# PART C, CHAPTER 16.3: SHORT-TERM HOUSING SERVICES

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Policy Number** | **Authority** | **Scope** | **Effective Date** |
| Part C, Chapter 16.3 | 34 CFR [§361.5(c)(34)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-361#p-361.5(c)(34)), [§361.48(b)(7)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-361#p-361.48(b)(7)), and TWC Rule [§856.46](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=46) | 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 Short-Term Housing assistance for customers.

## DEFINITIONS

Normal Living Expenses: Items such as housing, food, clothing, and transportation, and whatever additional expenses would be considered necessary to those broad categories (not directly associated with the receipt of VR services), such as utility costs and vehicle insurance.

Short-Term Housing: Housing that is incurred as a direct result of participation in TWC-VR assessments or services. Short-term housing may be one day to a few weeks or months and must be in excess of the customer's normal living expenses.

## POLICY

### General Overview

In some circumstances, the VR Counselor may agree to pay a landlord short-term housing expenses that are incurred as a direct result of participation in TWC-VR services. It must not be used to pay a customer's mortgage payment or usual and customary rent for housing, which are considered normal living expenses.

### Additional Policy Considerations

* Comparable Services and Benefits: TWC-VR must not expend funds on Short-Term Housing 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

### Establishing a Vendor

When it is expected that short-term housing, provided through maintenance services, in excess of normal living expenses, will exceed a total of three months (cumulatively or consecutively), TWC-VR staff must initiate the process to establish the landlord as a provider for "short-term housing" during the first month for which short-term housing maintenance is authorized.

If the landlord declines to be established as a provider for any reason, or if they have a hold through the Texas comptroller and cannot be paid, alternate housing must be explored. If no other acceptable options are available, justification for paying short-term housing maintenance to the customer requires VR Manager approval.

Once established as a TWC-VR provider, short-term housing maintenance is paid as short-term housing to the providing landlord or lessor.

### Short-Term Housing Expenses

This service is used only for short-term housing expenses that are paid to a landlord and incurred by the customer as a direct result of participation in TWC-VR services.

The VR Counselor may approve an amount for short-term housing expenses paid to a provider that is in excess of the customer's normal living expenses only when—

* The amount is the best-value decision to support TWC-VR assessments and services other than training; and
* The service is not available in the customer's local community (the same town as the customer's residence or within a 50-mile radius of the customer's residence).

Customers attending Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC) Outreach Mini-trainings are exempt from the 50-mile radius requirement.

Once established as a TWC-VR provider, short-term housing expenses are paid to the landlord.

## APPROVALS & CONSULTATIONS

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

* *VR Manager approval is required for all short-term housing and is limited to three-month increments (cumulatively or consecutively).*
* *VR Manager approval is required for continued maintenance for short-term housing provided to the customer if the landlord declines to be established as a provider for any reason, or if they have a hold through the State comptroller and cannot be paid, and no other acceptable options are available.*

**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** |
| 9/3/2024 | New | VRSM Policy and Procedure Rewrite |