# PART A, CHAPTER 10: SERVICES TO BUSINESS

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| **Policy Number** | **Authority** | **Scope** | **Effective Date** |
| Part A, Chapter 10 | Rehabilitation Act, as amended, Section 109, and 34 CFR [§361.32](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/section-361.32)  | All TWC-VR staff | 9/3/2024 |

## PURPOSE

In accordance with the authority (Federal and State) listed above, this policy is issued by the Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Division (TWC-VR). Adherence to these rules and regulations issued under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), supports Texans with disabilities in gaining, maintaining, and advancing in competitive integrated employment (CIE).

Specifically, the purpose of this policy and these procedures is to ensure adherence to the provision of services to business in the State of Texas.

## DEFINITIONS

Business Relations Team (BRT): Team responsible for the delivery of all VR business services, including outreach, consultation, technical assistance, and training to support job placement and job retention for individuals with disabilities.

Job Ready: When TWC-VR customers have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities needed, with or without supports, to begin seeking employment that is consistent with the employment goal on the customer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or IPE amendment.

Labor Market: Where the supply and the demand for jobs meet, with the workers or labor providing the services that employers demand.

Labor Market Information (LMI): Comprehensive knowledge regarding a specific labor market, including information about occupations, locations, wages, demographics, etc.

Outreach Services and Coordination Teams (OSC): The regional OSC teams are the primary points of contact in developing business partnerships at the local and regional levels. OSC teams are established at regional levels by the Business Relations Coordinators (BRCs) and regional leadership.

The National Employment Team (NET): A national VR business network of VR staff specializing in employer development, business consulting, and corporate relations. The Business Relations Team partners with The NET so they are executing a coordinated approach to serving business customers.

## POLICY

### General Overview

1. Services to Employers: The employment of individuals with disabilities is directly related to the level of awareness and understanding that the business community has of the skills, abilities, and contributions that individuals with disabilities possess. Their ability to function in a specific job, and the possible accommodations that may be required to perform essential job functions, are services that TWC-VR may provide, which will enhance the employment opportunities and support business hiring needs in the local communities.
2. Service to Customers: TWC-VR provides a variety of individualized employment services to meet a customer’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

### Legal Authorization

TWC-VR may expend VR funds to educate and provide services to employers who have hired or are interested in hiring individuals with disabilities, including the following:

1. Providing training and technical assistance to employers regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities, including disability awareness, and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other employment-related laws;
2. Working with employers to—
* Provide opportunities for work-based learning experiences (including internships, short-term employment, apprenticeships, and fellowships);
* Provide opportunities for pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS);
* Recruit qualified applicants who are individuals with disabilities;
* Train employees who are individuals with disabilities; and
* Promote awareness of disability-related obstacles to continued employment.
1. Providing consultation, technical assistance, and support to employers on workplace accommodations, AT, and facilities and workplace access through collaboration with community partners and employers, across States and nationally, to enable the employers to recruit, job match, hire, and retain qualified individuals with disabilities who are recipients of TWC-VR services, or who are applicants for such services; and
2. Assisting employers with utilizing available financial support for hiring or accommodating individuals with disabilities.

### Business Relation Team Services

## The VR Business Relations Team is responsible for the delivery of all VR business services, including outreach, consultation, technical assistance, and training to support job placement and job retention for individuals with disabilities. Members of the VR Business Relations Team include state office program specialists, regional business relations coordinators, employment assistance specialists, and outreach service and coordination (OSC) teams.

## PROCEDURES

### TWC-VR Staff Procedures

All TWC-VR staff members have a role in cultivating relationships with businesses, as well as referring to and consulting with the BRT.

### Workforce Solutions Offices

The 28 Workforce [Boards](https://twc.texas.gov/partners/workforce-development-boards) and over 170 Workforce Solutions Offices in the State of Texas offer a single point of contact for both the business community and those seeking employment. Services provided by Boards and Workforce Solutions Offices include employer services, WIOA youth and adult services, veteran services, job seeker resources and training, and labor market information.

TWC-VR and Workforce Solutions Office staff are strongly encouraged to partner to expand training and opportunities for job seekers and employers. By leveraging services and programs together, the customer, TWC-VR, and the workforce system win.

VR staff are to follow the local process when referring VR customers to Workforce Solutions offices for services. A service record to Workforce Solutions must be issued by a member of the VR team. When creating a service record, staff must use "Arranged" as the payment method. VR staff and Workforce Solutions staff are to remain in communication to ensure services are provided. TWC-VR Staff Learning Opportunities

TWC-VR staff must have knowledge and expertise in the labor market and the needs and expectations of business. TWC-VR offers a variety of supports for the field:

1. Training: Training opportunities are available through TWC Training and Development such as the Dual Customer Training available to TWC-VR staff to increase their knowledge, awareness, and understanding of serving the business community as another VR customer. The training teaches TWC-VR staff how to develop effective business relations, conduct outreach and marketing activities, and recommend appropriate accommodations for customers. TWC-VR staff may also work alongside their Regional BRC to build their awareness and confidence in this area.

Mandatory Training for VR Counselors (and any other staff member carrying a customer caseload) is located on the VR Business Relations intranet page: Labor Market Information (LMI).

1. Labor Market and Business Needs Tools: Competency in this area is critical to the vocational planning process as it helps TWC-VR and its customers build actionable goals to achieve high-quality employment outcomes.

Before contacting a business, TWC-VR staff must—

* Match businesses to the needs and interests of job seekers;
	+ Know basic information about the business, including the following:
	+ The business's location and whether transportation is available;
	+ The type of business and the products it makes and/or sells;
	+ The business's prospects and stability; and
	+ Whether the business is hiring.

When working with a business, TWC-VR staff must remember that—

* The business is a VR customer;
* TWC-VR has a responsibility to understand the business's needs;
* TWC-VR must adjust its services when possible to meet the business needs;
* Businesses are not—
	+ VR or disability experts (avoid the use of VR language; use business terminology);
	+ A funding source for special initiatives; or
	+ Obligated to hire from VR talent pools; and
* Businesses need qualified candidates as they do not and should not be expected to hire based on disability or out of charity.

To better understand the local labor market, available employment outcomes, and the population of potential VR customers, TWC-VR staff can conduct labor market analyses using community resources and Labor Market and Career Information department tools.

The analysis includes the following:

* Labor market analysis of job trends and other factors to promote strategic employment outcomes and business development; and
* VR caseload statistical analysis of specific caseloads or offices to identify job-ready customers, vocational goals, and historical placement trends.

### Job Ready Documentation

When TWC-VR customers have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities needed, with or without supports, to begin seeking employment that is consistent with the employment goal on the customer's IPE or IPE amendment, they are job ready. When the VR Counselor determines that the customer is job ready, the VR Counselor—

1. Updates the Job Ready status in RHW Personal Information section; and
2. Using the Job Ready case note topic in RHW, the VR Counselor documents the circumstances around the customer’s job readiness, labor market and business needs, (as applicable) and next steps.

When the VR Counselor and customer determine that the customer is no longer job ready, the VR Counselor repeats the previous steps and selects No for Job Ready and, together, they amend the IPE, as needed, to continue VR services.

If needed, the VR Counselor can use the Job Ready Worksheet as a guide in determining whether the customer is job ready. If used, a copy of the Job Ready Worksheet is filed in the customer's case file.

### Services to Business Documentation

For each activity provided to a business by a BRT member, there must be a record of the service entered into [WorkInTexas](https://www.workintexas.com/vosnet/default.aspx) to allow for joint reporting of services for the [WIOA](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/performance-indicators) Effectiveness in Serving Employers Indicator.

## APPROVALS & CONSULTATIONS

There are no approvals or consultations for this policy and these procedures.

**REVIEW**

The Policy Planning and Statewide Initiatives Team, or designee, is responsible for reviewing this policy and these procedures and will update the Document History log if necessary.

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| **Date** | **Type** | **Change Description** |
| 9/3/2024 | New | VRSM Policy and Procedure Rewrite |