

# **Service Descriptions for Vocational Rehabilitation Providers**

## **South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services & Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired**

This document identifies the descriptions and guidelines of services commonly used by the local Division of Rehabilitation (DRS) and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) offices. This document is released to providers for guidance in services commonly purchased by DRS and SBVI offices.

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## VOCATIONAL EVALUATION SERVICES

“Vocational evaluation” is an appraisal of an individual’s capability. It includes assessing patterns of appropriate work behavior, the individual’s ability to acquire occupational skills and providing services enabling an individual to select an appropriate vocational goal. It is a planned and systematic sequence of vocational assessments, which uses reliable and valid instruments developed for the individual’s type and degree of disability.

Vocational evaluations are categorized into three categories types; Comprehensive, Limited and Situational Evaluation. These evaluations can be utilized individually or in combination with each other for a more complete assessment of the client’s capabilities. The selection and type of evaluation utilized should be based upon the client’s needs and the necessity to obtain vocational information. The counselor and client should select which evaluation categories to use based upon what questions need to be answered by a vocational evaluation.

### Components of a Comprehensive and Limited Vocational Evaluation

Evaluation Component	Minimum Requirements of a Comprehensive Evaluation	Minimum Requirements of a Limited Evaluation
Aptitude testing	A	A
Achievement/verbal testing	A	A
Personality/Emotional testing	A	A
Interest testing	A	A
Work sampling	A	B
Specific occupational testing	A	B
Career guidance/exploration	A	C
Job seeking skills evaluation	B or C	B or C
Cognitive testing	A	A
Perceptual/Sensory testing	A	A
Work history explored & compiled	C	C
Physical capacities assessed	A	A
Motor dexterity skills	A	A
Transportation assessed	B or C	B or C

**A** = Commercial tests could include Valpar, Views, McCarron Dial, other commercial testing tools, or evaluations from a specialist such as physical therapist and occupational therapist.

**B** = In-house test/forms designed by the provider

**C** = Area assessed by interviewing the client and/or other key people

### COMPREHENSIVE VOCATIONAL EVALUATION

The Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation must utilize at a MINIMUM 11 of the 14 components listed above. This evaluation is provided one-to-one with the client and involves approximately 30 to 40 hours of the client’s time.

## **LIMITED VOCATIONAL EVALUATION**

The Limited Vocational Evaluation must utilize at a MINIMUM 5 and a MAXIMUM 10 of the 14 following components listed above. The evaluation is provided on-to-one with the client and involves approximately 15 to 20 hours of client's time.

## **EMPLOYMENT SKILLS TRAINING**

Employment Skills Training is the provision of training in preparation for competitive integrated community employment. The training is individualized based upon the person's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. The training typically is no longer than 12 weeks in length, unless approval for additional time in training is approved by the District Supervisor or the Division Assistant Director. The Employment Skills Training must have measurable objectives and outcomes from the training program. This service MUST include job preparation classes or instruction. Individuals should receive training on interviewing for jobs, completing applications and other job seeking skills. Providers of this service need to have their program approved by the State Office. Full-time is a minimum of 30 training hours per week. If 30 hours is not possible, the service should be pro-rated to half-time.

## **JOB READINESS CLASS (previously Pre-Employment Classes)**

As part of a comprehensive assessment, job training class is a job preparation class or instruction to assist the client in preparing for future employment. It may include but should not be limited to training on interviewing techniques, filling out job applications, completing a resume, obtaining references, encouraging job preparation activities such as volunteering, mentoring, job shadow experiences and completing interest and aptitude testing. It can be done on a one-to-one basis or as part of an employment class or group. It is done without the Employment Skills Training and is billed on an hourly basis by the provider.

## **JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES**

Job placement services include assisting the client in finding employment at minimum wage or above and in competitive integrated employment setting. The service can include orientating the client to the job demands and informing the employer about the client's abilities and special needs. Placement services will consist of a maximum of 25 hours of job placement related activities per job placement package authorization or successful placement of the client into competitive integrated employment. The following service components are all considered components of a job placement package, but the scope of services must be individualized to best assist the client to obtain competitive integrated employment. The counselor and client should identify which of the following placement services are needed to obtain employment. The provider should individualize the placement services based upon these needs. Job placement package services can include the following as needed by the client.

- A. Collaboration with employment agencies.
- B. Employer contact and job development.
- C. Task analysis and job restructuring.
- D. Job negotiation and job carving with an employer.
- E. Individual instruction in job seeking skills, identification of current and potential job openings and development of a job seeking plan.
- F. Individual counseling on job retention skills.
- G. Personal assistance in conducting job interviews.
- H. Assistance with basic resume building or development of a master application

**Up to 5 hours of JPP services can be used for interview prep and resume development. If more time will be needed to assist the individual with this, ES services can be used.**

I. Consulting and advising on job adjustment and/or client/employer conflicts.

There should be a periodic review of the job seeking plan and related job placement services. A written report should be furnished to the rehabilitation counselor monthly, including an itemized description of services, date of service, time spent providing services, and a summary of services with future recommendations.

**\*\*\* Successful Placement**

The fee rate for a successful placement will be paid to the provider after the individual placed has worked a minimum of “one work week,” where the employment is competitive integrated employment and at least minimum wage. This “one work week” will be based upon the average number of hours the individual will be working each week on a regular basis. Example: For an individual who was hired for a job that is 40 hours per week, this would mean they would be required to maintain employment for 40 hours before placement is paid. For an individual who was hired for a job that is 18 hours per week, this would mean they would be required to maintain employment for 18 hours before successful placement is paid. If the schedule varies, it will be based upon an average work week. For example, if the person is hired to work 15 to 20 hours per week, they would be required to work 17 hours before the placement is paid.

This incentive is paid only after the counselor has reviewed the placement. The counselor has the discretion regarding whether to pay when the placement is for “significantly” fewer hours than the stated employment goal on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or is significantly different than the stated employment goal on the IPE. . For example, if a client stated a goal of 30 hours per week but the placement is for 15 hours per week, payment for the placement can be authorized by the counselor if the client expresses satisfaction with the placement. However, if the client still wants a 30 hour per week job, it is not considered that placement has occurred until that goal is reached, either with a new job at that number of hours or with a second placement so that the total number of hours worked per week is satisfactory to the client. If the client continues to work at the job with fewer hours for more than 90 days, the counselor should further review the goal with the client and determine if they are in fact satisfied with the job and successful placement and closure can occur.

Job placements that are less than 10 hours per week must be reviewed by the SBVI Assistant Director or the DRS District Supervisor and may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Additionally, successful placement should be employment that is consistent with the individual’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. The placement should also be in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the individual’s informed choice. This fee rate is not contingent upon the case being closed successfully rehabilitated.

**\*\*\* Employed for 90 days**

An incentive will be paid if the individual placed maintains employment for 90 consecutive days. Successfully Employed closure (AKA 26 closure) does NOT need to take place for this incentive to be paid.

### **\*\*\* Successfully Employed closure (AKA 26 closure)**

An incentive will be paid if the individual placed maintains employment for 90 consecutive days and Successfully Employed closure takes place. District Supervisors can approve payment of this incentive under certain circumstances even when the case is not being immediately closed successfully employed by the VR Counselor.

### **\*\*\* Employed for 90 days & Successful Employed closure (AKA 26 closure) without Job Placement Services**

The Employed for 90 days and Successful Employed closure incentives may be planned and authorized when the client is already employed or has recently obtained employment without the services of a provider. If supports such as job coaching and/or follow along (or other supports) result in successful employment for a minimum of 90 days, the incentives for Employed for 90 days & Successful Employed closure (without Job Placement) may be paid if planned for and authorized and/or approved by the District Supervisor.

### **\*\*\* Wages Incentive**

- **Wages Incentive – Level I**

A wage incentive will be paid if the individual's income, at the time of the Successfully Employed closure, meets or exceeds 40% above the State of South Dakota minimum hourly wage rate. This incentive is NOT paid at placement, only when the case is successfully closed.

- **Wage Incentive – Level II**

A wage incentive will be paid if the individual's income, at the time of the Successfully Employed closure, meets or exceeds 60% above the State of South Dakota minimum hourly wage rate. This incentive is NOT paid at placement, only when the case is successfully closed.

NOTE: If client meets Level II wages, both Level I and Level II incentives will be paid.

### **\*\*\* Social Security Recipient Incentive**

To assist Social Security recipients in increasing their hours and wages, a referral to a Benefits Specialist for benefit analysis and on-going education by the VR counselor should take place. This will allow for full understanding of the Social Security Administration (SSA) incentives and will serve to reduce dependency on benefits and improve the client's quality of life.

- **Social Security Recipient Incentive I**

An incentive will be paid at the time of the Successfully Employed closure (AKA 26 closure), if the client is a Social Security Recipient and is working at Trial Work Level (TWL) or higher. This incentive is NOT paid at placement, only when the case is successfully closed.

- **Social Security Recipient Incentive II**

An incentive will be paid at the time of the Successfully Employed closure (AKA 26 closure), if the client is a Social Security Recipient and working at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) or higher. This incentive is NOT paid at placement, only when the case is successfully closed.

NOTE: If the client is working at TWL and working at SGA, both Incentives I and II will be paid. Also, providers may collect on both the Wage incentives and the SSA incentives.

### **\*\*\* Unsuccessful Placement**

The fee rate for an unsuccessful placement should be paid to the provider when they have completed 25 hours of job placement and the individual has not obtained competitive integrated employment that is consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. If individuals discontinue their job placement services prior to the end of the 25 hours, the provider can prorate these services. For cases of unsuccessful placement that cross fiscal years, billing by the provider should be done at the annual service rate in which most of the time was spent in providing the service.

### **JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

There are occasions where the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will purchase job placement services for students with disabilities while they are attending secondary education. This is most common when a student is not on an IEP or the student will be doing an employer paid work experience. If the student is on an IEP, then the school should be participating in Project Skills where the school is responsible for the job placement and job coaching.

If the student is in their final year of school and does not plan on continuing with any postsecondary training, then the job placement package and incentives should be authorized. If the student is not in their final year of school or will continue with postsecondary education, then the hourly job placement services should be authorized.

### **UNDERSERVED TERRITORY INCENTIVE**

An Underserved Territory Incentive was created to help provide consistent, adequate services in areas typically not served or underserved by employment service providers. Providers will be able bill an additional amount indicated on the plan and authorization **after providing 10 hours of direct services to the client**. This is to provide coverage of extra expenses incurred in serving more rural/underserved areas of South Dakota as an incentive to increase services in these areas. If a provider is providing Vocational Rehabilitation services in the following counties or in other areas upon District Supervisor approval, they will be eligible to receive this incentive. This will be in addition, not in place of, compensation for travel.

The counties included in this incentive include Bennet County, Campbell County, Clark County (southern part), Clay County (outside of Vermillion), Corson County, Day County, Dewey County, Edmunds County, Faulk County, Haakon County, Hand County, Harding County, Hyde County, Jackson County, Jones County, Kingsbury County (Western part), Lincoln County (southern part), Marshall County, McPherson County, Mellette County, Oglala Lakota County, Perkins County, Potter County, Roberts County, Spink, Sully County, Todd County, Turner County, Union County, Walworth County and Ziebach County. **While this is a general outline, if you have a unique situation where you feel you have an underserved area outside of these counties, Underserved Territory Incentives can be provided per consultation with the VR Counselor/District Supervisor.**



## **JOB COACHING SERVICES**

Job coaching services are time-limited services needed to support individuals with severe disabilities in employment. Skilled trainers (job coaches) provide these services. The length of services depends on individual's needs and is provided on a one-on-one arrangement. The job coach should work with the employer to learn the job skills then begin training the client. Next the job coach begins training the client working one-on-one initially and gradually fading out as the client becomes more job proficient. Job coaching is purchased on an hourly basis. When determining job coaching hours needed and to be authorized, the VR Counselor will consider the provider staff recommendations, the job requirements, the skill level of the client, and the severity of the disability.

## **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

Employment Services are individualized services provided in an independent setting that enables the client to prepare, obtain, and/or maintain their employment. Employment Services may also include services provided during a comprehensive assessment and are separate from Situational Assessment evaluation hours. **The VR Counselor should be specific on the IPE regarding what services are being requested AND communication this thoroughly to the provider.** Services provided through Employment Services may include but are not limited to:

- Assisting the individual with extensive resume writing
  - Basic resume writing is included in JPP services
- Extensive interview preparation skills
  - Basic interview prep is included in JPP services
- Assistance with purchasing appropriate clothing for interviews
- Providing disability training to employers
- On-on-one job preparation training, etc.
- This service could also include meetings requested by the VR Counselor.

These services are separate from the job placement activities which are covered under the Job Placement Package.

## **FOLLOW-ALONG SERVICES**

Follow-Along Services are individualized services provided in an independent setting that enables the client to maintain their employment as this occurs after placement has occurred. These services are necessary for monitoring the individual after starting a job. The length of services is based on the individual's needs to assure smooth transition into employment. If this service is needed long-term, a referral must be made to a more appropriate long-term funding source. Individuals receiving Home Community Based Services (HCBS) are already being funded for follow-along services and HCBS would be a comparable benefit.

## **SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

Situational assessments are essentially the observations of people performing work situations in real work settings to assess the persons skills, preferences, and support needs in that particular environment. It involves a practice of observing, evaluating, and reporting over a period. During this assessment, a client's behavior and work performance in a job situation and interaction with other employees is observed. This type of evaluation helps the client learn the role of a worker

and allows the evaluator to assess many more work behaviors than can be explored with standardized vocational testing approaches.

### **Requirements**

For situational assessments to be effective, an appropriate work site must be utilized, adequate supervision provided and a means to gather information. Situational assessments funded by DRS and SBVI must include the following requirements:

1. Work site must be with a business in the community meeting the requirements of a competitive integrated employment setting;
2. Work site must be in the client's interest and choice;
3. Work site must not be part of an enclave, mobile crew or other group models.
4. Client must perform the work duties as part of the assessment. Receiving a tour or observing a job is not considered part of a situational assessment; and
5. Observations and comments will be recorded on a Situational Assessment report form DHS-RS-347.

### **Hours Authorized**

The number of hours authorized needs to be individualized based upon the employment setting, difficulty of the job, individual's stamina, and other potential factors. The billable time for a situational assessment is the actual amount of time the provider spends with the client at the job site or gathering information from the employer for input in assessment. Up to 10 situational assessment hours can be authorized by the counselor to allow the provider time to develop assessment sites. The counselor needs to be contacted by the provider for approval when more than 10 hours have been utilized on trying to develop sites for the situational assessment(s). Additional hours can be authorized at the counselor's discretion up to a maximum of 25 hours utilized.

### **What Happens when the Situational Assessment turns into Permanent Employment?**

Good situational assessments are developed specifically to meet the needs and interest of a client. At times good situational assessments will lead into permanent employment for an individual. If the situational assessment results in permanent employment, the provider will receive an authorization and payment for the base job placement package and all job placement incentives that are met. These incentives are described above in this manual. The reimbursement for the base "Successfully Employed" incentive will be reimbursed when the individual has been employed on the employer's payroll for one week. All other job placement incentives will be paid when the client's case is closed successfully rehabilitated.

### **Insurance Coverage**

The most significant barrier to establish an employment site for a situational assessment is the employer's concern on insurance coverage. A copy of the insurance policy can be found on VRFACES or obtained from the State Office and has been purchased specifically for DRS & SBVI clients participating in situational assessments. This policy will cover \$10,000 for medical expenses and \$5,000 for death benefits. Only DRS or SBVI clients who are authorized for a situational assessment are covered under this policy. This includes individuals being served through the outcome-based mental health contracts. Feel free to share a copy of this policy with the employer and providers.

In the event a client gets injured or dies during a situational assessment, please contact the DRS or SBVI Assistant Director as soon as possible. An "Accident Claim Form" needs to be obtained from the State Office and completed immediately, and then returned to the State Office.

## **CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT**

Customized Employment (CE) means: Individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both. It is based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the person with a disability, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of the employer. It may include employment developed through job carving, self-employment or entrepreneurial initiatives, or other job development or restructuring strategies that result in job responsibilities being customized and individually negotiated to fit the needs of individuals with a disability.

### **The Essential Elements of Customized Employment**

- Negotiation of job duties with the employer.
- Individualization, involving a job for one person.
- Negotiated pay of at least the minimum wage.
- CE occurs in businesses in the community (not on the provider's payroll) that meets the requirement of Competitive Integrated Employment or in businesses owned by the individual.
- CE facilitates mutually beneficial voluntary employment relationships.
- A qualitative "no fail" process that presumes that all individuals can work and includes discovery of the employment seeker to determine the employment seeker's strengths needs and interests.
- Customized self-employment or customized wage employment, as chosen by the individual.
- CE is best used to meet the needs of employment seekers with disabilities who have not been or are unlikely to be successful with traditional or supported employment.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation Funding for Customized Employment**

The Vocational Rehabilitation program can fund Customized Employment (including Discovery) from providers who:

- have completed the certification for Employment Services with an Emphasis on Customized Employment by the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE <http://www.acreducators.org/certificates>);
- have completed the on-line mentoring program through GRIFFIN-HAMMIS ASSOCIATES
- utilize the VR approved Discovery report form (DISCOVERING PERSONAL GENIUS STAGING RECORD); and
- Receive prior approval from the VR Counselor for Customized Employment and the VR Counselor is included from the beginning in all aspects of the Discovery/Customized Employment

### **Candidates for Customized Employment**

Customized Employment can benefit most individuals and does not exclude anyone that could benefit from this level of service. Vocational Rehabilitation has prioritized this service and funding for individuals who meet the following categories;

- have the most significant disabilities;
- would not be successful in a current job position even with supported employment;

- would require the job to be carved out from a current position, negotiated to meet the employer’s needs or be a business within a business concept;
- be eligible or receive long term supports

### **Discovery**

Discovery is a thorough description of a job seeker to better determine how to proceed with the next step, Job Development. Discovery is never used to assess what the employment seeker can and cannot do before deciding whether to authorize more services. Discovery assumes employability with needed supports and is not to be used to determine whether someone is employable or designated as “unemployable.” If VR is to pay for Discovery, VR Counselors must be involved before starting Discovery, services pre-authorized and be included in the part of the team.

The Discovery process consists of six steps and all must be fully completed and evaluated by the VR counselor/Discovery Fidelity Administrator to be considered a successful discovery process that is ready to proceed to Job Negotiation/Placement and Job Maintenance. Discovery should take 20-40 hours over a five to nine-week timeframe. Timeliness in completing steps is essential to keep the process moving forward. Discovery will be authorized and billed using the current fee rate in the following service categories:

- Initial Discovery (Stages 1-4) will be authorized billed at an hourly rate with 30 hours initially authorized. Additional hours can be authorized if needed and only actual hours of services can be billed.
- Vocational Profile (Stage 5) is authorized and billed at a flat service rate.
- Job Development Planning Meeting (Stage 6) is authorized and billed at a flat service rate.
- CE Visual Resume (optional) is authorized and billed at a flat service rate.
  - Requirements needed to bill for the resume include (at minimum)
    - The individuals three theme’s with descriptions of why it is a theme for the person
    - Important to/Needed Supports
    - At least three pictures taken throughout the Discovery Process
    - Quotes from references
  - VR Counselors can provide a sample resume at providers request.

Billing of CE services should be done monthly for **completed** stages of the discovery process. If a stage is started in a month but not completed, that stage cannot be billed for until it is complete. While the full Discovery Staging Record does not need to be submitted each month, the information that will be eventually included in the DSR should be put on the regular monthly reports to submit with the billing. Once all six stages are complete, the full Discovery Staging record should be submitted to the VR counselor for review and approval before the job search process begins.

### **Job Development/Negotiation/Customization**

This process involves contacting employers in the community for competitive integrated employment. This service will include selecting an employer and negotiating wages, supports, and job duties that are mutually beneficial for the job seeker and employer. This portion of services occurs in the business community with the job seeker involved as they desire. The role of the

employment specialist in this part of the process is multi-layered and critical for success. This person should have exceptional skills (developed through ACRE training) in getting to know clients, contacting/communicating with businesses, and negotiation. This process is unique compared to typical job search practices as it works under the assumptions that providers should avoid job openings and view the job seeker as the primary customer. This process should include the following elements.

- Determining essential vs. ideal job features with the job seeker/teem
- Creating a presentation of Customized Employment for providers for consistency
- Using connections in business to build awareness of CE
- Using strategies to help businesses identify their needs
- Creating and emphasizing an informational relationship with the employer
- Creating a customized job description based on the job seekers goals and identified business needs
- Disclosing personal information about the job seeker on their terms
- Negotiating a support plan with providers

Customized Employment Job Development, Negotiation, and Customization will be authorized and billed using the current fee rate in the following service categories:

- Job Development, Negotiation, and Customization will be authorized and billed at an hourly rate with 30 hours initially authorized. Additional hours can be authorized if needed and only actual hours of services can be billed.
- Job Placement Incentives
  - Successful Job Placement (follow description in Job Placement Services);
  - Employed for 90 days (follow description in Job Placement Services);
  - Successful VR case closure (follow description in Job Placement Services);
  - Equal or greater than 20 hours of employment per week (billed at time of VR Closure with verification of hours); and
  - Wage is equal or greater than 20% over current minimum wage (billed at time of VR Closure with verification of earnings).

### **Employment Training and Supports**

Individuals participating in Customized Employment will need Job Coaching, Follow Along and on-going long term supports. The Vocational Rehabilitation program can authorize and fund the necessary job coaching to train the individual on the job tasks. Job Coaching is authorized and paid on an hourly rate. Time limited follow along services can also be funded unless the individual receives Home Based Community Services (HCBS) funding that already includes this service. Follow along services can also be authorized and paid on an hourly rate. Funding from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is time limited and long term supports must be identified early in the Customized Employment process.

### **INDEPENDENT LIVING EVALUATION AND SERVICES**

Independent living (IL) evaluations and IL services can be provided from a Center for Independent Living as a comparable benefit or if these services are not readily available, the evaluation and services can be purchased from community rehabilitation programs or private providers. The IL evaluation must be done in the individual's home unless approved by the VR Counselor. IL evaluations can also include other community observations such as shopping at the grocery store or depositing money at the bank. The VR counselor must meet with the provider to identify the areas

of independent living that will be evaluated. If VR funds the evaluation, the VR Counselor will authorize an estimated number of hours needed to conduct the evaluation. The provider will submit an evaluation report as a result of this service.

VR clients may require independent living services to be successful in achieving their employment outcome. If an IL evaluation was done, it should have included a description of the needed IL services and estimate of hours needed for IL Services. Independent living services must be included on the Individualized Plan for Employment that complement an employment outcome.

If the VR client is also a client receiving services from a Center for Independent Living, the IL evaluation and IL services should be funded through the IL funding system. If equipment is needed such as van modifications, ramp to get out of their home to go to work or clothes for employment, the VR system will purchase these items. If the Center for Independent Living is not able to provide the services, the services can be purchased from other providers.

### **EMPLOYMENT SKILLS PROGRAM**

The Employment Skills Program (ESP) was initially designed for serving adults with severe mental illness from the Mental Health Centers who VR had an outcome contract arrangement with. Because of the success of the ESP, the program was expanded to other Mental Health Centers/providers who did not have the outcome contract arrangement. The ESP modeled the forms and procedures of the Project Skills program. Employment Skills Program has also been very valuable for individuals with brain injuries. ESP can provide up to 250 hours of paid employment. The actual number of hours is determined by VR Counselor. The table below describes how each model is authorized and the approval level.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Method 1</b>	<b>Method 2</b>
	MH Provider who follows the outcome payment structure (i.e., SEMHC, HSA)	Providers who follow traditional fee for service structure (i.e., Private Providers)
Develop Employment Skills Job Site	Typically, 10 hours of Job Placement services but can be more if approved by VR Counselor	Typically, 10 hours of Job Placement services but can be more if approved by VR Counselor
Employment Skills Program	ESP 1 & ESP2 (rates)	Job Coaching & Follow along
If job becomes permanent	Contract Service package	Base Job Placement plus incentives when met
Incentives	2-week incentive starts when they are on employer payroll.	Already part of Job Placement package addressed above
Type of client	Mental Illness with limited or poor work history	Youth with disabilities who are not on an IEP or adults with severe impairments and with limited or poor work history
Approval	VR Counselor	VR Counselor
Authorization of client hours worked	In units of 25 hours with a maximum of 250 hours.	The units of hours vary upon VR Counselor approval with a

Description	Method 1	Method 2
	Employment Experience Wages and Benefits are combined. 110 Other funds are the funding source; vendor is DRS or SBVI.	maximum of 250 hours. Employment Experience Wages and Benefits are combined and based on the current fee schedule. 110 Other funds are the funding source; vendor is DRS or SBVI.
Authorization for Vendor Services	ESP1 is up to 4 units of 25 hours. ESP2 is up to 6 units of 25. The vendor is the provider who is doing the service, and the funding source is Supported Employment or the 110 funds from the DRS/SBVI District Office.	The service on the authorization is job coaching or follow along for the actual time the provider is at the job site. The vendor is the provider who is doing the service, and the funding source is Supported Employment or the 110 funds from the DRS/SBVI District Office.
Reports from provider	Monthly tracking progress and hours. The format should be developed between provider and VR Counselor.	Monthly tracking progress and hours. The format should be developed between provider and VR Counselor.

**(ESP1) - Employment Skills Program first 100 hours**

This service category and rate is for the first 100 hours of the Employment Skills Program (Project Skills) for a specific employment experience. The billing is for the completion of units of 25 hours of paid work experience. All individuals must be pre-approved by the VR Counselor to participate in this service category.

**(ESP2) - Employment Skills Program >100 hours**

This service category and rate is for the Employment Skills Program (Project Skills) for a specific employment experience beyond the first 100 hours. The billing is for the completion of units of 25 hours of paid work experience. All individuals must be pre-approved by the VR Counselor to participate in this service category.

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

The Division of Mental Health maintains a list and rates of commonly purchased services from community mental health centers. These services are based upon CPT codes and the current fee schedule. A copy of these services and rates are available from the State Office the beginning of each State Fiscal Year. Contract Services authorized to mental health centers for the provision of job search, job placement, employment follow along, etc provided by mental health centers are separate from the Job Placement Package and incentives. The description of service categories is listed below and used with Mental Health Centers who have a contract with the Division of Rehabilitation Services.

**Services continue after 60 hours without employment**

Employment services will be provided for a maximum of 60 hours unless it is determined by the VR Counselor and provider that services should continue. This category is reimbursed when an individual has been not been employed for two weeks and services will continue in increments of

20. This total amount will be paid in three different payments upon provision and documentation showing 20, 40, and 60 hours of job placement service provided. This category is not reimbursable if reimbursement has been paid for successful placement after two weeks of employment.

**Successful Placement**

This category is reimbursed when an individual has been employed for two weeks. In many situations, the VR Counselor may determine the individual to be “Stable in Employment” at this time. This is a counselor decision and depends upon how well the client is performing the job duties and meeting the employer requirements. This can only be billed once per individual’s case.

**Successfully Employed Closure (AKA 26 closure)**

This category includes any or all the following services an individual may need to become successfully employed; Job Placement, Job Coaching, and Employment/Follow Along. Successful employment must be at minimum wage in an integrated business setting with a minimum of 10 hours per week. Individuals less than 10 hours per week will require District Supervisor approval for reimbursement. Closures through Temporary Agencies can be approved if it can be demonstrated that employment is on-going employment. These situations must be approved by the District Supervisor.

**Employed 3 months after Successfully Employed Closure**

This category is reimbursable when an individual is still employed 3 months after the VR case has been successfully closed.

**Incentives for Wages**

Refer to description on page 6

**Social Security Recipient Incentive**

To assist Social Security recipients in increasing their hours and wages, a referral to a Benefits Specialist for benefit analysis and on-going education by the VR counselor should take place. This will allow for full understanding of the Social Security Administration (SSA) incentives and will serve to reduce dependency on benefits and improve the client’s quality of life.

- **Social Security Recipient Incentive I**

An incentive will be paid at the time of the Successfully Employed closure, if the client is a Social Security Recipient and is working at Trial Work Level (TWL) or higher. This incentive is NOT paid at placement, only when the case is successfully closed.

- **Social Security Recipient Incentive II**

An incentive will be paid at the time of the Successful Employed closure, if the client is a Social Security Recipient and working at Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) or higher. This incentive is NOT paid at placement, only when the case is successfully closed.

NOTE: If the client is working at TWL and working at SGA, both Incentives I and II will be paid. Also, providers may collect on both the Wage incentives and the SSA incentives.



## **SUPPORTED EDUCATION SERVICES**

Supported Education Services are provided in coordination with VR post-secondary assistance or monitoring for any student (does not require SE eligibility) who needs additional assistance with the transition to post-secondary. This can include any services necessary during a semester to assist an individual with a disability to successfully complete a postsecondary educational program. A variety of services and supports may be provided under this category at the discretion of the client and counselor. These services are purchased from existing providers (including case managers or other staff) when approved by the District Supervisor. Examples may consist of:

- Providing mental-health related Follow Along throughout schooling to contribute to academic success
- Assisting a student with finding their classroom before the classes start;
- Assisting the client with needed independent living supports;
- Taking the student to meet with the Disability Coordinator or Financial Needs office; or
- Helping the student arrange transportation services.

This service is provided as an hourly service using the regular annual rates with number of hours authorized to be determined by the counselor. The level and type of service needed by the client will be discussed with the team and indicated on the plan to provide consistency in expectation and to ensure the student is receiving required assistance.

## **DEAF SERVICES**

The following services are available from Communication Services for the Deaf or other agency who specialize in providing services for individuals who are deaf or hearing impaired.

### **Communication Assessment - up to 5 hours**

This is a one-time service that would be provided early in the VR process and purchased on an hourly increment up to 5 hours of service. It is intended for those clients who the counselor or staff interpreter suspects might have minimal language skills. It would provide the counselor with a communications baseline to develop services around. A skilled CSD staff member will meet with the client and assess their communication style/skills. For individuals with very limited language, this evaluation may include meeting with family members, teachers, and other service providers. CSD will determine the individual's preferred mode of communication (i.e., signs, gestures, pantomime, use of physical objects, and/or demonstration to convey meaning). The counselor and the client will be provided a completed evaluation form, including recommendations. This service will be provided by level five interpreters or trained deaf relay interpreters.

### **Comprehensive Communication Assistance Services**

This is an ongoing service that would be authorized on an hourly basis. It would contain the following components:

- staff person would participate in person-centered planning, IEP, and IPE meeting upon request.
- staff person would function as a team member with the VR counselor directing the team.

- staff person would provide service coordination and communication assistance services on behalf of the team and client. This would include meetings and coordination of services with other service providers and job site consultations.
- staff person would be responsible for on-going follow-along services with the client to ensure they are accomplishing the goals established in their service plan.
- staff person would meet monthly with the VR counselor to review the client's progress and provide monthly written reports. This service would not include ongoing interpreter services, independent living skills training, or job coaching. Advocacy services would be the responsibility of the VR counselor.

## **INTERPRETER SERVICES**

Interpreting services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can be purchased from interpreters who possess a valid South Dakota Certification issued by the Department of Human Services. The interpreters can be with an agency or a free-lance interpreter. The interpreter/interpreter agency must obtain prior approval or authorization from the Department of Human Services employee. This is typically by an authorization from a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for applicants/clients of the vocational rehabilitation service program. Other interpreting requests will be from other DHS employees for meetings.

## **FEE SCHEDULE/BILLABLE TIME**

Interpreters will be reimbursed at the current DHS fee rates for interpreters. If interpreting is during evening hours or weekends, the interpreter/interpreter agency can bill at their current rate. Invoices must include the date of service (time of service if billed evening rate), amount of time being billed, and interpreter's name and certification level.

Time billed for interpreting services will be for a minimum of one hour or the actual hours of interpreting services if more than one hour. After the first hour, additional time should be rounded and billed in 15-minute increments. Billable time can also include the time spent on travel as described in the travel compensation section of this manual. Time spent writing reports, billing for services, and other non-service activities are already part of the hourly costs and should not be duplicated. If an interpreter is scheduled for more than one client at the same location, the assignment will be considered one interpreting assignment.

## **CANCELLATION OR NO SHOW POLICY**

Most interpreter/interpreter agencies have a 24-hour cancellation policy. DHS will adhere to their cancellation policy and pay the scheduled interpreting services. If a client fails to show for an appointment, the interpreter/interpreter agency will be paid for all hours originally scheduled if the no show is reported immediately to the VR Counselor authorizing the service.

## **INTERPRETING AT POST SECONDARY PROGRAMS**

The Department of Human Services can pay for a portion of the interpreting services at postsecondary programs for approved Vocational Rehabilitation clients. This is arranged through the postsecondary program Disability Coordinator. There is a separate guidance for Postsecondary Programs available on billable services by contacting the DRS Deaf Services Program Specialist.

## **TBI SERVICES**

The following services are available from the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center in providing services for individuals who have experienced a brain injury.

### **Cognitive Retraining**

This service is authorized in half-day units for comprehensive team services for an individual with a brain injury. The team approach targets cognitive training, speech therapy, counseling, community living, and vocational abilities. This includes case management and nursing services.

### **TBI Overnight Support Services**

The overnight support services are purchased when individuals are attending by staying at the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center's apartment and need supervision throughout the night. Below are examples of when this service would be appropriate:

- For initial evaluation purposes for independence
- If a person needs assistance with activities of daily living during the overnight period
- If a person requires 24/7 supervision due to elopement risk (for instance to maintain sobriety)
- If a person requires 24/7 supervision due to other behavioral issues
- If a person requires 24/7 supervision to prevent unwanted visitors (exploitation)

## **BENEFITS SPECIALISTS SERVICES**

The Division of Rehabilitation Services will purchase Benefits Specialists services from only approved Benefits Specialists. These individuals have gone through extensive training on benefits services and have been certified by the Virginia Commonwealth University. Individuals approved will have a contract with the Division of Rehabilitation Services as being an approved provider of these services. Benefits Specialists services are provided throughout the Vocational Rehabilitation Process. An authorization is completed for 10 hours of benefit specialist services with one hour paid at the time of the referral and remaining hours based on services provided. Payment is made internally in VR FACES.

### **Pre-employment Analysis:**

- Referral for beneficiary who is not working, does not have a job offer, and does not have a good idea about what they want to do/how much they want to make.
- Services include: Initial call to explain services; send releases to be signed; once BPQY is received, Benefits Specialist meets with beneficiary to complete intake and determine questions/concerns; write general letter with fact sheets; meet second time to go over letter and questions; encourage future contact.
- Not all beneficiaries will need this (i.e., if they are referred after a job offer/employment).
- Estimated 2 hours of work.

### **Benefits Analysis:**

- Referral for beneficiary who has job offer or is employed
- Services include: Initial call to explain services; send releases to be signed if don't already have them; once BPQY is received, Benefits Specialist meets with beneficiary to complete intake and determine questions/concerns; research specific situation for job offer/employment; verify all benefits; contact other agencies/programs as necessary; write analysis and task list; meet 1-2 more times to refer analysis and explain work incentives; discuss task list and encourage future contact.

- Estimated 5 hours of work.

**Follow-up analysis:**

- Services include: Answering specific questions; researching any changes to their situation (increased hours or new job); use of work incentives - TWP months, subsidy, IRWE, 1619(b), PASS, overpayment.
- Recommend 5 hours (may or may not use all these hours).

**BILLABLE TIME**

Services reimbursed on hourly rates are for the time spent providing direct services for the client. Billable time can include the provider’s time involved in meetings if the VR Counselor has requested the meeting. Meeting time should be billed under a currently approved hourly service or Employment Services. Billable time includes the time spent on travel as described below. Time spent in writing reports and other non-service activities are already part of the hourly costs and should not be duplicated.

The number of hours authorized for hourly services need to be individualized based upon the employment setting, difficulty of the job, individual’s stamina, and other potential factors.

Vocational Rehabilitation will allow one-fourth hour as billable time when the client has missed a scheduled meeting. The provider must attempt to contact the client and notify the VR Counselor of missed meeting. Sending the client an individual text message, voice message, email, etc. are all examples of contacts that do not take 15 minutes and are not typically billable time. Exceptions to this would be emailing back and forth with a client (documented/billed in individual client case), texting back and forth with a client (documented/billed in individual client case), or making multiple phone calls with clients that do not answer (documented in each case/billed in one) for a time period of 15 minutes or more. No more than 1 hour per day can be billed for these kinds of contacts. Unique situations that providers feel could warrant billing for time need to be approved by the VR Counselor. See the chart of examples below for clarification on communications that can be billed or not per this guidance.

**Case notes need to reflect work that was done and conversations that were had with clients to allow counselor the ability to verify time being billed.**

<b>Example Case Note/Situation</b>	<b>Billable?</b>
Client was a no show for an appointment. Provider followed up with text/left voicemail in attempt to meet or reschedule but did not get a response.	Yes, can bill .25 hour.
Provider texted client to check in and see how work was going and got no response.	Not billable
Provider texted client to check in and see how work was going, and client said “good.” With no other response.	Not billable; communication did not last/require 15 minutes or more worth of time.
Provider called to check in with a client. Client didn’t answer so provider left a voicemail asking client to call them back.	Not billable

<p>Provider called to schedule an appointment. Appointment scheduled with client for 12/30/2020</p>	<p>Not billable; if nothing else was discussed, this communication did not last/require 15 minutes or more worth of time.</p>
<p>Provider sent client an email to check in and see how work was going.</p>	<p>Not billable</p>
<p>Provider sent client an email to check in and see how work was going. Client responded and said everything was going well and that they didn't have any questions or concerns at this time.</p>	<p>Not billable</p>
<p>Provider sent client a text to check in and see how things were going at work. Client said things were going well and that they would be off this Friday due to their daycare being closed. Provider asked client how they had gone about requesting time off and confirmed that client had followed company policy to request this leave. Provider and client discussed possible alternatives for daycare in the future when daycare is closed, and client expressed that in the future, their mom may be able to watch their children, but that she had an appointment that she couldn't miss on this particular Friday. Client followed up and said that she appreciated her employers understanding in allowing her a day off in their first month of work as she's been let go for similar things in the past. Provider reinforced clients following of policy to request leave and having good communication with employer contributing the flexibility she received this time. Client was encouraged to contact provider if anything more came up.</p>	<p>Billable. This conversation likely took close to 15 minutes or more to complete. If in doubt, look at times texts were sent/received to get a better idea of how long the communication took. Can submit copies of text messages to confirm time conversing with client.</p>
<p>Provider texted client to check in on how client was doing on job search with no response. Also texted (multiple clients initials) to check in with no response. Billing on this case as a total of 15 minutes were spent reaching out to clients to check in.</p>	<p>Yes, this is billable on <u>one case</u> but attempt at contact should be included for each client and noted that billing was made under another client.</p>
<p>Client emailed that he applied for an Administrative Specialist position with Zeal Center. I looked over his application and emailed a response. I emailed Zeal Center explaining OJT and ESP along with a letter of support for the client. I emailed the client informing him that I sent an email to Zeal</p>	<p>Yes-all emails be thorough documentation showing work that was done.</p>

Center. I also forwarded the email regarding the Police Records Clerk position. I received an email from Brienne Maner from Zeal Center saying that they already offered the job to a top candidate. She said client has an impressive resume and will keep it on file should another opportunity arise. I sent Brienne a response and forward the email to the client.	
Client emailed that he has an interview with Avera for a Patient Service Rep on Monday. I emailed asking if he would like to practice interview questions. Client responded and said he would, preferably Friday at 1:30. I emailed that 1:30 works. Client emailed later and said that he applied for First Impressions/Admin Asst with SFalls Chamber of Commerce. I looked over 5 files he attached and emailed a response.	Yes
Provider called client to see how work was going and to offer her a ride on Wednesday if needed. It is Veteran's Day and there is no bus. She left a voicemail.	No
Provider contacted client to see how work was going. She left a message	No
I called the client, but we had a bad connection, so we were not able to visit. I texted the client instead and asked him how work was going. He responded and said, "good."	No
I called client and made an appointment for next week. We will meet next Tuesday at 10a at Perkins to discuss her job search plan.	No
Client texted that she has been sick since Saturday and wanted to cancel our Tuesday meeting. I asked her to give me a call when she is feeling better.	No.

## **BILLABLE TIME FOR CLIENT TRANSPORTATION**

As the Vocational Rehabilitation Program increases in serving individuals with more significant impairments, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program will include provider's billable time in transporting applicants/clients to and from the job site for the following situations:

- During situational assessments if the applicant/client does not have transportation or does not know how to use the transportation system. If a public transportation system is available, the assessment can include the individual's ability to utilize the public transportation system.
- During the first two weeks when the job starts if the client does not have transportation or does not know how to use the transportation system. After the initial two weeks, the

client should have in place an ongoing transportation system or work with the VR Counselor for other transportation arrangements.

## **COMPENSATION FOR TRAVEL**

Cost for local travel is included in all fee rates. But to promote services in rural areas and compensate these additional costs, the following reimbursement procedure has been established:

- Reimbursement is allowable when authorized services are provided at a location of 20 miles out of the city limits where the destination facility is located, except for the Sioux Falls and Rapid City District Offices. For these cities, travel reimbursement is allowable when authorized services are provided at a location of 20 miles or more from the District Office address versus from the city limits. In all locations, travel reimbursement is allowable to start at a “home base” to the destination location and back when it involves traveling over 20 miles one way. For example, if the provider lives in Madison and will provide job placement for a client living in Sioux Falls, the provider can bill for mileage starting at his or her “home base” in Madison to Sioux Falls and back.
- Travel time will be reimbursed at 80% of the current fee rate.
- Reimbursement must be authorized by the counselor prior to the start of services.

Reimbursement may include travel time and mileage. Travel time will be calculated from portal to portal. Mileage will be paid in accordance with the rates and rules established by the South Dakota State Board of Finance Travel Regulations. For billing purposes, the submitted report must include the number of hours worked and number of miles traveled.

## **BILLING CHECKLIST**

Completing billing and providing required reports/documentation to DRS/SBVI offices should be completed on a regular basis, **ideally monthly**. This allows the counselor to better monitor the case and minimizes errors in the billing and payment process.

### **Hourly Services (with report):**

- Job Coaching
- Employment/Follow Along
- Situational Assessment

### **Job Placement Services: At Time of Placement (with report and with employment memo):**

- Successful Placement (after 1 “work week” has occurred and if meets stated goal of client for number of hours/week)

### **Job Placement Services: After 90 Days of Employment:**

- Employed for 90 Days Incentive (Successful Employment Closure does not need to take place)

### **Job Placement Services: At Time of Closure:**

- Wages Incentives – Level I or Level II or both (Only at time of Successful Employed Closure, if client’s income meets or exceeds 40% or 60% above the State of South Dakota minimum hourly wage rate or both)

- Social Security Recipient Incentives – Incentives I or II or both (Only at time of Successful Employment Closure, if the client is a Social Security Recipient and working at the TWP or SGA levels or both)

**Unsuccessful Placement (with report):**

After 25 hours of job placement services provided without the client obtaining Competitive Integrated Employment, the services can be prorated on a per hour basis for allowable job placement services leading to Competitive Integrated Employment. For cases that cross fiscal years, the billing should be done at the annual service rate in which most of the time was spent providing the service.

**SPECIAL RATES**

**Evening, Weekend, and Holiday Rates**

Effective 07/01/2021, to help increase availability of services occasionally required outside of normal business hours and to ensure adequate reimbursement to providers offering their services after hours, the Division of Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired will be offering an evening, weekend, and holiday rate for certain services. This rate can be billed when the services are provided in-person and are required outside of the traditional Monday-Friday, 8a-5p work schedule. Services to be included in the evening, weekend, and holiday rates would be

- Job coaching
- Follow along
- Customized Employment Hourly services
- Situational Assessment
- Interpreting
- IL Training

Holiday’s included in the “holiday” rate include

- New Year’s Day
- Martin Luther King Jr Day
- Presidents’ Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Native American Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas

With pre-approval by the VR counselor and clear documentation of hours worked, a 25% higher rate than what is typically billed for those services can be used when provided outside typical office hours. Pre-approval from counselor to bill this higher rate must be documented in case notes to accompany billing for these services. Note: Pre-approval does not need to occur for each individual instance but rather for the situation as a whole. For example, if a client is hired and begins work all over the weekend where the provider is not able to obtain pre-approval from the counselor, post-approval can be obtained for billing the higher rate instead.



Example: If a client gets a job in a factory and works over-night, counselors can pre-approve that services can be provided at the after hours rate as needed for the entire case not just individual instances where services may need to be provided outside of typical business hours.

BUT

If this client typically works during the day, but picks up an occasional evening/weekend shift where services are needed, this would need approved each time the unique incidence occurs. Because these services may already be authorized and in a plan before the need for the evening, weekend, and holiday rate is needed, approval of the higher rate after completion of an IPE/Authorization should also be documented in the individual's case notes in VRFACES. No other changes to authorizations or IPE's will be necessary.

Services provided in a virtual manner or at the convenience of the provider/client/business outside of regular hours will not be eligible to be billed for at the higher rate. When approving providing billing for evening, weekend, and holiday rates, please consider the following

- Is the service required outside of business hours to help the client to be successful in employment?
- Could services provided during traditional hours satisfy the clients need for assistance?

### **Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) Rates**

To reimburse providers with higher skills and education related to the provision of employment services to individuals with disabilities, the Division of Rehabilitation and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired will allow a 25% higher rate to be billed above established rates for all VR services for those that have received their Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) certification AND who have completed a 2 day Person Centered Thinking (PCT) Training. Standard rates will still apply for those that choose to not pursue certification or who have not yet achieved their certification. If agencies have both certified and non-certified staff, they will need to bill at different rates based on which provider completed a service and their certification status.

To support this initiative, the State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs will

- Provide trainings on provider core competencies
- Provide trainings on Person Centered Thinking

### **TICKET TO WORK REIMBURSEMENTS**

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has entered into two-year contracts with providers to provide additional supports for Social Security beneficiaries who have a Ticket to Work. This partnership arrangement with the providers establishes payment sharing 50/50 of Ticket to Work Milestones starting with Phase I/Milestone 2 payments. The Division of Rehabilitation Services handles all the processing of the Ticket to Work records and issues payments to providers after each quarter. Only providers who have entered into the Ticket to Work Agreement with the Division of Rehabilitation Services can receive these profit-sharing payments. Additional information can be obtained at the Vocational Rehabilitation District Office or the State Office at 605-773-3195.