travel Costs.

Exceptions:

* When CART services are provided remotely, the unedited transcript of the CART services must accompany the invoice for payment.
* When a scheduled service is cancelled less than 48 hours before the scheduled service, including cancellation upon arrival.

### 24.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

For CART services, the provider must submit the following for payment:

* Complete and accurate invoice, and
* Documentation on a separate document or on the invoice of the following:
  + Customer name
  + Location where service was provided indicating any service provided remotely
  + Assignment date and time
  + Assignment duration
  + All addresses traveled to during the round-trip (if billing for travel time)
  + Service provider name
  + Service provider certification level

For remote CART services, the provider must submit the following for payment:

* Unedited transcript in Microsoft Word
* Complete and accurate invoice

Invoices for cancellation fees, including cancellation upon arrival, must state the fees being billed are cancellation fees and not actual services provided.

## 24.5 Communication Access Reimbursement of Travel Costs

### 24.5.1 Service Description

For out-of-area travel, the reimbursement of travel-related costs is based on round-trip travel and payment can include reimbursement of approved:

* lodging; and
* per diem.

The VR program does not reimburse for travel expenses to transport customers.

Providers do not qualify for a state tax exemption.

Travel per diem for overnight accommodations may be provided only with prior approval from VR with a service authorization for projected travel costs. Lodging and meal reimbursements are approved by VR and must use the information in the fee schedule.

### 24.5.2 Process and Procedures

After the VR counselor determines there is not a provider to serve the customer within his or her local community, the following process and procedures apply.

To be reimbursed for any travel costs, such as for meals and lodging:

* The communication access services are scheduled with the provider and the customer is notified the services are scheduled.
* At the time of scheduling the communication access services, the provider advises VR staff that reimbursement of travel costs will be required, in addition to providing an estimate of these costs.
* The provider receives service authorization for the projected cost after prior approval is received.
* The service authorization includes separate line items for each of the allowable expenses.
* The provider travels from the defined provider location to the service location and provides the services before returning to the provider location.

The provider submits the required documentation for payment.

### 24.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The communication access provider must submit the following for payment:

* Complete and accurate invoice, and
* Documentation on a separate document or on the invoice of the following:
  + Customer name
  + Location where service was provided indicating any service provided remotely
  + Assignment date and time
  + Assignment duration
  + All addresses traveled to during the round-trip (if billing for travel time)
  + Copies of receipts and supporting documentation for all expenses
  + Service provider name
  + Service provider certification level

## 24.6 Communication Access Fee Schedules

Below are some of the factors used by HHS in determining fees paid for Communication Access Services:

Rates for interpreters and CART services are based on several factors. Below are the definitions that determine what rates apply:

* Day: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., weekdays (Monday through Friday)
* Evening: 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., weekdays (Monday through Friday)
* Weekend: 5:00 p.m. Friday to 8:00 a.m. Monday
* Last Minute: service requests made with less than 48 hours' (two business days') advance notice

### Interpreter Certification Levels

* Level A:  BEI Level I\Ii, II\Iii, Basic, OC:B; NIC; RID CI, CT, IC, TC, and NAD III
* Level B:  BEI III\IIIi, Advanced, OC:C, OC:V; NIC Advanced; RID CSC, IC\TC, CI\CT, RSC, CDI, and NAD IV
* Level C:  BEI IV\IVi, V\Vi, Master; NIC Master; RID MCSC, SC: L, and NAD V

For additional factors refer to [Texas Health and Human Services (HHS), Communication Services for State Agencies (CSSA), CSSA Maximum Rates](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/business/contracting-hhs/communication-services-state-agencies-cssa/cssa-maximum-rates).

### 24.6.1 Interpreter Rates

Rates for interpreters are listed in the [Texas Health and Human Services (HHS), Communication Services for State Agencies (CSSA), CSSA Maximum Rates](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/business/contracting-hhs/communication-services-state-agencies-cssa/cssa-maximum-rates). The Guidelines of the page do not apply.

When a session exceeds the original approved time, last-minute rates must be billed at the Additional Quarter Hour rates under Interpreter Rates—Evening/Weekend and must be approved by the VR counselor.

### 24.6.2 CART Rates

Rates for CART services are listed in the [Texas Health and Human Services (HHS), Communication Services for State Agencies (CSSA), CSSA Maximum Rates](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/business/contracting-hhs/communication-services-state-agencies-cssa/cssa-maximum-rates). The Guidelines section of the page do not apply.

When a session exceeds the original approved time, last-minute rates must be billed at the Additional Quarter Hour rates under CART Rates—Evening/Weekend and must be approved by the VR counselor.

### 24.6.3 Travel Rates

#### Lodging

The cost of lodging is reimbursed only if it is incurred at a commercial lodging establishment.

The provider should use the least expensive lodging available. The provider cannot exceed the rates allowed on the published US General Services Administration's (GSA) Federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates website. If the county is listed instead of the city, use the county's daily rate found on the [GSA Federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates) website.

Reimbursement includes:

* the cost of the room;
* city, county, state, and other hotel taxes; and
* the fee for self-parking when applicable.

#### Meals

Meals are only reimbursed if:

* the provider is away from the identified provider location for at least six consecutive hours; and
* overnight travel is required.

Receipts are required for meals to be reimbursed.

Gratuities are not reimbursed. Taxes are reimbursed but are already included in the allowed per diem rate. Alcohol expenses are not reimbursed.

To determine the per diem rate, refer to the [Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates) published by the GSA. If the county is listed instead of the appropriate city, the VR counselor uses the county's daily rate.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 25: Placeholder

# Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers Manual Chapter 26: Benefits and Work Incentives Counseling Services

## 26.1 Overview of Benefits and Work Incentives Counseling Services

Benefits and work incentives counseling consists of individualized services that provide detailed information on the impact of employment and other income on Social Security Administration (SSA) disability cash benefits, Medicaid and/or Medicare coverage, and other publicly and privately funded services.

Information provided through benefits and work incentives counseling services supports customers’ abilities to make informed decisions about earning a living wage. An important component to such services is identification and explanation of SSA and Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) work incentives that the customer may qualify for when employed.

The benefits counselor must review the deliverable for the benefits and work incentives counseling service in detail with the customer and document the review with the benefits counselor’s signature and the date. Once the review has been completed and a copy of each deliverable has been sent to the VR counselor, the benefits counselor may submit an invoice for payment.

Customers who have an individualized plan for employment (IPE) and are participating in other VR services before engaging in employment-related services may be referred for Benefits Information and Referral (Benefits I&R) only.

Customers are eligible for benefits and work incentives counseling services if they are actively looking for work or already working and have an IPE and one or more of the following SSA benefits:

* Title XVI Childhood Disability;
* Title XVI Adult Disabled/Blind Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
* Title XVI SSI Aged only if the customer has a letter from the SSA retaining the disability designation;
* Title II Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI);
* Title II Childhood Disability Beneficiary/Disabled Adult Child (CDB/DAC); and/or
* Title II Disabled Widow/Widower Beneficiary (DWB).

The following services may be provided through benefits and work incentives counseling services:

* For recipients of SSI or Title II Disability Benefits (SSDI, CDB/DAC, or DWB):
  + Benefits I&R;
  + Benefits Summary and Analysis/Work Incentive Plan (BSA/WIP);
  + Veteran's BSA/WIP; and/or
  + Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran's BSA/WIP.
* For SSI recipients:
  + Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE);
  + Impairment-Related Work Expense (IRWE);
  + Blind Work Expense (BWE);
  + Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS); and/or
  + Property Essential to Self-Support (PESS).
* For Title II recipients:
  + PASS
  + IRWE; and/or
  + Subsidy or Special Condition.

Completion of HHSC’s Medicaid Buy-In for people with disabilities who work application, including assistance gathering necessary documentation can be purchased for any customer regardless of receipt of SSA disability benefits.

All fees for services described in this chapter can be found in VR-SFP 26.7 Benefits and Work Incentives Counseling Service Fees.

Any request to change the Benefits I&R Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director using the VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request, before the change is implemented. For more information, refer to VR-SFP 3.4.11 Contracted Services Modification Request.

## 26.2 Staff Qualifications and Training

The contractor and contractor staff members who provide the services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers (VR-SFP) manual.

Before any benefits and work incentives counseling services are provided to customers, the benefits counselor’s director must:

* approve the VR3454, Benefits Counseling Provider Staff Information Form, completed by each staff member; and
* submit approved forms to the benefits counselor's TWC-assigned regional program support specialist or regional quality assurance specialist.

The VR3454, Benefits Counseling Provider Staff Information Form, must document the benefits counselor’s qualifications with evidence such as transcripts, diplomas, reference letters, credentials, and licenses.

The benefits counselor must meet one of the following qualifications, as determined by the program specialist for benefits and work incentives:

* Current full certification from [Virginia Commonwealth University's National Training and Data Center](https://vcu-ntdc.org/) (Counselors with provisional certification from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) as a community partner work incentives counselor (CPWIC) may not provide fee-for-service benefits and work incentives counseling services to VR customers unless they are working under the supervision of a currently certified CPWIC.)
* Current full work incentives practitioner credential certification from [Cornell University’s Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability](https://www.ytionline.org/) (WIP-C™)
  + A copy of the credential and a list of all courses taken to maintain credentialed status for the individual’s current Cornell five-year certification period must be provided.
  + Staff members who complete Cornell University’s Work Incentives Planning and Utilization for Benefit Practitioners Certificate Series: Non-Credentialing Program may not provide fee-for-service benefits and work incentives counseling services to VR customers.

### 26.2.1 Community Work Incentive Coordinator at a Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program

To qualify to provide benefits and work incentives counseling services to VR customers, a community work incentive coordinator (CWIC) must be in possession of the following:

* a copy of current VCU certification; and
* a list of SSA-required continuing certification credits completed for the certification year.

Veterans’ benefits information may be provided by a CWIC who is a veteran or who has completed the Online Basic Training Course from the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) and the VCU veterans supplemental training course. The CWIC must have a minimum of five years’ experience working with one of the following:

* A veterans' organization (for example, Operation Pay it Forward, the Military Veteran Peer Network, or any organization listed in the Directory of Veterans Service Organizations)
* The US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
* The Texas Veteran's Commission

A BSA/WIP or revised BSA/WIP completed by a provisionally certified CWIC must be reviewed and cosigned by a certified CWIC.

### 26.2.2 Community Partner Work Incentives Counselor

To qualify to provide benefits and work incentives counseling services to VR customers, a CPWIC must be in possession of the following:

* a copy of current VCU certification; and
* a list of SSA-required continuing certification credits completed for the certification year.

Veterans’ benefits information may only be provided by a fully certified CPWIC who is a veteran or who has completed the Online Basic Training Course from NVLSP and the VCU veterans supplemental training course and who has a minimum of five years’ experience working with one of the following:

* A veterans' organization (for example, Operation Pay it Forward, the Military Veteran Peer Network, or any organization listed in the Directory of Veterans Service Organizations)
* The VA
* The Texas Veterans Commission

A Veteran's BSA/WIP or Revision to Veteran's BSA/WIP written by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be reviewed and cosigned by a certified CPWIC.

### 26.2.3 Work Incentives Practitioner-Certified (WIP-C™) Certified through Cornell University's Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability

To qualify to provide benefits and work incentives counseling services to VR customers, a WIP-C™ must be in possession of the following:

* a copy of current Cornell certification; and
* a list of continuing education unit courses completed toward ongoing certification and the date the candidate expects to complete all 60 hours.

Veterans’ benefits information may only be provided by a WIP- C™ who is a veteran or who has completed the Online Basic Training Course from NVLSP and has a minimum of five years’ experience working with one of the following:

* A veterans’ organization (for example, Operation Pay it Forward, the Military Veteran Peer Network, or any organization listed in the Directory of Veterans Service Organizations)
* The VA
* The Texas Veterans Commission

## 26.3 Supplemental Security Income and/or Title II Disability Benefits

Benefits and work incentives counseling services are available to customers receiving one or more of the following:

* Childhood SSI
* Adult Disabled/Blind SSI
* SSDI
* CDB/DAC
* DWB

A concurrent beneficiary is someone who is receiving both SSI and a Title II disability benefit.

The Medicaid Buy-In service is available to any customer who is working, including those receiving a Title II disability benefit.

The following benefits and work incentives counseling services are available to SSI and Title II disability recipients:

* Benefits I&R
* BSA/WIP
* Revision to BSA/WIP
* Veteran's BSA/WIP
* Revision to Veteran's BSA/WIP
* SSI SEIE
* SSI IRWE
* SSI BWE
* SSI PASS
* SSI PESS
* Title II PASS
* Title II IRWE
* Title II Subsidy or Special Condition
* Texas HHSC's Medicaid Buy-In for any customer who is working, including, but not limited to, those receiving Title II disability benefits.

### 26.3.1 Supplemental Security Income and/or Title II Benefits Information and Referral

#### 26.3.1.1 Service Description

SSI and/or Title II Benefits I&R provides the customer with a high-level overview of SSA Title XVI, Title II, and/or concurrent cash benefits and health care programs and with general information regarding the impact of earned and unearned income on the programs. A written narrative record of the conversation is the deliverable.

Benefits I&R must be as specific to the customer as possible. Fact sheets and checklists may be provided but cannot substitute for individualized information.

The Benefits I&R deliverable may contain a proposal for more detailed benefits and work incentives counseling services via a BSA/WIP if there is supporting evidence for this recommendation.

#### 26.3.1.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting Benefits I&R;
* an SSA Benefits Planning Query (BPQY); and
* a service authorization (SA).

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When the BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Benefits I&R packet with the customer within 15 business days after the date on the VR1512.

When the BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Benefits I&R packet with the customer within 45 business days after the date on the VR1512.

The benefits counselor outlines the basics of the customer’s Title XVI, Title II, or concurrent cash and health care benefits and answers the customer’s basic questions. If the customer wants information on how specific amounts of income affect benefits and health care, a BSA/WIP must be purchased. The Benefits I&R conversation is recorded in a written narrative. Generic fact sheets on the customer’s SSA disability program may be offered for additional information.

The benefits counselor compiles the Benefits I&R packet, mails it to the customer, and contacts the customer to review the packet. All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be addressed in the Benefits I&R documentation.

The benefits counselor submits a copy of the Benefits I&R packet to the requesting VR counselor with an invoice.

#### 26.3.1.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor documents in descriptive terms in the Benefits I&R packet all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedure, demonstrating that the following are covered or included:

* Basic information about the customer's SSA Title XVI, Title II, and/or concurrent cash benefits and health care program
* General information regarding the impact of earned and unearned income on the programs
* All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section (addressed in the Benefits I&R documentation)
* Documented proof that the customer and the benefits counselor have reviewed the packet, as evidenced by the benefits counselor's signature and date of review

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by a supervising certified CPWIC.

Payment for Benefits I&R is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated invoice and Benefits I&R packet (reviewed with the customer, as documented).

### 26.3.2 Supplemental Security Income and/or Title II Benefits Summary and Analysis/Work Incentive Plan

#### 26.3.2.1 Service Description

An SSI and/or Title II BSA/WIP is a written document that provides both general and individualized information about a customer's verified Title II and/or Title XVI cash benefits, health care, and other benefits and how working will affect all publicly and privately funded benefits.

The BSA section must provide the customer with:

* an overview of the customer's disability benefit program and associated health care;
* detailed information on how anticipated or current earned income will affect SSA disability benefits;
* an explanation of how any other publicly or privately funded benefits will be affected by employment income; and
* information on where to go for more information.

The source of verification of all benefits and programs must be documented on the BSA/WIP. Verification must come from the SSA, HHSC, or another funding entity.

The WIP section details current and future actions, including timelines, that must be taken by the customer and others involved in the customer’s case in relation to SSA disability benefits and other publicly or privately funded benefits.

A BSA/WIP must include recommendations for any work incentives under Title XVI or Title II for which the customer may qualify.

Assistance with completion of the application process for specific work incentives is purchased separately from the BSA/WIP.

#### 26.3.2.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting a BSA/WIP;
* an SSA BPQY; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When the BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed BSA/WIP packet with the customer within 30 business days after the date on the VR1512.

When the BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed BSA/WIP packet with the customer within 60 business days after the date on the VR1512.

At the BSA/WIP meeting, the benefits counselor provides an overview of the customer’s SSA disability benefit program and associated health care, as well as detailed information on how anticipated or current earned income will affect SSA disability cash and other benefits. Generic fact sheets about the customer’s SSA disability program, Medicaid/Medicare, and other benefits programs may be offered for additional information. All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be specifically addressed in the BSA/WIP documentation.

BSA/WIP documentation must contain each of the following seven sections in the order listed. Each section must contain the information listed.

* Section One: Summary of Customer’s Current Situation
  + List of SSA and other benefits received to be addressed in the BSA/WIP
  + Type of benefit and how that information was verified
  + Current cash benefit amount awarded, current net benefit the customer is receiving, and how those amounts were verified
  + Value of SNAP benefit and how receipt of this benefit was verified
  + Type of health care coverage, including any private insurance plans, and how that information was verified
  + Monthly health insurance premiums, if applicable, and how that information was verified
  + Name of representative payee or authorized representative, if applicable
  + Overpayment balance and monthly overpayment recovery amount, if applicable
  + Name of home-and community-based services waivers the customer receives, if applicable
* Section Two: Summary of Current Employment/Future Employment Plans
  + Any future employment and earnings goals identified
  + If not employed, wage and hours expected and how that information was verified
  + Current employment situation, if applicable, including job title, hours worked each week, start date, and current rate of pay
* Section Three: Employment Services and Supports
  + List of employment services currently receiving
  + List of employment services and/or supports from which the customer could benefit
* Section Four: Benefits Issues
  + Issues related to Title II disability benefit (for example, potential eligibility on another work record, conversion to retirement, or overpayment issues)
  + Issues related to SSI benefit (for example, in-kind support and maintenance, excess resources, deeming, marriage, or overpayment)
  + Issues relating specifically to CDB/DAC benefits (for example, restriction on whom the CDB/DAC beneficiary can marry; transition from CDB/DAC to SSDI)
  + Where to get assistance with an overpayment that is work related and poses a barrier to continuing employment, if applicable
  + Any additional benefit issues that should be addressed
* Section Five: Issues Requiring Immediate Action
  + How and when earnings from employment and any work incentive programs must be reported to the SSA and other agencies, such as HHSC/Medicaid
  + List of all issues requiring immediate action to be addressed in the BSA/WIP, including, but not limited to, reporting income and dealing with an overpayment or medical review notice
* Section Six: Work Incentive Plan
  + Managing SSA benefits and work incentives (for example, reporting monthly income; timely payment of overpayment recovery amount), with timelines and responsible party
  + Planning for future health care needs (for example, options for customers who lose their Medicare savings program or Medicaid), with timelines and responsible party
  + Managing federal, state, or local benefit programs, with timelines and responsible party
  + Accessing employment services and supports (for example, once VR closes the case, the customer may be able to access an employment network), with timelines and responsible party
  + Resolving existing benefit problems, with timelines and responsible party
  + Creating a follow-up contact plan with the benefits counselor
* Section Seven: Calculation Sheets
  + For those on SSI, this section must contain one or more calculation sheets that illustrate the information in the BSA/WIP.
  + For those on Title II disability, this section must contain one or more tracking charts that illustrate the information in the BSA/WIP.
  + For concurrent beneficiaries, this section must contain both SSI calculation sheets and Title II tracking charts that illustrate the information in the BSA/WIP.
  + BSA/WIPs produced by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

The benefits counselor:

* documents the meeting in the approved format noted above;
* compiles the BSA/WIP packet;
* ensures all questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section are addressed in the BSA/WIP documentation;
* mails the BS&A/WIP packet to the customer; and
* reviews all materials with the customer, as documented by the benefits counselor’s date and signature.

#### 26.3.2.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor documents in descriptive terms in the BSA/WIP all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedure, demonstrating that the following are covered or included:

* An overview of the customer's disability benefit program and associated health care
* Detailed information on how anticipated or current earned income will affect SSA disability and other benefits
* All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section (addressed in the BSA/WIP documentation)
* Documented proof that the customer and the benefits counselor have reviewed the packet, as evidenced by the benefits counselor's signature and date of review

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC. Payment for a BSA/WIP is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated invoice and BSA/WIP (reviewed with the customer, as documented).

### 26.3.3 Veteran’s Supplemental Security Income and/or Title II Benefits Summary and Analysis/Work Incentive Plan

#### 26.3.3.1 Service Description

A Veteran’s SSI and/or Title II BSA/WIP is a written document that provides both general and individualized information about a customer’s verified Title II or Title XVI cash benefits, health care, and other benefits. A Veteran’s BSA/WIP includes detailed information on the impact of employment on a veteran’s cash benefits, health care, housing, and participation in other veterans’ programs.

The Veteran’s BSA section must provide the customer with:

* an overview of the customer’s veteran’s benefits, SSA disability benefits, and associated health care;
* detailed information on how anticipated or current earned income will affect veteran’s and SSA disability benefits;
* an explanation of how any other publicly funded benefits will be affected by employment income; and
* information on where to go for more information.

The source of verification of all benefits and programs must be documented on the Veteran’s BSA/WIP. Verification must come from the VA, SSA, HHSC, or another funding entity.

The Veteran’s WIP section details current and future actions, with timelines, that must be taken by the customer and others involved in the customer’s case in relation to SSA, VA, and other disability benefits.

A Veteran’s BSA/WIP must include recommendations for any work incentives under Title XVI or Title II for which the customer may qualify.

Assistance with completion of the application process for specific work incentives is purchased separately from the Veteran’s BSA/WIP.

#### 26.3.3.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting a Veteran’s BSA/WIP;
* an SSA BPQY; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When a BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Veteran’s BSA/WIP packet with the customer within 30 business days after the date on the VR1512.

When a BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Veteran’s BSA/WIP packet with the customer within 60 business days after the date on the VR1512.

At the Veteran’s BSA/WIP meeting, the benefits counselor provides an overview of the customer’s SSA disability benefit program and associated health care, as well as detailed information on how anticipated or current earned income will affect SSA disability, VA, and other benefits. Generic fact sheets about the customer’s SSA disability program, Medicaid/Medicare, VA, and other benefits programs may be offered for additional information. All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be specifically addressed in the Veteran’s BSA/WIP documentation.

Veteran’s BSA/WIPs must contain each of the following seven sections in the order listed. Each section must contain the information listed:

* Section One: Summary of Customer’s Current Situation
  + A list of SSA and other benefits received to be addressed in the Veteran’s BSA/WIP
  + Type of benefit and how that information was verified
  + Current cash benefit amount awarded, current net cash benefit the customer is receiving, and how that information was verified
  + Value of SNAP benefit and how receipt of this benefit was verified
  + Type of health care coverage, including any private insurance plans, and how that information was verified
  + Cost of monthly health insurance premiums, if applicable, and how that information was verified
  + Name of representative payee or authorized representative, if applicable
  + Overpayment balance and monthly overpayment recovery amount, if applicable
  + Name of home- and community-based services waivers the customer receives, if applicable
* Section Two: Summary of Current Employment/Future Employment Plans
  + Any future employment and earnings goals identified
  + If not employed, employment goal, including wage and hours expected and how that information was verified
  + Current employment situation, if applicable, including job title, hours worked each week, start date, and rate of pay
* Section Three: Employment Services and Supports
  + List of employment services the customer currently receives
  + List of employment services and/or supports from which the customer could benefit
* Section Four: Benefits Issues
  + Issues related to VA and SSA disability benefits (for example, potential eligibility on another work record, conversion to retirement, and overpayment)
  + Issues related to SSI benefit, if applicable (for example, in-kind support and maintenance, excess resources, deeming, marriage, and overpayment)
  + Issues relating specifically to CDB/DAC benefits, if applicable (for example, restriction on whom the CDB/DAC recipient can marry; transition from CDB/DAC to SSDI)
  + Where to get assistance with an overpayment that is work related and poses a barrier to continuing employment, if applicable
  + Any additional benefit issues that should be addressed
* Section Five: Issues Requiring Immediate Action
  + How and when earnings from employment and any work incentive programs must be reported to the SSA, VA, and any other agencies, such as HHSC/Medicaid
  + List of all issues requiring immediate action to be addressed in Veteran’s BSA/WIP, including, but not limited to, reporting income and dealing with an overpayment or medical review notice
* Section Six: Work Incentive Plan
  + Managing SSA and VA benefits and work incentives (for example, reporting monthly income; timely payment of overpayment recovery amount), with timelines and responsible party
  + Planning for future VA- or SSA-associated health care needs (for example, options for customers who lose their Medicare savings program or Medicaid; determining whether TRICARE will be affected), with timelines and responsible party
  + Managing federal, state, or local benefit programs, with timelines and responsible party
  + Accessing employment services and supports (for example, the customer’s ability to access an employment network after VR closes the case), with timelines and responsible party
  + Resolving existing benefit problems, with timelines and responsible party
  + Creating a follow-up contact plan with the benefits counselor
* Section Seven: Calculation Sheets
  + For those on SSI, this section must contain one or more calculation sheets that illustrate the information in the Veteran’s BSA/WIP.
  + For those on Title II disability, this section must contain one or more tracking charts that illustrate the information in the Veteran’s BSA/WIP.
  + For concurrent beneficiaries, this section must contain both SSI calculation sheets and Title II tracking charts that illustrate the information in the Veteran’s BSA/WIP.

In addition to the sections above, detailed information on how employment will affect the following veterans’ benefits, if applicable, must be addressed in the Veteran’s BSA/WIP:

* VA disability compensation, pension, or military retirement benefits and how the specific VA benefit identified is affected by earned income and SSA Title XVI or Title II disability benefits, or vice versa
* TRICARE
* VA health system
* Special VA programs disregarded by the SSI program
* Veteran Readiness and Employment
* Available subsistence allowances, including housing and work-study
* Housing grants for veterans, including Texas State Veterans Homes
* Veterans employment centers
* Compensated Work Therapy programs
* Education and training programs for veterans, including the Hazlewood Act
* Service-disabled veterans’ insurance
* Assistance with vehicle modifications
* Annual clothing allowances
* VA Thrift Savings Plan

The following may also be provided:

* Links to and information about private programs, such as VetAssist and the Military Veteran Peer Network
* How to locate and a short description of the services provided by:
  + TWC’s Workforce Solutions Offices’ Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives or “vet reps”
  + The TWC/Texas Veterans Commission online list of private Texas employers that have a written policy of employment preference for veterans
  + The Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program
* Self-employment resources specifically for veterans, if applicable, including links to the following:
  + The Texas Veterans Commission Veteran Entrepreneur Program
  + The US Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Veterans Business Development
  + The SBA Veterans Business Outreach Center
  + The US General Services Administration
  + SCORE

The benefits counselor compiles the Veteran’s BSA/WIP packet, mails the packet to the customer, and reviews the packet with the customer. All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be addressed in the Veteran’s BSA/WIP documentation.

Veteran’s BSA/WIPs produced by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

#### 26.3.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor documents in descriptive terms in the Veteran’s BSA/WIP all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedure, demonstrating that the following are covered or included:

* An overview of the customer’s disability benefit program and associated health care
* Detailed information on how anticipated or current earned income will affect SSA and VA disability and other benefits
* All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section (addressed in the Veteran’s BSA/WIP documentation)
* Documented proof that the customer and the benefits counselor have reviewed the packet, as evidenced by the benefits counselor’s signature and date of review

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

Payment for the Veteran’s BSA/WIP is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated invoice and Veteran’s BSA/WIP (reviewed with the customer, as documented).

### 26.3.4 Revision to Supplemental Security Income and/or Title II Benefits Summary and Analysis/Work Incentive Plan or Veteran’s Benefits Summary and Analysis/Work Incentive Plan

#### 26.3.4.1 Service Description

To make changes to an SSI and/or Title II BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP, a Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP packet is necessary. Revisions to a BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP must be employment related and can occur when a customer with an open VR case has a change in the earned income documented in Section 2 of the original BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP.

#### 26.3.4.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting a Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP;
* an SSA BPQY; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When the BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP packet with the customer within 30 business days after the date on the VR1512.

When the BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP packet with the customer within 60 business days after the date on the VR1512.

In the Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP meeting the benefits counselor reviews the overview of the customer’s SSA disability benefit program and associated health care, as well as the detailed information on how anticipated or current earned income will affect SSA disability, VA, and other benefits, as applicable. Generic fact sheets about the customer’s VA and SSA disability program, Medicaid or Medicare, TRICARE, and any other benefits programs, as applicable, may be offered for additional information. All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Specific Information Needed and Additional Comments section must be specifically addressed in the Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP documentation. After completing the BSA/WIP the benefits counselor mails the final packet to the customer and reviews the packet with the customer.

#### 26.3.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor documents in descriptive terms in the Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedure, demonstrating that the following are covered or included:

* An overview of the customer’s disability benefit program and associated health care
* Detailed information on how anticipated or current earned income will affect VA benefits, SSA disability, and other benefits, as applicable
* All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section (addressed in the Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP documentation)
* Documented proof that the customer and the benefits counselor have reviewed the packet, as evidenced by the benefits counselor’s signature and date of review

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

Payment for a Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated invoice or Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP (reviewed with the customer, as documented).

## 26.4 Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives

The following SSI work incentives are available:

* SEIE
* IRWE
* BWE
* PASS
* PESS

### 26.4.1 Supplemental Security Income Student Earned Income Exclusion

#### 26.4.1.1 Service Description

The SSI SEIE is an in-depth written explanation and application for this work incentive, which allows certain students under age 22 to retain more of their monthly SSI cash benefit when working.

#### 26.4.1.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting SEIE;
* an SSA BPQY; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When the BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed SEIE packet with the customer within five business days after the date on the VR1512.

When the BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed SEIE packet with the customer within 35 business days after the date on the VR1512.

The SEIE packet consists of:

* a completed application for SEIE on SSA Form 1372 or an SEIE request letter; and
* Instructions on reporting income to the SSA.

Generic fact sheets about the customer’s SSA disability program and SEIE may be offered for additional information.

An SEIE request letter must contain the following information:

* A statement from the student including the student’s age and confirmation of receipt of SSI benefits
* The name and complete address of the school the student attends
* The school’s authorized website or the email address of the student’s instructor
* Proof of enrollment using the Texas Department of Public Safety’s Verification of Enrollment and Attendance form or other acceptable documentation from the secondary or postsecondary school
* The number of weekly class hours the student attends
* A description of the student’s course of study
* The student’s anticipated date of completion
* The employer’s complete business name and address
* The dates of the student’s employment
* The student’s hourly and gross monthly pay
* The number of hours the student works per week
* A copy of the student’s first pay stub or direct deposit statement (If the SEIE request is backdated, copies of all pay stubs or direct deposit statements for the period for which SEIE is requested must be included.)
* The student’s wet signature
* The student’s full name, as it appears in the SSI record
* The student’s full address
* The student’s telephone number and email address, if available

The benefits counselor completes the SEIE application, mails it to the customer and reviews it with the customer. All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be addressed in the SEIE documentation.

#### 26.4.1.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor documents in descriptive terms in the SEIE packet all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedure, demonstrating that the following are covered or included:

* Basic information about SEIE, SSI, and Medicaid
* Information regarding the impact of earned and unearned income on SSI
* All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section (addressed in the SEIE packet)
* Documented proof that the customer and the benefits counselor have reviewed the packet, as evidenced by the benefits counselor’s signature and date of review

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

Payment for an SEIE packet is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated invoice and SEIE packet (reviewed with the customer, as documented).

### 26.4.2 Supplemental Security Income Impairment-Related Work Expense

#### 26.4.2.1 Service Description

An SSI IRWE is a completed application with an in-depth written explanation for this work incentive, which allows customers to retain more of their SSI monthly cash benefit for items and/or services related to the customer’s disability if needed to maintain or advance in employment.

#### 26.4.2.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting IRWE
* an SSA BPQY; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When the BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed IRWE packet with the customer within 10 business days after the date on the VR1512.

When the BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed IRWE packet with the customer within 40 business days after the date on the VR1512.

The IRWE packet consists of a completed application for IRWE and a copy of SSA Form 795 with instructions on reporting income to the SSA. Generic fact sheets about the customer’s SSA disability program and IRWE may be offered for additional information.

There is no SSA form for IRWE. The benefits counselor can create a template IRWE request letter for the customer.

Requests for IRWE must include the following information:

* The date
* The period worked
* The customer’s name
* The customer’s Social Security number (SSN)
* The representative payee, if applicable
* Confirmation of receipt of SSI
* A statement that the document is an IRWE request
* A statement that items listed for IRWE consideration:
  + are necessary for work activity or self-employment;
  + are paid for by the customer;
  + are not reimbursed by another source;
  + are not deducted as a business expense; and
  + relate to an impairment being treated by a health care provider
* A receipt showing payment for each IRWE expense requested
* A statement that the customer will provide additional documentation, if requested
* A list of requested IRWEs, including:
  + the amount of each expense;
  + the impairment to which the cost is related;
  + the health care provider’s name and type (for example, Dr. Jane Smith, family practitioner), if applicable; and
  + where possible and applicable, the accompanying doctor’s notes verifying the need for the item or service.

The benefits counselor completes the IRWE packet, ensuring that pay stubs and receipts are included, mails the packet to the customer, and reviews the packet with the customer. All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be addressed in the IRWE packet.

The benefits counselor submits a copy of the IRWE packet to the requesting VR counselor with an invoice.

#### 26.4.2.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor documents in descriptive terms in the IRWE packet all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedure, demonstrating that the following are covered or included:

* Basic information about IRWE, SSI cash benefits, and Medicaid
* Information regarding the impact of earned and unearned income on SSI
* All questions and concerns in the VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section (addressed in the IRWE packet)
* Documented proof that the customer and the benefits counselor have reviewed the packet, as evidenced by the benefits counselor’s signature and date of review

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

Payment for an IRWE packet is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated invoice and IRWE packet (reviewed with the customer, as documented).

### 26.4.3 Supplemental Security Income Blind Work Expense

#### 26.4.3.1 Service Description

The SSI BWE is a written or electronic in-depth explanation and application for this work incentive, which allows customers who are statutorily blind, by SSA’s definition, to retain more of their SSI monthly cash benefit when working.

#### 26.4.3.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting BWE;
* an SSA BPQY; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When the BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed BWE packet with the customer within 10 business days after the date on the VR1512.

When the BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor must review the completed BWE packet with the customer within 40 business days after the date on the VR1512.

The BWE packet consists of a completed application for BWE and a copy of SSA Form 795, with instructions on reporting income to the SSA. Generic fact sheets about the customer’s SSA disability program and BWE may be offered for additional information.

The completed written BWE application must contain the following information:

* Receipts and proof of wages or self-employment tax returns
* The date
* The period worked
* The customer’s name
* The representative payee, if applicable
* The customer’s SSN
* A contact phone number
* Statements that:
  + the letter is a BWE request;
  + the customer would like the SSA to consider allowing the items outlined in the application to be deducted as BWEs;
  + the BWEs requested are necessary for work activity or self-employment;
  + the BWEs are paid for by the customer and are not deducted as business expenses; and
  + additional documentation will be provided if requested by the SSA.
* A list of expenses and other information for the report periods on included pay stubs or direct deposit statements, including:
  + pay date;
  + federal taxes;
  + local taxes;
  + Social Security taxes; and
  + mandatory dues or pension costs.
* A list of other work expenses (such as transportation, child care, disability-related expenses, meals consumed at work, and uniforms, with receipts for verification wherever possible)
* For each BWE requested:
  + the date of payment;
  + the type of expense;
  + the amount of the expense; and
  + a copy of SSA Form 795 for reporting BWE expenses.

The benefits counselor completes the BWE packet, mails the packet to the customer and reviews the packet with the customer. All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be addressed in the BWE packet.

#### 26.4.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor documents in descriptive terms in the BWE packet all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedure, demonstrating that the following are covered or included:

* Basic information about BWE, SSI cash benefits, and Medicaid
* General information regarding the impact of earned and unearned income on the programs
* All questions and concerns in the VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section (addressed in the BWE packet)
* Documented proof that the customer and the benefits counselor have reviewed the packet, as evidenced by the benefits counselor’s signature and date of review

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

Payment for a BWE packet is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated invoice and BWE packet (reviewed with the customer, as documented).

### 26.4.4 Supplemental Security Income Plan to Achieve Self-Support

#### 26.4.4.1 Service Description

An SSI PASS is a completed application on SSA Form 545 with budgets and an in-depth written explanation for this SSI work incentive, which allows customers to set aside money to pay for items and/or services needed to achieve a work goal. Money deposited in the customer’s PASS account will increase the amount of the monthly SSI cash benefit and not be counted towards the SSI $2,000/$3,000 monthly resource limit.

Customers are not required to be working to have a PASS but must have a work goal that will result in a living wage.

#### 26.4.4.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting PASS;
* an SSA BPQY; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When the BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed PASS packet with the customer within 30 business days after the date on the VR1512.

When the BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed PASS packet with the customer within 60 business days after the date on the VR1512.

The benefits counselor:

* assists in completion of the PASS application on SSA Form 545;
* attaches the PASS budget;
* explains how to track and report PASS savings to the SSA;
* assists with gathering other needed documentation for the PASS;
* mails the packet to the customer; and
* reviews the packet with the customer.

All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be addressed in the PASS documentation.

#### 26.4.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor documents in descriptive terms in the PASS packet all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedure, demonstrating that the following are covered or included:

* Basic information about SSI, PASS, and Medicaid
* General information regarding the impact of earned and unearned income on the programs
* All questions and concerns in the VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section (addressed in the PASS packet)
* Documented proof that the customer and the benefits counselor have reviewed the packet, as evidenced by the benefits counselor’s signature and date of review

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

Payment for PASS is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated invoice and PASS packet (reviewed with the customer, as documented).

### 26.4.5 Supplemental Security Income Property Essential to Self-Support

#### 26.4.5.1 Service Description

SSI PESS is an in-depth written explanation and application on SSA Form 795 and accompanying documents, such as a tax return, a deed, or documents proving the base value of livestock or tools. This work incentive allows customers receiving SSI who own property, livestock, or tools used in a trade or business or as an employee to exclude all or a portion of those items from resources. PESS only applies to unincorporated for-profit businesses that produce net earnings from self-employment in the trade or business exclusion, such as sole proprietorships, partnerships, and limited liability companies.

#### 26.4.5.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting PESS;
* an SSA BPQY; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When the BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed PESS packet with the customer within 15 business days after the date on the VR1512.

When the BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed PESS packet with the customer within 45 business days after the date on the VR1512.

The benefits counselor:

* assists in completion of the PESS request on SSA Form 795;
* attaches supporting documentation, such as a tax return, a deed, or documents proving the base value of livestock or tools;
* explains how to track and report PESS savings to the SSA;
* mails the packet to the customer; and
* reviews the packet with the customer.

The SSA Form 795 PESS request must have attached or contain the following information:

* Tax returns, deeds, or other proof of ownership of PESS exclusions
* The date
* The period worked
* The customer’s name
* The representative payee, if applicable
* The customer’s SSN
* The customer’s contact phone number
* A statement on SSA Form 795 that:
  + the PESS is necessary for work activity or self-employment;
  + the items are paid for by the customer;
  + the cost of the items is not deducted as a business expense; and
  + additional documentation will be provided if requested by the SSA.
* A list of PESS exclusions

#### 26.4.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor documents, in descriptive terms in the PESS packet, all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedure, demonstrating that the following are covered or included:

* Basic information about SSI, PESS, and Medicaid
* General information regarding the impact of earned and unearned income on the programs
* All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section (addressed in the PESS documentation)
* Documented proof that the customer and the benefits counselor have reviewed the packet, as evidenced by the benefits counselor’s signature and date of review

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC. Payment for PESS is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated invoice and PESS packet (reviewed with the customer, as documented).

## 26.5 Title II Work Incentives

The following Title II services are available:

* PASS
* IRWE
* Subsidy or Special Condition

### 26.5.1 Title II Plan to Achieve Self-Support

#### 26.5.1.1 Service Description

A Title II PASS is a completed application on SSA Form 545 with budgets and an in-depth written explanation for this Title II work incentive, which allows customers to set aside money to pay for items and/or services needed to achieve a work goal.

Customers on Title II disability benefits who have an approved PASS will always get some amount of SSI disability monthly cash benefit and Medicaid while the PASS is active.

A PASS application packet for a Title II disability beneficiary must include instructions on how to report income to the Title II claims representative and a note that, as long as the customer is receiving Medicaid, he or she must have no more than $2,000/$3,000 in monthly resources.

Customers are not required to be working to have a PASS but must have a work goal that will result in a living wage.

#### 26.5.1.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting PASS;
* an SSA BPQY; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When the BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed PASS packet with the customer within 30 business days after the date on the VR1512.

When the BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed PASS packet with the customer within 60 business days after the date on the VR1512.

The benefits counselor completes the PASS application on SSA Form 545, the PASS budget, and other documentation, educates the customer on how to track and report PASS savings to the SSA, mails the packet to the customer, and reviews the packet with the customer.

All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be addressed in the PASS documentation.

#### 26.5.1.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor documents in descriptive terms in the PASS packet all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedure, demonstrating that the following are covered or included:

* Basic information about SSA Title II and concurrent cash benefits and Medicaid and Medicare
* Information on the resource limit with Title II PASS
* General information regarding the impact of earned and unearned income on the programs
* All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section (addressed in the PASS documentation)
* Documented proof that the customer and the benefits counselor have reviewed the packet, as evidenced by the benefits counselor’s signature and date of review

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

Payment for PASS is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated invoice and PASS packet (reviewed with the customer, as documented).

### 26.5.2 Title II Impairment-Related Work Expense

#### 26.5.2.1 Service Description

A Title II IRWE is a completed application with an in-depth written explanation for this work incentive, which allows customers to retain their Title II monthly cash benefit if expenses for items and/or services related to the customer’s disability are needed to maintain employment. Title II IRWEs can only be ordered if the customer has finished a trial work period and is earning above substantial gainful activity.

#### 26.5.2.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting Title II IRWE;
* an SSA BPQY; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When the BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Title II IRWE packet with the customer within 10 business days after the date on the VR1512.

When the BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Title II IRWE packet with the customer within 45 business days after the date on the VR1512.

The Title II IRWE packet consists of:

* a completed application for Title II IRWE;
* a copy of SSA Form 795; and
* instructions on reporting income to the SSA.

Generic fact sheets about the customer’s Title II disability benefits and Title II IRWE may be offered for additional information.

There is no SSA form for Title II IRWE. The benefits counselor can create a template IRWE request letter for the customer. The Title II IRWE letter must contain the following information:

* The date
* The period worked
* The customer’s name
* The customer’s SSN
* The representative payee, if applicable
* The SSN on which payment is made, if different from the customer’s SSN (for example, for a CDB/DAC or DWB recipient)
* The type of Title II benefit received
* A statement that the document is a Title II IRWE request that items listed be deducted as IRWEs when considering the work activity the customer is reporting
* A statement that items listed for Title II IRWE consideration:
  + are necessary for work activity or self-employment;
  + are paid for by the customer;
  + are not reimbursed by another source or deducted as a business expense; and
  + relate to an impairment being treated by a health care provider.
* A receipt for each Title II IRWE expense, attached by the customer
* A statement that the customer will provide additional documentation, if requested
* A listing of requested Title II IRWEs including:
  + the date of payment;
  + the amount of the expense;
  + the impairment to which the cost is related;
  + the health care provider’s name and type (for example, Dr. Jane Smith, family practitioner), if applicable; and
  + where possible and applicable, accompanying doctor’s notes verifying the need for the item or service.

The benefits counselor completes the Title II IRWE packet, mails the packet to the customer and reviews the packet with the customer. All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be addressed in the Title II IRWE documentation.

#### 26.5.2.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor documents in descriptive terms in the Title II IRWE packet all information required in the Service Description and Process and Procedure, demonstrating that the following are covered or included:

* Basic information about Title II IRWE, the Title II benefits program, and Medicare
* General information regarding the impact of earned and unearned income on the programs
* All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section (addressed in the Title II IRWE documentation)
* Documented proof that the customer and the benefits counselor have reviewed the packet, as evidenced by the benefits counselor’s signature and date of review

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

Payment for a Title II IRWE is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and date invoice and Title II IRWE packet (reviewed with the customer, as documented).

### 26.5.3 Title II Subsidy or Special Condition

#### 26.5.3.1 Service Description

A Subsidy or Special Condition service consists of a completed application on SSA Form 3033 signed by the customer’s employer and an in-depth written explanation. This work incentive allows customers to keep their monthly Title II cash benefit after completion of the trial work period when working above substantial gainful activity and receiving natural or paid on-the-job supports.

#### 26.5.3.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting Subsidy or Special Condition service;
* an SSA BPQY; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

When the BPQY is submitted with the VR referral packet, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Subsidy or Special Condition packet with the customer within 30 business days after the date on the VR1512.

When the BPQY is not submitted with the VR referral packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Subsidy or Special Condition packet with the customer within 60 business days after the date on the VR1512.

The Subsidy or Special Condition packet consists of a completed application for Subsidy or Special Condition on SSA Form 3033 and instructions on reporting income to the SSA. Generic fact sheets about the customer’s SSA disability program and Subsidy or Special Condition may be offered for additional information.

The benefits counselor mails the customer SSA Form 3033, along with the information needed for the employer to complete and sign SSA Form 3033, and reviews the packet with the customer. All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be addressed in the Subsidy or Special Condition documentation.

#### 26.5.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor assists the customer in getting the SSA Form 3033 completed and signed by the employer and attaches pay stubs and any other documentation, as described in the Subsidy or Special Condition Service Description.

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

Payment for a Subsidy or Special Condition is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated invoice and Subsidy or Special Condition packet (reviewed with the customer as documented).

## 26.6 Medicaid Buy-In

### 26.6.1 Service Description

The Medicaid Buy-In service consists of a completed application on HHSC Form 1200/MBI, pay stubs and other required documentation, and an in-depth written explanation for this work incentive, which allows any qualifying customer who is working and needs health insurance to purchase Medicaid and earn a living wage.

If the customer also receives Title II disability benefits, a BSA/WIP must be purchased simultaneously or before purchasing the Medicaid Buy-In service.

### 26.6.2 Process and Procedures

The benefits counselor receives:

* a VR1512, Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Referral, requesting Medicaid Buy-In;
* an SSA BPQY, if applicable; and
* an SA.

The benefits counselor schedules a meeting with the customer. The meeting should be scheduled within 10 working days from receipt of the TWS-VRS referral. If the customer does not respond to the benefits counselor’s phone, email, or text message to schedule an appointment within five business days of the date on the VR1512, the benefits counselor should request the referring VR counselor’s assistance in contacting the customer.

If a BPQY is necessary and submitted with the VR referral packet or was previously provided within the past year, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Medicaid Buy-In packet with the customer within 30 business days after the date on the VR1512.

If a BPQY is necessary but not submitted with the VR Referral Packet and the benefits counselor must obtain the BPQY, the benefits counselor should make every effort to review the completed Medicaid Buy-In packet with the customer within 60 business days after the date on the VR1512.

The Medicaid Buy-In packet consists of a completed application on HHSC Form H-1200/MBI and instructions on reporting income to HHSC. Generic fact sheets about Medicaid Buy-In and the customer’s SSA disability program, if applicable, may be offered for additional information.

The benefits counselor assists the customer in completing the HHSC H-1200/MBI and gathering pay stubs and other necessary documentation, mails the packet to the customer, and reviews the packet with the customer. All questions and concerns in the VR1512 Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services Requested section must be addressed in the Medicaid Buy-In documentation.

### 26.6.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The benefits counselor completes and submits a Medicaid Buy-In packet to the requesting VR counselor with an invoice.

Note that any service provided by a provisionally certified CPWIC must be cosigned by the supervising certified CPWIC.

Payment for Medicaid Buy-In is made when the VR counselor approves the invoice and the completed MBI packet (reviewed with the customer as documented).

## 26.7 Benefits and Work Incentives Counseling Service Fees

A benefits counselor cannot collect money from a VR customer or the customer’s family for any service.

| **Services** | **Fee** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Benefits I&R | $100 | May be purchased one time for a customer |
| BSA/WIP | $550 | May be purchased one time for a customer |
| Veteran’s BSA/WIP | $1,000 | May be purchased one time for a customer |
| Revision to BSA/WIP or Veteran’s BSA/WIP | $300 | May be purchased multiple times for a customer |
| PASS | $450 | May be purchased one time for a customer |
| IRWE | $100 | May be purchased one time for each job a customer obtains |
| BWE (SSI only) | $100 | May be purchased one time for each job a customer obtains |
| PESS (SSI only) | $100 | May be purchased one time for each job a customer obtains |
| SEIE (SSI only) | $100 | May be purchased one time for each job a customer obtains |
| Subsidy or Special Condition (Title II only) | $100 | May be purchased one time for each job a customer obtains |
| Medicaid Buy-In Application (Any customer) | $260 | May be purchased one time for each job a customer obtains |