# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-400: Training Services

Revised April 3, 2023

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## C-401: Legal Authorization

#### 34 CFR §361.48(b) (6)

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

(6) Vocational and other training services, including personal and vocational adjustment training, advanced training in, but not limited to, a field of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (including computer science), medicine, law, or business); books, tools, and other training materials, except that no training or training services in an institution of higher education (universities, colleges, community or junior colleges, vocational schools, technical institutes, or hospital schools of nursing or any other postsecondary education institution) may be paid for with funds under this part unless maximum efforts have been made by the State unit and the individual to secure grant assistance in whole or in part from other sources to pay for that training."

#### Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Vocational Rehabilitation Services Rule §856.45:

"(a) VRD purchases vocational and other training services for customers who require additional knowledge or skills to enter employment consistent with their aptitudes and ability, and compatible with their physical or mental impairments.

(b) VRD purchases vocational and other training services through an appropriate facility. These facilities include accredited colleges and universities, certified public or private businesses, technical and vocational schools, on-the-job training, correspondence course training, tutorial training, and community rehabilitation program training.

(c) Academic training in institutions of higher education (universities, colleges, community or junior colleges, vocational schools, technical institutes, or hospital schools of nursing) is subject to the following:

(1) Academic training in proprietary vocational schools and technical institutes must be provided only in schools that are licensed or certified by the Agency on the Licensed Career Schools and Colleges Directory website, the Eligible Training Provider System website, or another regulatory agency, before including the training on the individualized plan for employment. (2) No vocational rehabilitation funds may be used to pay for academic training unless VRD and the customer have made maximum efforts to secure grant assistance in whole or in part from other sources to pay for the training.

(3) The PELL grant, like any other comparable services and benefits, must be applied to the educational process before the expenditure of VRD funds for services under this section. Services must not be denied pending receipt of a PELL grant, but must be contingent upon the customer's making application if eligible.

(4) Academic training must be provided through public, tax-supported colleges and universities in Texas unless:

(A) a specific curriculum related to the customer's academic major is not available at a Texas public institution;

(B) academic training elsewhere is determined to be more economical; or

(C) academic training elsewhere provides specialized services needed by the customer.

(5) If the customer chooses to obtain academic training at a private college or university in Texas or at a college or university outside Texas and the provisions in paragraph (4) of this subsection do not apply, academic support must be limited to that which the customer would receive if he or she attended a state-supported college or university in Texas, unless the customer is a recipient of Social Security benefits, either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

(6) A customer who is blind, does not meet the residency requirements of a particular institution, and is not eligible for tuition exemption under Texas Education Code (TEC) §54.364 may receive VRD tuition assistance based on the customer's economic need, but the payments must not exceed the tuition paid for a customer who does meet the residency requirements.

(7) Tuition and fee exemption is an exemption from payment of tuition and/or required fees normally charged by a state-supported college or university. Required fees include student services, building use, health center use, lab fees, and property deposits not reimbursable to the student. Required fees do not include optional fees.

(8) Any equipment purchased for the customer during academic training must be needed by the customer to help maintain academic success so that the customer can meet the employment outcome.

(9) Once admitted to academic training:

(A) the customer must maintain and complete a full-time course load as defined by the college or university. This requirement may be waived if:

* the customer is a graduating senior;
* the customer is an incoming freshman (first two semesters or quarters);
* the customer is a returning adult (first academic year only);
* the customer is in summer school; or
* other extenuating circumstances prevent the customer from participating in a full-time course load; and

(B) the customer is required to meet with the VR counselor at least once each semester, to submit add or drop slips as changes occur, and to provide grade slips or transcripts to the VR counselor at the end of each semester.

(d) VRD requires that each customer who is provided with vocational or other training services by VRD apply for financial assistance where reasonably available. This assistance can include federal, state, or local grants-in-aid and private scholarships where applicable. If the customer has not done so before the time of application for vocational rehabilitation services, the VR counselor assists the customer in doing so.

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## C-406: Purchasing Training Services

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### 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 [VRSM B-505: Content of the IPE](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-b-500#b505).

#### 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 [VRSM D-212: Creating the Service Authorization](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d212) and D-212-2: Crossing State Fiscal Years.

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

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) may pay for training when the customer is enrolled in a public, private, or out-of-state institution. To determine the institution’s classification, refer to [College for all Texans—Degree Programs](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/).

This subsection and [C-412: Maximum Payment for Training at a Proprietary Institution](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c412) list the maximum amounts of tuition and fees that VR is permitted to pay per semester or grading period.

When completing the individualized plan for employment (IPE), VR staff must not include specific rates of tuition and fees. Staff should refer to the rates 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

VR pays the entire amount for in-state tuition and required fees at public training institutions in Texas for eligible customers after the Pell Grant, needs-based financial aid, and any required customer contributions are applied. VR pays the Texas resident tuition rate. Exceptions to exceed the Texas resident tuition rate may be granted with justification and VR Supervisor approval.

VR staff uses the [College for all Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website to verify if the public institution is one of the following:

* + [Two-Year Community College](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c409-1)
	+ [Four-Year College or University](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c409-2)
	+ [Technical College](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c409-3)
	+ [State College](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c409-3)
	+ Health-Related Institution

#### Study Abroad

If study abroad is required at an in-state public college or university and there is not an option to take virtual or on-campus classes, VR pays for the entire amount of tuition and required fees.

If study abroad is required at a private or out-of-state college or university and there is not an option to take virtual or on-campus classes, VR pays up the maximum amounts as stated in policy. Refer to C-409-2: Private or Out-of-State Training Institutions and [C-406-2: Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Recipients](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c406-2).

VR must approve the eligible study abroad location which can be based on cost-effectiveness, best value, and value added to the customer’s training program. For information on airfare refer to C-1402-7: Airfare.

Exceptions to the requirements for study abroad require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor.

### C-409-2: Private or Out-of-State Training Institutions

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

* documents in a case note why the customer chose a private or out-of-state institution instead of a public institution; and
* follows pay the procedures in the next section to determine the maximum amount that VR may pay to the private or out-of-state institution.

Note: The VR counselor must document clearly and in detail the reason the customer chose a private or out-of-state institution when there is a comparable public in-state institution. Justification may be for reasons such as accommodations for the customer’s disability, additional support out-of-state, or any other justification for choosing a private or out-of-state institution.

Tuition and fees paid to private and out-of-state institutions may not exceed the maximum amount described in the next section unless the VR counselor justifies, and the VR supervisor approves exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees. For customers who are eligible for Social Security Insurance (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) because of a disability, refer to [C-406-2: Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Recipients](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c406-2).

For approval requirements, refer to [C-408-3: Content of an IPE for Training at a College or University](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c408-3) and [D-206-3: Out-of-State Purchases](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200%22%20%5Cl%20%22d206-3).

#### Maximum Amounts for a Private or Out-of-State Training Institution

To calculate the amount that VR may pay toward the cost of the customer's tuition and required fees for training at a private or out-of-state college, university, and training institution, the VR counselor uses the following procedure:

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

* + [C-409-3:](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c409-1) [Private or Out-of-State Training Institutions: Two-Year College](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c409-1);
	+ [C-409-4: Private or Out-of-State Training Institutions: Four-Year College or University;](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c409-2)
	+ [C-409-5: Private or Out-of-State Training Institutions: Technical College](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c409-3); or
	+ [C-409-6: Private or Out-of-State Health-Related Institutions](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c409-4).

Note: This is the maximum amount that VR may pay toward the cost of the customer's tuition and required fees at a private or out-of-state college, university, and training institution.

1. Next, calculate the amount of tuition and required fees and deduct the Pell Grant amount and the amount of needs-based financial aid that does not require repayment. From this amount, if the customer is over the basic living requirement (BLR), deduct BLR.
2. If the amount in number two is less than the maximum that VR may pay in number one, VR issues the service authorization (SA) for the amount determined in number two.
3. If the amount in number two is more than the maximum that VR may pay in number one, VR issues the SA for the maximum amount determined in number one.
4. If the amount in number two is zero, VR does not issue an SA.
5. Finally, staff must provide to the customer in writing the amount that VR will pay and the amount that is still owed to the institution. The [VR3405, Tuition Payment Calculation Worksheet for Private or Out-of-State Training](https://intra.twc.texas.gov/intranet/gl/html/vocational_rehab_forms.html) may be used to calculate the amount that VR may pay toward the cost of the customer's tuition and required fees.

### C-409-3: Private or Out-of-State Training Institutions: Two-Year College

VR staff verifies that the private or out-of-state training institution is an established two-year college by finding its classification on the [College for all Texans—Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website. Staff must verify private or out-of-state institutions by finding the school’s classification through the school’s 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](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c406-2).

As of July 2022, VR pays the maximum rate of $127 per semester hour, which includes the amount of tuition and fees at a two-year private or out-of-state college.

VR pays a maximum of $3,810 per year for certificate training at a two-year college that is not on a semester hour schedule. (The maximum amount for a college or university certificate program 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 average 2022–2023 college costs of tuition and fees found on the [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83)—Institutions of Higher Education website. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

#### Service Records for Training at a Two-Year College

The following ReHabWorks (RHW) specifications must 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-409-4: Private or Out-of-State Training Institutions: Four-Year College or University

VR staff verifies that the private or out-of-state training institution is an established four-year college or university by finding its classification on the [College for all Texans—Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website. Staff must verify private or out-of-state institutions by finding the school’s classification through the school’s website.

As of July 2022, VR pays the maximum amount of $392 per semester hour, which includes the amount of tuition and fees at a four-year private or out-of-state 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](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c406-2).

VR pays a maximum of $11,760 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 average 2022–2023 college costs of tuition and fees found on the [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83)—Institutions of Higher Education website. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

#### Service Records for Training at a Four-Year College or University

The following RHW specifications must 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-409-5: Private or Out-of-State Training Institutions: Technical College

VR staff verifies that the private or out-of-state training institution is an established technical college by finding its classification on the [College for all Texans— Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website. Staff must verify private or out-of-state institutions by finding the school’s classification through the school’s 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](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c406-2).

As of July 2022, VR pays the maximum amount of $150 per semester hour, which includes the amount of tuition and fees at a private or out-of-state technical college.

VR pays a maximum of $4,500 per year for certificate training at a technical college that is not on a semester hour schedule. (The maximum amount for a college or university certificate program 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 average 2022-2023 college costs of tuition and fees found on the [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83) website. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

#### Service Records for Training at a Private or Out-of-State Technical College

The following RHW specifications must 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-409-6: Private or Out-of-State Health-Related Institutions

VR staff verifies that the private or out-of-state training institution is an established health-related institution by finding its classification on the [College for all Texans—Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website. Staff must verify private or out-of-state institutions by finding the school’s classification through the school’s 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](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c406-2).

As of July 2022, VR pays the maximum amount of $434 per semester hour, which includes the amount of tuition and fees at a private or out-of-state health-related institution.

VR pays a maximum of $13,020 per year for certificate training at a private or out-of-state health-related institution that is not on a semester hour schedule. (The maximum amount for a college or university certificate program is based on established tuition and fee rates for customers enrolled in 15 credit hours for both the fall and spring semesters.)

These rates are based on one standard deviation above the average 2022-2023 college costs of tuition and fees found on the [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83)—Institutions of Higher Education website. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

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

* Level 1—Training—College and University [86000]
* Level 2—Training—Public Health-Related Institutions [86000-11129]
* Level 3—Training—Health-Related Four-Year Program
* Level 3—Training—Health-Related Graduate Program
* Level 4—Tuition and required fees
* Level 4—Tuition and fees

C-409-7: Purchasing Dual Credit CoursesCustomers taking dual credit courses at 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-1305-14: Dual Credit Courses](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1300#c1305-9).

### C-409-8: Graduate and Other Post-University Training

When a customer attends graduate and/or other post-university training, VR staff verifies the institution’s classification on the [College for all Texans—Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website. Staff must verify private or out-of-state institutions by finding the school’s classification through the school’s website.

Public Texas training institutions are exempt from the maximum rate limitation. VR may pay for the entirety of tuition and required fees at public Texas institutions for eligible customers.

The maximum amounts VR pays to a private or out-of-state graduate or other post-university training institution are determined based on the type of institution the customer is attending. For maximum amounts, refer to C-409-4: Private or Out-of-State Training Institutions: Four-Year College or University or C-409-6: Private or Out-of-State 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](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c406-2).

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## C-415: Textbooks and Supplies

VR may purchase required textbooks and course-related supplies if they are not already included in the cost of tuition and fees. VR pays the entire amount for required books and supplies.

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, electronic books, and/or e-books.

For additional purchasing 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](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c406-2).

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 the processes and procedures in [VRSM C-1407: Tools and Equipment](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1400%22%20%5Cl%20%22c1407).

### C-415-1: Service Authorization

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

### C-415-2: 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.

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## C-422: Project SEARCH

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### C-422-6: Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) Related to Project SEARCH

For an MSG to be recognized for customers that participate in Project SEARCH, the customer must:

* Be enrolled in school
* Have an IPE goal that matches the training areas of their rotations
* Have Project SEARCH documented on the IPE as a service

**Documenting Project SEARCH in RHW**

The customer’s training information must be documented in ReHabWorks (RHW) and the [VR3362, Project SEARCH Progress Report](https://twc.texas.gov/vocational-rehabilitation-service-forms), must be in the case file to ensure adequate reporting of Measurable Skill Gains (MSG). Refer to [VRSM A-505: Documenting Measurable Skill Gains](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-a-500#a505) for additional information.

For each Project SEARCH rotation, a Semester/Grading Period record must be entered identifying the rotation completed.

For additional information on entering training information in RHW, please see the [ReHabWorks User Guide B-300: Education History](https://twcgov.sharepoint.com/sites/ws/vr/co/RHWUserGuide/RUG%20B-300%20Education%20History%20082519.docx).

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