# PART E, CHAPTER 3.2:OPENING, TRANSFERRING, AND PHASE ADJUSTING CASE RECORDS

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| **Policy Number** | **Authority** | **Scope**  | **Effective Date** |
| Part E, Chapter 3.2 | N/A | 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 opening, phase adjusting, and transferring case records.

## DEFINITIONS

Case Record: Refers to the entirety of the case record, including electronic data in RHW, the paper file, and virtual case file.

Caseload: Refers to case records assigned to a VR Counselor.

Electronic Case File: Refers to information pertaining to a case entered into RHW, TWC-VR's case management system. Database record that documents the process and contains all the information collected and the documents generated throughout the VR process for an individual customer by TWC-VR staff, such as the Initial Contact, Application, Case Notes, and Plans phases.

Good Faith Effort: When TWC-VR staff make three or more attempts to contact the customer, on more than one date, and using more than one method of contact (e.g., phone, email, SARA).

Paper Case File: The hard copy or printed records associated with a customer’s TWC-VR case.

Phases: Specific points in RHW assigned to track the movement of a case through the VR process (e.g., application); also referred to as a "status."

Phase Adjustments: When changes are made to a closed case (e.g., case was closed but is phase adjusted to “active” status to provide additional services).

Virtual Case File: A non-paper version of the case file hosted electronically and ultimately residing in TEAMS. The virtual case file is used to organize and logically provide access to customer-related information obtained from, relevant to, and/or used on behalf of the customer during or as the result of the receipt of TWC-VR or OIB services.

## POLICY

### General Overview

TWC-VR staff open case records for a variety of reasons, such as potentially eligible students with disabilities, referrals, and applicants, including phase adjustments under certain circumstances. It is crucial for TWC-VR staff to adhere to outlined requirements and procedures to ensure compliance with regulations, accurate documentation, and effective service delivery.

Following these requirements ensures that each case is managed consistently and transparently, facilitating optimal outcomes for customers. Detailed record-keeping also supports accountability and enables effective monitoring and evaluation of the services provided.

Case records may be transferred to another TWC-VR office or caseload for several reasons, including changes in the customer's location, the need for specialized services available in a different office, or caseload vacancies. Transfers ensure that customers continue to receive appropriate and timely support, tailored to their evolving needs and circumstances. Proper management and transfer of case records are vital for maintaining continuity of care and for the customer to successfully achieve an employment outcome.

## PROCEDURES

### Customer with an Open VR Case

When a customer makes contact with a TWC-VR office but has an open VR case in a different management unit, the VR Counselor must clarify whether the customer is requesting a case transfer.

If the customer wants to continue receiving services through the assigned management unit, the VR Counselor provides the customer with the contact information for—

* The assigned unit; and
* The assigned VR Counselor.

The VR Counselor must document the contact in RHW.

### Transferring Cases and Caseloads

A customer's case record can be transferred from one caseload to another caseload for a variety of reasons; however, a case record must not be transferred when a customer temporarily moves outside of the service area to—

* Attend training;
* Live in a supportive residential facility;
* Participate in services from a comprehensive rehabilitation center other than Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC); or
* Participate in other planned services outside of the service area.

A request for case transfer can be made by the customer either verbally or in writing.

The request can be submitted to—

* The VR Counselor of record; or
* Any TWC-VR office.

The VR Counselor or office receiving the request for transfer must—

* Document the request in a case note; and
* If necessary, notify the TWC-VR staff of the request.

### Transferring Open Cases

Within three business days of receiving a request to transfer an open case, the current VR Counselor and RA team must—

* Document the request for a transfer, including the reason that the case is being transferred and the office to which it is being transferred;
* Update all demographic information in RHW;
* Review and/or update the IPE, joint annual review (JAR), or IPE amendment (for the VR Counselor only);
* Review and/or update disability information in RHW (for the VR Counselor only);
* Close or update all service records;
* Pay and/or close all service authorizations (SA); and
* Notify the VR Manager about the request for a case transfer.

Providers must be notified when SAs are closed without payment. The receiving TWC-VR office must issue a new SA when the case is received for ongoing services, when applicable.

1. Transferring within the Same Management Unit: A formal case review is not required for cases that are transferred within the same management unit; however, the VR Manager, VR Supervisor, or designee must transfer the case and enter a RHW case note to verify that the transfer has been completed.

The VR Counselor to which the case is assigned must contact the customer in a timely manner to schedule an appointment to resume services.

1. Transferring to a Different Management Unit: Within five business days of receiving a request for a case transfer, the transferring VR Manager, VR Supervisor, or Unit Support Coordinator—
	* Completes a partial Vocational Rehabilitation/Older Individuals Who are Blind Process (VR/OIBP) Review to include Process B: Application and Diagnostic Interview and Process D: Eligibility in TxROCS. (If applicable, reviewers must also complete Process C: Trial Work Services);
	* Prints or adds to the electronic case file a copy of the completed case review;
	* Sends the case file and the copy of completed case review to the receiving office by using email for electronic case files or certified mail for paper case files;
	* Completes *Case Transfer Letter (VR1025)*, notifying the customer that their file has been sent to the receiving office; and
	* Files a copy of the transfer letter in the customer's case file.

Within three business days of receiving the paper case file, the receiving VR Manager, VR Supervisor, or designee must—

* + Assign the case to the receiving counselor in RHW;
	+ Enter a case note verifying that the case was received and assigned; and
	+ Notify the VR Counselor that the case was assigned.
1. Transferring a Transition Services Case: An individual who is a student with a disability and is working with a Transition VR Counselor (TVRC) is transferred to a general VR caseload after they no longer meet the "student with a disability" definition and have demonstrated regular participation in planned services. Typically, students who are assigned to a VR Counselor with a dual caseload (one that includes adults as well as students and youth) are not transferred to another caseload. Instead, they continue services with the same VR Counselor until they are ready for closure of the case.

When a student no longer meets the "student with a disability" definition, the TVRC can transfer the case to a general VR Counselor caseload, unless they are ready for successful closure. In that case, the TVRC may close the case successfully.

Unless the student is moving to a new region, the student should have at least one joint contact with the TVRC and the receiving VR Counselor before the transfer to discuss pertinent issues and facilitate the process. The student's IPE must be followed unless amended by the VR Counselor and the student.

When there are questions related to transferring a student from transition services to general VR services, they are addressed by the VR Manager. In some cases, it may be appropriate for a case to be transferred before the end of the student’s eligibility for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). VR Manager exceptions may be documented to allow for individual circumstances when the "Other" transfer reason is used in RHW, such as when a customer is enrolled and making progress in postsecondary education but will be continuing with Pre-ETS.

### Transferring Closed Cases

If the customer will be reapplying for services and the paper case file is still at a local TWC-VR office at the time of the request, the closed case file must be sent using certified mail to the receiving office within three business days of the request for a transfer.

If a customer's closed paper case file has been transferred to the RMC, TWC-VR staff retrieves the paper case files from the RMC in accordance with TWC Records and Information Management Manual, Records Storage.

A closed case must not be transferred from one caseload to another caseload in RHW.

1. Transfer of an Entire Caseload: To transfer an entire caseload, the Regional Director will send a memorandum to the TWC-VR Director requesting—
	* Approval; and
	* Coordination of the transfer.

Additional guidance for transfer of an entire caseload will be provided by State Office Executive Management.

1. Transfer of a Case Record Using RHW: Once the case record is delivered to the receiving local TWC-VR office, the receiving VR Manager, VR Supervisor, or designee must transfer the case in RHW. If the case is sent to TWC RMC, the management unit mailing the case must transfer the case in RHW.

### Notifying the Customer of the Transfer

When a customer is reassigned from one VR Counselor to another, the customer must be notified by the current VR Counselor or a rehabilitation assistant (RA) before the case is reassigned.

The notification must include the following:

* Date of the anticipated change; and
* Name and contact information of the new VR Counselor.

If the date and contact information are not known at the time of the notification, the customer is provided with the VR Manager's contact information until information for the new VR Counselor is available.

Case transfers must be processed in a timely manner to ensure that the transfer does not disrupt or delay the provision of services or cause undue hardship for the customer.

In all case transfers, the receiving VR Counselor must contact the transferring VR Counselor within five business days of receiving the customer's file to staff the case and discuss any outstanding issues.

### Opening a New Case and Phase Adjustments

When a customer has a TWC-VR case that was previously closed and is requesting services again, the VR Counselor determines whether to—

* Open a new case;
* Adjust the phase of the case to provide post-employment services within the program year quarter a case was closed; or
* Adjust the phase of the case in RHW within the program year quarter the case was closed, only if the case was closed—
	+ Successfully or unsuccessfully after Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE); or
	+ Before case assignment.

The customer's request to apply for additional services must not be delayed or denied on the basis that the customer has received services from TWC-VR in the past.

### Opening a New Case for a Closed Case

TWC-VR staff must follow the procedures for each type of closed case.

1. Opening a New Case for a Previous Unsuccessful Closure: A new case may be opened for a customer who has received TWC-VR services in the past. The VR Counselor opens a new case record in the same way as for any other individual requesting services.

As a part of the diagnostic interview and the comprehensive assessment, the VR Counselor must—

* + Review the circumstances related to the previous unsuccessful closure by reading the documentation for that previous case,
	+ When necessary, obtain a copy of the previous virtual and/or paper case file; and
	+ Document in RHW the reasons for opening a new case.
1. Opening a New Case for a Previous Successful Closure: When a customer requests additional TWC-VR services after the customer's case has been closed successfully, the VR Counselor must first consider what level of services the customer requires.

If the customer requires only limited services to maintain, regain, or advance in employment, the VR Counselor must phase adjust the case if it is within the program year quarter of the successful closure.

The VR Counselor opens a new case record if the—

* + Customer requires more complex and comprehensive services, or
	+ Successful closure is outside of the program year quarter in which the case was closed.

As a part of the diagnostic interview and the comprehensive assessment process, the VR Counselor must—

* + Review the circumstances related to the previously successful closure by reading the documentation on the previous case; and
	+ Document in RHW the reasons for opening a new case.

### Phase Adjustments for a Closed Case

Phase adjustments must be used only when the--

* Case was closed either successfully or unsuccessfully after the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE); or
* Case was closed before application (potentially eligible cases only); and
* Phase adjustment is within the program year quarter the case was closed.

TWC-VR staff must follow the procedures for each type of phase adjustment.

1. Closure after IPE Is Returned to Active Status: To request and complete a phase adjustment from a closed status after IPE back to an active status, the VR Counselor must—
	* Review the case and gather information from the customer to ensure that a phase adjustment is appropriate;
	* Select the Phase Adjustment Request tab from the case in RHW;
	* Select the Save tab to set the approval status to pending and to generate an action for the VR Supervisor in RHW; and
	* Document the justification for the phase adjustment in a case note that will automatically open in RHW when the phase adjustment request is saved.

The VR Supervisor must take the following steps:

* + Review and approve or deny the phase adjustment request in RHW by selecting the Phase Adjustment Approval tab:
	+ Document the approval or non-approval of the decision for the phase adjustment in a case note in RHW; and
	+ Notify the VR Counselor that the phase adjustment was approved or denied.
1. Unsuccessful Closure Changed to a Successful Closure after IPE: If a customer whose case was closed as an unsuccessful closure became employed during the same program year quarter in which the case was closed, the VR Counselor must first complete the phase adjustment process.

To change an unsuccessful closure after IPE to a successful closure, the VR Counselor must take the following steps:

* + Review the case to ensure that all criteria for Successful Closure are met;
	+ Update the employment information in RHW;
	+ Select the Phase Adjustment Request tab from the case in RHW;
	+ Select the Save tab to set the approval status to pending and to generate an action for the VR Supervisor in RHW; and
	+ Document the justification for the phase adjustment in a case note that will automatically open in RHW when the phase adjustment request is saved.

The VR Supervisor must take the following steps:

* + Review and approve or deny the phase adjustment request in RHW by selecting the Phase Adjustment Approval tab;
	+ Document the approval or non-approval of the decision for the phase adjustment in a case note in RHW; and
	+ Notify the VR Counselor that the phase adjustment was approved or denied.

If the phase adjustment is approved, the VR Counselor closes the case as a successful closure in RHW.

1. Successful Closure Changed to Unsuccessful Closure after IPE: If a case was closed as a successful closure but did not meet the criteria for a successful closure, the VR Counselor must first complete the phase adjustment process above.

The VR Supervisor must review and approve or deny the phase adjustment request in RHW by selecting the Phase Adjustment Approval tab from the case in RHW.

If the change is approved, the VR Counselor must close the case as an unsuccessful closure in RHW.

1. Closure Before Application is Returned to Potentially Eligible with Case Assignment (for Pre-ETS only): In order to request and complete a phase adjustment from a Closure before Application to Potentially Eligible with Case Assignment, the VR Counselor must take the following steps:
	* Review the case and gather information from the customer to ensure that a phase adjustment is appropriate;
	* Select the Phase Adjustment Request tab from the case in RHW;
	* Select the Save tab to set the approval status to pending and to generate an action for the VR Supervisor in RHW; and
	* Document the justification for the phase adjustment in a case note that will automatically open in RHW when the phase adjustment request is saved.

The VR Supervisor must take the following steps:

* + Review and approve or deny the phase adjustment request in RHW by selecting the Phase Adjustment Approval tab from the case in RHW;
	+ If the phase adjustment is approved, save the Phase Adjustment Approval page as approved in the Management Unit Supervisor Approval drop-down;
	+ If the phase adjustment is denied, save the Phase Adjustment Approval page with Denied in the Management Unit Supervisor Approval drop-down;
	+ Documents the approval or non-approval of the decision for the phase adjustment in a case note in RHW;
	+ Notify the VR Counselor that the phase adjustment was approved or denied.

If the case does not meet the criteria for Pre-ETS eligibility (e.g., student with a disability), the case will not be phase adjusted.

## APPROVALS & CONSULTATIONS

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

* *VR Supervisor approval is required when a phase adjustment is within the same program year quarter.*
* *Deputy Division Director of Field Services Delivery approval is required when a phase adjustment is outside of the program year quarter and must be sent by email to* *vr.rhwsupport@twc.texas.gov* *to phase adjust the case after approval.*
* *Deputy Division Director of Field Services Delivery approval is required for exceptions to standard TxROCS User Roles.*
* *VR Regional Director approval is required when transferring an entire caseload.*

**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 |