# PART C, CHAPTER 12.2.c:

# VOCATIONAL ADJUSTMENT TRAINING SERVICES

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| **Policy Number** | **Authority** | **Scope** | **Effective Date** |
| Part C, Chapter 12.2.c | 34 CFR [§361.48(b)(12)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-361#p-361.48(b)(12)), and TWC Rule [§856.49](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=40&pt=20&ch=856&rl=49) | 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 Vocational Adjustment Training services.

## DEFINITIONS

Flat Fee: A fixed charge for a service or product that does not change regardless of the amount of time or resources used to complete the task.

Hourly Based: A payment structure where services are billed according to the number of hours worked.

Informed Choice: The means by which a customer chooses their rehabilitation path, from options based on their needs and circumstances and the TWC-VR rules, as it relates to choosing work readiness services and the providers of those services.

## POLICY

### General Overview

Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT) Services prepare customers to excel in their abilities to successfully obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment (CIE). VAT Services address disability issues, interpersonal skills training, daily living skills, and issues that interfere with obtaining or maintaining employment. The services can be held at the provider's facility or within the community and can be offered in groups and individually as a flat fee or hourly based service.

### VAT Parameters

Flat Fee VAT Services:

* Explore the You in Work (curriculum: 10 hours):
  + Allows a customer to gain instruction to assist them in understanding their own work personalities, interests, values, and transferable skills; and
  + Allows the customer to complete self-assessments, participate in individual and group discussions and activities, and apply the information learned to improve their employability.
  + Soft Skills to Pay the Bills - Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success (curriculum: 20 hours):
  + Focuses on teaching soft (i.e., workforce readiness) to youth, including youth with disabilities; and
  + Introduces youth to workplace interpersonal and professional skills that focus on six key skill areas:
    - Communication;
    - Enthusiasm and attitude;
    - Teamwork;
    - Networking;
    - Problem solving and critical thinking; and
    - Professionalism.
  + Soft Skills for Work Success (curriculum: 13 hours):
  + Allows a customer to gain, understand, and demonstrate the necessary soft skills to be successful at work; and
  + Focuses on developing essential skills related to effective communication, problem solving, work habits, and work ethics.
* Entering the World of Work (curriculum: 10 hours):
  + Allows a customer to gain knowledge and skills related to workplace expectations, rules, and laws.
* Job Search Training - For Pre-ETS customers ONLY (curriculum: 20 hours):
  + Allows a customer to gain the skills necessary to obtain employment in entry-level positions;
  + Focuses on developing the skills essential for preparing for a job search in the following areas:
    - Exploring Careers;
    - Completion of *Employment Data Sheet (VR1850)*;
    - Job Applications;
    - Resumes;
    - Job references and written correspondence;
    - Interviews;
    - Pre-employment testing;
    - search;
    - Preparing for first day on the job; and
    - References.
* Disability Disclosure Training (curriculum: 20 hours):
  + Provides facts and information to assist customers in making informed decisions about disclosing their disability and how their disability may affect his/her educational, employment, and social lives;
  + Not designed to tell the customer how or when they should disclose their disability; rather, it helps the customer make informed decisions about disclosing their disability; decisions that will affect their educational, employment, and social lives; and
  + Uses the 411 on Disability Disclosure curriculum published by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability.
* Money Smart – A Financial Education Training (curriculum: 30 hours):
  + Teaches customers the basics of handling their money and finances, including how to create positive relationships with financial institutions; and
  + Equips customers with the basics of financial education to give them the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to manage their finances.
* VAT Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training (curriculum: 10 hours):
  + Helps customers understand postsecondary education, financial aid, and the services that are available to support students in postsecondary education and training;
  + Allows a customer to—
    - Understand what types of postsecondary education and training are available;
    - Understand the differences between high school and college accommodations, and what services are available to support students in postsecondary education and training;
    - Identify their transferable skills and understand what skills are important for college readiness and success; and
    - Understand the process of applying to and paying for college.

Hourly-Based VAT Services:

* Public Transportation Training:
  + Assists customers in developing the skills essential for travel within the customer’s community using public transportation;
  + End goal is for the customer to demonstrate the ability to use their chosen mode of public transportation to travel to one or more specific locations within the customer’s community such as, but not limited to—
    - School;
    - Work sites; and
    - Independent living center.
  + Hourly-based service similar to Job Skills Training.
* VAT Specialized Services (VAT-S):
  + Should be purchased for a customer only when another structured VAT cannot meet the customer's needs. Services included in the training plan should be skills that are not taught in another VAT service or skills the customer failed to master in previous training; and
  + Designed to teach skills and knowledge to reduce barriers to success in obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment.

Examples of skills addressed during an VAT-S service include, but are not limited to, the following:

* + Decision-making;
  + Career exploration;
  + Housing opportunity;
  + Childcare management;
  + Effective communication;
  + Independent living;
  + Financial management;
  + Interpersonal communication;
  + Grooming and hygiene; and
  + Stress management.

VAT Specialized Services are purchased as VAT Specialized Evaluation and VAT Specialized Training.

* + VAT Specialized Evaluation:
    - The Vocational Adjustment Trainer evaluates the customer for up to five days and for no more than 10 hours.
    - The *Vocational Adjustment Training Specialized Evaluation (VR3135A)* will indicate if and what skills need to be addressed in the training.
    - When Training is recommended, the *Vocational Adjustment Training, Specialized Training Plan (VR3135B)* must be completed prior to any training being provided
  + VAT Specialized Training:
    - VR sponsors no more than 25 hours per week and *VR3135B* must outline the goals, objectives, skills, and hours of training allowed.
    - *VR3135B* must be updated and approved by the VR Counselor every 28 days.

### Standards for Providers (SFP)

The SFP manual focuses on the business practices, processes, and policies that TWC-VR and the contracted provider must follow. This VRSM chapter includes services that are provided by a contractor. For additional information regarding contractor responsibilities, service descriptions and costs, please refer to the SFP Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services.

### Additional Policy Considerations

* Comparable Services and Benefits: VAT Services are exempt from the requirement to secure comparable services and benefits prior to TWC-VR expending funds.
* Customer Participation in the Cost of Services: VAT Services are exempt from applying Basic Living Requirements (BLR) and, therefore, the customer is not required to participate in the cost of services.
* 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 VAT

VAT Services benefit customers who have never worked, have not worked for a long time, or have a sporadic work history, and prepare customers for successful employment so they can manage or address vocational impairments and be self-sufficient. The VR Counselor and customer will identify the customer’s employment barriers and the VAT Services that address those barriers to better prepare the customer for CIE.

### VAT Referral and Service Provision

When the VR Counselor and customer agree to the receipt of VAT Services, it must be included in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), TWE plan, IPE amendment, or a Service Justification for potentially eligible students with disabilities.

The VR Counselor must—

* Complete *Referral for Provider Services (VR5000)*,
* Provide documentation (only when relevant), such as medical or psychological reports, case notes, vocational testing, or employment data collected by TWC-VR staff;
* Include the premiums available for VAT services (i.e., Deaf Premium, Mileage Premium, Brain Injury Premium, and Blind Premium);
* Determine whether the VAT services will be provided in-person, remotely, or a combination of both;
* Ensure TWC-VR staff sends the service authorization (SA) and the VR5000;
* Monitor the customer's progress;
  + For VAT Specialized Services only (in coordination with the customer and the VAT Trainer): Complete and approve *VR3135B* after the evaluation and before additional 28 days of training is authorized;
* Provide any needed instruction or intervention necessary to foster the customer's success;
* Review required documentation, ensuring that all outcomes required for payment are achieved and that the staff qualifications were held by the individual providing the service to the customer; and
* Ensure that the invoice is paid.

The contractor—

Flat Fee VAT Services:

* The VAT Trainer—
  + Documents all information required on the applicable VR service forms:
    - *VAT: Explore the "You" in Work (VR3122)*
    - *VAT: Soft Skills for Work Success (VR3123)*
    - *VAT: Soft Skills to Pay the Bills (VR3124)*
    - *VAT: Entering the World of Work (VR3125)*
    - *VAT: Job Search Training (VR3126)*
    - *VAT: Disability Disclosure Training (VR3132)*
    - *VAT: Money Smart (VR3133)*
    - *VAT: Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training (VR3139)*
  + Provides evidence that all outcomes required for payment and directions on SA have been achieved, including—
    - Training was delivered as indicated on the *VR5000*;
    - Training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to six customers;
    - Attendance records show the minimum of required hours of training;
    - Customer's training included—
      * Required modules outlined in the curriculum;
      * Required extension activity or activities; and
      * Journaling activities were offered;
      * All necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
      * Various instructional approaches were used to meet the customer's learning style; and
      * All supplies and resources were provided.

Hourly-Based VAT Training:

* The VAT Trainer—
  + Documents all information required on the applicable VR service forms:
    - *VAT: Public Transportation Training (VR3134)*
    - *VAT: Specialized Evaluation (VR3135A)*
    - *VAT: Specialized Training Plan (VR3135B)*
    - *VAT: Specialized Progress Report (VR3136)*

For Public Transportation Training—

* + Documents all information required on VR3134;
  + Provides evidence that all outcomes required for payment and directions on SA have been achieved, including—
    - Training was delivered as indicated on the *VR5000*;
    - Training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to six customers;
    - Attendance records show the minimum of required hours of training;
    - Customer's training included—
      * Curriculum topics;
      * One required extension activity; and
      * Journaling activities.
    - Customer's skill level was rated for the curriculum topics;
    - Progress log includes all required elements listed on *VR3134*, including a description of the services provided and the customer's performance of skills;
    - All necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the training;
    - Trainer used instructional approaches that met the customer's learning styles and preferences; and
    - All supplies and resources were provided so the customer could participate in the training.

VAT Specialized:

* VAT Trainer for the VAT Specialized Evaluation and Training must—
  + Deliver the Evaluation and training as indicated on the *VR5000*;
  + Develop (in coordination with the customer and the VR Counselor) a *VR3135B* for the customer, including measurable goals, objectives, and timelines after the evaluation and before additional 28 days of training is authorized;
  + Provide evidence all outcomes required for payment and directions on SA have been achieved, including—
    - Attendance was recorded and includes the total number of hours the customer participated in the evaluation or training;
    - Evaluation or training was provided without exceeding the ratio of one staff member to no more than six consumers;
    - All necessary accommodations and compensatory techniques were identified, documented, and provided as necessary to meet the special needs of the customer to successfully participate in the evaluation or training;
    - Customer's performance, skills, and needs were evaluated and results summarized; or when training provided, a narrative description for each goal and objective is recorded on the most recently approved *VR3136*;
    - Projected achievement date is established for each goal;
    - Projected number of training hours is established for each goal; and
    - Communications made with the VR Counselor and customer, and notation of updates made to *VR3136* are documented in the Additional Comments section.

### Customer's Satisfaction

The customer's satisfaction and service delivery is verified by the customer's signature on the required form, as applicable, or by TWC-VR staff member’s contact with the customer, documented in a case note.

### VAT Services

Payment for each VAT service is made to the contractor when the VR Counselor approves a completed, accurate, signed, and dated form for the appropriate VAT service and invoice.

Payment will not be made if the customer's excused absence, unexcused absence, or holiday results in failure to attend the minimum number of required training hours.

## APPROVALS & CONSULTATIONS

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

* *VR Director approval is required for any request to change requirements for Vocational Adjustment Training services, using the Contracted Service Modification Request (VR3472) prior to changes being implemented.*

## 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.

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