# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual Section C-1000

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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 <mailto: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-1000: Employment Services

## Introduction

Employment services are an essential part of a customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE). The employment services on a customer's IPE must be consistent with the customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Employment services:

* train and prepare a customer for the job search;
* help customers gain positions that meet their individual needs; and
* assist customers with job skills training, when needed, to keep a job.

A customer's job placement must match the needs of the customer and the business. The customer's job placement must be in a work environment that is:

* integrated;
* competitive; and
* full-time or the most hours the customer can work.

In cases where, without a provider, a business hires a customer in a seasonal, temp-to-hire, or PRN position, the job is acceptable as long as the customer will be considered for continued employment after the probationary period ends.

For provider placements, Form VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request, must be completed for seasonal employment placements. See the VR Standards for Providers (VR-SFP) 17.4.1 Bundled Job Placement Services Service Description and VR-SFP 18.1 Supported Employment Overview for more information.

## C-1001: Legal Authorization

Per Human Resources Code §91.002(2), someone who is "blind" is an individual having not more than 20/200 visual acuity in the better eye with correcting lenses or visual acuity greater than 20/200 but with a limitation in the field of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees.

Relevant excerpts from 34 CFR §361.48 Scope of Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Individuals with Disabilities:

"(b) Services for individuals who have applied for or been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. As appropriate to the vocational rehabilitation needs of each individual and consistent with each individual's individualized plan for employment, the designated State unit must ensure that the following vocational rehabilitation services are available to assist the individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice:

(19) 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 telecommuting or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome.

(20) Customized employment in accordance with the definition of that term in §361.5(c) (11).

(21) Other goods and services determined necessary for the individual with a disability to achieve an employment outcome."

(Authority: Sections 7(37), 12(c), 103(a), and 113 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; 29 USC §705(37), 709(c), 723(a), and 733)

## C-1002: Role of the Counselor

The primary role of a VR counselor in the provision of employment services is to ensure that customers reach their employment goals. The VR counselor arranges, purchases, and/or provides the employment services noted in the customer's IPE in a timely manner, and ensures that services meet both agency standards and customer needs.

The VR counselor also monitors a customer's progress and provides feedback, vocational counseling, guidance, and encouragement. If needed, the VR counselor recommends changes or adjustments to the IPE based on the customer's progress.

For more information about IPE amendments, refer to VRSM B-506: Joint Annual Reviews and IPE Amendments.

### C-1002-1: Frequency of Contact During Employment Services

Although a customer's IPE or IPE amendment may include purchased employment services through a provider, the VR staff remains actively involved with the provider and the customer throughout the customer's vocational rehabilitation.

It is a best practice that VR staff maintain monthly contact with the customer and the employment services provider (ESP). The VR staff documents these contacts and the customer's progress in case notes in ReHabWorks (RHW).

### C-1002-2: Employment Services Resources

The VR counselor ensures that the following resources are available to the customer:

#### Occupational, Vocational, and Technical Information

A VR counselor cultivates and maintains a variable collection of occupational, vocational, and technical materials, in addition to information about specific jobs, work sites and locations, occupational and rehabilitation engineering, local job opportunities, and current trends in rehabilitation engineering (job restructuring, modification, and technology).

#### Evaluation and Training

The VR counselor provides the customer with information and choices about evaluation and training. He or she explains what evaluation and training are available to the customer, in addition to explaining why and how each evaluation and/or training might benefit the customer.

Evaluation and training services include vocational evaluation, employment assessment services, work readiness services, vocational rehabilitation teacher (VRT) services, orientation and mobility services (blind services), assistive technology training, disability specific training (diabetes education), hard skills training, and soft skills training. Sources for evaluation, assessment, and training include Workforce Solutions Offices, ESPs, community rehabilitation providers, community colleges, and apprenticeship programs (labor union shops).

VR-SFP Chapter 4: Employment Assessments includes information on the following employment-related assessment services:

* Vocational Evaluation;
* Situational Assessments and Work Samples;
* Environmental Work Assessment; and
* Career Planning Assessment.

#### Community Resources

The VR counselor develops and maintains effective working relationships with agencies and organizations within the community that offer support services to customers seeking employment, including the following:

* Texas Health and Human Services Commission
* Texas Department of State Health Services
* Lighthouses for the Blind
* Independent living centers
* Goodwill Industries
* College and university placement offices
* Organizations serving senior citizens
* Veterans Administration
* Unions
* Civic clubs, such as Lions Clubs, Kiwanis, Elks

#### Employment Assistance Specialist Services

Employment Assistance Specialist (EAS) services include assistance to a specific business and customer, technical support for accommodations, and evaluation for a customer seeking assistive technology.

For more information on EAS services, see VRSM C-1008: Employment Assistance Specialist Services.

For more information on referring customers to EAS services, see VRSM C-1002-3: Referral to Employment Assistance Specialist Services.

#### Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher Services

As needed, the VR counselor serving a customer who is blind or visually impaired recommends VRT services to assess the customer's independent and employment lifestyle skills, and to provide blindness skills training. VRTs provide training in the customer's home or workplace, for example, marking appliances, labeling items in braille or large print, and other strategies to support basic living skills.

For more information on VRT training services, see VRSM C-424: Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher.

For more information on referring customers to VRT services, see VRSM C-1002-4: Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher Services.

#### Counselor-Directed Placement Services

In counselor-directed placement, the VR counselor coordinates the job placement process utilizing services and supports that are arranged for or provided directly to the customer. These services may be provided by the VR counselor or by other VR staff.

Counselor-directed placement services are appropriate for customers who demonstrate the following characteristics:

* Receptive to VR counseling and guidance
* Effective communication skills
* Self-initiative to follow through on tasks independently
* Requests assistance or direction as needed
* Independently uses time management techniques to achieve steps and goals related to attainment of employment
* Problem-solving skills to address issues related to employment and disability management
* Participates independently in job clubs or classes to prepare for employment, such as classes on developing a résumé and other skills needed for job search and employment
* Appropriate grooming and attire for job search and employment.

In counselor-directed placement services, the VR counselor ensures the customer receives as much assistance as the customer needs to reach their IPE employment goal. Areas that may be addressed by VR counselors and other VR staff, as qualified, as part of counselor-directed placement services include:

* collection of employment and education data,
* identification of transferable skills,
* identification of employment barriers,
* completion of job applications,
* development of resumes, references, and cover letters
* interview preparation,
* job search,
* job placement,
* pre-employment testing,
* salary and position negotiation,
* acceptance of job offers,
* worksite accommodations, and
* disability disclosure.

Roles of VR staff in counselor-directed placement services include:

* Acting as a mentor and coach to develop the customer's skills in finding, obtaining, and keeping a job;
* Monitoring the customer's job search progress;
* Coordinating with the Business Relations Team to support the customer in competing in the labor market;
* Facilitating job clubs or providing resources for classes at Workforce Solutions Offices or other community locations to help customers obtain competitive integrated employment;
* Contacting prospective employers to identify and develop job opportunities for the customer;
* Conducting job searches by using the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) WorkInTexas.com and other job listings that are available; and/or
* Sharing job leads with the customer.

When necessary, the VR counselor can purchase Non-Bundled Job Placement Services for completion of an employment data sheet, job application, and résumé training or for interview training. To purchase Non-Bundled Job Placement Services as part of counselor-directed placement services, the VR counselor

* completes the Form VR1840, Job Placement Services Referral;
* identifies the specific service(s) being requested from the provider;
* attaches any information necessary for the provider to work effectively with the customer;
* sends a service authorization to the provider; and
* ensures that all outcomes required for payment of the service have been achieved prior to approval of the report and payment of the invoice.

### C-1002-3: Referral to Employment Assistance Specialist Services

EAS staff serve customers who have a primary disability of vision loss. A VR counselor refers a customer for EAS services by creating a service record in RHW and delegating the service to an EAS. VR counselors must contact EAS staff for an initial consult before referring a customer for an assistive technology evaluation. An EAS contact is required for the following:

* Vocational or academic customer issues—the VR counselor contacts EAS staff regarding training or assistive technology that might assist with a customer's employment goal.
* Business contacts—the VR counselor contacts EAS staff regarding scheduling business contacts, site tours, assistance with a job analysis, job accommodations, technical information or updates, job retention and restructuring, or environmental assessments.
* Assistive technology—the VR counselor contacts EAS staff regarding any issue relating to assistive technology or applications of technology.

For more information see VRSM C-1008: Employment Assistance Specialist Services.

### C-1002-4: Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher Services

VRT services require coordination with the customer's VR counselor through all phases of the rehabilitation process, particularly during the eligibility and comprehensive assessment phases.

The VRT and the VR counselor work together to:

* develop a team approach for services with each customer;
* exchange frequent and regular communication during the provision of VRT services; and
* ensure that comprehensive VRT services are provided in a timely manner.

The VR counselor refers a customer to the VRT by creating a service record in RHW. The VRT accepts the service record by updating it from "Requested" to "Assessment" status in RHW after the first contact has been made with the customer by phone or in person.

Adult customers anticipating surgery or treatment expected to improve their vision above legal blindness should not be referred to a VRT unless the customer demonstrates an urgent need before surgery. The VR counselor must consider the VRT's availability before making a referral.

For more information, see VRSM C-424: Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher.

## C-1003: Role of the Customer

The role of the customer in the VR process is to consider information and make informed choices about services that the customer believes will help him or her achieve a successful employment outcome. Customers should be actively involved in developing an IPE with the help of a VR counselor.

Customers must:

* attend meetings with the VR counselor and other staff members;
* attend scheduled appointments with service providers and prospective employers;
* communicate issues to the VR counselor and participate in problem solving;
* make and implement decisions;
* identify needed resources; and
* expect to work in a competitive integrated employment situation that is consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

## C-1004: Role of the Employment Services Provider

ESPs must have a bilateral contract with TWC. All ESPs must provide services as defined in the VR Standards for Providers (VR-SFP) manual and meet all required outcomes for payment. ESP staff must meet the qualifications described in the VR-SFP.

ESP services use instructional approaches that meet each customer's educational and disability needs. When the VR-SFP requires attendance records, VR staff can request to view the records at any time.

When customers are referred to an ESP, the customer must receive orientation to the contractor's services, roles, responsibilities, expectations, policies, and procedures.

ESP staff coordinates with the customer's VR counselor to ensure that all verbal and written communications between the contractor and the customer are conducted in the customer's preferred language.

VR staff must review the VR-SFP manual to familiarize themselves with ESP responsibilities, service definitions, and the outcomes required before payment can be made for an invoiced service.

For more information on the role and required qualifications of ESPs, see VR-SFP Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services, 17.2 Staff Qualifications and Training.

## C-1005: Noncontracted Providers

### C-1005-1: Nontraditional Provider

A nontraditional provider is an individual who does not have a bilateral contract and who can help a customer achieve an employment goal. Nontraditional providers are available for services such as Job Skills Training, Work Experience Services, Vocational Adjustment Training and Bundled Job Placement.

#### Using a Nontraditional Provider

A nontraditional provider can be used when:

* the customer needs to learn skills for a job or Work Experience Services that a traditional bilateral contract provider does not have, such as welding, use of commercial construction equipment, or use of medical equipment; or
* the services are needed in an area with no available approved and credentialed providers.

The fees for nontraditional providers are listed throughout this chapter and in VRSM C-400: Training Services.

Refer to the VR-SFP sections on Service Description/Scope, Procedures, and Outcomes Required for Payment.

Note: VR-SFP sections on Staff Qualifications and Purchasing Fees do not apply to nontraditional providers.

#### Setting Up a Nontraditional Provider

The steps to set up a nontraditional provider as a vendor are as follows:

Step 1: VR staff must explain the following to a potential nontraditional provider:

* Customer confidentiality requirements
* Nondisclosure of information requirements
* Ethical requirements and considerations
* Expectations of the services that nontraditional providers provide

Step 2: If the individual agrees, the VR staff member follows the procedures in VRSM D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services on linking a vendor. Field staff collects all information necessary to establish the nontraditional provider and submits the information to the regional quality assurance specialist.

Step 3: The regional quality assurance specialist, or designee, must approve the nontraditional provider and must:

* maintain a file on the nontraditional provider that contains all required documents;
* review all submitted documents to ensure they meet the requirements for a nontraditional provider; and
* send an email containing the RHW specifications that Provider Services needs to link the nontraditional provider as a vendor.

The regional quality assurance specialist or designee must contact Provider Services each time the link specification needs to be turned on or off to issue, replace, or update a service authorization.

Step 4: Field staff requests Service Record Approval via email. The regional quality assurance specialist or designee approves or denies in RHW and sends a courtesy email to field staff. This is to ensure that a nontraditional provider serves no more than five customers.

Step 5: The regional quality assurance specialist monitors the number of customers the nontraditional provider serves for each service. After a nontraditional provider serves five customers for any service, the nontraditional provider is permanently delinked from RHW for that service.

Nontraditional providers are only permitted to work with five VR customers before they are required to become bilateral contract providers.

When working with nontraditional providers, the sections titled Service Description, Process and Procedures, and Outcomes Required for Payment in VR-SFP Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services must be followed; however, the staff qualifications and purchasing fees outlined in the VR-SFP Chapter 17 do not apply. Refer to VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers for this information.

### C-1005-2: Transition Educator Provider

A transition educator provider is an individual who is not a provider with a bilateral contract and:

* has a master's degree or a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation, psychology, education, or related field (includes being a certified Texas Educator); and
* is currently or has been an employee of a school system, a Texas Education Service Center, a college, or a university within the past fiscal year.

#### Using a Transition Educator Provider

Transition educator providers must be approved annually to ensure that they continue to meet qualifications.

Transition educator providers are available for services such as Vocational Adjustment Training, Bundled Job Placement, Vocational Adjustment Training Work Experience Services, and Job Skills Training. A transition educator provider may be used when:

* the services are needed in an area with few or no approved and credentialed providers; or
* the customer has received services from a teacher in the school system and the teacher has agreed to continue to provide work readiness or employment service for the customer when the school's work readiness or employment services are not available, for example, during summer break or after graduation.

The fees for transition educator providers, which are lower than fees for a provider with a bilateral contract, are listed throughout this chapter and in VRSM C- 400: Training Services. Refer to the VR-SFP sections on Service Description/Scope, Procedures, and Outcomes Required for Payment. Note: VR-SFP sections titled Staff Qualifications and Purchasing Fees do not apply to transition educator providers.

#### Setting Up a Transition Educator Provider

The steps to set up a transition educator provider as a vendor are as follows:

Step 1: VR staff members must explain the following to the potential transition educator provider:

* Customer confidentiality requirements
* Nondisclosure of information requirements
* Ethical requirements and considerations
* Expectations of the services that transition educator providers provide

Step 2: If the individual agrees to become a transition educator provider, VR staff must collect and submit the following to the regional quality assurance specialist or designee:

* Copy of the transition educator provider's transcripts, which indicates a master's degree or a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation, psychology, education, or related field
* Proof that the transition educator is currently or has been an employee of a school system, a Texas Education Service Center, a college, or a university within the past fiscal year

Follow the procedures in VRSM D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services on how to link a vendor.

A transition educator provider must provide proof of employment at a school system, a Texas Education Service Center, a college, or a university annually.

Step 3: The regional quality assurance specialist or designee must approve the transition educator provider using the following procedures:

* Maintain a file on the transition educator provider that contains all required documents
* Review all submitted documents to ensure they meet the requirements for a transition educator provider
* Send an email containing the RHW specifications that Provider Services needs to link the transition educator provider as a vendor

Step 4: The regional quality assurance specialist or designee requests that the transition educator provider be delinked from RHW at the time designated as the end of year, or collects proof that the transition educator provider is or has been an employee of a school system, a Texas Education Service Center, a college, or a university within the current or past fiscal year.

When working with transition educators, the sections titled Service Description, Process and Procedures, and Outcomes Required for Payment in VR-SFP Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services must be followed; however, the staff qualifications and purchasing fees outlined in the VR-SFP Chapter 17 do not apply. Refer to VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers for this information.

## C-1006: Work Readiness Services

Work Readiness Services can be purchased when a customer needs more assistance than VR staff members can provide directly. Work Readiness Services support customers in achieving an individualized level of work readiness as related to disability issues, interpersonal skills training, daily living skills, and issues that interfere with participation in obtaining or maintaining employment. Work Readiness Services allow a customer to develop the competencies and essential skills necessary to be successful on the job and in the community. It is expected that customers will be job ready when they complete Work Readiness services.

For more information on Work Readiness, see VRSM C-421: Work Readiness and VR-SFP Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services.

For more information about Job Readiness, see VRSM A-406-5: Job Readiness.

For information on employment services for individuals with a most significant disability, see VRSM C-1200: Supported Employment Services.

## C-1007: Job Placement Services

### C-1007-1: Non-Bundled Job Placement Services

Non-Bundled Job Placement services include training on the employment data sheet, application, and résumé. These services are purchased when a customer does not need assistance from a provider to be placed in a job. A customer can receive one or more of the Non-Bundled Job Placement services. Non-Bundled Job Placement services should not be bought when Bundled Job Placement services or Supported Employment services will be purchased. These services may be provided remotely when the VR counselor has indicated approval of remote service delivery on the Form VR5000, Referral for Provider Services. For more information, refer to VR Standards for Providers (VR-SFP) 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery.

See VR-SFP 17.3 Non-Bundled Job Placement Services, for more information, including outcomes for payment and fees.

The following premiums are available for Non-Bundled Job Placement. Refer to the links below for additional information:

* VR-SFP 20.3 Autism Premium;
* VR-SFP 20.11 Blind Premium;
* VR-SFP 20.5 Deaf Service Premium; and
* VR-SFP 20.6 Mileage Premium.

The service authorization for a premium is issued at the same time the non-bundled service authorization is issued.

The VR counselor:

* completes the Form VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, and attaches medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, or employment data collected by VR staff that will assist the provider to work with the customer;
* indicates on the Form VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, when the services may be provided remotely, or in a setting where the trainer and customer are in the same location, or using a combination of methods;
* ensures that the service authorization for a Non-Bundled Job Placement service is issued;
* monitors the customer's progress with both the customer and the service provider;
* provides any instruction or intervention necessary to foster the success of the customer;
* reviews and approves the Form VR1841, Non-Bundled Job Placement Services Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training form or equivalent documentation, and/or the Form VR1842, Non-Bundled Job Placement Services Interview Training Report, ensuring that all outcomes required for payment are achieved and that the individual providing the service to the customer held all required staff qualifications; and
* ensures that the invoice is paid.

For students or youth 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.

Nontraditional providers and transition educator providers can be used when all requirements outlined in VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers have been met.

When working with nontraditional providers and transition educator providers, the VR sections titled Service Description, Process and Procedures, and Outcomes Required for Payment in VR-SFP Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services must be followed; however, the staff qualifications and purchasing fees outlined in the VR-SFP Chapter 17 do not apply. Refer to VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers for this information.

### C-1007-2: Bundled Job Placement Services

VR counselors can purchase Bundled Job Placement services from contracted providers if the VR counselor believes that the customer is going to need more assistance than VR staff can provide to achieve the customer's employment goal. If any Non-Bundled Job Placement service (such as Employment Data Sheet, Application and Résumé Training, or interview training) has been purchased, the Bundled Job Placement services purchased from an ESP must be reduced.

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, except for students or youth with disabilities.

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.

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 should only be paid once for each customer between Active Status (customer has an IPE) and Closure Status of a VR case. On a case-by-case basis, it may be necessary to purchase benchmark(s) more than once.  When the VR counselor determines a customer needs the supports of a job placement provider for an additional placement, the VR counselor must consult with the VR supervisor for approval.  Before obtaining VR supervisor approval, the VR counselor must document in a case note why the customer requires another placement and what interventions and/or services have been provided to the customer to address needs, circumstances, behaviors, and/or other employment barriers since the first purchase of the service.

See VR-SFP Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services, 17.4 Bundled Job Placement Services, for more information, including outcomes for payment and fees.

The following premiums are available for Bundled Job Placement. Refer to the following Standards for Providers chapters for additional information:

* VR-SFP 20.3 Autism Premium;
* VR-SFP 20.11 Blind Premium;
* VR-SFP 20.4 Criminal Background Premium;
* VR-SFP 20.5 Deaf Service Premium;
* VR-SFP 20.6 Mileage Premium;
* VR-SFP 20.7 Professional Placement Premium; and
* VR-SFP 20.8 Wage Premium.

Any planning meeting related to the placement plan between the customer, provider, customer’s circle of supports, and VR staff may be conducted remotely. Refer to VR-SFP 3.4.8 Remote Service Delivery for additional information.

The Form VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan Part B should indicate if a customer’s case is eligible for a premium. The service authorization for a premium must be issued with the Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark A service authorization and the service authorization remains open until the achievement of Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark C.

The VR counselor:

* Completes Form VR5000, Referral for Provider Services, and attaches medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, or employment data collected by VR staff that will assist the provider to work with the customer;
* schedules the job placement meeting with the customer and the provider;
* completes the Form VR1845A, Bundled Job Placement Services Placement Plan Part A and the Form VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan Part B and Status Report electronically through discussion with the ESP and the customer to identify:
  + whether the customer will receive Basic or Enhanced Bundled Job Placement services (through completion of the Support Needs Assessment);
  + the customer's negotiable and nonnegotiable employment conditions;
  + skills, abilities, experience, training, and education that relate to the training and job to be obtained;
  + measurable employment goals using the six-digit Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system codes; and
  + any premium services the ESP may be authorized to receive upon completion of Benchmark C.
* indicates on the Form VR1845B or service authorization when the services can be provided in person at or away from job site, remotely, or combination, in person and remotely. Note: TWC-VR does not allow use of non-video telecommunication (phone) or text messages to customers to conduct visits. It is best practice to conduct the in-person visits at the customer's job site, unless there are restrictions that prevent the Job Placement Specialist from entering the job site;
* indicates for Benchmarks B and C on the Form VR1845B or service authorization whether the visits can be done in person and/or remotely at or away from the customer’s job site;
* prints both forms for required signatures from the VR counselor, job placement specialist, and the customer;
* ensures that VR staff will send the service authorization and electronically fillable forms to the job placement specialist so the forms can be completed with the updated status required for invoicing;
* monitors the customer's progress with both the customer and the ESP;
* provides any needed instruction or intervention necessary to foster the customer's success;
* refers to the Standards for Providers (SFP) 17.4 Bundled Job Placement Services for the service definition, process and procedures, and outcomes required for payment prior to approving any invoices for payment:
  + 17.4.2 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark A,
  + 17.4.3 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark B,
  + 17.4.4 Bundled Job Placement—Benchmark C; and
* ensures that the invoice is paid.

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 Bundled Job Placement Services. Each Benchmark should only be purchased once for each customer.

When the VR counselor determines a customer needs the supports of a job placement provider for an additional placement, the VR counselor must consult with the VR supervisor for approval.  Before obtaining VR supervisor approval, the VR counselor must document in a case note why the customer requires another placement and what interventions and/or services have been provided to the customer to address needs, circumstances, behaviors, and/or other employment barriers since the first purchase of the service.

See VR-SFP Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services, 17.4 Bundled Job Placement Services, for more information on the Service Description, Process and Procedures, Outcomes Required for Payment and Fee.

For more information on how to establish and set up nontraditional providers and transition educator providers, see VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers.

Nontraditional providers and transition educator providers can be used when all requirements outlined in VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers have been met.

When working with nontraditional providers and transition educator providers, the VR-sections titled Service Description, Process and Procedures, and Outcomes Required for Payment in VR-SFP Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services must be followed; however, the staff qualifications and purchasing fees outlined in the VR-SFP Chapter 17 do not apply. Refer to VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers for this information.

#### Basic Job Placement Fees

The fee schedules for nontraditional provider Basic Job Placement services are:

* Benchmark A – 5th day of paid employment – $528.00
* Benchmark B – 45th day of paid employment – $264.00
* Benchmark C – 90th day of paid employment – $528.00

The fee schedules for transition educator provider Basic Job Placement services are:

* Benchmark A – 5th day of paid employment – $720.00
* Benchmark B – 45th day of paid employment – $360.00
* Benchmark C – 90th day of paid employment – $720.00

For more information on how to establish and set up nontraditional providers and transition educator providers, see VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers.

### C-1007-3: Job Skills Training

VR purchases Job Skills Training when a customer needs more training and support than that provided by the employer. The employer, 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 on and in-line with the customer's goals and abilities as documented on the Form VR3314, Job Skills Training Referral. Job Skills Training is limited to a total of 200 hours per customer for the life of a customer's current VR case.

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 employer expectations.

The counselor, customer, provider, and the employer are all involved in the decision to allow remote Job Skills Training at a work 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. Remote Job Skills Training must be supplemented with in person Work Experience Training away from the job site.

Job Skills Training can be purchased for Extended Services for 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 for a customer. The goals for Job Skills Training must address the Extended Service needs of the customer. Before a Job Skills Trainer can provide Job Skills Training for Extended Services to a customer, a Form VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request form must be approved by the VR Division Director. A new Form VR3472, must be approved by the Director of the VR Division for every 200 hours of Job Skills Training authorized for the customer.

VR must stop purchasing Job Skills Training for Extended Service when any of the following occur.

The customer:

* no longer needs Extended Services to maintain employment;
* can receive Extended Services from another resource(s);
* has receive 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."

Job Skills Training cannot be purchased for adult customers to provide Extended Services.

Refer to VRSM C-1202-3: Extended Services and to VR-SFP Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services, 17.5 Job Skills Training for additional information.

Refer to VR-SFP 17.5.1 Job Skills Training Service Description for details on how and when remote training may be purchased.

The VR counselor:

* completes Form VR3314, Job Skills Training Referral, and attaches medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, or employment data collected by VR staff to assist the provider to work with the customer;
* ensures Form VR3314 or service authorization comments 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;
* when applicable, ensures a Form VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request form is approved by the VR Division Director to purchase Job Skills Training for Extended Services for “youth with disabilities”;
* identifies goals to be addressed with the customer on Form VR3314;
* ensures that VR staff sends the service authorization and Form VR3314 to the provider;
* monitors the customer's progress with both the customer and the service provider;
* when necessary, approves additional goals to be addressed with the customer and notes the approval in an RHW case note;
* when necessary, approves additional Job Skills Training hours;
* when applicable, continually evaluates the customer’s need for Extended Services and the availability resources other than VR to provide the Extended Services for a “youth with disabilities”;
* provides any needed instruction or intervention necessary to foster the customer's success;
* reviews and approves Form VR3315, Job Skills Training Progress Report, ensuring that all outcomes required for payment are achieved and that the individual providing the service to the customer held all the required qualifications; and
* ensures that the invoice is paid.

See VR-SFP Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services, 17.5 Job Skills Training for more information on Job Skills Training, for more information on the Service Description, Process and Procedures, Outcomes Required for Payment and Fee.

The following premiums are available for Job Skills Training. Refer to the referenced chapters in the Standards for Providers for additional information:

* VR-SFP 20.3 Autism Premium;
* VR-SFP 20.11 Blind Premium;
* VR-SFP 20.10 Brain Injury Premium;
* VR-SFP 20.5 Deaf Service Premium; and
* VR-SFP 20.6 Mileage Premium.

The service authorization for a premium is issued at the same time the Job Skills Training service authorization is issued.

#### Noncontracted Providers

Nontraditional providers and transition educator providers can be used to provide Job Skills Training when all requirements outlined in VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers have been met.

When working with nontraditional providers and transition educator providers, the VR-sections titled Service Description, Process and Procedures, and Outcomes Required for Payment in VR-SFP Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services must be followed; however, the staff qualifications and purchasing fees outlined in the VR-SFP Chapter 17 do not apply.

Nontraditional providers and transition educator providers cannot be used for Job Skills Training for Extended Services.

Refer to VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers for this information.

#### Fee Chart for Noncontracted Providers

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Service** | **Fee** |
| Nontraditional Provider Job Skills Training-Individual | $22.00 per hour per customer |
| Transition Educator Provider Job Skills Training- Individual | $30.00 per hour per customer |
| Transition Educator Provider Job Skills Training-Group | up to $15.00 per hour per customer (no more than one trainer to four customers) |

For more information on how to establish and set up nontraditional providers and transition educator providers, see VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers.

#### Creating a Service Record for Job Skills Training in ReHabWorks

A service record must be created with the following specifications for Job Skills Training services.

Service Records for Job Skills Training service:

* Level 1 – Employment Services and Assessments [87100]
* Level 2 – Job Skills Training Contract Required [87100-90910]
* Level 2 – Services from Transition Educator Q or RPSS approval required [87100-6066]
* Level 2 – Services from Non-Traditional Provider Q or RPSS approval required [87100-50544]

Choose the appropriate specifications for Level 3 and 4 based on the core service to be provided.

### C-1007-4: On-the-Job Training

On-the-job training (OJT) is a way to help individuals build skills and reestablish employment when they have limited skills, limited work history, and a history of unemployment, legal issues, or incarceration. OJT can be used as a hiring incentive with employers while helping customers to overcome employment barriers. The US Department of Labor offers the [Federal Bonding Program](https://bonds4jobs.com/), which can provide fidelity bonding for the first six months of employment for hard-to-place customers with a history of incarceration.

OJT is a service for which VR pays an employer to train a VR customer who has been hired as an employee of the business earning the same rate of pay and benefits as other individuals without disabilities hired into the same or similar position. The employer trains the customer in the skills necessary to perform both essential and nonessential job duties. The specifications of the training are established using the Form VR1609, On-the-Job Training Worksheet and entered into a "Service Authorization" in RHW.

OJT is:

* individualized to the customer's and the employer's needs;
* training for a VR customer who is hired as an employee of the business earning the same rate of pay and benefits as other individuals without disabilities hired into the same of similar position;
* when the customer meets the minimum requirements for a position, but requires formal and/or informal training activities at the employer's work site to acquire the skills necessary for a specific position or occupation; and
* a commitment from the employer to retain the customer as an employee after successful completion of the OJT, if the customer competently performs essential functions of the position or industry.

OJT is a substantial service, as defined in VRSM B-600: Closure. Time spent in OJT cannot be counted toward the 90 days of employment required for a successful closure. The start date of employment entered into RHW must be after the date of OJT completion.

#### Local Workforce Development Board Funding

On-the-job training (OJT) can also be funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) if a customer is jointly served by VR and a Local Workforce Development Board (Board) that offers OJT programs. Using WIOA-funded OJT is a comparable benefit and should be documented as such in RHW. However, not all Boards in Texas offer OJT.

OJT opportunities may be developed using the same business development techniques used in regular job placement. OJT is a service that employers can access to offset any additional training costs they may incur from hiring a customer. For further information, see VRSM C-400: Training Services.

The length of OJT depends on the skills to be learned and the customer's learning ability. If the training is longer than three months, VR Supervisor approval is required and approval must be documented in RHW in a case note. The VR Supervisor will consider the following as possible justifications to increase the length of OJT so that a customer can secure successful long-term employment:

* Customer's disability as it relates to the length of time necessary to safely learn and demonstrate the essential and nonessential skills competently
* Certifications, licenses, or class completions required by the OJT
* Requirements of the employer's management, labor boards, and/or unions that must be met

Note: This list is not inclusive. Contact the regional program specialist assigned, as necessary, to discuss the appropriateness of extending OJT beyond three months.

The following VR services cannot be purchased when a customer is receiving OJT services:

* Job Skills Training
* Bundled Job Placement services
* Supported Employment services

#### OJT Processes and Procedures

When the VR counselor and customer determine that OJT is appropriate, the VR counselor prepares the customer before approaching employers. The VR counselor ensures that the customer is job ready as discussed in VRSM A-406-5: Job Readiness.

The VR counselor identifies an employer that will hire the customer and participate in the OJT program.

VR staff must inform the employer of what TWC expects from participants in the VR OJT program.

Once the employer agrees to provide OJT for a VR customer, the VR counselor and VR staff do the following:

* Assist the employer in establishing itself as a vendor for VR.
* Complete the Form VR1609, On-the-Job Training Worksheet, with the customer and the employer's representative, recording all required information on the form. As the form is being completed, the VR counselor, customer, and employer negotiate the stipulations of the OJT. It is the responsibility of the VR counselor to ensure the Form VR1609 is accurately completed.
* Ensure that the information collected on the Form VR1609 is entered into the service authorizations completely and accurately. Ensure that the service authorization establishes the specifications, expectations, goals, and cost of OJT, and lists the outcomes and documentation required for payment.
* Review the service authorization with the employer to ensure the business understands all the specifications outlined, including, but not limited to, the goals of the customer's training, the invoice process, the documentation requirement, and the fees paid for service.
* Ensure the employer completes Form VR3316, On-the-Job Training Progress Report. Form VR3316 must be submitted each time the employer invoices VR for payment of the customer's OJT, or at a minimum of once every 30 days of the OJT. Due dates for Form VR3316 are included in the service authorization.
* Visit the business site, as arranged and stated on the service authorization, to evaluate the success of the OJT. A summary of each business site visit must be documented in a case note in RHW.
* As necessary, the VR counselor updates the VR OJT Worksheet, completes a new form, and enters the new information into a service authorization.

#### Purchasing On-the-Job Training

VR may pay OJT fees to an employer for:

* a training expense that is more than the non-OJT training cost for a new employee in the same or similar position; and
* any wasted product produced during the training that is not put into the business's product inventory.

OJT employer payments are based on a sliding scale and the business's size at the work site where the training takes place:

* 1-50 employees—up to 80 percent of cost
* 51-250 employees—up to 60 percent of cost
* 251 employees or more—up to 30 percent of cost

If necessary, a higher percentage of reimbursement may be applied after consultation with the State Office Program Specialist for Employment Re-entry, Work Experience and Proprietary Schools. VR staff follow the purchasing guidelines in VRSM D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services in addition to the applicable guidelines in this section.

Examples of when paying a higher percentage is acceptable include when there is:

* a documented high cost for materials that cannot be put into the employer's product inventory but are needed to train the OJT customer; or
* an extreme cost associated with the trainer needed for the OJT customer because of the skill level, certification, or licensure required for the trainer.

The State Office Program Specialist for Employment Re-entry, Work Experience and Proprietary Schools is required to document the consultation in a case note in RHW.

The VR counselor must negotiate a payment schedule that progressively decreases throughout the training period as the customer's skills increase.

#### Outcomes Required for Payment

* The employer must submit Form VR3316, On the Job Training Progress Report, with an invoice. Form VR3316 must be completed by the employer's representative and document in descriptive terms all the form's requested information.
* VR staff must verify that the customer received OJT as specified in the service authorization.
* Invoice and Form VR3316, On the Job Training Progress Report, must be submitted a minimum of once every 30 days of OJT. Due dates must be included in the service authorization specifications.

### C-1007-5: Apprenticeship Opportunities

If a customer is interested and capable, the VR counselor can explore TWC apprenticeship opportunities with the customer. TWC registered apprenticeships offer opportunities for employment and ongoing training, paid through WIOA funds, to become proficient in a skilled trade or craft.

VR counselors are encouraged to review the criteria at [TWC apprenticeship program](https://twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/registered-apprenticeship-training-programs-job-seekers) to determine basic eligibility for an apprenticeship. Customers pursuing apprenticeships must be job ready and meet the qualifications of an offered apprenticeship position before applying. Customers must be able to contact the employers themselves and participate in a panel interview to successfully compete for an apprenticeship position.

After determining that apprenticeship is a feasible alternative for the customer, the VR counselor and customer are encouraged to explore options on the [My Next Move](https://www.mynextmove.org/) website.

## C-1008: Employment Assistance Specialist Services

The goal of the employment assistance specialist (EAS) is to increase the quantity and enhance the quality of employment outcomes for VR customers who have a primary disability of vision loss. The EAS works in partnership with employers, the VR team, and customers with vision loss to provide specialized support to meet the customer's assistive technology needs and reach employment goals.

Specific services include, but are not limited to, assistive technology purchase planning, baseline computer skills assessment, equipment and software installation and troubleshooting, equipment refurbishing and loans, job retention and basic consultation services.

### C-1008-1: Accessing Employment Assistance Specialist Services

Employment assistance specialists serve customers with a primary disability of vision loss. A VR counselor refers a customer for EAS services by creating a service record in ReHabWorks and delegating the service to an EAS.

#### Creating a Service Record for EAS Services

* Level 1—In-House Services
* Level 2—Employment Assistance Services (EAS)
* Level 3—Employment Assistance Services (EAS)
* Level 4— Select the applicable service (describe)

Note: The term “describe” should be replaced with a brief description of requested services.

#### Initial Consultation

VR counselors must contact an EAS for an initial consultation assessment before referring a customer with a primary disability of vision loss for an assistive technology evaluation at the Assistive Technology Unit, or with an Assistive Technology Evaluation provider.

#### Other Consultations

As needed, VR counselors should contact an EAS for consultation and assistance with the following:

* Customer's vocational or academic issues regarding assistive technology or training that might assist with an employment goal
* Facilitating meetings with employer contacts, site tours, assistance with a job analysis, job accommodations, technical information or updates, job retention and restructuring, or environmental assessments
* Issues related to assistive technology

### C-1008-2: Business Contacts

The EAS contacts small business and locally based regional personnel to increase awareness and facilitate communication between potential employers and VR counselors. The EAS works in partnership with regional business relations coordinators and regional outreach service and coordination teams to further develop business activities.

For more information on VR business services, see VRSM A-400: Business Services.

### C-1008-3: Assistive Technology Consultations

The EAS consults with employers, customers, and VR counselors about modifying or restructuring a job so that customers with a primary disability of vision loss can be successful. More involved rehabilitation engineering situations may be referred to assistive technology support specialists to identify appropriate technologies to meet job requirements and enhance the quality of employment for customers.

For more information on technology services, see VRSM C-200: Technology Services.

Note: Customers can often adapt to situations with inexpensive, or even no-cost low-tech solutions. Frequently, the best solution is the simplest, because it requires the least amount of specialized training and the item is easily replicated in an emergency and more easily replaced by the customer when VR is not available.

### C-1008-4: In-Service Training

The EAS presents at in-service training programs that cover the following for staff and employers:

* The employment assistance process
* Applications and implementation of rehabilitation engineering
* The use of vocational information
* Other information about employment of individuals with disabilities

### C-1008-5: Basic Consultation Service

Basic Consultation is a service for customers who have:

* a primary disability of vision loss;
* a secondary and tertiary disabilities that is not significant; and
* are not currently employed.

Through basic consultation services, a customer can receive assistive technologies to help them begin adjusting to their vision loss immediately and start training programs to ultimately achieve their employment goal.

Basic Consultation services can be provided by designated BVI staff that have been trained to provide this service.

Basic Consultation services are optional for customers in the field who are blind or visually impaired. If this option is to be used in-region, the following procedures apply:

* Designated VR staff with a BVI specialty are identified by regional management. These staff members must complete Basic Consultation training arranged by the regional EAS and the State Office Employment Assistance Program Specialist (EAPS). The ideal VR staff with a BVI specialty is a vocational rehabilitation teacher (VRT), who is required to have completed at least one year of his or her OJT plan.
* Upon completion of Basic Consultation training, the trainee will be mentored by the EAS for quality assurance.
* With the approval of the EAS and the regional program support manager, the trained VR staff with a BVI specialty performs Basic Consultations on his or her own.
* A list of approved BVI staff members who may perform Basic Consultations in the region will be housed on the EAS Intranet page.

#### Creating a Service Record for Basic Consultation

A VR counselor refers a customer who is blind or visually impaired for Basic Consultation services by creating a service record in ReHabWorks and delegating the service to the designated Blind Services staff member or VRT.

* Level 1—In-House Services
* Level 2—Employment Assistance Services (EAS)
* Level 3—Employment Assistance Services (EAS)
* Level 4—Basic Consultation (describe)

Note: The term "describe" should be replaced with a brief description of requested services.