# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual Section C-1200

# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-1200: Supported Employment Services

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**Introduction**

Supported Employment (SE) enables customers with the most significant disabilities to enter competitive integrated employment by:

* providing individualized assistance in finding an appropriate job match;
* providing Ongoing Support Services; and
* establishing Extended Services, sometimes called long-term supports, to help the customer to maintain a long-term competitive integrated employment.

Often customers in SE have been:

* excluded from community services;
* institutionalized; or
* in segregated work programs, such as sheltered workshops or enclaves, for extended periods of time.

SE providers often use the "place and train" model and customized employment practices to develop the best job match for the customer, using flexible strategies to meet the individual's needs and the employer's unmet business needs. The "place and train" model matches customers to jobs that are consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choices. Providers then supply ongoing supports and training so that the customer can develop the skills needed to maintain the employment over the long term with the use of Extended Services.

SE can be used with customers with any disability, but it is most commonly used with customers who have a neurodevelopment disability, complex physical disabilities such as brain injury, cerebral palsy, etc., and significant behavioral health conditions that cause the customer to have severe limitations.

**C-1201: Legal Authorization**

**34 CFR §363.3**

"A State may provide services under this part to any individual, including a youth with a disability, if:

(a) The individual has been determined to be:

(1) Eligible for vocational rehabilitation services in accordance with 34 CFR 361.42; and

(2) An individual with a most significant disability;

(b) For purposes of activities carried out under §363.4(a)(2), the individual is a youth with a disability, as defined in 34 CFR 361.5(c) (59), who satisfies the requirements of this section; and

(c) Supported employment has been identified as the appropriate employment outcome for the individual on the basis of a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs, as defined in 34 CFR 361.5(c)(5), including an evaluation of rehabilitation, career, and job needs."

**34 CFR §361.5**

(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.

(Authority: Sections 7(5) and 12(c) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; 29 U.S.C. 705(5) and 709(c))

(11) Customized employment means competitive integrated employment, for an individual with a significant disability, that is—

(i) Based on an individualized determination of the unique strengths, needs, and interests of the individual with a significant disability;

(ii) Designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and the business needs of the employer; and

(iii) Carried out through flexible strategies, such as—

(A) Job exploration by the individual; and

(B) Working with an employer to facilitate placement, including—

(1) Customizing a job description based on current employer needs or on previously unidentified and unmet employer needs;

(2) Developing a set of job duties, a work schedule and job arrangement, and specifics of supervision (including performance evaluation and review), and determining a job location;

(3) Using a professional representative chosen by the individual, or if elected self-representation, to work with an employer to facilitate placement; and

(4) Providing services and supports at the job location.

(Authority: Section 7(7) and 12(c) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; 29 U.S.C. 705(7) and 709(c))"

**34 CFR §361.5**

"(53) Supported employment—

(i) Supported employment means competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, or employment in an integrated work setting in which an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, is working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment that is individualized, and customized, consistent with the unique strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, including with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities—

(A) For whom competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred, or for whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and

(B) Who, because of the nature and severity of their disabilities, need intensive supported employment services and extended services after the transition from support provided by the designated State unit, in order to perform this work.

(ii) For purposes of this part, an individual with a most significant disability, whose supported employment in an integrated setting does not satisfy the criteria of competitive integrated employment, as defined in paragraph (c)(9) of this section is considered to be working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment so long as the individual can reasonably anticipate achieving competitive integrated employment—

(A) Within six months of achieving a supported employment outcome; or

(B) In limited circumstances, within a period not to exceed 12 months from the achievement of the supported employment outcome, if a longer period is necessary based on the needs of the individual, and the individual has demonstrated progress toward competitive earnings based on information contained in the service record."

(Authority: Sections 7(38), 12(c), and 602 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; 29 USC 705(38), 709(c), and 795g)

"(54) Supported employment services means ongoing support services, including customized employment, and other appropriate services needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, in supported employment that are -

(i) Organized and made available, singly or in combination, in such a way as to assist an eligible individual to achieve competitive integrated employment;

(ii) Based on a determination of the needs of an eligible individual, as specified in an individualized plan for employment;

(iii) Provided by the designated State unit for a period of time not to exceed 24 months, unless under special circumstances the eligible individual and the rehabilitation counselor jointly agree to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment; and

(iv) Following transition, as post-employment services that are unavailable from an extended services provider and that are necessary to maintain or regain the job placement or advance in employment."

(Authority: Sections 7(39), 12(c), and 103(a)(16) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; 29 USC 705(39), 709(c), and 723(a)(16))

**34 CFR §361.5**

"(37) Ongoing support services, as used in the definition of supported employment, means services that—

(i) Are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, in supported employment;

(ii) Are identified based on a determination by the designated State unit of the individual's need as specified in an individualized plan for employment;

(iii) Are furnished by the designated State unit from the time of job placement until transition to extended services, unless post-employment services are provided following transition, and thereafter by one or more extended services providers throughout the individual's term of employment in a particular job placement;

(iv) Include an assessment of employment stability and provision of specific services or the coordination of services at or away from the worksite that are needed to maintain stability based on—

(A) At a minimum, twice-monthly monitoring at the worksite of each individual in supported employment; or

(B) If under specific circumstances, especially at the request of the individual, the individualized plan for employment provides for off-site monitoring, twice monthly meetings with the individual;

(v) Consist of—

(A) Any particularized assessment supplementary to the comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs described in paragraph (c)(5)(ii) of this section;

(B) The provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site;

(C) Job development and training;

(D) Social skills training;

(E) Regular observation or supervision of the individual;

(F) Follow-up services including regular contact with the employers, the individuals, the parents, family members, guardians, advocates or authorized representatives of the individuals, and other suitable professional and informed advisors, in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement;

(G) Facilitation of natural supports at the worksite;

(H) Any other service identified in the scope of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals, described in §361.48(b); or

(I) Any service similar to the foregoing services."

(Authority: Sections 7(27) and 12(c) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; 29 USC 705(27) and 709(c))

**34 CFR §361.5**

"(19) Extended services means ongoing support services and other appropriate services that are -

(i) Needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability including a youth with a most significant disability, in supported employment;

(ii) Organized or made available, singly or in combination, in such a way as to assist an eligible individual in maintaining supported employment;

(iii) Based on the needs of an eligible individual, as specified in an individualized plan for employment;

(iv) Provided by a State agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer, or any other appropriate resource, after an individual has made the transition from support from the designated State unit; and

(v) Provided to a youth with a most significant disability by the designated State unit in accordance with requirements set forth in this part and part 363 for a period not to exceed four years, or at such time that a youth reaches age 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth with a disability under paragraph (c)(58) of this section, whichever occurs first. The designated State unit may not provide extended services to an individual with a most significant disability who is not a youth with a most significant disability."

(Authority: Sections 7(13), 12(c), and 604(b) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; 29 USC 705(13), 709(c), and 795i(b))

**C-1202: Eligible for Supported Employment Services**

SE services may be used for customers with any type of disability, but a customer must:

* have a most significant disability (three or more functional limitations);
* require individualized assistance in finding an appropriate job match;
* require ongoing supports to learn the job and establish accommodations; and
* require extended services (long-term supports) to maintain the employment after VR closes the case.

A VR counselor can authorize the purchase of SE if the customer has a most significant disability and:

* will benefit from the Place, Then Train model of job placement;
* needs extensive comprehensive training and support to compete in the labor market;
* needs ongoing supports to maintain an employment outcome;
* requires considerable help competing in the open job market;
* has not had competitive integrated employment or has experienced interrupted or intermittent employment; and/or
* is likely to be able to find and keep a competitive integrated job when necessary supports are in place.

Supported Employment services are available for customers who are “youth with disabilities,” adults, and in trial work.

**C-1202-1: Level of Significance for Supported Employment Cases**

All VR customers who use SE services must be designated in ReHabWorks (RHW) as "most significant." The level of significance is determined at the time eligibility is determined. However, if additional information becomes available to support the change in the level of significance, this designation may be updated at any time thereafter.

SE can be used as a Trial Work activity.

For more information about determining the level of significance, refer to VRSM B-300: Determining Eligibility and VRSM B-309: Establishing the Level of Significance.

**C-1202-2: Ongoing Supports**

Ongoing supports are furnished by VR through SE from the time of job placement until the customer has achieved job stability and has been transitioned to Extended Services. Ongoing supports include the coordination or delivery of services at or away from the job site that are necessary for the customer to maintain stability in employment. Examples include:

* job skills training;
* social skills training;
* hard-skills training;
* development of job aids;
* education on disabilities with business; or
* establishing accommodation.

**C-1202-3: Extended Services**

Extended Services and supports assist the customer in maintaining employment long term, after the intensive ongoing supports and training have led to the stabilization of the customer's employment. Extended Services are comparable benefits that must be listed in the customer’s IPE.

Extended Services can be provided either at the employment site or off-site when necessary to maintain stable employment. Examples of Extended Services include, but are not limited to:

* job skills training (job coaching when provided by Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers) to assist with development of soft and hard skills to ensure the customer is meeting the expectation of the employer;
* transportation;
* Social Security income reporting;
* medication management;
* assistance with dressing or toileting; and/or
* managing the customer's work schedule.

**Extended Service Providers**

Extended Services are funded by sources other than TWC-VR for as long as needed to ensure the customer remains stable in his or her employment. Extended Services begin when the customer achieves job stability. The Supported Employment Specialist coordinates and trains all Extended Service providers.

The only exception for Extended Services being provided by resources other than TWC-VR is for a VR customer who is a "youth with a disability" that does not have comparable benefits or resources available for Extended Services. VR can purchase Extended Services for VR customers who are "youth with disabilities" through Job Skills Training for only VR customers for a period of up to four years or until the youth reaches age 25, whichever occurs first. When VR is providing Extended Services for a customer and is purchasing Job Skills Training the VR counselor must continually seek alternate resources for Extended Services and document the resources sought out in a case note. When comparable benefits or resources are found for Extended Services, VR must stop the purchase of Job Skills Training as an Extended Services.

Extended Services can be provided by:

* Medicaid Waiver Programs
* Local Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (LIDDA) and Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHA)
* public agencies and private nonprofit organizations
* natural supports:
	+ supports from supervisors and coworkers such as mentoring, feedback on performance, and/or assistance in learning new skills
	+ friends and family members can also provide natural supports such as arranging transportation, helping with medication management, and helping to solve work-related problems

**Home and Community Based (HCBS) Waivers**

Section 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers provide opportunities for Medicaid beneficiaries to receive services in their own home or community rather than institutions or other isolated settings. These programs serve a variety of targeted populations groups, such as people with mental illnesses, intellectual disabilities, and/or physical disabilities. A person's services for HCBS waivers are determined on the person's preferences obtained through person-centered planning. Currently there is an interest list for all Texas HCBS waivers. When a VR customer is eligible for a HBCS wavier the VR counselor should assist the customer in putting their name on the interest list.

People getting Medicaid HCBS have the right to:

* seek employment
* work in competitive or integrated settings
* engage in community life
* control their personal resources
* receive services in the community

Texas Home and Community Based (HCBS) Waivers include:

* Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS)
* Home and Community-Based Service (HCBS)
* Texas Home Living (TxHmL)
* Youth Empowerment Services (YES)
* Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD)
* STAR+PLUS
* STAR Kids

VR counselor's roles in coordinating a customer's Extended Services in a HCBS Wavier:

* VR counselor must make sure the customer's HCBS waiver budget has funds available for extended supports; and
* VR counselor must make sure the HCBS waiver provider includes the Extended Services in the customer's HCBS waiver person-centered/directed plan and individual service plan.

When HCBS services are coordinated in a VR customer's case:

* it is preferred and a best practice that the Extended Services, known as Supported Employment in the HCBS waiver, be identified before the VR counselor makes a referral for the VR Career Planning Assessment (CPA);
* units for HCBS waiver Supported Employment (aka VR Extended Services), must be approved in customer's HCBS waiver plan no later than the end of the final job retention benchmark in order for extended services to begin at job stability; and
* see TWS-VRS & HHS Waiver Sequencing of Services document.

This section applies only to customers who have a Medicaid waiver already available to them.

**Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance Recipients**

If a customer is eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits, the VR counselor must obtain a Benefits Planning Query (BPQY) in order for the Career Planning Assessment to be completed. Once the customer has an employment and earnings goal on the IPE, VR will arrange for the customer to receive a Benefits Summary and Analysis/Work Incentive Plan. VR works with the customer to facilitate use of Social Security work incentives when these resources are determined to benefit the customer. For more information about this process, refer to VRSM A-306-7: SSA Benefits and Work Incentives Supports and Services Planning Process.

**Youth with Disabilities Customers and Extended Services**

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-VRD can provide extended services to VR customers who are “youth with a disability.” 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. See the glossary for the definition of "youth with a disability." When VR sponsors extended services for youth with disabilities, the case must continue to maintain job stability status. Job skills training is how TWC-VRD 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.

VR counselor must continue to seek out resources to fund the Extended Services until a resource for Extended Services is identified or the case is closed.

A case cannot be closed until 90 days after VR is no longer providing Extended Services for "youth with disabilities" customers.

For more information on services for youth with disabilities, refer to VRSM C-1300: Transition Services for Students and Youth with Disabilities.

For more information about using comparable benefits, refer to VRSM B-400: Completing the Comprehensive Assessment and VRSM B-504-6: Comparable Benefits.

**C-1203: Individualized Plan for Employment for Supported Employment**

Supported Employment must be identified as an appropriate rehabilitation objective for the customer and is based on a comprehensive assessment that determines the customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. This objective is included in the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE).

An IPE for SE must:

* show that the customer is eligible for and will be receiving SE Services via the checkbox option in RHW;
* include SE services as a planned service;
* specify the benefits analysis and planning for customers who receive Social Security benefits to determine whether benefits exist that the customer can access to support employment;
* specify the maximum number of hours the customer will work in a competitive integrated setting based on the customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice;
* specify ongoing training and supports such as job skills training needed at the employment site and away from the employment site that will be necessary for the customer to maintain the competitive integrated employment;
* specify the Extended Services and supports needs and sources to provide or arrange the Extended Services, including natural supports, including:
	+ the name of the individual, organization, or other resource that is reasonably expected to agree to provide Extended Services after the TWC-VR–funded services cease (if such a resource cannot be identified when the IPE is developed, include information about a reasonable expectation for the time that a source for the Extended Services will become available before case closure); and
	+ an explanation of the coordination of services and comparable benefits that will be provided under other individualized plans for other federal or state programs, when available and identified through Social Security benefits analysis and planning. Examples are:
		- an Individualized Education Plan (IEP);
		- an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP-BSD);
		- CLASS;
		- HCS; and
		- other available programs.

If the original IPE did not identify SE as a planned service, the IPE must be amended to include SE and the SE service provider. All changes to planned SE services must be documented in an IPE or in an IPE amendment. Use of service-justification case notes instead of an IPE or IPE amendment is not allowed.

When completing an IPE for SE, refer to VRSM B-500: Individualized Plan for Employment and Post-Employment.

**C-1204: Purchasing Requirements**

Supported Employment Services are purchased through contracted providers only.

For more information on general purchasing policies and procedures, refer to VRSM D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services.

To ensure accountability and high-quality services to VR customers, VR staff must apply the contracting requirements as published in the Standards for Providers. For information about required outcomes for Supported Employment Services and the fee schedule, refer to VR Standards for Providers, Chapter 18: Supported Employment Services.

Any request to change to Supported Employment Service Description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director using the Form VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request form, before the change is implemented. Examples of when a VR3472 is necessary include when:

* requesting a change in providers in cases where the benchmarks previously achieved are not being paid;
* extending SE services beyond 24 months; and
* purchasing Supported Employment services after the purchase of a Bundled Job Placement Benchmark A-C.

**C-1204-1: Premiums**

The following premiums can be purchased with SE services:

* Autism
* Blind
* Brain Injury
* Criminal Background
* Deaf
* Mileage
* Professional Placement
* Wage

Refer to VR Standards for Providers, Chapter 20: Premiums, for service descriptions to determine whether a specific premium is applicable for a customer as well as the fee schedule.

**C-1205: Referral to Supported Employment Services**

Supported Employment (SE) must be identified as an appropriate rehabilitation objective for the customer based on a comprehensive assessment that determines the customer’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice and is included in the customer’s individualized plan for employment (IPE) or the trial work plan (TWP). Before a referral to a provider for SE services, the VR counselor must identify, address, and document medical, psychological, and/or physical barriers that could interfere with successful employment.

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 Form 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.

When the customer is a Social Security beneficiary, the VR counselor must

* complete a benefits planning query (BPQY) before the referral;
* coordinate the provision of long-term supports funding from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Department of State Health Services, and the managed care organization, when the customer has a 1915(c) waiver, prior to the referral;
* indicate on the referral the customer’s resources that are related to Extended Services; and
* facilitate access to identified Extended Services resources.

**C-1206: Benchmarks**

SE services may not exceed 24 months from the time the customer is placed. When the customer needs SE for longer than 24 months to reach job stabilization, VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services, must be completed and submitted for approval. The VR counselor and the customer must agree to extend services and must document the approved extension on the customer’s IPE.

When a change to an SE service description, process and procedure, or outcomes required for payment is required to meet a customer’s individual needs, the change 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.

The following VR services may not be purchased while a customer is receiving SE services from an ESP:

* Bundled Job Placement
* Job Skills Training, except when the Job Skills Training is used to provide Extended Services as described in VRSM C-1202-3: Extended Services
* Non-bundled Job Placement
* On-the-Job Training (OJT)
* Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT)
* Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT)
* Environmental Work Assessment (EWA)
* Vocational Evaluation
* Project SEARCH
* Work Adjustment Training (WAT)
* Work Experience Services (WE)

For all benchmarks, the VR counselor:

* works in coordination with the customer and the SE specialist throughout the SE process to ensure the best possible employment outcome for the customer;
* facilitates the SE process, providing counseling and guidance throughout, to ensure successful employment for the customer;
* monitors the customer’s case;
* reviews all required documentation for accuracy and completeness prior to payment; and
* verifies that all deliverables have been achieved prior to authorizing payment of the invoice.

For all benchmarks, the rehabilitation assistant (RA):

* requests records;
* creates service records and issues SAs, ensuring SE funds are used when available;
* schedules and/or coordinates meetings with the customer, the customer’s circle of support, the SE specialist, and the VR counselor; and
* returns reports and invoices to the provider to correct errors using Form VR3460, Vendor Invoice Additional Data Request.

Refer to SFP Chapter 18 for additional information regarding SE service descriptions, processes and procedures, outcomes required for payment, the fee schedule, and SE resources.

**C-1206-1: Supported Employment Plan**

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. Form, VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report, must be reviewed and agreed upon by the customer, the SE specialist, and the VR counselor.

When developing or amending the SE Plan, a meeting is conducted in person or remotely. The VR counselor, SE specialist, customer and, as appropriate, the customer’s representative and circle of support, must attend the SE plan meeting.

When developing the SE plan, the VR counselor must:

* review Form VR1630, Career Planning Assessment with the group, ensuring that the information recorded in the VR1632 represents the information in the CPA and/or EWA and the customer's best interests;
* complete Form, VR1632 with the customer, SE specialist, and circle of support, recording the customer's identified:
	+ interests, preferences, and potential job tasks;
	+ employment conditions in measurable terms; and
	+ extended services (funded, paid, and/or natural supports).
* maintain a signed version of Form VR1632 in the VR case file;
* provide a signed copy of Form VR1632 to the customer and SE specialist;
* provide an electronically fillable copy of Form 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.

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 Form 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 Form VR1632 with the customer, SE specialist, and circle of support;
* obtain new signatures;
* file the updated, signed copy of Form VR1632 in the customer’s VR case file;
* provide an updated, signed copy of Form VR1632 to the customer and SE specialist;
* provide the updated, electronically fillable copy of Form VR1632 to the SE specialist; and
* ensure all required SAs are up to date.

**C-1206-2: Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark**

The job development and placement benchmark should be authorized and paid once during the life of the case. On a case-by-case basis, it may be necessary to purchase the Job Development and Placement benchmark more than once. When the VR counselor determines the customer needs the supports of a supported employment specialist for an additional Job Development and Placement benchmark, the VR counselor must obtain VR supervisor 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 benchmark.

During the job development and placement benchmark, the VR counselor:

* reviews all documentation submitted by the provider for accuracy and completion;
* communicates with the provider and the customer regarding the job search and placement;
* reviews the employment placement to see if it meets the definition of competitive integrated employment (CIE) and requests that a CIE checklist be completed, when applicable;
* monitors the customer's employment to ensure that nonnegotiable employment conditions are met throughout the delivery of SE services;
* verifies that the extended services (funded, paid, and/or natural supports) have been identified and that the provider has arranged to train the long-term-support provider;
* verifies that the customer has received ongoing supports as necessary for the customer to learn the job and meet the employer's expectations;
* requests that VR staff issue SAs to the SE specialist for one or two job retention periods, based on the customer’s needs;
* checks the SAs for premiums that are still open; and
* when requested by the SE specialist, schedules a job stability review meeting with the SE specialist, customer, and circle of support.

For information on how a CIE checklist is completed, refer to the Competitive Integrated Employment intranet page.

For more information, refer to SFP 18.5: Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark.

**C-1206-3: Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark**

The VR counselor may approve and pay up to five job retention benchmarks. Six or more job retention benchmarks require the VR counselor to consult with the VR Supervisor prior to approval.

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 Form VR1632.

The job retention benchmark may be purchased multiple times until the customer either achieves job stability or to reestablish job stability.

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 for accuracy and completion;
* 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.

For more information, refer to SFP 18.6: Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark.

**C-1206-4: Supported Employment Job Stability Review**

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.

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.

Refer to VRSM C-1202-3: Extended Services for information about extended services and for information about when a VR counselor can purchase extended services through job skills training for VR customers who are youth with disabilities.

The job stability meeting may be conducted remotely. 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 SFP 18.7.1;
* reviews all documentation submitted by the provider;
* 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.

When the VR counselor determines the customer needs the supports of a supported employment specialist for an additional Job Development and Placement benchmark, the VR counselor must obtain VR supervisor 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 benchmark.

To reestablish job stability, the VR counselor:

* requests an SA for the provider to participate in another job stability review meeting;
* schedules a job stability review meeting; and
* follows the procedures for a job stability review meeting.

For more information on job stability, refer to SFP 18.7: Supported Employment Job Stability Review.

**Counseling and Guidance for Job Stability**

The VR counselor conducts counseling and guidance (C&G) with the customer during the job stability review meeting. After the job stability review meeting, a C&G case note must be entered documenting the customer’s job stability status. In addition to the C&G case note requirements in VRSM E-300: Case Note Requirements, the VR counselor must document in the C&G case note whether 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 Form 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 training goals, unless a goal has been determined to be “no longer applicable” or is scheduled to be transferred to extended services, on Form VR1634.

The job stability date is the day after the current job retention benchmark is completed.

Note: It is a best practice to schedule the SE closure meeting at the job stability review meeting when the job stability date is set.

For more information on job stability, refer to SFP 18.7: Supported Employment Job Stability Review.

**C-1206-5: Supported Employment Closure Benchmark**

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.

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.

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 Form VR1632 to the VR counselor without signatures before or at the 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.

Counseling and Guidance for SE Closure

The VR counselor conducts counseling and guidance (C&G) with the customer during the SE closure meeting. After the SE closure meeting, a C&G case note must be entered. In addition to the C&G case note requirements in VRSM E-300: Case Note Requirements, the VR counselor must document in the C&G case note whether 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 Form 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 For, VR1632 is accurate.

Note: Signatures on Form VR1632 are obtained at the SE closure meeting.

For more information, refer to SFP 18.8 Supported Employment Closure Benchmark.

**C-1207: Closing a Supported Employment Case**

Before successfully closing a case with an SE outcome, in addition to the requirements outlined in VRSM B-600: Closure, the following conditions must be met:

* The SE specialist has successfully placed the customer in a job consistent with the SE plan.
* The customer has worked at least 90 days without substantial services funded by VR and without provision of services other than monitoring the established extended support.

When closing the case in RHW, ensure that the Employment Outcome at Closure, which is captured on the Successful Closure page in RHW, is updated to show "Supported Employment in Competitive Integrated Employment."