# VR-SFP Chapter 20: Premiums

Revised February 1, 2022

## 20.1 Overview of Premiums

Premiums are payments made to contractors in addition to the base rate paid for services.

Premiums are paid to providers when the provider:

* has met the outcomes required for payment for the authorized premium in SFP 20; and
* has obtained the credentials necessary to work with individuals who have disabilities, such as autism or deafness.

### 20.1.1 Premium Payments

Premium payments compensate providers for their additional efforts, such as taking required training that ultimately benefits customers but can increase the costs of providing services. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) encourages all staff of contracted providers to obtain specialty endorsements. The specialty endorsement identifies the individuals working for contractors who possess the necessary knowledge for competent practice related to disability populations and complex employment barriers.

Whether a contractor receives a premium payment depends on a customer's specific vocational needs and barriers to employment. Multiple premiums may be associated with a base rate when vocationally justified. VR counselors are not required to provide premium payments when a direct service provider qualifies for the premium, if the VR counselor determines that extra effort made by the provider, such as taking required training, is not necessary for the specific customer's success. If a customer does not have a vocationally justified need for the service, it will not be approved by the VR counselor. Premiums are paid only when all outcomes for the service have been achieved and the criteria for the premium have been met.

Premium payments must be approved through a service authorization. Premium payments are invoiced as identified in the 20.11 Premium Fee Schedule below. No partial payments are made.

**Disability Related Premiums**

For outcome-based services such as Supported Employment and Job Placement benchmarks, Vocational Adjustment Training courses and the Career Planning Assessment (CPA), the service authorization will be issued before service delivery and invoiced after the outcome for the base service has been achieved.

For hourly based services, such as Job Skills Training, Work Experience Training, Personal Social Adjustment Training, and Work Adjustment Training, the service authorization will be issued before the service begins and will be invoiced when the services are completed.

**Non-Disability Premiums related to Work Experience Placement, Bundled Job Placement and Supported Employment**

Will be paid at the conclusion of the service as specified below.

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## 20.3 Autism Premium

### 20.3.1 Service Description

A service provider is eligible for the Autism Premium when:

* the customer has been diagnosed with one or more of the following, as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5):
  + Autism spectrum disorder
  + Social communication disorder;
* the counselor determines that the customer requires intervention to remove barriers to employment that are directly related to the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or social communication disorder in any of the following categories:
  + Level of independence
  + Social skill deficits
  + Communication deficits
  + Obsessive thoughts and/or interests, resistance to change
  + Sensory integration issues (such as but not limited to, seeking deep pressure, or having sensitivity to lights or noise)
  + Level of anxiety
  + Comorbidities (such as but not limited to, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, depression, and obsessive compulsive disorder); and
* the direct service provider has a University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE) Autism Specialization Endorsement.

The Autism Premium may be available for the services covered in:

* Chapter 4: Employment Assessments;
* [Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-13);
* [Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-17); and
* [Chapter 18: Supported Employment](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-18)

### 20.3.2 Process and Procedures

A contracted provider's staff member who provides a direct service to the customer must:

* meet the staff qualifications identified for the base service; and
* maintain a current UNTWISE Autism Endorsement.

The contracted provider receives authorization for both the base service and the Autism Premium through a service authorization. The referral and/or service authorization identifies the categories in which the customer may need intervention to remove barriers related to the customer's diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or social communication disorder.

The provider's staff member:

* ensures that all deliverables for the base service are provided; and
* provides interventions, as needed, to remove any barriers related to the customer's autism spectrum disorder or social communication disorder.

The staff member with the UNTWISE Autism Endorsement assigned to work with the customer must:

* provide the base service, as defined in the VR Standards for Providers (VR-SFP) manual;
* remain on-site providing all necessary interventions, as identified on the referral form and/or service authorization;
* identify interventions and compensatory techniques to address and/or remove the barriers directly related to the customer's diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or social communication disorder; and
* complete and sign [VR1882, Autism Service Premium Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html).

The VR1882, Autism Service Premium Report, must be submitted each time a deliverable is submitted for the base service as indicated in the Premium fee schedule.

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### 20.3.4 Fee

For more information, refer to 20.11 Premium Fee Schedule.

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## 20.4 Criminal Background Premium

### 20.4.1 Service Description

For a customer's case to be eligible for the Criminal Background Premium, VR must have documentation of criminal history in the customer's case file, such as:

* the customer's conditions of probation or parole; or
* a name-based criminal history record or fingerprint record from the Texas Department of Public Safety or equivalent law enforcement agency indicating the customer has a:
* felony conviction;
* guilty plea with deferred adjudication for a felony; or
* no-contest plea with deferred adjudication for a felony.

A provider will not automatically be eligible for the Criminal Background Premium when a customer has a felony.

An employment service provider is eligible for the Criminal Background Premium when:

* authorization is indicated on the [VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan Part B and Status Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), or on VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report;
* the provider is authorized by a service authorization received at Bundled Job Placement Benchmark A or Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark; and
* the customer obtains employment that meets all the criteria outlined in VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan Part B and Status Report, or on VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report.

The VR counselor determines whether the type of felony interferes with the customer's ability to obtain competitive integrated employment to meet the goals listed on the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE), based on consideration of such factors as the:

* type of felony and how long ago the felony was committed;
* customer's job history;
* customer's qualifications; and
* local job market conditions.

The premium is paid only once, at the conclusion and achievement of Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark.

### 20.4.2 Process and Procedures

The contracted provider receives authorization for the Criminal Background Premium through a service authorization. The service authorization for the Criminal Background Premium must be received when the service authorization for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark A is received and when Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark is received.

The staff member working with the customer must provide the Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment service as required in the VR-SFP manual.

The provider's staff member must complete the required documentation for either Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment, including the section for the Criminal Background Premium. The Criminal Background Premium is paid only after all required outcomes for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark deliverables have been achieved and approved by the VR counselor.

### 20.4.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The direct services provider is eligible for the Criminal Background Premium when the customer achieves all outcomes required for either Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark, as outlined in the corresponding chapters of the VR-SFP manual.

The service provider is paid for the Criminal Background Premium when the VR counselor confirms and approves that the customer has achieved all outcomes required for the base service, as outlined in the corresponding chapter of the VR-SFP manual.

Payment for the Criminal Background Premium is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* report for the base service, with the Criminal Background section completed; and
* invoice.

### 20.4.4 Fee

For more information, refer to 20.11 Premium Fee Schedule.

## 20.5 Deaf Premium

### 20.5.1 Service Description

A service provider is eligible for the Deaf Premium when:

* the customer's primary mode of communication is a form of sign language (such as American Sign Language, Manually Coded English, Signed Exact English, and/or Pidgin Signed English); and
* services are delivered by a staff member qualified to communicate in the customer's primary mode.

To qualify for this premium, the staff member providing direct services must show proof of proficiency in sign language by providing documentation of certification from the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI), certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), or a [Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI)](http://www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi/) rating of intermediate plus.

The Deaf Premium may be available for the services covered in:

* Chapter 4: Employment Assessments;
* [Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-13);
* [Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-17); and
* [Chapter 18: Supported Employment](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-18).

For interviews and meetings with an employer, the customer may request an interpreter who is not providing the base service by contacting the customer's VR counselor.

### 20.5.2 Process and Procedures

A contracted provider's staff member who provides direct service to the customer must:

* meet the staff qualifications identified for the base service; and
* be certified by the BEI or the RID or hold an SLPI rating of intermediate plus.

The contracted provider receives authorization for both the base service and the Deaf Premium through a service authorization. The provider's staff member:

* ensures all outcomes are achieved for the base service; and
* facilitates communication using the customer's primary mode of communication, such as American Sign Language, Manually Coded English, Signed Exact English and/or Pidgin Signed English.

The staff member facilitates communication with or for the customer while:

* providing the base service as defined in the corresponding chapter of the VR-SFP manual; and
* facilitating necessary communication for the customer to participate in the base service.

The provider's staff member must complete the required documentation for the base service, including the section for the Deaf Premium.

### 20.5.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The services provider is eligible for the Deaf Premium when:

* the VR counselor confirms and approves the customer has achieved all outcomes required for the base service as outlined in the corresponding chapter of the VR-SFP manual; and
* the provider's staff member who facilitates communication attaches the current applicable credential of the staff member's proficiency in sign language.

VRS does not pay fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

The Deaf Premium is paid when the VR counselor:

* verifies communication was facilitated for the customer; and
* approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:
  + report for the base service, with the Deaf Premium section completed; and
  + invoice.

### 20.5.4 Fee

For more information, refer to 20.11 Premium Fee Schedule.

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## 20.7 Professional Placement Premium

### 20.7.1 Service Description

A provider receives a Professional Placement Premium when the customer finds a job that meets all the criteria outlined in [VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan Part B and Status Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), or VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report.

In addition to meeting the requirements in VR1845B or VR1632, the position obtained must require at least a bachelor's degree, and the requirement must be stated in the job description or job posting.

The Professional Placement Premium is paid only once, after achievement of the Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark.

### 20.7.2 Process and Procedures

The contracted provider receives authorization for the Professional Placement Premium through a service authorization.

The service authorization for the Professional Placement Premium for Job Placement must be received when the service authorization for Job Placement Benchmark A is received. For Supported Employment, the service authorization must be received when the service authorization for Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark is received.

The provider’s staff member working with the customer must provide the Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment service as defined in the VR-SFP manual.

The provider's staff member must complete the required documentation for either Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment, including the section for the Professional Placement Premium. The Professional Placement Premium is paid only after all outcomes have been achieved and approved by the VR counselor for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark.

### 20.7.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The direct services provider is eligible for the Professional Placement Premium when the customer achieves all deliverables required for either Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark, as outlined in the corresponding chapters of the VR-SFP manual.

Proof that a degree is required for the position obtained by the customer must be submitted with the invoice.

The services provider is eligible for the Professional Placement Premium when:

* the VR counselor confirms and approves that the customer has achieved all outcomes required for the base service, as outlined in the corresponding chapter of the VR-SFP manual; and
* proof that a bachelor's degree or higher was required for the position obtained by the customer is demonstrated by either a copy of the job posting or the customer's job description.

The Professional Placement Premium is paid when the VR counselor verifies that the position required a bachelor's degree or higher and approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* report for the base service, with the Professional Placement section completed; and
* invoice.

### 20.7.4 Fee

For more information, refer to 20.11 Premium Fee Schedule.

## 20.8 Wage Premium

### 20.8.1 Service Description

For a customer's case to be eligible for a Wage Premium, a customer must:

* find employment that meets all the outcomes outlined in [VR1845B, Bundled Job Placement Services Plan Part B and Status Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), or VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report;
* earn a gross wage of at least $16 per hour; and
* work a minimum of 20 hours per week.

Proof of the customer's earnings and average hours worked per week must be submitted with the invoice; for example, an itemized pay stub may be used to verify the earning and hours.

The Wage Premium is paid only once, after achievement and completion of Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark.

### 20.8.2 Process and Procedures

The contracted provider receives authorization for the Wage Premium through a service authorization. The service authorization for the Wage Placement Premium for Job Placement must be received when the service authorization for Job Placement Benchmark A is received. For Supported Employment, the service authorization must be received when the service authorization for Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark is received.

The staff member working with the customer must provide the Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment service as defined in the VR-SFP manual. The provider's staff member must complete the required documentation for either Bundled Job Placement or Supported Employment, including the section for the Wage Premium.

The Wage Premium is paid only after all outcomes have been achieved and approved by the VR counselor for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark.

### 20.8.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The direct services provider is eligible for the Wage Premium when the customer achieves all deliverables required for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Closure Benchmark, as outlined in the corresponding chapters of the VR-SFP manual.

Proof of the customer's earnings and average hours worked per week must be:

* documented in a format such as an itemized pay stub; and
* submitted with the invoice.

The services provider is eligible for a Wage Premium when the VR counselor confirms and approves that the customer:

* has achieved all outcomes required for the base service, as outlined in the corresponding chapter of the VR-SFP manual;
* earns over $16 per hour (gross); and
* works an average of 20 hours per week, as verified by documentation such as an itemized pay stub.

Payment for the Wage Premium is made when the VR counselor:

* verifies that the customer earns over $16 gross per hour and works 20 or more hours per week; and
* approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:
* report for the base service, with the Wage Premium section completed; and
* invoice.

### 20.8.4 Fee

For more information, refer to 20.11 Premium Fee Schedule.

## 20.9 Travel Premium

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### 20.9.5 Travel Premium Fee

For more information, refer to 20.11 Premium Fee Schedule.

## 20.10 Brain Injury Premium

### 20.10.1 Service Description

An acquired brain injury (traumatic and nontraumatic) is an injury to the brain that is not hereditary, congenital, degenerative, or induced by birth trauma. The brain injury occurs after birth.

Examples of injuries that affect the brain or the oxygen supply to the brain include:

* stroke;
* aneurysm;
* tumor;
* infectious disease;
* falls;
* car accident;
* sports injury; and
* lack of oxygen to the brain.

A provider is eligible to provide services for the Brain Injury Premium when:

* the customer has been diagnosed with an acquired brain injury;
* the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor determines that the customer requires intervention to remove barriers to employment that are directly related to the diagnosis of acquired brain injury; and
* the direct service provider has a staff member who will provide the services and either:
  + is certified by the Brain Injury Association of America as a certified brain injury specialist (CBIS) (for information go to [Brain Injury of America](https://www.biausa.org/)); or
  + holds a Brain Injury Endorsement from the University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion & Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE).

The contracted provider receives authorization for the Brain Injury Premium through a service authorization.

The Brain Injury Premium may be available for the services covered in:

* Chapter 4: Employment Assessments;
* [Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-13);
* [Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-17); and
* [Chapter 18: Supported Employment](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-18)

### 20.10.2 Process and Procedures

The provider's staff member:

* ensures that all deliverables for the base service are provided; and
* provides interventions, as needed, to remove any barriers related to the customer's acquired brain injury.

The staff member with the UNTWISE Brain Injury Endorsement assigned to work with the customer must:

* provide the base employment service, as defined in the service's associated chapter in the VR-SFP;
* remain on-site (where the employment service is being provided) to provide all necessary interventions, as identified on the referral form and/or service authorization; and
* document in the report for the base service, the interventions and compensatory techniques used to address and/or remove the barriers directly related to the customer's diagnosis of acquired brain injury.

The provider may attend the monthly Employment Supports for Brain Injury (ESBI) interdisciplinary team meeting. The fee to attend is paid one time per month.

### 20.10.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The service provider is eligible for payment of the Brain Injury Premium when:

* the VR counselor confirms and approves that the customer has achieved all outcomes required for the base service, as outlined in the chapter of this manual that corresponds to the base service; and
* the staff member providing the base service meets the qualifications for the base service and maintains a current Brain Injury Endorsement from UNTWISE or is certified by the Brain Injury Association of America as a CBIS.

VR does not pay for fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

The premium is paid after VR approves the documentation that is required for the base service and invoice.

If the provider attends an ESBI interdisciplinary team meeting, the provider must submit a progress note outlining:

* the information obtained by the provider at the meeting; and
* any services that the employment service provider plans to provide in upcoming months.

### 20.10.4 Fee

For more information, refer to 20.11 Premium Fee Schedule.

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## 20.11 Premium Fee Schedule

A provider cannot collect money from a VR customer or the customer's family for any service-related charge that exceeds VR's allowable service fees. If VR and another resource are paying for a service for a customer, the total payment must not exceed the fee specified in the VR Standards for Providers.

### 20.11.1 Autism Premium

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| **Autism Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Career Planning Assessment | $315.00 |
| Career Planning Assessment (prorated when Environmental Work Assessment (EWA) completed) | $198.00 |
| Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training | $43.00 |
| Non-Bundled Interview Training | $34.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $551.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $735.00 |
| Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark | $495.00 |
| Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark (every 28 days) | $477.00 |
| Supported Employment Closure Benchmark | $360.00 |
| Job Skills Training (Individual) | $9.00 per hour |
| Job Skills Training (Group) | $4.00 per hour |

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### 20.11.3 Deaf Premium

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| **Deaf Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Career Planning Assessment (CPA) | $660.00 |
| Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training | $217.00 |
| Non-Bundled Interview Training | $174.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $1305.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $1740.00 |
| Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark | $1,210.00 |
| Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark (every 28 days) | $1,166.00 |
| Supported Employment Closure Benchmark | $880.00 |
| Job Skills Training (Individual) | $22.00 per hour |
| Job Skills Training (Group) | $10.00per hour |
| VAT-Job Search Training | $478.00 |
| VAT-Disability Disclosure | $478.00 |
| VAT-Entering the World of Work | $239.00 |
| VAT-Explore the You in Work | $239.00 |
| VAT-Money Smart | $717.00 |
| VAT-Public Transportation Training (Group) | $10.00 per hour |
| VAT-Public Transportation Training (Individual) | $22.00 per hour |
| VAT-Soft Skills for Work Success | $358.00 |
| VAT-Soft Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success | $478.00 |

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### 20.11.8 Brain Injury Premium Fee

All premiums are paid after the base service deliverables are approved by a VR counselor. Each rate is paid once—except for the hourly rates noted below. The provider may attend interdisciplinary team meetings one time per month.

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| **Brain Injury Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training | $60 |
| Non-Bundled Interview Training | $48 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $360 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $480 |
| Career Planning Assessment | $245 |
| Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark | $385 |
| Supported Employment Job Retention Benchmark (every 28 days) | $371 |
| Supported Employment Closure Benchmark | $280 |
| Job Skills Training (Individual) | $6 per hour |
| Job Skills Training (Group) | $3 per hour |
| Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT)—Job Search Training | $120 |
| VAT—Disability Disclosure | $120 |
| VAT—Entering the World of Work | $60 |
| VAT—Explore the You in Work | $60 |
| VAT—Money Smart | $180 |
| VAT—Public Transportation Training (Group) | $3 per hour |
| VA—Public Transportation Training (Individual) | $6 |
| VAT—Soft Skills for Work Success | $90 |
| VAT—Soft Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success | $120 |
| VAT—Specialized (evaluation and training) | $6 per hour |
| Work Experience Placement | $120 |
| Work Experience Training—Individual | $6 per hour |
| Work Experience Training—Group | $3 per hour |
| Attending an ESBI interdisciplinary team meeting (Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan (IAEP) and/or Individual Program Plan (IPP)) | $37.50 per meeting |