# PART C, CHAPTER 10.7: OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES

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| **Policy Number** | **Authority** | **Scope** | **Effective Date** |
| Part C, Chapter 10.7 | N/A | All TWC-VR staff, particularly VR Counselors | 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 other education and training programs not specifically outlined in other policies.

## DEFINITIONS

Informed Choice: The means by which a customer chooses their rehabilitation path, from options based on their needs and circumstances and the VR program's rules, as it relates to choosing education and training services and the providers of those services.

## POLICY

### General Overview

TWC-VR provides education and training services that do not fall under one of the main training categories but may be available to TWC-VR customers. TWC-VR provides individualized services, which include the provision of education and training services necessary to meet the unique needs of the customer, including their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

### Recognized Credentials and Measurable Skill Gains (MSG)

Education and training services may result in MSGs (e.g., report card, training progress) and a recognized credential (e.g., bachelor’s degree, vocational license). All credentials and MSGs achieved during participation in TWC-VR services must be entered in the Education History page in RHW.

### Additional Policy Considerations

* Comparable Services and Benefits: TWC-VR must not expend funds on education and training services unless the VR counselor and the customer have made maximum efforts to secure comparable services and benefits from other sources to pay for services.
* Customer Participation in the Cost of Services: A customer's eligibility for TWC-VR services does not depend on the customer's income or liquid assets; however, if the customer's net income or liquid assets exceed the Basic Living Requirements (BLR), the customer must participate in the cost of services unless an exception is granted.
* Recipients of Social Security Disability Benefits: Recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), due to the customer’s disability, are exempt from the requirement to participate in the cost of TWC-VR services regardless of income.
* Exceptions to Policy: When necessary to meet the VR needs of a customer, TWC-VR staff members may request exceptions to policies and procedures through their chain of management up to the Deputy Division Director of Field Services Delivery, or designee. However, exceptions to policies and procedures based on Federal and State laws, statutes, and rules or regulations are not allowable.

## PROCEDURES

### Determining the Need for Other Education and Training Services

Other training must specifically meet the customer’s rehabilitation needs and be consistent with the goals in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Other training services may include instruction in the following areas:

* Basic reading, writing, and math;
* High school equivalency assessment preparation approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) (i.e., 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;
* 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://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/preparation-and-continuing-education/educator-preparation-home)
* [Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) approved and accredited by TEA;](https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/preparation-and-continuing-education/educator-preparation-home)
* Communication training for the deaf; and
* Coping strategies training for the deaf or hard of hearing and blind.

For other Education and Training services, the requirement to seek comparable services and benefits and the customer financial participation (BLR) policies and procedures apply.

TWC and local education agencies provide various training programs that may meet the customer's needs.

### Payment for Other Education and Training Programs

The TWC-VR service 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 set up and linked.

### Adult Basic Education

TWC or other governmental agency programs provide adult basic education using Federal funds. VR Counselors must not encumber TWC-VR funds for this activity.

TWC-VR may pay the cost of high school equivalency testing for assessments approved by the TEA (i.e., GED test, HiSET exam, or TASC test).

VR Counselors must review the [TEA website](https://tea.texas.gov/) to compare assessments and determine the best option for the customer.

### Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Training

Located in Austin, Texas, the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC) is a comprehensive VR training facility operated by TWC-VR. Its mission is to work in partnership with blind or visually impaired customers and TWC-VR staff toward the accomplishment of independence and employment. CCRC provides evaluation, training, and related services in residential, classroom, and community settings.

### Other Rehabilitation Center Training

If a customer is requesting rehabilitation center training outside of the CCRC, the VR Counselor must provide the customer with information about CCRC and recommend that the customer complete a tour of the center. If a tour is not available, or if the VR Counselor and customer decide that a tour is not in the best interest of the customer, the VR Counselor must clearly document the circumstances and reason(s) for making the decision.

If a VR Counselor recommends rehabilitation center training outside of the CCRC/State of Texas, the following must be documented in case notes:

* The fact that the customer completed a CCRC tour with a CCRC staff member or the reason the customer did not complete a tour; and
* VR Counselor's justification and explanation for recommending rehabilitation center training services outside of CCRC/State of Texas.

### 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 TWC-VR funds.

* Arranging for a Paid Instructor: The VR Counselor arranges for paid instructor 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 (e.g., one-on-one);
  + Offered in a small-group setting; or
  + Through a school not regulated by any entity including TWC Career Schools and Colleges.

Instructor Qualifications: The trainer, school, and the course must not meet the requirements to be regulated.

* Arranging for an Exempt School: The VR Counselor purchases training from schools with TWC Career Schools and Colleges’ exemption so that a customer has a chance to learn a specific work skill from a qualified individual or school. This training can be—
  + Customized to the customer's needs (e.g., one-on-one);
  + Offered in a small-group setting; and
  + Through a school that has TWC Career Schools and Colleges’ exemption.

Instructor or School Qualifications: The trainer, school, and the course must be specifically exempted in writing by TWC Career Schools and Colleges.

Tuition and Fees for Paid Instructor and Exempt Schools: When training is obtained through a paid instructor or exempt school, tuition and fees rates paid by TWC-VR must not exceed the maximum payment rates for proprietary schools.

## APPROVALS & CONSULTATIONS

TWC-VR staff must follow the following approvals and consultations:

*Approvals*

* *VR Manager approval is required when the customer chooses to attend rehabilitation center training outside of the CCRC/State of Texas.*
* *VR Regional or Deputy Regional Director approval is required when there is justification to use an Exempt School or Paid Instructor. Approval is granted individually for the course and is not a blanket approval for an unlicensed school.*

*Consultations*

* *State Office Program Specialist(s) consultation is required when there is justification to use an Exempt School or Paid Instructor.*

**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 |