# PART C, CHAPTER 12.3.b:WORK EXPERIENCE TRAINING SERVICES

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| **Policy Number** | **Authority** | **Scope**  | **Effective Date** |
| Part C, Chapter 12.3.b | 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%24ext.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 Work Experience Training services.

## DEFINITIONS

Bilateral Contractor: A service contractor that agrees to specific duties or deliverables under the terms of a contract with TWC-VR.

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 experience placement services and the providers of those services.

Non-Traditional Provider: An individual who does not have a bilateral contract and who can help a customer achieve an employment goal.

Transition Educator: An individual who is not a provider with a bilateral contract, holds a master's or bachelor's degree in rehabilitation, psychology, education, or a related field (including certified Texas Educators), and is currently or has been employed by a school system, Texas Education Service Center, college, or university within the past fiscal year.

Trial Work Experience (TWE): Exploration of an individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in realistic work situations in order to determine whether or not there is clear and convincing evidence to support a determination that an individual with a disability is incapable of benefiting from VR services in terms of an employment outcome.

## POLICY

### General Overview

Work Experience Training services are goal-focused and designed to provide customers practical, hands-on job experience in real-world settings. Customers engage in paid employment, volunteer, or internships where they can develop essential job skills, build a work history, and gain valuable insights into workplace dynamics. This training aims to enhance their employability, boost confidence, and better prepare them for future career opportunities.

Work Experience Training services are provided by the Work Experience Trainer and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

* Teaching and reinforcing skills of the customer;
* Establishing and setting up accommodations and/or compensatory techniques to increase the customer's independence and ability to meet the Work Experience Training site's expectations;
* Monitoring to ensure the customer's and the employer's needs are being met; and
* Working with employers to address topics such as disability education, accommodations and advocacy.

Work Experience Training services are not intended to interrupt daily business operations, and the trainer must make every attempt to prevent potential disruptions.

### Work Experience Training Parameters

Work Experience Training services are used for temporary work, seasonal work, internships, and volunteer opportunities.

* Work Experience Training services are purchased from a bilateral contractor or, when a bilateral contractor is not available, by a Transition Educator or Non-Traditional Provider.
* Work Experience Training services may be purchased without the purchase of Work Experience Placement (WEP) Services.
* Work Experience Training services are not intended to be used to provide support on the job in which a customer’s case will be closed successfully.
* Work Experience Training services can be provided in person, remotely, or a combination of both.
	+ When remote Work Experience Training services are to be provided, the employer must agree to allow use of the technology, internet, and/or devices to be used by the customer at the Work Experience Training site.
	+ The first Work Experience Training services session must be provided in person, at or away from the worksite (when employers will not allow the trainer onsite), to evaluate the customer's and employer's training needs and to set up any equipment and software necessary to facilitate the remote service delivery.
* TWC-VR will not pay a provider for Job Placement services, including SE services, if a customer is hired into permanent employment by the work site during or after Work Experience Training. Job Skills Training services can be purchased when the customer begins a permanent employment placement, if necessary.
* Work Experience Training services may be provided concurrently with Wage Services, Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL), some training programs arranged by the Business Relations Team (BRT) services, Paid Work Experience (PWE), and Group Skills Training (GST).
* Work Experience Training services cannot be provided concurrently with SE, Job Skills Training, Job Placement, Project SEARCH, Work Adjustment Training (WAT), On-the-Job Training (OJT), or Registered Apprenticeships.

### Standards for Providers Manual (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 14: Work Experience Services.

### Additional Policy Considerations

* Comparable Services and Benefits: Work Experience Training 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: Work Experience Training 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 Work Experience Training Services

Work Experience Training services are provided to a customer after they are already working or have already been placed in a worksite.The VR Counselor and the customer may determine that Work Experience Training services are necessary, when—

* Monitoring is needed to ensure the customer is meeting the expectations of the work experience site and has the supports and accommodations necessary to be successful; and/or
* Additional training and support may be needed in addition to what is currently being provided at a worksite.

### Work Experience Training Referral and Service Provision

When the VR Counselor and customer agree to the receipt of Work Experience Training services, it must be included in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), TWE plan, or an IPE amendment.

The VR Counselor must—

* Complete the *Work Experience Referral (VR1600)*, including the Work Experience Training site, and the goals to be achieved as a result of the training.
* When a customer receives both WEP and Work Experience Training services, only one *VR1600* is required;
* Include the premiums available for Work Experience Training services (i.e., Blind Premium, Brain Injury Premium, Mileage Premium) in the *VR1600*. Service authorizations (SA) for premiums must be issued at the time the base service is issued;
* Provide documentation (only when relevant), such as case notes; psychological, vocational, or medical evaluations; and the Career Planning Assessment (CPA) and Environmental Work Assessment (EWA) to prepare the trainer to work with the customer;
* Determine whether the Work Experience Training services will be provided in person, remotely, or a combination of both;
* Ensure TWC-VR staff send the SA and *VR1600*;
* Monitor the customer's progress;
* Provide any needed instruction or intervention necessary to foster the customer's success;
* Review and approve *Work Experience Training Report (VR1604)*, completed by the contractor, 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 must—

* Address the goals included in the *VR1600* and any additional goals or focus areas that may be necessary to meet a customer's individual needs;
* Use structured intervention techniques or informally train the customer to implement the most effective and least intrusive methods at or away from the worksite, as agreed upon in the *VR1600* and/or SA;
* Provide training to help the customer learn the essential soft and hard skills of the work experience and/or the skills necessary to arrange and use transportation to get to and from the Work Experience Training site;
* Work with the customer, work site, and TWC-VR staff members to establish the support services, accommodations, compensatory techniques, and training necessary to address barriers and ensure successful employment for the customer;
* Observe the customer to identify and solve potential problems related to the customer's employment success before the problem becomes an issue for the customer, worksite, or coworkers;
* Monitor the customer's performance to ensure improvement in the customer's work experience performance;
* Gradually reduce the time spent with the customer at the Work Experience Training site when applicable, as the customer becomes better adjusted and more independent and no longer needs training support or monitoring;
* Complete the *VR1604*, including—
	+ The Work Experience Training services goals—
		- As identified on *VR1600*;
		- As identified on the SA, when applicable; and
		- That emerged during the training, when applicable;
	+ The method training was facilitated;
	+ The customer's progress for each training session:
		- Date the service was provided (xx-xx-xx);
		- Start time of session (x:xx a.m. or p.m.);
		- End time of session;
		- Record the total number of minutes of each session;
		- Number of goals addressed in the training session; and
		- A narrative description of the services provided by the Work Experience Trainer and the customer's performance of skills related to the customer's goals.
	+ Total the amount of time for all training provided for the reporting period using quarter-hour (.25) increments by rounding up the total when equal to or greater than eight minutes and rounding down for seven or less minutes (e.g., total time was 68 minutes, which is equivalent to 1.25 hours;
	+ Premiums, when applicable.

### Customer's Satisfaction

The customer's satisfaction and service delivery is verified by the customer's signature on the *VR1601* or by TWC-VR staff member’s contact with the customer, documented in a case note.

### Work Experience Training Payment

Payment for Work Experience Training services is made to the contractor when the VR Counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* *VR1604*; and
* The invoice.

TWC-VR will not pay any fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

## APPROVALS & CONSULTATIONS

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

* *VR Supervisor approval is required when a Work Experience Training services must exceed 12 weeks to meet the customer's individualized needs. The VR Counselor must document the reason for the extension in a case note including the goals to be achieved and the number of additional weeks that are needed to meet the customer's needs in order to gain approval.*
* *VR Director approval is required for any request to change requirements for Work Experience Training services, using the Contracted Service Modification Request form (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.

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