# PART C, CHAPTER 6.2: CRISS COLE REHABILITATION CENTER (CCRC)

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| **Policy Number** | **Authority** | **Scope** | **Effective Date** |
| Part C, Chapter 6.2 | TWC Rule [§856 Subchapter G](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=40&pt=20&ch=856&sch=G&rl=Y) | 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 partnering with the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center toward the achievement of a customer's independence and employment.

## DEFINITIONS

Career Focus Training Program: Individualized training that prepares the customer for employment by developing, implementing, and applying employment readiness skills and capabilities based on the customer's personal career goals.

DeafBlind Training Services: Provides an array of individually targeted services to students who are DeafBlind/hard of hearing and who may need specialized training in the area of DeafBlind resources, hearing aid management, hearing lost strategies, communication and advocacy. This service is provided as an extension of CCRC training programs.

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 to participate in services offered by CCRC.

Non-Visual Training: A training approach which requires the use of blindfolds as a tool for learning alternative techniques.

Proficiency Training Program: Individualized training that builds skills based on the customer's current capabilities and vocational goals. The customer will participate in a variety of classes; the length of training is an average of six to nine months based on the customer's needs.

## POLICY

### General Overview

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.

### Legal Authorization

Although WIOA does not specifically address VR training delivered in a dedicated residential facility, all WIOA regulations related to customer rights, eligibility, and service provision apply to CCRC.

### CCRC Eligibility

The CCRC has certain eligibility requirements that must be met to access their services:

* To be eligible for CCRC services, customers must—
  + Be legally blind or DeafBlind;
  + Be age 18 or older;
  + Have a permanent address to return to during and after training; and
  + Have an active case (i.e., Individualized Plan for Employment [IPE]) with TWC-VR services.
* To be eligible for acceptance, customers must be able to—
  + Fully participate in an eight-hour training day, five days a week;
  + Manage daily personal care, health, and medication;
  + Attend scheduled classes and demonstrate progress;
  + Transfer skills from one setting to another; and
  + Behave in socially appropriate ways and live cooperatively in an adult residential setting.

### CCRC Admissions Tours

Individualized tours to provide general information to customers and their families are a required component of the admissions process.

Customers have an opportunity to—

* Participate in a tour of the physical facility;
* Meet with CCRC staff for individual consultations and to get answers to specific questions;
* Participate in CCRC classes; and
* Meet with current CCRC customers.

The referring TWC-VR Counselor is responsible for providing food, lodging and transportation for the customer to participate in the tour, if necessary.

### Additional Policy Considerations

* Comparable Services and Benefits: CCRC does not have comparable services and benefits; however, any additional TWC-VR services required for a customer must follow their respective policies and procedures.
* Customer Participation in the Cost of Services: CRCC 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

### Referrals to the CCRC Training Program

The following outlines the steps from the customer's initial referral to their arrival at CCRC. The TWC-VR Counselor must contact the CCRC Admissions Coordinator for assistance or to review individual customer circumstances.

1. Expectations of CCRC Customers**:** TWC-VR Counselors are encouraged to share the following with customers when discussing a referral to CCRC:
   * Participating in the CCRC training program is similar to attending college. Customers work with their TWC-VR Counselor, CCRC VR Counselor, and CCRC instructors to choose programs or courses to meet their employment goals and individual needs.
   * CCRC customers participate in evaluative training activities. These activities give customers opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and functional skills.
   * The CCRC VR Counselor compiles the evaluative training recommendations for each customer and schedules the customer for classes.
   * Customers, CCRC VR Counselors, and the referring TWC-VR Counselor, or designee, use information gathered during all training activities to develop training goals and progress training meetings are scheduled on a regular basis.
   * Customers have the option to complete training programs non-visually using sleep shades. Sleep shades help customers minimize their dependence on vision and overcome their fear of blindness. Instructors discuss program and training options with customers during tours on the first day of classes and throughout the training program.
2. CCRC Referral Packet**:** In the CCRC Referral Packet, the following must be provided:
   * Documentation of legal blindness with best correction from a medical eye professional, such as an optometrist, ophthalmologist, or low-vision specialist, when referred to the Proficiency or Career Focus Training Program;
   * Documentation of hearing loss from an audiologist and documentation of vision loss from a medical eye professional when referred to the DeafBlind Training Program;
   * General physical information from a medical professional within the past 12 months;
   * Tuberculosis test results within the past 12 months; and
   * Psychological evaluation/report, if applicable.
3. Special Circumstances Referral Information:Additional information is required for customers with special circumstances.
   * Parole or Probation: If the customer is on parole or probation, they must submit the following:
     + Name, address, and phone number of the parole or probation officer; and
     + Court documents indicating conditions of parole or probation.
   * Substance or Alcohol: If the customer has had a substance or alcohol issue at any time in the past, they must submit the Substance Abuse/Alcohol Abuse Contract.
   * Mental Health Diagnosis: If the customer has a mental health diagnosis, the TWC-VR Counselor must submit a mental health stability statement from the customer's mental health provider stating that the customer—
     + Is stable;
     + Can manage their mental health issues independently;
     + Can manage their prescribed medication independently; and
     + Can participate in an intensive rehabilitation training program.
   * Bloodborne Pathogen-Related Illness: If the customer has bloodborne pathogen-related illness, the TWC-VR Counselor contacts the CCRC Admissions Coordinator before submitting any referral information to ensure protection of confidential information as mandated by Federal law.
   * Diabetes: If a customer has diabetes, the TWC-VR Counselor must submit a diabetes education report documenting that the customer can independently manage their diabetes, to include testing, medication, identifying, and ordering.
   * Hearing Loss or Deafness: If a customer has a hearing loss or deafness, a current audiological report must be included.
   * Personal Attendant Services: Personal attendant services required by customers must be arranged before the customer's admission date and coordinated with the CCRC Admissions Coordinator.
   * If the customer does not have a permanent residence, the TWC-VR Counselor submits written documentation from the residential provider or family member that includes the following:
     + Customer's name;
     + Address;
     + Phone number; and
     + A statement that the customer can return to this residence at any time.
   * If the customer has a guardian assigned by the court, the TWC-VR Counselor submits the following:
     + Legal guardianship papers;
     + *CCRC Parent or Guardian Consent form (VR2050)*; and
     + *CCRC Medical Authorization form (VR2051)*.
   * If the customer is attending a CCRC summer transition program and is under age 18, the TWC-VR Counselor must submit the *VR2051*. (The referral process may occur before age 18, but the customer must have reached the age of 18 before starting the program.)
4. Sending information: The TWC-VR Counselor must send all information to CCRC Admissions by email to [ccrc.admissions@twc.texas.gov](mailto:ccrc.admissions@twc.texas.gov) or by mail to—

**CCRC Admissions Office**

4800 North Lamar

Austin, Texas 78756

The referring TWC-VR Counselor must update the RHW population indicator to include CCRC and submits a referral through the Referral Services List located in the RHW CCRC menu. Once this referral has been saved, a case action will be generated to CCRC Admissions for their review.

CCRC Admissions acknowledges the referral request and subsequent statuses in RHW by—

* + Placing the referral in a Pending status upon receiving initial RHW referral;
  + Placing the referral in an Accepted status when all necessary referral information has been received for the CCRC Referral Packet;
  + Placing the referral in a Scheduled status when a specific date for the service has been determined (the Admissions Coordinator mails an acceptance packet to the customer); and
  + Placing the referral in an Active status for CCRC upon arrival; or
  + Placing the referral in a Not Accepted status when the referral does not meet the admissions criteria, or when the referral declines, cancels, or no-shows on admissions date.

1. Computerized Criminal History Search:CCRC requires that a computerized criminal history (CCH) search be completed on all referrals. Once a customer is referred, CCRC admissions staff run a CCH, regardless of VR status.
2. Active Status at the CCRC: When a customer arrives for the CCRC Training Program, admission staff places the customer in Active status for CCRC training. Upon Active status, the customer is assigned a CRCC VR Counselor who manages the case.

The referring TWC-VR Counselor must mail the complete customer paper file to the assigned CCRC VR Counselor within 15 days of the admission date. After the paper case file is delivered to the receiving office at CCRC, the receiving CCRC Counselor must update the paper file location in RHW using the Paper File Transfer option in the Case Management menu.

### CCRC General Program

The following outlines the sequence of services provided to customers from arrival through completion of training.

1. Orientation: The purpose of the CCRC orientation is to familiarize customers with the philosophy, guidelines, and procedures of CCRC.
2. Evaluation: The purpose of the initial evaluation is to provide each customer with an opportunity to demonstrate the skills they already possess and identify additional/new skills that will assist them in reaching their rehabilitation goals.
3. Program Planning: Program planning occurs following the evaluation. The CCRC Training Team develops recommendations, which are shared with the customer and the CCRC VR Counselor to determine the most appropriate next step for the customer. The referring CCRC VR Counselor is encouraged to participate in the program planning process and is provided with follow-up documentation. The recommended next steps may include the following:
   * Further assessment;
   * Full-time CCRC training; and
   * Alternative training options, other than CCRC training.
4. Training: Customers participate in visual or nonvisual training in one or more of the following categories:
   * Proficiency Training Program;
   * Career Focus Training Program; and/or
   * DeafBlind Training Program.
5. Progress Reviews: The customer and the CCRC VR Counselor meet periodically throughout the customer's training program with the referring TWC-VR Counselor to review training progress. Progress reports must be posted in RHW.
6. Graduation: Upon completion, the customer is recognized for their accomplishments during a graduation ceremony.

### CCRC Training Services

The following describe the training services provided:

* Proficiency Training: The Proficiency Training Program is individualized training that builds skills based on the customer's current capabilities and vocational goals. The customer will participate in a variety of classes; the length of training is an average of six to nine months based on the customer's needs.
  + Core Classes: Required for all General Program customers (Adaptive Skills, Orientation and Mobility, Technology, Career Guidance, and Industrial Arts).
  + Need/Elective: Available by customer request or to meet individual customer circumstances.
* Career Focus Training: The Career Focus Training Program is individualized training that prepares the customer for employment by developing, implementing, and applying employment readiness skills and capabilities based on the customer's personal career goals. This includes self-employment, the Work Experience program, and the Business Enterprise of Texas program. This program focuses on individuals who already have foundational blindness skills.
* DeafBlind Training: The DeafBlind Training Program provides training options within CCRC. Customers receive training tailored to meet the specialized needs of individuals who are DeafBlind to obtain skills for independent living and employment.
* Outreach Services: CCRC provides outreach services in the TWC-VR regions, including mini-training, career focus training, and college preparation. CCRC works in partnership with the TWC-VR regions to assist customers in making informed choices about whether or not CCRC may serve their rehabilitation, training, and educational needs.
* Residential Services: All students are expected to follow the guidelines outlined in the CCRC Student Handbook provided during the admissions process.

All rooms at CCRC accommodate two residents. Customers living in the CCRC residential hall are expected to share a room with another customer of the same gender. Exceptions may be made to sharing rooms (e.g., customers with a dog guide, customers who require an accessible room). Preference for residential services is given to customers living outside Austin.

CCRC serves meals to customers at no cost. Special dietary arrangements can be made upon request.

CCRC residents and day students are expected to make their own arrangements or work with their TWC-VR Counselor for transportation to and from CCRC for CCRC training.

* Post-CCRC Plans: Documentation of the customer's training services, and next step plans must be documented in RHW. The customer’s electronic case is transferred from the CCRC VR Counselor to the TWC-VR Counselor via RHW.

The CCRC VR Counselor must mail the complete customer paper file to the assigned TWC-VR Counselor within 15 days of the completion date. After the paper case file is delivered to the receiving TWC-VR office, the receiving TWC-VR VR Counselor, or designee, must update the paper file location in RHW using the Paper File Transfer option in the Case Management menu.

If a customer moves to another region before completing the CCRC program, the case is transferred back to the referring TWC-VR Counselor or Program Coordinator before any decision is made about case transfer.

## 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 |