# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual Section C-500

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## Notes on the Manual

On October 1, 2017, Texas Workforce Commission’s Blind Services Division and Rehabilitation Services Division combined to create a single designated state unit (DSU) to administer the vocational rehabilitation program for Texans with disabilities.

The combined Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual (VRSM) was initially published on October 1, 2017. The latest update to this manual is reflected in the chapters below.

Please note that VRSM includes links to information that is intended to provide additional decision-making supports to VR staff. Some of this information 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.

Substantive revisions to the content are noted in the VRSM List of Revisions. Any printed versions may not contain the latest policy changes.

If you have any questions about VRSM content, please contact the TWC Vocational Rehabilitation Division Policy Team at state office by sending an email message to vrsm.support@twc.texas.gov.

## Manual Overview

The VR Services Manual:

* helps ensure VR customers receive quality services to assist them in achieving successful competitive integrated employment outcomes as a result of their participation in vocational rehabilitation services.;
* helps to ensure taxpayer funds are spent wisely and each purchase paid for with public funds represents full value to the taxpayer; and
* provides published policies and procedures for maintaining compliance with federal and state laws, statutes, and rules or regulations.

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

# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-500: Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center

## Introduction

The Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC) is a comprehensive vocational rehabilitation (VR) training facility operated by Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). It is located in Austin, Texas, at 4800 N. Lamar Boulevard.

The mission of CCRC is to work in partnership with customers and staff toward the accomplishment of independence and employment. CCRC provides evaluation, training, and related services in residential, classroom, and community settings.

This chapter is organized into the following sections:

* Pre-application Considerations—Use this information to assist the customer in making an informed choice about how CCRC services can be useful in reaching the customer's work and living goals.
* Admissions Process—When the customer makes the decision to seek admission to CCRC for General Programs or Specific Services, use this information to complete the referral and to coordinate services with Admissions from customer acceptance to arrival.
* CCRC General Programs—This section provides general program information.
* CCRC Training Services—This section provides detail on the proficiency, career focus, and deafblind training programs.
* Post-CCRC Plans—Documentation of services provided and recommendations at CCRC will be posted in the customer's case folder in ReHabWorks (RHW).

This chapter also includes sections on available resources and commonly asked questions.

## C-501: Legal Authorization

Although the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) does not specifically address VR training delivered in a dedicated residential facility, all WIOA regulations related to customer rights, eligibility, and service provision cited in the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual (VRSM) apply to CCRC.

## C-502: Pre-application Considerations

### C-502-1: Eligibility

To be eligible for CCRC services, customers must:

* be legally blind or deafblind;
* be age 18 or older;
* have a permanent address to return to during and after training; and
* be referred for VR services.

To be eligible for acceptance, customers must be able to:

* fully participate in an eight-hour training day, five days a week;
* manage daily personal care, health, and medication;
* attend scheduled classes and demonstrate progress;
* transfer skills from one setting to another; and
* behave in socially appropriate ways and live cooperatively in an adult residential setting.

### C-502-2: Expectations of CCRC Customers

VR counselors are encouraged to share the following information with customers when discussing a referral to CCRC:

* Participating in the CCRC training program is similar to attending a college. Customers work with their field VR counselor, CCRC VR counselor, and CCRC instructors to choose programs or courses to meet their vocational goals and individual needs.
* CCRC customers participate in evaluative training activities. These activities give customers opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and functional skills. Customers' time in programs may vary, based on individual needs.
* CCRC VR counselor compiles the evaluative training recommendations for each customer and schedules the customer for classes.
* Customers, CCRC VR counselor, and referring staff members use information gathered during all training activities to develop training goals.
* Progress training meetings are scheduled on a regular basis with customers, CCRC VR counselor, and referring staff members.
* Customers have the option to complete training programs nonvisually using sleep shades. Sleep shades help customers minimize their dependence on vision and overcome their fear of blindness. Instructors discuss program and training options with customers during tours, on the first day of classes, and throughout the training program.
* Customers are expected to apply skills of daily living as they are learned.
* Customers are expected to complete the training program.

For additional information regarding CCRC expectations, contact the CCRC admissions coordinator or CCRC director.

## C-503: CCRC Admissions Process

### C-503-1: CCRC Tour

Highly individualized tours are available to provide customers and their families with general information about CCRC and the programs provided. Customers have an opportunity to:

* participate in a tour of the physical facility;
* meet with staff for individual consultations and to get answers to specific questions;
* participate in CCRC classes; and
* meet with current CCRC customers.

Food and lodging are provided during the tour. Transportation to and from the airport or bus station is available upon request.

A CCRC tour prior to admission is mandatory for customers referred for services at CCRC.

### C-503-2: Referrals to the Training Program

The following information outlines steps from the customer's initial referral to his or her arrival at CCRC. For current deadlines, see the CCRC admissions calendar located on the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Intranet page. The VR counselor contacts the CCRC admissions coordinator for assistance or to review individual customer circumstances.

#### CCRC Referral Packet

In the CCRC Referral Packet, all customers must provide:

* documentation of legal blindness with best correction from a medical eye professional, such as an optometrist, ophthalmologist, or low-vision specialist, when referred to the Proficiency or Career Center Program;
* documentation of hearing loss from an audiologist and documentation of vision loss from a medical eye professional when referred to the Deafblind Training Program;
* general physical information from a medical professional within the past 12 months; and
* tuberculosis test results within the past 12 months.

Information from psychological reports is not required, but can be helpful.

#### Special Circumstances Referral Information

Certain information is required for all customers. Additional information is required for customers with special circumstances.

If the customer is on parole or probation, he or she submits:

* the name, address, and phone number of the parole or probation officer; and
* court documents indicating conditions of parole or probation.

If the customer has had a substance or alcohol issue at any time in the past, he or she submits the Substance Abuse/Alcohol Abuse Contract.

If the customer has a mental health diagnosis, the VR counselor submits a mental health stability statement from the customer's mental health provider stating that the customer:

* is stable;
* can manage his or her mental health issues independently;
* can manage his or her prescribed medication independently; and
* can participate in an intensive rehabilitation training program.

If the customer has bloodborne pathogen-related illness, the VR counselor contacts the CCRC admissions coordinator before submitting any referral information to ensure protection of confidential information as mandated by federal law.

For additional information on protection of bloodborne pathogen-related illness information, see VRSM A-200: Customer Rights and Legal Issues.

If a customer has diabetes, the diabetes education reports must be submitted documenting that the customer can independently manage his or her diabetes, to include testing, medication, identifying, and ordering.

If a customer has a hearing loss or deafness, then a current audiological report is needed.

Personal attendant services required by customers must be arranged before the customer's admission date and coordinated with the CCRC admissions coordinator.

If the customer does not have a permanent residence, the VR counselor submits written documentation from the residential provider or family member that includes:

* the customer's name;
* address;
* phone number; and
* a statement that the customer can return to this residence at any time.

If the customer has a guardian assigned by the court, the VR counselor submits:

* legal guardianship papers;
* Form VR2050, CCRC Parent or Guardian Consent Form; and
* Form VR2051, CCRC Medical Authorization Form.

If the customer is attending the College Prep Summer program and is under age 18, the VR counselor submits Form VR2050, CCRC Parent or Guardian Consent Form, and Form VR2051, CCRC Medical Authorization Form. (The referral process may occur before age 18, but the customer must have reached the age of 18 before starting the program.)

The VR counselor contacts the CCRC admissions coordinator with any questions regarding documentation requirements for customers with special circumstances.

The VR counselor sends all information to CCRC Admissions by email to [ccrc.admissions@twc.texas.gov](mailto:ccrc.admissions@twc.texas.gov), by fax to 512-377-0317, or by mail to:

CCRC Admissions Office  
101 E. 15th Street, Suite 6804  
Austin, Texas 78778

The referring VR counselor updates the RHW population indicator to include CCRC and submits a referral through the Referral Services List located in the RHW CCRC menu. Once this referral has been saved, a case action will be generated to CCRC Admissions for their review.

CCRC Admissions acknowledges the referral request and subsequent statuses in RHW by:

* placing the referral in a Pending Status upon receiving initial RHW referral;
* placing the referral in an Accepted Status when all necessary referral information has been received for the CCRC Referral Packet;
* placing the referral in a Scheduled Status when a specific date for the service has been determined (the admissions coordinator mails an acceptance packet to the customer); and
* placing the referral in an Active Status for CCRC upon arrival; or
* placing the referral in a Not Accepted Status when the referral does not meet the admissions criteria, or when the referral declines, cancels or no shows on admissions date.

#### Computerized Criminal History Checks

CCRC requires that a computerized criminal history check (CCHC) be completed on all referrals. Once a customer is referred, CCRC admissions staff runs a CCHC, regardless of VR status.

CCHC reports contain criminal action occurring in the state of Texas. CCHC reports show either no criminal action or criminal action matching the name and date of birth submitted. CCHC reports are often incomplete and difficult to interpret. CCRC admissions staff members can consult with their supervisory chain and the TWC Office of General Counsel if they need help to interpret the results. They can send questions regarding CCHC reports to [ogc@twc.texas.gov](mailto:ogc@twc.texas.gov).

Staff must document results in the customer's electronic record in RHW. Staff must not document any details of the CCHC report in the case note; staff must include only the date the CCHC was requested, the date the CCHC was run, and the impact of the results on the customer's acceptance into CCRC. Staff must indicate on the case note whether the customer is not accepted or if there is some restriction on the customer's acceptance based on the CCHC.

For procedures on maintaining and storing a customer's CCHC, in addition to releasing customer records and information to the customer and other parties, see VRSM A-200: Customer Rights and Legal Issues, A-206-4: Release of Customer Records and Information.

Transportation is coordinated by the referring VR counselor in the field and CCRC Admissions Department.

#### Active Status at the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center

When a customer arrives for the CCRC Training Program, Admissions places the customer in Active Status for CCRC training. Upon Active Status the customer is assigned a VR counselor at CCRC who manages the case.

The VR counselor in the field office mails the complete customer paper file to the assigned VR counselor at CCRC within 15 days of the admission date. After the paper case file is delivered to the receiving office at CCRC, receiving staff must update the paper file location in RHW using the Paper File Transfer option in the Case Management menu of the customer.

Note: The customer's case is not transferred to the assigned VR counselor at CCRC.

Upon completion of the customer's CCRC training the VR counselor in the field resumes responsibility for the case management.

The VR counselor at CCRC mails the complete customer paper file to the assigned VR counselor in the field within 15 days of the completion date. After the paper case file is delivered to the receiving VR office in the field, receiving staff must update the paper file location in RHW using the Paper File Transfer option in the Case Management menu of the customer.

## C-504: CCRC General Program

The following outlines the sequence of services provided to customers from arrival through completion of training.

### C-504-1: Orientation

The purpose of the CCRC orientation is to familiarize customers with the philosophy, guidelines, and procedures of CCRC.

### C-504-2: Evaluation

The purpose of the initial assessment is to provide each customer an opportunity to demonstrate the skills they already possess and identify additional/new skills that will assist them in reaching their rehabilitation goals.

### C-504-3: Program Planning

Program planning occurs following assessment. CCRC staff develops recommendations, which are shared with the customer and referring staff to determine the most appropriate next step for the customer. Referring staff members are encouraged to participate in the program planning process and are provided with follow-up documentation. The recommended next steps may include:

* further assessment;
* full-time CCRC training; and
* alternative training options, other than CCRC training.

### C-504-4: Training

Customers participate in visual or nonvisual training in one or more of the following categories:

* Proficiency Training Program
* Career Focus Training Program
* Deafblind Training Program

### C-504-5: Progress Reviews

The customer and CCRC VR counselor meet periodically throughout the customer's training program with referring staff to review training progress. Progress reports are posted in RHW.

### C-504-6: Graduation

Upon completion, the customer is recognized for his or her accomplishments during a graduation ceremony. Family, friends, and TWC staff are invited to attend.

## C-505: CCRC Training Services

The following subsections describe the training services provided.

### C-505-1: Proficiency Training

The Proficiency Training Program is individualized training that builds skills based on the customer's current capabilities and vocational goals. The customer can choose from a variety of classes; the length of training is based on the customer's needs.

* Core Classes: All General Program customers are required to participate in all recommended core classes (Adaptive Skills, Orientation and Mobility, Technology, Career Guidance, and Industrial Arts).
* Need/Elective: Available by customer request or to meet individual customer situations

### C-505-2: Career Focus Training

The Career Focus Training Program is individualized training that prepares the customer for employment by developing, implementing, and applying employment readiness skills and capabilities based on the customer's personal career goals. This includes self-employment, Employment Boot Camp, the Work Experience program, and the Business Enterprise of Texas program.

### C-505-3: Deafblind Training

The Deafblind Training Program provides training options within CCRC, at the Sierra Ridge apartments in Austin or in the local home community. Customers receive training tailored to meet the specialized needs of individuals who are deafblind to obtain housing and employment.

For additional information, see the:

* CCRC Policy Manual located on the CCRC Intranet page; and
* CCRC Customer Training Programs intranet page.

Throughout the training program, the customer is encouraged to make the connection between what is being learned and how to apply new skills in the home, community, and work environments, such as traveling independently if they take trips home during training.

### C-505-4: Outreach

CCRC provides outreach services in the field, including mini-training, career guidance, and college preparation, to allow customers to make informed choices about how CCRC may serve their rehabilitation, training, and educational needs.

## C-506: Residential Services

All students are expected to follow the guidelines outlined in the Student Handbook (found under Brochures and Publications on the Intranet page) provided during the admissions process.

All rooms at CCRC accommodate two residents. Customers living in the CCRC residential hall are expected to share a room with another customer of the same gender. Exceptions may be made to sharing rooms, such as customers with a dog guide, customers who require an accessible room, and roommates of different genders who are legally married. Preference for residential services is given to customers living outside Austin.

CCRC serves meals cafeteria-style to customers at no cost. Special dietary arrangements can be made upon request.

Sierra Ridge residents are expected to provide their own meals.

Sierra Ridge residents and day students are expected to make their own arrangements for transportation to and from CCRC for CCRC training.

## C-507: Post-CCRC Plans

Documentation of the customer's training services and next step plans are provided in RHW.

Case transfer from CCRC to the field is via RHW.

If a customer moves to another region before completing the CCRC program, the case is transferred back to the referring field VR counselor or transition counselor and VR or program coordinator before any decision is made about case transfer.

## C-508: Resource Information

The following information resources are available on TWC's Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center website:

* CCRC brochure —Describes CCRC services using a picture format. Useful in educating the public about CCRC. (English, Spanish, large print, braille, and regular print versions are available.)
* CCRC calendar—CCRC summary of important dates updated annually. A listing of CCRC services and general procedural information related to CCRC admissions.
* CCRC Student Handbook—Provides specific information about CCRC programs. A handbook is sent to each customer before arrival for CCRC programs. (English, Spanish, large print, braille, and regular print versions are available.)
* CCRC Policy Manual—Provides policies and procedures for the facility and training program.
* Outreach services—Provides information on CCRC outreach services that are provided in the regional offices, including mini-trainings.
* Deafblind Services Unit web page—Provides information about deafblind services offered by TWC-VR.

## C-509: Frequently Asked Questions

For answers to commonly asked questions, please see CCRC Frequently Asked Questions located on CCRC Intranet page.