# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-400: Training Services

Revised July 1, 2021

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## C-404: VR Counselor Responsibilities

The VR counselor provides ongoing support through regular counseling, guidance, and help with coordinating access to necessary supports throughout the life of the case. This can include assisting the customer in applying for other types of assistance such as federal aid.

If a counselor has determined that an exception will facilitate a customer’s progress and there is not an approval exception listed in policy, counselors are encouraged to staff the request through their chain of management to the Deputy Division Director for Field Services for consideration. VRSM clearly states when no exceptions are allowed.

### C-404-1: Informed Choice and Training Services

When there is an expressed desire or need for the customer to participate in training services to reach an identified vocational goal, the VR counselor works with the customer through the process of informed choice to explore a variety of options. This must be documented clearly in a case note or series of case notes in RHW as part of the assessing and planning process to complete the comprehensive assessment. For more information on roles and responsibilities in this process, refer to B-102: Informed Choice.

### C-404-2: Counseling and Guidance for Training Participants

The VR counselor must provide counseling and guidance that emphasizes the importance of the customer's participation in and commitment to successful completion of training and the achievement of the employment outcome.

Counseling and guidance for training participants are provided, at a minimum:

* before the beginning of any training period;
* once during each semester or training period (to check the customer's progress); and
* at the end of each semester or training period (to check grades and to plan for the next semester or training period).

When appropriate, VR counselors provide counseling and guidance on opportunities for advanced training in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, computer science, medical, legal, and business occupations. (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are referred to as "STEM" occupations.)

For more information about counseling and guidance requirements, refer to C-100: Counseling and Guidance.

As part of the counseling and guidance process, VR counselors provide information on available information, resources, and supports that will help the customer make an informed choice and succeed in services. For more information refer to D-203-1: Informed Customer Choice.

### C-404-3: Evaluating Training Progress

Each semester or training period, the VR counselor reviews the following, as appropriate:

* The customer's grades or progress report, but does not delay services when grades cannot be obtained before registration for the next semester or grading period
* The customer's degree plan and the progress made to reach the training goal
* Financial aid and tuition bill
* All courses the customer plans to take during the next semester or training period to ensure they are a part of the customer's required coursework.

The customer must maintain satisfactory training progress as defined in C-407-3: Satisfactory Training Progress. If the customer struggles to maintain satisfactory training progress, the VR counselor reviews the customer's use of available resources and supports, such as tutoring, accommodations, and assistive technology, to see if the customer could improve the use of available resources and supports.

## C-405: Financial Aid and Comparable Benefits

Comparable benefits and required customer participation in the cost of services must be applied to the cost of all training services before VR funds are used.

The customer must contact the school and apply for financial aid. No VR funds can be used to pay for training until VR and the customer have made maximum efforts to secure grants and/or other assistance to pay for the training. Verification of application for available financial aid and/or verification of financial aid awardmust be included in the customer's case file.

The following comparable benefits options can be selected to document the use of comparable benefits when service records, IPEs, and Closure Services pages are developed in RHW:

* Disability services offices on college and university campuses
* Educational service center
* Federal student aid (such as Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOP), and work-study)
* Intellectual and developmental disabilities agencies
* Other state agencies
* Other VR state agencies
* Scholarship
* Tuition waiver (non-blind, non-deaf)
* Tuition waiver–Blind
* Tuition waiver–Deaf
* Tuition waiver–Foster Care
* Veteran's Administration
* Waiver programs—MDCP In-Home, CLASS & Family Support Class
* Other entitlement programs

For more information, refer to [D-203-3: Use of Comparable Services and Benefits](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d203-3); [C-405-2: Pell Grant](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c410-2); and [D-203-4: Customer Participation in the Cost of Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d203-4).

### C-405-1: Free Application for Federal Student Aid

The [Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa) is a form that can be prepared annually by current and prospective students (undergraduate and graduate) in the United States to determine eligibility for student financial aid. All customers must complete the FAFSA. If the institution does not accept federal financial aid, the customer must complete the institutions financial aid application to receive VR funds for training and related expenses.

### C-405-2: Pell Grant

The Pell Grant and other comparable benefits are applied to the cost of tuition, fees, and other educational expenses before any VR funds can be used. No exceptions are permitted to the use of the Pell Grant. If the Pell Grant is greater than the tuition and fees owed by the customer, the remaining funds should be applied to the cost of other educational expenses, such as books, supplies, room and board, and transportation, under the terms of the grant.

Student financial assistance, such as a loan that requires repayment or scholarships that are not based on student income, are excluded from the financial aid requirement.

### C-405-3: Defaulted Student Loans

If the student has defaulted on a Guaranteed Student Loan, the student is denied a Pell Grant and other forms of financial aid. Before receiving VR funds for training, the customer must:

* initiate the process of getting the loan out of default; and
* provide written documentation, such as copies of correspondence, to confirm that he or she has initiated this process.

For more information, refer to The Federal Student Aid website for "[Getting Out of Default](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/default/get-out)."

### C-405-4: Tuition and Fee Waivers

Students who are eligible for a tuition waiver are exempt from paying tuition and fees for any state-supported college or university in Texas. A waiver includes exemption from all required fees and charges, except for:

* fees or charges for lodging;
* costs of boarding and/or clothing; and
* refundable deposits.

For more information about these tuition waivers, refer to [College for All Texans: Financial Aid](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/financialaid/tofa.cfm?Kind=W).

The 62nd Texas Legislature, Regular Session (1971), established the tuition waiver (also referred to as "tuition exemption") program to help Texas residents who are deaf or blind to receive the benefits of higher education in publicly funded colleges and universities. For more information about these tuition waivers, refer to [College for All Texans: Types of Financial Aid—Exemptions—Blind/Deaf Student Exemption Program](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/financialaid/tofa2.cfm?ID=547) and refer to the additional details below.

### C-405-5: Deafness Tuition and Fee Exemption

Customers who are severely hard of hearing or deaf who request academic training must:

* be referred to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS); and
* complete HHSC [HHSC Form 3900, Application for Certificate of Deafness for Tuition Waiver (PDF)](https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/laws-regulations/forms/3900/3900.pdf).

For more information, go to [Texas Health and Human Services Deaf and Hard of Hearing](https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/deaf-and-hard-hearing).

### C-405-6: Blindness Tuition and Fee Exemption

Individuals who are legally or totally blind and meet residency requirements for the college or university are exempt from paying tuition and fees for state-supported colleges and universities in Texas. An individual does not have to be a VR customer to receive a tuition and fee exemption.

The VR counselor provides the individual with a copy of [VR3119, Certification of Blindness](http://intra.twc.state.tx.us/intranet/gl/html/vocational_rehab_forms.html), certifying that the individual is legally or totally blind.

A completed VR3119, Certification of Blindness, is distributed as follows:

* The original is given to the customer; and
* A copy is placed in the appropriate file (the customer's VR file or the college-tuition-exempt file for non-VR customers).

It is the responsibility of the individual requesting the waiver to:

* submit documentation of blindness to VR;
* submit a Certificate of Blindness to the educational institution;
* provide proof that he or she meets the institution's entrance requirements; and
* follow the institution's procedures regarding tuition exemption.

If the individual is a VR customer, the information should be readily available in the customer's case file.

To meet the eligibility for tuition exemption as indicated in TEC §54.205, the individual must:

* be a resident of Texas as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board;
* be a high school graduate or have received a GED;
* present a letter of recommendation from the principal of the high school attended, from a public official, or from another responsible person who knows the blind individual; and
* present a self-written statement that:
* explains his or her purpose in pursuing higher education; and
* indicates the certificate or degree program to be pursued, or the professional enhancement anticipated from the course of study for that certificate or degree program.

If a VR customer is legally or totally blind but is not eligible for tuition exemption because he or she does not meet the state-supported school's residency requirements, VR can pay for tuition and fees at a public in-state college or university, not to exceed the Texas-resident tuition rate.

If the individual is not a VR customer, the individual must present visual diagnostic information in person or by mail, confirming legal or total blindness.

Eye exams from an optometrist, an ophthalmologist, or a low-vision specialist meet this requirement. VR does not pay for a diagnostic exam for the sole purpose of obtaining this record. The VR counselor does not use a medical consultant if medical records do not clearly document legal blindness.

It is recommended that the VR counselor meet with the individual in person so that the VR counselor can determine whether the individual needs other VR services. Travel funds are not authorized solely for certification for tuition exemption.

## C-406: Purchasing Training Services

A service authorization (SA) is the only valid means by which VR can authorize the purchase of goods and services on behalf of VR customers.

Use of a service authorization ensures that the:

* required approvals and consultations have been obtained;
* appropriate funds have been encumbered;
* necessary contracts are included, when applicable; and
* additional instructions, guidance, and other necessary information is given to the provider.

For general information about policies and procedures for purchasing all goods and services, refer to D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services.

### C-406-1: Payer of Last Resort

VR is the payer of last resort. Comparable benefits and required customer participation in the cost of services must be applied to the cost of all training services before VR funds are used. For more information, refer to D-203-3: Use of Comparable Benefits.

Because VR uses tax revenue for case service expenditures, VR has the additional obligation to purchase the least expensive services that meet the vocational needs of the customer. For more information, refer to D-203-2: Best Value Purchasing.

The following are sources of comparable services and benefits:

* US Department of Veterans Affairs
* Pell Grant
* Disability services offices on college and university campuses
* Waivers
* Other entitlement programs

### C-406-2: Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Recipients

Customers who are eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) because of a disability are exempt from required participation in the cost of training services that are:

* associated with basic living requirements (BLR) calculations;
* associated with payment limitations for public universities, public colleges, or public technical institutions for tuition, fees, and other training-related expenses; or
* associated with payment limitations for independent or proprietary training institutions for tuition, fees, and other training-related expenses if there is not a comparable public training institution.

Exceeding the maximum tuition and fees amounts set by policy does not require VR management approval if the customer is a SSI or SSDI recipient.

SSI and SSDI recipients are not exempt from the requirement to use comparable services and benefits for all services, such as tuition exemptions, federal financial aid that does not require repayment, or other free or low-cost services that are readily available to the customer. Refer to D-203: Purchasing Decisions for more information.

### C-406-3: Repeating Courses

VR usually does not pay for courses that must be repeated. If VR funds are used to pay for a course more than twice, the VR counselor must consult with the VR Supervisor, and the justification for VR support of the repeated course must be clearly documented by the VR counselor in an RHW case note.

Counseling and guidance should be provided to ensure that the customer is using available supports and is complying with customer responsibilities as defined on the IPE or IPE amendment.

### C-406-4: Withdrawals and Refunds

When a customer withdraws from a course or VR terminates services before the customer completes the course, the VR counselor pursues a refund per the school's policy.

### C-406-5: Creating Service Authorizations for Training Services

An SA is the only valid means by which VR can authorize the purchase of goods and services on behalf of VR customers.

#### Encumbrance Period

VR limits the number of encumbrance periods for training and related services to two semesters, trimesters, quarters, or other school registration periods. For example, the VR counselor might have issued service authorizations for the fall semester and must issue service authorizations for the spring semester when the customer needs to register for the spring semester before the end of fall semester. However, the IPE must include the entire time frame that is required for the customer to complete the approved training that is needed to reach the vocational goal. For more information about developing the IPE, refer to B-505: Content of the IPE.

#### Prorating Costs When Crossing Fiscal Years

For additional information about creating service authorizations for tuition and fees, including information about crossing state fiscal years and prorating services refer to D-212: Creating the Service Authorization, D-212-3: Prorating Services, and D-212-4: Tuition and Fees Only

## C-407: Customer Responsibilities

Successful completion of training requires active involvement by the customer in all aspects of the VR service and training. This includes:

* providing all required documentation;
* completing all admission and registration procedures required by the training institution;
* maintaining satisfactory training progress, as defined by the training institution; and
* maintaining satisfactory progress with VR services as defined in the customer's IPE.

VR requires that each customer who is provided with training services apply for available financial assistance such as federal, state, or local grants and private scholarships.

A service authorization is the only valid means by which VR can authorize goods and services with VR funds. For more information on purchasing services and procedures, refer to [D-204: The Purchasing Process](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d204).

### C-407-1: Required Documents

A customer who is participating in training must provide the VR counselor with the following documentation, which is kept in the customer's paper case file:

* Verification of application for available financial aid and/or verification of financial aid award
* A copy of the individualized degree plan or comparable documentation as provided by the training institution
* A course schedule for each training period
* Documentation that shows progress for each training period, such as a report card, grade report, or transcript
* Written documentation of added and dropped courses
* Written justification for a change in the major course study
* Documentation of the appropriate certificate of completion

For information on Measurable Skill Gains documentation requirements, refer to [VRSM A-500: Measurable Skill Gains](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-a-500). For information on Credential Attainment documentation requirements, refer to [VRSM A-600: Credential Attainment](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-a-600).

When a course of study is changed more than twice, approval from the VR Supervisor is required before VR continues sponsorship of costs associated with training.

### C-407-2: Participation in VR Services and Training

The following information is based on the Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Services Rule §856.45. No exceptions other than those described below can be made to the following policies and procedures.

To demonstrate customer participation in VR services, the customer must:

* enroll in courses and electives that are included in the institution-approved degree or training plan;
* contact the VR counselor before adding or dropping classes, this includes taking an incomplete for a course. If the course schedule is changed, then payments for reader services, books, tools, supplies, transportation, room and board, and other supports must be recalculated;
* maintain and complete a full-time course load as defined by the training institution, unless the customer is:
	+ a graduating senior (from a college or university);
	+ an incoming freshman (first two semesters or quarters);
	+ a returning adult student (first academic year only);
	+ attending summer school, mini-semester; or
	+ subject to other documented extenuating circumstances, such as disability-specific limitations, that prevent the customer from participating in a full-time course load;
* communicate with the VR counselor, teachers, and the training provider's disability office about problems or accommodation needs;
* use the services and supports that are available through the training provider's disability office, as needed;
* maintain consistent enrollment and attendance in regular semesters; and
* maintain satisfactory progress, as defined in C-407-3: Satisfactory Training Progress.

### C-407-3: Satisfactory Training Progress

Satisfactory training progress is defined by the training provider and included on the customer's IPE. The customer must meet satisfactory training progress requirements for each semester or grading period to receive VR funding for subsequent semesters or grading periods.

The VR counselor can make exceptions to this requirement for no more than one semester or grading period and on a case-by-case basis if justification for the exception is documented clearly in a case note. If a customer fails to meet satisfactory training progress for two or more consecutive semesters or grading periods, the VR Supervisor must review and approve continuing with, or resuming, training and related services or supports.

## C-408: Training at a College or University

Customers can attend an accredited public or private (independent) college or university and earn a certificate or an associate, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree when the customer can meet minimum standards to be accepted in the program.

### C-408-1: Assessment for Training at a College or University

Customers must meet the minimum standards for acceptance to a college or university that is sponsored by VR; the college or university must be identified as the provider for the service in the customer's IPE or IPE amendment.

Before completing the IPE, the VR counselor assesses the customer's potential to benefit from and successfully complete academic training. The assessment includes a review of the customer's:

* previous academic achievements (grades, degrees, and certificates);
* existing or new cognitive evaluations;
* need for, or history of, remedial classes;
* independent living skills;
* ability to manage the related time demands;
* need for assistive technology or accommodations in a training environment; and
* need for non-VR supports for participation.

For more information about completing the comprehensive assessment, refer to B-400: Completing the Comprehensive Assessment.

#### Private or Out-of-State Colleges or Universities

Training must be provided through public colleges and universities in Texas unless:

* a specific curriculum related to the customer's course of study is not available at a Texas public institution;
* academic training elsewhere is determined to be more economical, after all costs are considered; or
* academic training elsewhere provides specialized services needed by the customer that are not available at a Texas public institution.

When a customer chooses to attend a private (independent) or an out-of-state college, technical or state college, university, or health-related institution, even though a comparable public training institution is available in Texas, tuition and fees paid by VR cannot exceed in-state tuition and fees. Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor.

For more information refer to [C-409: Maximum Payment for a Training at a College or University](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c412).

For approval requirements see [D-206-3: Out-of-State Purchases](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200%22%20%5Cl%20%22d206-3) and [C-409-5: Private or Out-of-State for College or University Training](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c412-4).

#### Evaluating Previous Training Performance

If the customer's history includes a record of marginal or poor performance in previous training, before committing to a full training program in the customer's IPE, the VR counselor should consider obtaining additional diagnostic evaluations or other types of assessments, if comparable documentation is not available, to develop a remedial plan and determine whether the customer is likely to be successful (with supports).

Examples of poor training performance include:

* excessive and/or repetitive class withdrawals or drops;
* poor attendance; and
* failing grades.

### C-408-2: Developmental Courses at a College or University

If a customer requires developmental courses (sometimes called remedial courses) to strengthen academic skills, the VR counselor must consider best value and other comparable benefits to provide this training, including:

* adult basic education programs;
* special training;
* tutorial programs; and/or
* developmental courses provided at no cost.

If comparable benefits are unavailable or impractical, VR can pay for developmental courses for a maximum of two semesters or grading periods.

### C-408-3: Content of an IPE for Training at a College or University

In addition to the requirements identified in B-500: Individualized Plan for Employment, an IPE that includes training services must also include:

* an employment goal that is directly associated with the sponsored training;
* the specific definition of satisfactory progress such as minimum grades requirements and attendance;
* the credit hours required for each semester or grading period;
* statements of specific customer and VR responsibilities; and
* a statement about the requirement to apply available federal financial aid (for example, the Pell Grant and other funding that does not require repayment) to the cost of training before VR funds are authorized.

The IPE must be written for the entire length of the agreed-upon training at the college or university and can be amended throughout the life of the case.

#### Admission and Registration Procedures

The customer must complete all admission and registration procedures required by the college or university. The customer completes as much as possible, with VR staff providing only minimal coaching and prompting. When needed, the level of coaching and prompting to complete these tasks should be individualized, based on the customer's unique needs and circumstances.

### C-408-4: Required Time Frames for Completion of Training at a College or University

VR customers are expected to complete VR-sponsored training within a reasonable time and in accordance with their college or university degree plan.

VR sponsorship of academic training that exceeds the following time frames requires VR Supervisor approval as soon as it is apparent that the following time frames will be exceeded:

* An associate degree (generally 60 credit hours) must be completed within three years.
* A bachelor's degree (generally 120 credit hours) must be completed within six years (including credit hours from a junior college or community college).
* A master's degree must be completed within three years. (This does not include time to complete bachelor's degree before beginning the master's degree program.)

Timeframes for doctoral degree level training varies. Documentation must show that the customer is participating at a full-time status.

#### Prorated Time Frames

When a customer has spent time in a college or university before VR sponsorship, the VR counselor must consider the credit hours already earned that apply to the current degree plan. The required timeframes for completion are then based on the institution degree plan, which must be based on full-time enrollment, unless the full-time enrollment requirement is justified in a case note and approved. The VR counselor documents the justification for the prorated time frame in a case note in ReHabWorks (RHW) and includes the agreed-upon time frame in the customer's IPE or IPE amendment.

## C-409: Maximum Payment for Training at a College or University

VR pays for training based on the type of institution in which the customer is enrolled. To determine the type of institution in which a customer is enrolled, refer to [College for all Texans— Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/). This subsection and subsection [C-409](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c413) list the maximum amounts that VR is permitted to pay per semester or grading period for tuition and fees.

To calculate the amount that VR can pay toward the cost of the customer's tuition and required fees for training at a community college, technical or state college, four-year college, university, or health-related institution, the VR counselor uses the following procedure.

Multiply the number of credit hours the customer is taking per semester or grading period by the maximum payment amount listed in:

* C-412-1: Public Training Institutions Two-Year Community College;
* C-412-2: Public Training Institutions Technical and State College;
* C-412-3: Public Training Institutions Four-Year College or University; or
* C-412-4: Public Health Related Institutions.

This is the maximum amount that VR can pay toward the cost of the customer's tuition and required fees.

* Next, find the amount due for tuition and required fees and deduct the Pell Grant amount and the amount of need-based financial aid that does not require repayment.
* From this amount if the customer is over BLR, deduct BLR.
* If the amount in number 2 is less than the maximum that VR can pay in number 1, VR issues the service authorization for the amount from number 2; or
* If the amount in number 2 is more than the maximum that VR pays in number 1, VR issues the service authorization for the maximum amount from number 1; or
* If the amount in number 2 is 0, VR does not issue a service authorization.

The [VR3405, Tuition Payment Calculation Worksheet](https://intra.twc.texas.gov/intranet/gl/html/vocational_rehab_forms.html) can be used to calculate the amount that VR can pay toward the cost of the customer's tuition and required fees.

#### IPE Requirements

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The IPE should not reflect specific rates but should refer to them as "will pay amounts per policy."

For more information on IPE and IPE amendments, refer to [B-500: Individualized Plan for Employment](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-b-500).

### C-409-1: Public Training Institutions: Two-Year Community College

Verify that the institution is a public community college by finding where it is classified on the [College for all Texans— Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website.

Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information, refer to [D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200). For customers who are eligible for SSI/SSDI because of a disability refer to C-406-2: Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Recipients.

As of July 2021, VR pays the maximum rate of $120 per semester hour. This amount is all inclusive of tuition and fees combined at a public community college.

VR pays a maximum of $3,600 per year for certificate training at a two-year community college that is not on a semester hour schedule. (The maximum amount for certificate programs through a college or university is based on established tuition and fee rates for enrollment in 15 credit hours for both the fall and spring semesters.)

These rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83) (college cost 2020-2021) average of tuition and fees. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

#### Service Records for Training at a College or University

The following RHW specifications should be used when creating service records for training services:

Level 1 - Training, College and University [86000]

Level 2 - Training – Two-Year Community College [86000-11143]

Level 3 - Training – Two-Year Community College

Level 4 - Tuition and fees

### C-409-2: Public Training Institutions: Four-Year College or University

VR staff verifies that the institution is a public university by finding how it is classified on the [College for all Texans— Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website.

As of July 2021, VR pays the maximum amount of $389 per semester hour. This amount is all inclusive of tuition and fees combined at a public university.

Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information refer to [D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200). For customers who are eligible for SSI/SSDI because of a disability refer to C-406-2: Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Recipients.

VR pays a maximum of $11,670 per year for certificate training at a four-year college or university that is not on a semester hour schedule. (The maximum amount for certificate programs through a college or university is based on established tuition and fee rates for enrollment in 15 credit hours for both the fall and spring semesters.)

These rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83) (college cost 2020-2021) average of tuition and fees. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

#### Service Records for Training at a College or University

The following RHW specifications should be used when creating service records for training services:

Level 1 - Training, College and University [86000]

Level 2 - Training – Four-Year College or University [86000-11136]

Level 3 - Training - University - Four-Year Program

Level 4 – Tuition and required fees

Level 3 - Training - University - Graduate Program

Level 4 - Tuition and fees

### C-409-3: Public Training Institutions: Technical and State College

Verify that the institution is a public technical or state college by finding where it is classified on the [College for all Texans— Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website.

Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information, refer to [D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200). For customers who are eligible for SSI/SSDI because of a disability refer to C-406-2: Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Recipients.

As of July 2021, VR pays the maximum amount of $149 per semester hour. This amount is all inclusive of tuition and fees combined at a public technical or state college.

VR pays a maximum of $4,470 per year for certificate training at a technical or state college that is not on a semester hour schedule. (The maximum amount for certificate programs through a college or university is based on established tuition and fee rates for enrollment in 15 credit hours for both the fall and spring semesters.)

These rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83) (college cost 2020-2021) average of tuition and fees. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

#### Service Records for Training at a Public Technical or State College

The following RHW specifications should be used when creating service records for training services:

Level 1 - Training, College and University [86000]

Level 2 - Training - Technical and State College [86000-11153]

Level 3 - Training - Technical and State College

Level 4 - Tuition and fees

### C-409-4: Public Health-Related Institutions

VR staff verifies that the institution is a public health-related institution by finding how it is classified on the [College for all Texans—Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website.

Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information, refer to [D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200). For customers who are eligible for SSI/SSDI because of a disability refer to C-406-2: Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Recipients.

As of July 2021, VR pays the maximum amount of $416 per semester hour. This amount is all inclusive of tuition and fees combined at a public health-related institution.

VR pays a maximum of $12,480 per year for certificate training at a public health-related institution that is not on a semester hour schedule. (The maximum amount for certificate programs through a college or university is based on established tuition and fee rates for enrollment in 15 credit hours for both the fall and spring semesters.)

These rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83) (college cost 2020-2021) average of tuition and fees. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

#### Service Records for Training at a Public Health Related Institution

The following RHW specifications should be used when creating service records for training services:

Level 1 - Training, College and University [86000]

Level 2 - Training – Public Health-Related Institutions [86000-11129]

Level 3 - Training – Health-RelatedFour-Year Program

Level 4 – Tuition and required fees

Level 3 - Training – Health-Related Graduate Program

Level 4 - Tuition and fees

### C-409-5: Private or Out-of-State Training at a College or University

When a customer chooses to attend a private (independent) or out-of-state college, technical or state college, university, or health-related institution, even though a comparable public training institution is available in Texas, the VR counselor:

* documents the reason for selecting the public training institution that is being compared to the private or out-of-state training institution in a case note; and
* follows the procedures above for determining the amount that can be paid to the public institution. This is the amount that VR can pay toward the cost of a private institution.

Tuition and fees paid by VR cannot exceed in-state tuition and fees. Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For customers who are eligible for SSI/SSDI because of a disability, refer to C-406-2: Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Recipients.

For approval requirements see [C-408-3: Content of an IPE for Training at a College or University](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c406-3) and [D-206-3: Out-of-State Purchases](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d206-3).

### C-409-6: Purchasing Dual Credit Courses

Customers taking dual credit courses from a college or university must meet the same requirements established for classroom courses at that institution. For policies and procedures on purchasing dual credit courses, refer to [C-1305-9: Dual Credit Courses](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1300#c1305-9).

### C-409-7 Graduate and Other Post-University Training

When a customer attends graduate and other post-university training,VR staff verifies the institution is classified on the [College for all Texans—Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website. The maximum amounts VR pays are determined based on the type of institution the customer is attending. For maximum amounts, refer to C-409-2: Public Training Institutions Four-Year College or University or C-409-4: Public Health Related Institutions.

Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information, refer to [D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200). For customers who are eligible for SSI/SSDI because of a disability refer to C-406-2: Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Recipients.

## C-410: Correspondence and Distance Learning Courses

Customers taking online, correspondence, or distance-learning courses from a college, university, or proprietary institution must meet the same requirements established for classroom courses at that institution. See C-409: Maximum Payment for a Training at a College or University and C-412: Maximum Payment for Training at a Proprietary Institution.

## C-411: Training from Career and Technical or Certified Schools (Proprietary Institutions)

Career and technical or certified schools (proprietary institutions), including correspondence and internet courses, must:

* have been reviewed by the appropriate licensing entity;
* offer approved curricula; and
* hold a license to operate a career school or college.

Proprietary schools must be licensed or certified by TWC or another regulatory agency such as, the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. To find a list of TWC licensed schools, go to <https://apps.twc.state.tx.us/CSC/directory/search.do>. To find a list of certified schools, go to the [Eligible Training Provider System](https://apps.twc.state.tx.us/PROVIDERCERT/dispatcher?link=HREF&pageid=APP_HOME).

TWC can grant exemptions from licensing under TEC Chapter 132, which governs career schools and colleges. For instructions on the exemption process see C-409: Training by Paid Instructor.

### C-411-1: Assessment for Training at a Proprietary Institution

Customers must meet the minimum standards for acceptance to a proprietary institution that is sponsored by VR and included in the customer's IPE.

Before completing the IPE, the VR counselor assesses the customer's potential to benefit from and successfully complete training. The assessment includes a review of the customer's:

* previous academic achievements (grades, degrees, and certificates);
* existing or new cognitive evaluations;
* ability to manage the related time demands;
* need for assistive technology or accommodations in a training environment; and
* need for non-VR supports for participation.

For more information about completing the comprehensive assessment, refer to B-400: Completing the Comprehensive Assessment.

#### Out-of-State Proprietary Institutions

Out-of-state proprietary institutions that provide training to a customer must meet all the following criteria:

* The institution must be legally authorized by the state of its physical location to offer postsecondary education and award degrees.
* The institution must be accredited by a regional or national accrediting organization recognized by the US Secretary of Education under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 USC §1001 et seq.).
* The institution must offer in Texas only postsecondary distance or correspondence programs of instruction. (That is, there is no physical location in Texas.)

If the institution meets the criteria listed above, it must take the actions listed on the [TWC Out-of-State Distance Education Institutions](https://twc.texas.gov/partners/out-state-distance-education-institutions) page under the "TWC Requirements You Must Meet" section.

If the institution does not meet all the criteria, an explanation of both TWC's licensing and exemption processes is contained on the [TWC Career Schools and Colleges Resources page](https://twc.texas.gov/partners/career-schools-colleges-resources). Follow the [Apply for a certificate of approval](https://twc.texas.gov/partners/applying-career-school-or-college-license) link for more information.

Tuition and fees rates paid by VR cannot exceed maximum payment rates; when training is obtained in another state, payment is governed by the policies and procedures outlined in C-412: Maximum Payment for Training at a Propriety Institution.

When a customer chooses to attend a private or an out-of-state proprietary school, even though a comparable training institution is available in Texas refer to C-409-5: Private or Out-of-State Training at a College or University for documentation and payment procedure requirements.

### C-411-2: Content of an IPE for Training at a Proprietary Institution

In addition to the requirement identified in B-500: Individualized Plan for Employment, an IPE that includes training services must also include:

* an employment goal that is directly associated with the sponsored training;
* the definition of "satisfactory progress";
* the hours required for each semester or grading period;
* statements of specific customer and VR responsibilities; and
* a statement about the requirement to apply available federal financial aid (for example, the Pell Grant and other funding that does not require repayment) to the cost of training before VR funds are authorized.

The IPE must be written for the entire length of the agreed-upon training at the institution and can be amended throughout the life of the case.

#### Satisfactory Attendance and Progress

Customers attending a proprietary institution must meet the institution's requirements for attendance, progress, and grades for each grading period.

For more information on requirements, refer to C-407-3: Satisfactory Training Progress.

### C-411-3: Required Time Frames of Proprietary Institutions

When a student is enrolled full time, VR sponsorship of training through a proprietary institution must be completed within the time frames established by the institution for full-time enrollment.

Training that exceeds time frames for completion requires approval from a VR Supervisor before further training will be sponsored with VR funds.

#### Prorated Time Frames

When a customer has spent time in a training at a proprietary institution before VR sponsorship, the VR counselor must consider the credits already earned that apply to the current curriculum and adjust the required timeframes for completion of the approved program. The required timeframes for completion are then based on full-time enrollment, unless the full-time enrollment requirement is justified in a case note and approved. The VR counselor documents the justification for the prorated time frame in a case note in ReHabWorks (RHW) and includes the agreed-upon time frame in the customer's IPE or IPE amendment.

## C-412: Maximum Payment for Training at a Proprietary Institution

VR staff verifies that the institution is licensed or certified by TWC on the [Licensed Career Schools and Colleges Directory](https://apps.twc.state.tx.us/CSC/directory/search.do) website; the [Eligible Training Provider System](https://apps.twc.state.tx.us/PROVIDERCERT/dispatcher?link=HREF&pageid=APP_HOME) website; or another regulatory agency website, such as the [Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation](https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/LicenseSearch/), before including the training on the IPE.

The maximum amount VR can pay for tuition and fees combined for full-time enrollment at a proprietary institution, after comparable benefits and BLR is applied, is the lesser of:

* $120 per semester hour; or
* $3,600 per year.

As of July 2021, these rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from College for All Texans public training institutions two-year community college (college cost 2020-2021) average of tuition and fees.

Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification, consultation with the State Office Program Specialist for Re-Entry, Work Experience & Proprietary Schools, and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information, refer to [D:200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200). For customers who are eligible for SSI/SSDI because of a disability refer to C-406-2: Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Recipients.

#### Service Records for Training at a Proprietary University

The following RHW specifications should be used when creating service records for training services:

Level 1 - Training, Vocational Programs by Proprietary or Certified Schools - MC [86100]

Level 2 – Choose the description that matches the training

#### IPE Requirements

The IPE should not reflect specific rates but should refer to them as "will pay amounts per policy."

For more information on IPE and IPE amendments, refer to [B-500: Individualized Plan for Employment](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-b-500). For more information about previous rates, refer to the [VR Services Manual List of Revisions](https://twc.texas.gov/manuals/revisions/vrsm-revisions.html).

### C-412-1: Out-of-State Training at a Proprietary Institution

When a customer chooses to attend a private or out-of-state proprietary school, even though a comparable training institution is available in Texas, the VR counselor:

* documents the reason for selecting the out-of-state proprietary school that is being compared to the public training institution in a case note; and
* follows the procedures above for determining the amount that can be paid to the institution. This is the amount that VR can pay of the cost of an out-of-state institution.

For approval requirements see [C-411-2: Content of a IPE for Training at a Proprietary Institution](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c407-2) and [D-206-3: Out-of-State Purchases](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d206-3).

## C-413: Training by Paid Instructor or Exempt Schools

Training by a paid instructor or school exempt from the TWC licensing requirement to meet a customer's individualized needs can be purchased with VR funds. For assessment considerations, content of an IPE, and required time frames refer to C-411: Training from Career and Technical or Certified Schools (Proprietary Institutions).

### C-413-1: Legal Authorization

TEC §132.002(b) states:

"Schools offering a course or courses of special study or instruction financed or subsidized by local, state, or federal funds or by any person, firm, association, or agency other than the student involved, on a contract basis and having a closed enrollment, may apply to the commission [TWC] for exemption of such course or courses from this chapter [TEC—Chapter 132] and such course or courses may be declared exempt by the commission where the commission finds the course or courses to be outside the purview of this chapter."

### C-413-2: Arranging for a Paid Instructor or Exempt School

The VR counselor arranges for paidinstructor training so that a customer has a chance to learn a specific work skill from a qualified individual. This training can be:

* customized to the customer's needs (for example, one-on-one);
* offered in a small-group setting; or
* through a school that has a TEC §132.002(b) exemption (see 407-1: Out of State Proprietary Institutions).

#### Instructor Qualifications

The trainer and the course must be:

* approved by TWC; or
* specifically exempted in writing by TWC, based on TEC §132.002(b).

Per TWC regulation, all vocational training providers that charge a fee, including individuals that provide training, are defined as "schools."

Requests for approval to use a school that has the TEC §132.002(b) exemption require:

* consultation with the State Office Program Specialist for Re-Entry, Work Experience and Proprietary Schools; and
* approval from the Regional Director or Deputy Regional Director.

This approval is granted individually for the course and is not a blanket approval for an unlicensed school.

#### Fees

When training is obtained through a paid instructor, tuition and fees rates paid by VR must not exceed payment rates that are governed by the policies and procedures outlined in C-412: Maximum Payment for Training at a Proprietary Institution.

## C-414: Goods and Services that Support Training Services

In addition to sponsorship of tuition and fees, additional goods and services can be included in the customer's IPE or services justification case note, as appropriate, if they are required for the customer to participate in planned training. The additional goods and services include:

* textbooks and supplies (refer to C-415: Textbooks and Supplies)
* reader services (refer to C-309: Reader Services)
* assistive technology equipment and/or software (refer to C-200: Technology Services)
* low-vision devices (refer to C-703-14: Low-Vision Services)
* vocational rehabilitation teacher services (refer to C-424: Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher)
* employment assistance specialists (refer to C-1008: Employment Assistance Specialist Services)
* training-related supplies (refer to C-415: Textbooks and Supplies)
* transportation (refer to C-1402: Transportation Services)
* interpreters (refer to C-305: Interpreter Services)
* personal assistant (refer to C-1403: Personal Assistant Services)
* room and board (refer to C-418: Room and Board Services)
* occupational licenses (refer to C-1406: Occupational Licenses)
* computers (refer to D-204: The Purchasing Process)
* orientation and mobility training (refer to C-600: Orientation and Mobility Services)
* referral to community resources (refer to C-405: Financial Aid and Comparable Benefits)

For more information about content in the IPE and IPE amendment, refer to B-500: Individualized Plan for Employment. For information about specific goods and services refer to content throughout the manual.

## C-415: Textbooks and Supplies

VR can purchase required textbooks and course-related supplies when they are not already included in the cost of tuition and fees.

VR must consider the most cost-effective option when purchasing textbooks and supplies.

Options for purchasing textbooks include traditional hardcopy textbooks (new or used) and other formats of textbooks, such as audiobooks and electronic books, or "e-books."

### C-415-1: Service Authorization

The SA for textbooks or supplies must be itemized with the description of the quoted amount.

### C-415-2: Maximum Amounts for Textbooks and Supplies

Exceptions to the limitations for books and supplies require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information, refer to [VRSM D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200). For customers who are eligible for SSI/SSDI because of a disability refer to C-406-2: Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Recipients.

The maximum amounts that VR can pay per semester or grading period for required textbooks and course-related supplies that are not included in tuition and fees are as follows:

* Community college: $1,000
* Technical and state college: $728
* Four-year college or university: $797
* Health-related institutions: $876
* Proprietary institutions (career colleges): $1,000

These rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83) (college cost 2020-2021) averages for books and supplies. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

Tools and equipment that are required for training but will be kept and used by the customer for employment after completing training are purchased according to processes and procedures in [VRSM C-1407: Tools and Equipment](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1400#c1407). The amount for these items is not included in or subject to the maximum amounts for required textbooks and course-related supplies.

### C-415-3: Reselling Textbooks

If a hardcopy of a textbook is purchased but is not needed for a class, for reference, or for the customer's major or minor field of study, the customer can sell the textbook back to the bookstore. When a textbook is sold back to the bookstore, the customer must provide to the VR counselor a copy of the receipt of sale, which is kept in the case file. The amount that was received from the sale of the book must be applied to the cost of books next semester. The amount on the receipt for that textbook is subtracted from the amount needed for the following semester's required textbooks.

If textbooks are sold back to the bookstore and the customer will no longer be participating in training the following semester, the funds, along with the receipt of sale, must be returned to the VR office.

## C-416: Tutoring Services

Tutoring services might be needed to support the customer's success in approved training programs. When tutoring services are available through the institution at no cost, these resources must be used as a comparable benefit before using VR funds.

If the available resources through the institution do not meet the customer's needs, VR may purchase tutoring services.

### C-416-1: Purchasing Tutoring Services

Before authorizing the purchase of tutoring services, the VR counselor ensures that the tutor has the necessary experience or skills to teach the customer. The VR counselor documents the tutor's relevant experience and/or skills in a case note and ensures that the provider is set up to receive direct payments from VR for VR services. Do not use maintenance to pay for this service.

The VR counselor may authorize

* a payment rate up to $20 an hour for tutorial services.
* the purchase of tutoring supplies as needed.

When there is a clearly documented need to pay more than $20 per hour or pay by semester for tutorial services, the VR Manager must approve the higher payment rate.

## C-417: Supplemental Specialized Academic Support Services

Supplemental specialized academic support services may be needed to support the customer's success in approved training programs. The intent of these services is to provide specialized services focused on specific disabilities to meet the customer’s academic needs. The services must be provided by the college or university that the customer is currently attending. The VR counselor must provide a Service Justification case note to justify the vocational need for the specialized support service.

To find out whether a supplemental specialized academic support service is under contract, VR staff consults with the appropriate State Office Program Specialist before completing an SA.

The following RHW specifications should be used when creating service records for non-contracted supplemental specialized academic support services at a two-year community college or university:

Level 1 - Training, College and University [86000]

Level 2 - Training – Two-Year Community College [86000-11143]

or

Level 2 - Training – Four-Year College or University [86000-11136]

Level 3-Support Services or Specialized Tutoring

## C-418: Room and Board Services

Room and board is a vocational rehabilitation (VR) service that can be provided to customers who are participating in college or university classes or other career and technical training.

### C-418-1: Purchasing Room and Board Services

The VR counselor may only approve VR funds to support room and board when the cost is in excess of the customer's normal living expenses (see [C-1401-1: Legal Authorization](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1400#c1401-1) for the definition of "normal living expenses") and:

* the amount is required to support the customer's participation in training;
* the amount is the best-value decision to support training services;
* the training is not available in the customer's local community (the same town as the customer's residence or within a 50-mile radius of the customer's residence); and
* the customer is attending training in person.

VR does not pay refundable deposits associated with room and board. See [D-206: Purchasing Restrictions](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d206) for more information.

Before a service authorization for room and board is issued, the VR counselor must document in ReHabWorks (RHW) that:

* room and board are required to support the customer’s participation in training;
* details from bids obtained for room and board (bids are required only if cost is greater than $5,000 per grading period; see D-205-3: Competitive Bids for additional details);
* the selected room and board option is the best-value decision; and
* the training is not available or within a 50-mile radius in the customer’s local community.

Paper documentation must be in the case file to confirm that the customer is enrolled in training.

A copy of the lease or housing agreement must be in the case file prior to authorizing a payment, and this document can be used in lieu of an invoice to authorize payments.
Room and board must be included on the customer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or IPE amendment.

Exceptions to the above processes and procedures require VR Manager approval.

### C-418-2: Room and Board Payments and Prorating

It is preferred that room and board that is paid to an entity other than a public in-state training institution be issued on one SA for the entire grading period and paid monthly. When paying a public in-state training institution, a single (properly pro-rated, when applicable) payment can be made for the entire grading period.

Room and board must be paid directly to the provider. See [D-211: Setting Up and Paying Providers for additional information](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d211). However, short-term housing maintenance may be used while a provider is initially being established. VR Manager approval is required to use short-term housing maintenance for these payments. See [C-1401-4: Short-Term Housing Maintenance](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1400#c1401-4) for additional information.

Services for room and board must be prorated when the service crosses state fiscal years. Refer to [D-212-2: Crossing State Fiscal Years](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d212-2) for more information on prorating room and board services.

Room and board can be paid in advance based on the conditions of the lease or rental agreement. See [D-213-2: Advance Payments](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d213-2) for additional information.

### C-418-3: Creating a Service Authorization for Room and Board

A service record must be created with the following RHW specifications for room and board.

#### Service Records for Room and Board Paid to a Private Entity or Training Institution

The following RHW specifications should be used when creating service records for room and board paid to a private entity or training institution:

* Level 1 – Multiple Goods and Services Including Child Care; Youth Goods and Services, Booth Rental and Room and Board for Training and Short-Term Housing for Other Services [27099]
* Level 2 – Room and Board for Training, Short Term Housing for Other Services; Meeting Room Space and Booth Rentals [27099-17440]
* Level 3 – Room and Board for Training
* Level 4 – The VR counselor chooses the appropriate other specifications

#### Service Records for Room and Board at a Two-Year Community College

The following RHW specifications should be used when creating service records for room and board services at a two-year community college:

* Level 1 – Training, College and University [86000]
* Level 2 – Training - Two-Year Community College for tuition started on or after 7/1/2019 [86000-11143]
* Level 3 – Room and Board and Other Support Services paid to the Two-Year Community College providing the Training

#### Service Records for Room and Board at a Four-Year College or University

The following RHW specifications should be used when creating service records for room and board services at a four-year college or university:

* Level 1 – Training, College and University [86000]
* Level 2 – Training - Four-Year College or University for tuition started on or after 7/1/2019 [86000-11136]
* Level 3 – Room and Board paid to the Four-Year College or University providing the Training

#### Service Records for Room and Board at a Public Health-Related Institution

The following RHW specifications should be used when creating service records for room and board services at a public health-related institution:

* Level 1 – Training, College and University [86000]
* Level 2 – Training - Public Health Related Institutions for tuition started on or after 7/1/2019 [86000-11129]
* Level 3 – Room and Board paid to the Public Health Related Institution providing the Training

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## C-421: Work Experience Services

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### C-421-4: Work Experience Training

VR counselors can purchase Work Experience Training services provided by a Work Experience trainer when a customer needs:

* monitoring to ensure the customer is meeting the work site expectations and has the supports and accommodations necessary to be successful; and/or
* more training and support than is occurring at the work experience site.

Work Experience Training may be purchased without the purchase of Work Experience Placement.

The counselor, customer, provider, and the employer are all be involved in the decision to allow remote Work Experience Training at a worksite. The employer must agree to allow use of the technology, internet and/or devices to be used by the customer at the work experience site. The use of the technology, internet and/or devices should not exclude or stigmatize the customer. Remote Work Experience Training must be supplemented with in person Work Experience Training away from the job site.

See [VR-SFP Chapter 14: Work Experience Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-14) for more information, including staff qualifications, service definition, process and procedures, and outcomes required for payment and fees.

Work Experience Training can be purchased to support the customers in the Summer Earn and Learn program and customers who are placed in a Work Experience program arranged by VR staff or other external entities.

The VR counselor:

* obtains a consultation from their supervisor anytime the Work Experience Training needs to be provided remotely. The consultation must be documented in a case note;
* completes [VR1600, Work Experience Referral](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) leaving no blanks and attaching, as applicable, medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, or employment data collected by VR staff that will assist the provider in working with the customer;
* ensures VR1600 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;
* ensures that VR staff sends the service authorization to the provider;
* monitors the customer's progress with the customer, Work Experience Specialist and with the SEAL provider or business, as applicable;
* provides any needed instruction or intervention necessary to foster the customer's success;
* reviews and approves [VR1604, Work Experience Training Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), ensuring that all outcomes required for payment are achieved and that the staff qualification were held by the individual providing the service to the customer; and
* ensures that the invoice is paid.

Transition Educator providers and Nontraditional providers may provide Work Experience Training services. Transition Educator and Nontraditional providers are required to provide the services as outlined in the VR Standards for Providers and in the service authorization.

Nontraditional providers and Transition Educator providers can be used when all requirements outlined in [VRSM C-1005: Noncontracted Providers](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1000#c1005) have been met.

When working with nontraditional providers and transition educator providers, the VR-SFP sections titled Service Description, Process and Procedures, and Outcomes Required for Payment in [VR-SFP Chapter 14, 14.4 Work Experience Training](https://twc.texas.gov/node6551#s144) must be followed; however, the staff qualifications and purchasing fees outlined in the VR-SFP Chapter 14 do not apply. The nontraditional provider and transition educator provider fees are listed below.

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## C-422: Project SEARCH

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### C-422-2: Steps to Establish a Project SEARCH Site

To start a Project SEARCH program, the VR counselor contacts the State Office Program Specialist for Workforce Alliances. After contact with the State Office Program Specialist for Workforce Alliances, VR staff members ensure that the following partners agree to start a program.

* Education: the local independent school district (ISD)
* Long-term support: the local intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) authority.

The team, comprising VR, the ISD, and local authorities, and possibly the host business if it has already been identified, can begin without an identified host business or Employment Services Provider (ESP). The team, not VR, selects the ESP based on interviews with all team members. VR schedules interviews for interested ESPs that have a current VR employment services contract.

The national Project SEARCH office is contacted with a request to start a program by the State Office Program Specialist for Workforce Alliances. Project SEARCH requires that a local partner hold a licensing agreement with its office, stating that the team will follow its model. The ISD typically holds the license; VR does not hold this license.

Once the national Project SEARCH office approves the license, it schedules training for the team. After the formal training from the national office begins, the office supports the team by setting up monthly meetings for planning and maintaining the program. While the ISD and the ESP are involved in the daily operations of the program, VR staff members assigned to the team must maintain regular, at least monthly, communication through emails or conference calls in addition to the monthly planning meetings.

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### C-422-5: Skills Training

Since each Project SEARCH team determines the length of the rotations at the host business (eight–12 weeks), it is important that the team create a calendar showing when rotations begin and end. This ensures that VR staff members know when to issue service authorizations to the ESP.

Project SEARCH Skills Training is based on experiential learning at a host business with support from the business and Project SEARCH team and should be provided in-person. If a host business will not allow interns or staff onsite for safety or other reasons, the Project SEARCH team can develop an alternate training method that can be provided after consultation is completed with the Project SEARCH Statewide Coordinator (Program Specialist for Workforce Alliances) and documented in ReHabWorks. Refer to the Training section in VRSM E-200: Summary Table of Approvals, Consultations, and Notifications.

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## C-423: Other Training

Other training must specifically meet the customer’s vocational rehabilitation need and is consistent with the IPE and vocational objectives.

Other training services may include instruction in the following areas:

* Adult education and literacy programs
* Basic reading, writing, and math
* Preparing to take a high school equivalency assessment approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) (that is, the GED test, HiSET exam, or TASC test)
* English as a second language
* High school credit courses
* Meeting adult continuing education objectives below the college credit level

Note: As a comparable benefit, available programs can be found in Texas at adult education and literacy programs funded by the TWC. Local education agencies also offer high school credit courses.

* Driver training;
* Postsecondary education programs not at the college credit level;
* The educational prerequisites for vocational skills training;
* Teacher alternative certification program approved and accredited [by TEA](https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftea.texas.gov%2Ftexas-educators%2Fpreparation-and-continuing-education%2Feducator-preparation-home&data=04%7C01%7Claura.lacour%40twc.state.tx.us%7C6aaf7e5dc3514efe1ed108d88bcbd037%7Cfe7d3f4f241b4af184aa32c57fe9db03%7C0%7C0%7C637413054778413062%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=yFMKjpOjLLsctOWYH%2FO6z26LCgtTqZFq9teBjhh8dPM%3D&reserved=0);
* Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) approved and accredited by [TEA](https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftea.texas.gov%2Ftexas-educators%2Fpreparation-and-continuing-education%2Feducator-preparation-home&data=04%7C01%7Claura.lacour%40twc.state.tx.us%7C6aaf7e5dc3514efe1ed108d88bcbd037%7Cfe7d3f4f241b4af184aa32c57fe9db03%7C0%7C0%7C637413054778413062%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=yFMKjpOjLLsctOWYH%2FO6z26LCgtTqZFq9teBjhh8dPM%3D&reserved=0);
* Communication training for the deaf; and
* Coping strategies training for the deaf or hard of hearing and blind.

Comparable services and benefits and required customer participation in the cost of services must be applied to the cost of all training services before VR funds are used. Refer to C-405: Financial Aid and Comparable Benefits.

The VR Services payment amount is based on published or current community rates. VR counselors may not approve payment for these services when the customer is:

* a resident of a state institution; or
* entitled to free services.

Before considering the purchase of other training services, the unit purchasing specialist works with the requesting staff to verify that the provider has the necessary qualifications, credentials, and/or licenses before requesting the vendor be setup and linked. Refer to VRSM Part C – Vocational Rehabilitation Services for available VR services that could meet customers’ needs first, and to the applicable policy for qualification requirements. Refer also to D-211: Setting Up and Paying Providers

### C-423-1: Adult Basic Education

TWC or other governmental agency programs provide adult basic education with federal funds. VR counselors must not encumber VR funds for this activity.

#### High School Equivalency Tests

VR may pay the cost of high school equivalency testing for assessments approved by the TEA. As of January 29, 2016, approved assessments for Texas are the GED test, HiSET exam, and TASC test. VR counselors must review the TEA website to compare assessments and determine the best option for the customer.

### C-423-2: Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Training

Rehabilitation-center training may be provided by the [Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC)](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-500). Customers are required to tour the CCRC before requesting training outside of Texas. The CCRC is part of VR and has proven to be a cost-effective way to deliver comprehensive training services. VR counselors refer customers to these services, as appropriate.

If a VR counselor recommends rehabilitation-center training outside of Texas, the following must be included in a case file:

* Documentation that the customer completed a tour of the CCRC with a CCRC staff member
* CCRC staff-member recommendations regarding rehabilitation, training, and educational services
* Counselor justification for out-of-state programming that explains that the specific services are recommended and are not available in Texas
* Recommendation from the VR counselor's manager
* Approval from the director of programs management

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