GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Client Services Policy Manual

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Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
Greg Schmieg, Executive Director

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Foreword

The policy unit requested that the VR team write a foreword to the new manual of policy. We were encouraged to include our philosophy and values. In attempting to articulate our philosophy and values, we found no better vehicle than the VR Program's Purpose, Values and Philosophy statement, which was created through a series of meetings involving all levels of staff.

Purpose

Our purpose is to provide opportunities to improve the quality of life for Georgians with disabilities by promoting independence through employment, service and support.

Philosophy

We believe all people deserve the best we have to offer.

Values

1. We value persons with disabilities. Therefore we will:
   - Involve customers and stakeholders in decision making
   - Honor the rights of persons with disabilities to make informed choices
   - Develop policies and procedures to "assist" not "hinder"
   - Recognize and respect the individuality of persons with disabilities
   - Provide accessible facilities, offices, products, and staff
2. We value quality. Therefore we will:
   - Strive to satisfy our customers beyond their expectations
   - Expect and acknowledge quality performance
   - Make decisions that are ethical, timely, consistent, caring, and responsible
   - Provide services considering our customers first
   - Continually evaluate the delivery of services, making changes as needed
   - Build partnerships
3. We value our people. Therefore we will:
   - Recognize and respect cultural differences
   - Expect and acknowledge quality performance
   - Seek out and value input and feedback
   - Create an environment that supports teamwork and autonomy
   - Respect staff
   - Provide opportunities for individuals and organizational growth and development
4. We value an organization of honest, sensitive, and responsible people. Therefore we will:
   - Promote a climate of trust and open communication
   - Encourage creative ideas and healthy debate
   - Promote sharing of ideas and differences of opinion in a non-judgmental atmosphere
   - Practice ethical decision-making

5. We value leadership that is committed to integrity, trust, teamwork, and open communication. Therefore we will:
   - Lead by example
   - Treat employees with dignity and respect
   - Promote open communication and sharing of information
   - Provide direction
   - Promote a climate that encourages, supports, and rewards risk taking, innovation, and new methods of doing business

Our vision has evolved as a result of our values and philosophy, a series of historical events, legislation, and input from partners and stakeholders. This has also helped to shape the vision, "To build an integrated work force development system that meets the needs of the business community and people with disabilities."

Recent legislation, which became federal law including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, is the basis of the policies contained here. Other significant legislation such as ADA has evolved through the years to reflect congressional findings about the needs of persons with disabilities and their choices.

Our Georgia VRP values were the guiding principles in the development of our mission of assisting people with disabilities to go to work. We gathered input from our State Rehabilitation Council, our customers through customer satisfaction surveys, public meetings and from our staff. In order for the Georgia VR Program to put into practice our mission, values and purpose and to comply with the law, we have developed policies and procedures. The purpose and intent of policy is to establish a framework for operationalizing the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act. Following established policy ensures fairness and consistency for our customers, compliance with the law, and protection for service delivery staff, and enables us to obtain federal funds that are necessary to provide the VR Program services. This helps all partners in the rehabilitation process to make appropriate and reasonable choices.

Our policy committee has developed a comprehensive and systematic document that complies with current legislation and program values. While this document is a valuable resource, it cannot stand alone. We have been charged with the awesome responsibility of assisting persons with disabilities to go to work. At the same time, we must be accountable to the taxpayers who sponsor our efforts, and to our customers, both clients and employers. To be the best and to offer the best requires good decision making, responsible goal-oriented activity, and accountability. Inherent in professionalism is a responsibility for learning and applying policy using good judgment. The VR team is confident that our professional staff will meet this challenge.

INTRODUCTION

Authority

The authority for the *Client Services Policy Manual* (CSPM) is, unless otherwise specified, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and current federal regulations for the law at 34 C.F.R. 361and 363, unless otherwise specified.

Purpose

The purpose of the CSPM is to establish a framework for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program of the Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. This framework serves many purposes. It ensures fairness and consistency for our client customers, compliance with federal and state laws, protection for service delivery staff, and qualified job applicants for our employer customers. It also helps all partners in the rehabilitation process to make appropriate and reasonable choices.

Policy is written primarily for the service delivery staff who are required daily to apply policy to unique situations. The vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC) has the greatest responsibility in that the VRC is the only person qualified, by law, to make eligibility decisions, approve work plans and determine that a person is suitably employed. However, all VR Program staff are responsible for understanding policy and applying it when appropriate.

Many of the changes in this edition are required by the 1998 Amendments of the Rehabilitation Act which is Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act and the assurances in the state plan which must be met in order for the Georgia VR Program to continue to be funded. Other changes are a result of input from staff through a formal survey as well as informal feedback, input from customers, from the VR Council, and the input and hard work of your state policy committee.

Some input suggested that policy is inflexible. The intent of policy is to facilitate the rehabilitation process, not to create barriers. If policy does not allow a specific activity or service, law may not allow it. Policy should not be viewed as a barrier, but rather a protection under the law. When circumstances warrant it, greater flexibility may be permissible, so consult first with your rehabilitation unit manager and then your policy appeals advisor.

Future Changes

Policy is a living document and can change without the law(s) changing, so long as the change does not conflict with current laws. Any staff person may influence a policy change. There are several opportunities to effect change:

- Serving on a policy committee;
- Giving recommendations to your regional policy representative who serves on the state policy committee;
- Giving ideas/suggestions to any member of the policy unit.

Structure

While rewriting to incorporate all the many changes in this manual, your policy unit reorganized the contents to correspond with the rehabilitation process. This reorganization is responsive to staff input.

There are six (6) sections to this CSPM. Each section has several topics pertaining to that section. Each topic has two parts as follows:

1. The first part is always "Policy." This is what we must (shall) do except in the Services Section where policy also indicates what we may do.
2. The second part is "Information", which contains additional information about the topic that may be helpful.

When researching a topic, first read the introduction to the section in which the topic appears; then read the entire topic to obtain a full understanding. It is important to read the introduction to each section as it contains policy which is applicable to all topics in the section. For example, the first topic in Section 500, "Case Closure/ General", is applicable to all closures.

If all who apply policy approach it as a guide which enables informed choices throughout the rehabilitation process, policy will assist the users toward a positive outcome.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency is designed to be

1. An integral part of the statewide Workforce Investment System and
2. Designed to assess, plan, develop and provide vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice so that they may prepare for and engage in gainful employment.

Policy Manager

October 1, 2001

Section 100.0.00
Case Management

SECTION 100.0.00
CASE MANAGEMENT
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SECTION 100.0.00
CASE MANAGEMENT

102.0.00 NONDISCRIMINATION

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: Section 504 of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794, and implementing regulations

20 U.S.C. § 1681

42 U.S.C. § 2000-d

42 U.S.C. § 6101

42 U.S.C. § 12031

102.1.00 POLICY:

102.1.01 The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency/VR Program shall administer and conduct its vocational rehabilitation program activities without regard to age, gender, race, color, creed or national origin.

102.1.02 No qualified individual with disabilities shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program because the Program's or a provider's facilities are inaccessible or unusable.

102.1.03 The VR Program shall operate in accordance with the definitions of "individual with a disability" contained in Section 7(8) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Within these definitions the VR Program shall administer and conduct all programs and activities without discrimination on the basis of or type of disability.

102.1.04 An appropriate mode of communication shall be used to enable a person with a disability to comprehend and respond to information that is being communicated. Where necessary, communication shall be supplemented with an appropriate alternate mode of communication.

102.1.05 Translational, interpretative or reader services shall be provided, as needed, for a applicant/client to comprehend and respond to information that is being communicated where the applicant/client is not familiar with the English language.

102.1.06 At the time of application, the work team member shall inform the applicant of the availability of alternate modes of communication. The necessity or lack of necessity for the use of an appropriate alternate mode of communication shall be recorded on the application.

102.1.07 When indicated, an alternate appropriate mode of communication shall be used at the following points:

A. Provision of a copy of the work plan to the individual or, as appropriate, his/her authorized representative;

B. As a supplement to the written notice of change; and

C. As a means to inform the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's authorized representative, of information concerning the availability and scope of informed choices, the manner in which informed choice may be exercised, and the availability of support services for individuals with cognitive or other disabilities who require assistance in exercising informed choice. Refer to Glossary: Informed Choice

104.0.00 DUE PROCESS/GENERAL

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: Section 102(c) of the Act, 29 U.S.C § 722(c), and implementing regulations, 34 CFR 361

O.C.G.A. § 49-9-11

O.C.G.A. § 50-13-1 *et seq.*

104.1.00 POLICY**:**

104.1.01 A applicant/client or authorized representative who does not agree with a decision by the VR Program regarding the provision or denial of services, including inaction or failure to act with reasonable promptness, may request review and re-determination of the decision. The request shall be in writing.

104.1.02 The applicant/client shall be notified, using the VR Program's Notice of Change Concerning Rehabilitation Services ("Notice of Change") form, of any VR Program decision that adversely affects the applicant/client. This notice shall include notification of the applicant's/client's right to seek mediation and review of the decision through an impartial hearing, and of the availability of resources within the Client Assistance Program. The written notice shall be supplemented, as necessary, with appropriate alternate modes of communication.

104.1. 03 The VR Program shall not institute a suspension, reduction, or termination of a service(s) being provided under a work plan, unless the applicant/client so requests, during the thirty (30) day period following issuance of a notice of change letter. If the applicant/client requests review of a program decision or action, services being provided at the time the review is requested shall continue without suspension, reduction or termination until the final decision is rendered. This provision shall not apply, and services shall be terminated immediately, when:

A. The client has died;

B. The client has moved and left no forwarding address;

C. The client is receiving a service(s) in a facility and commits a serious infraction of the facility's client code of conduct or a criminal act which results in the facility discharging the client from its program; or

D. The client or the client's authorized representative has obtained, or is attempting to obtain, service(s) through misrepresentation, fraud or collusion, or the commitment of a criminal act, including but not limited to threat(s) against program staff.

104.1.04 Upon receipt by the VR Program of the request for review, an administrative review shall be conducted and informal resolution shall be attempted through the use of negotiation or mediation between the applicant/client and authorized representative, if appropriate, and the VR Program.

104.1.05 The written decision of any administrative review or impartial hearing, and/or any agreement reached in mediation, shall be made a permanent part of the client's case file.

104.1.06 Translational, interpretative or reader services shall be arranged at the VR Program's expense, if needed, for an applicant or recipient who is not familiar with the English language.

104.1.07 The appropriate mode of communication required as a result of a disability should be provided at VR Program expense, if needed, to enable communication among all parties participating in an impartial hearing.
Refer to Glossary: Appropriate Modes of Communication

104.1.08 Notice of Due Process Rights and Procedures

The applicant/client shall be informed in writing and supplemented, as necessary, by appropriate alternate mode(s) of communication of his/her right to and the procedures by which he/she may request review of a VR Program decision, including mediation and/or an impartial hearing, at the following stages in the vocational rehabilitation process:

A. At application, the applicant shall be provided a copy of the Client Services Handbook.

B. The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall notify an applicant/client for vocational rehabilitation services under this policy using the VR Program's Notice of Change form when either: *(Revised 1/1/2000)*

1. The applicant is determined ineligible; or

2. The client is being assigned a priority category under the order of selection. Such notice shall specify whether the client shall be provided services under an open category. *(Revised 4/1/2003)*

C. At the development of the extended evaluation plan or the work plan (case status 06 or 10), the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall provide the client with a copy of the extended evaluation plan or the work plan and shall explain to the client his/her right to and procedures by which he/she may request review.

D. Any time a work plan is amended, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall provide the client with a signed copy of the amendment and shall explain to the client his/her right to and procedures by which he/she may request review.

E. In any case whereby reclassification into another priority category under the order of selection alters in any way the services being proposed or provided, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall notify the individual using the VR Program’s Notice of Change form. Refer to 306.0.00

F. At closure or termination (case status 08, 26, 28, 30, 33, 35, 37 or 38), the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall notify the applicant/client of the closure or termination, of his/her right to appeal, and of the procedures by which he/she may file a request for an impartial hearing using the VR Program's Notice of Change form, unless closure or termination occurs for the following reasons:

1. The client has died; or

2. The client's residence is unknown, as indicated by envelope(s) returned by the post office. The envelope(s) shall become a part of the case file. Refer to 502.0.00

G. When any VR Program action adversely affects the client's participation in the vocational rehabilitation program, the client shall be informed by the vocational rehabilitation counselor using the VR Program's Notice of Change form.

104.1.09 Notice of VR Program Action and Applicant/client Request for Review

A. The Notice of Change Concerning Rehabilitation Services to a applicant/client shall:

1. State the specific reason(s) for the VR Program's action and shall state the policy/ies or procedural provision(s) relied upon. The reason(s) shall be documented in the applicant's/client's file;
2. Advise the applicant/client of his/her right to appeal the decision and to whom to appeal the decision (including a name and address;
3. Inform the applicant/client of the availability of the resources of the Client Assistance Program;
4. Be supplemented, as necessary, by appropriate alternate modes of communication;
5. Show the same effective date as the date of the Notice of Change when:
    a. Newly requested service(s) are being denied;
    b. Client is being notified initially of his/her priority category assignment;
    c. Client is being notified of reclassification into a higher priority category.
6. Show the effective date as 30 calendar days from the date of the Notice of Change when:
    a. Services(s) are being suspended, reduced or terminated;
    b. Case is being closed.

B. The request for review and re-determination must be made in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the notice of change letter and should be directed to the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

1. Promptly forward a copy of the individual's request for an appeal/review, Hearing Request Summary, Notice of Change, if applicable, and appropriate case file documentation to the regional director and the policy unit manager.

2. Upon request of the applicant/client, assist the client to submit any request for a review and/or impartial hearing. The client must be allowed access to his/her file in accordance with VR Program policy on release of confidential information. Refer to 120.0.00

106.0.00 DUE PROCESS/ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

106.1.00 POLICY:

106.1.01 The administrative review shall be conducted by the regional director, or the regional director's designee, of the region in which the client is served. The designee shall not be the rehabilitation unit manager of the vocational rehabilitation counselor who made the decision

106.1.02 The regional director or regional director's designee shall schedule and conduct an administrative review within fifteen (15) calendar days after the date of receipt of the request for review. Prior to completing the administrative review, the reviewer must afford the individual the opportunity to present documentation to support their position. *(Revised 10/1/13)*

106.1.03 The regional director or designee shall render a written decision within five (5) working days from the date the administrative review is conducted.

106.1.04 The review may be either a document review of the issue(s) utilizing the case file, a telephone review with the client, a face-to-face review with the client and the client's authorized representative and counselor, or any combination thereof.

106.1.05 If the review is to involve a face-to-face review with the applicant/client, the individual shall be notified in writing at least five (5) calendar days prior to the review of the time, date, place and the issue(s) to be discussed. The regional director or designee may extend the time for the review upon a request from the client or other parties showing good cause or by mutual written agreement with the client. The face-to-face administrative review shall include the client and authorized representative (if applicable) and the vocational rehabilitation counselor. The face-to-face administrative review may also include the rehabilitation unit manager and any other person(s) deemed necessary for an accurate review of the decision. The applicant/client and/or authorized representative shall have the right to bring witnesses, present evidence and to question or refute any adverse witnesses or evidence. The regional director or designee shall have full discretion over the conduct of the review.

.106.1.06 The administrative review decision shall be provided to the client and authorized representative, if appropriate, and the vocational rehabilitation counselor and rehabilitation unit manager. A copy of the decision shall be placed in the client's case file and copies shall be mailed to the regional director and the policy manager. The decision shall state the policy/ies relied upon and the facts upon which the decision is based, and shall include procedures for continuing with an impartial hearing.

108.0.00 DUE PROCESS/ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

EFFECTIVE DATE: OCTOBER 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

108.1.00 POLICY:

108.1.01 Alternative dispute resolution (ADR), including informal administrative review, negotiation and mediation, may be used at any point in the appeal process. Refer to Glossary: Negotiation; Mediation

108.1.02 An applicant/client who appeals a VR Program action shall be informed of the availability of both negotiation and mediation and shall be provided a description of each method.

108.1.03 The use of negotiation or mediation shall not be used to delay applicant/client access to an impartial hearing.

108.1.04 ADR is a voluntary process; neither negotiation nor mediation shall be attempted unless all parties agree to participate in the process.

108.1.05 Mediation agreements shall be written and signed by both the VR Program and the applicant/client. Any agreement shall become a permanent part of the applicant/client case file.

108.1.06 All requests for negotiation and/or mediation shall be forwarded to the policy unit.

108.1.07 A negotiation may be conducted by the policy appeals advisor or rehabilitation unit manager or regional director. Negotiation should not be used if the client has requested or will request mediation.

108.1.08 Mediation shall be conducted by an impartial qualified mediator.

108.1.09 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall contact the policy manager to arrange for VR Program payment for the mediation. *(Revised 1/1/2000)*

110.0.00 DUE PROCESS/IMPARTIAL HEARING

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

110.1.00 POLICY:

110.1.01 If the applicant/client is not satisfied with the decision resulting from the administrative review, and mediation is not appropriate, he/she may request to continue with an impartial hearing before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) of the Office of State Administrative Hearings (OSAH).

110.1.02 The request to continue with an impartial hearing shall be directed to the regional director or designee, with copies to the policy manager and policy appeals advisor.

110.1.03 The request must be made in writing within ten (10) calendar days from receipt of the administrative review decision.

110.1.04 The policy manager, within three (3) working days after receipt of the request from the applicant/client, shall request the impartial hearing process continue by notifying the OSAH.

110.1.05 The OSAH must schedule and conduct the hearing within forty-five (45) calendar days from the date of the original request for the impartial hearing from the applicant/client, unless both parties agree to a specific extension of the time.

110.1.06 The OSAH must provide notice to the applicant/client, at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the hearing, of the time, date and place of the hearing, and of the issue(s) to be considered.

110.1.07 The applicant/client or, if appropriate, the authorized representative, shall be afforded an opportunity to present additional evidence, information, and witnesses to the ALJ, to be represented by counsel or other authorized representative, and to examine all witnesses and other relevant sources of information and evidence. The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the Georgia Administrative Procedure Act, O.C.G.A. 50-13-1 *et seq*., as modified by 34 CFR 361.57.

NOTE: The client, his/her authorized representative, the vocational rehabilitation counselor, rehabilitation unit manager, regional director or designee, policy appeals advisor and other appropriate parties may appear at the impartial hearing.

110.1.08 The decision of the ALJ shall be based on the evidence of the record, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, with its implementing regulations, the approved state plan, and this policy manual. The decision shall state the law and facts upon which the decision was reached.

110.1.09 The written decision shall be rendered within thirty (30) calendar days of the completion of the impartial hearing. This decision shall be provided to the applicant/client or, if appropriate, the authorized representative, the applicant's/client's vocational rehabilitation counselor, the director of the VR Program and the VR Program's policy unit manager.

110.1.10 The ALJ shall be selected on a random basis from among a pool of qualified ALJs jointly identified by the VR Program and the State Rehabilitation Council.

110.1.11 An ALJ who has conducted an impartial hearing regarding the vocational rehabilitation of a applicant/client shall not be eligible to hear any future appeal(s) brought by the same applicant/client.

112.0.00 POLICY EXCEPTION CRITERIA

Effective Date: January 15, 2005

Authority: 34 CFR 361

112.1.00 POLICY:

112.1.01 A policy appeals advisor or the policy manager may grant an exception to policy for a specific individual for the purpose of meeting that individual's unique rehabilitation requirements if the requirements are necessary for the individual's movement toward his/her vocational goal.

112.1.02 A policy exception request must be made in writing prior to any obligation for the exception on behalf of the VR Program. The request and the response to the request shall be maintained in the case file.

112.1.03 The policy exception request must be initiated by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor.

112.1.04 A policy exception shall only be granted if the request meets the criteria listed below:

A. Needs of the client**:** The exception to policy must be necessary because of the unique needs of the individual. The request for the exception must explain why policy should not apply to the particular client's services. (Example: A service may have a specified duration. However, because of a very significant impairment, an individual may need the service longer than the specified duration to be able to benefit from the service.)

B. Legality: The granting of the policy exception will not violate any federal or state law or regulation.

C. Intent of the policy: Granting the exception will not violate the intent of the given policy. (Example: Policy requires that there be evidence in the case file that a client can succeed in training before that training can be provided. The intent of the policy is to ensure that clients are moving appropriately toward a viable vocational goal and to ensure the prudent and effective use of public funds. An exception to this policy would violate its intent.)

D. Fairness and equity: The granting of the exception will not violate fairness to other clients. (Example: Policy exceptions allowing payment for services requiring financial need to persons who do not meet financial need.)

114.0.00 AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: Section 100(a)(3)(F) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 720

114.1.00 POLICY:

114.1.01 An applicant/client may be assisted by another individual to communicate with the VR Program. Assistance may be provided by a parent or other family member, guardian, advocate or other authorized representative. When the VR Program possesses documentary evidence of the identity and authority of the authorized representative, VR Program staff shall communicate with and provide information to the authorized representative in the same manner as with the applicant/client.

114.1.02 An applicant/client may revoke the authority of an authorized representative by providing written notice to the VR Program.

114.1.03 The parent(s) of an applicant/client who is a minor (i.e., under the age of eighteen years) shall be presumed to be the applicant's/client's authorized representative, unless parental rights have been terminated, as documented by a certified copy of the court order.

114.1.04 When an individual purports to act as an applicant's/client's authorized representative based on legal guardianship, the individual shall provide to the VR Program a certified copy of the court order assigning guardianship. No additional consent by the applicant/client is required.

114.1.05 When a family member who does not have legal custody of an applicant/client (e.g., the parent of an applicant/client who has reached the age of majority (eighteen years) or another family member) purports to act as an applicant's/client's authorized representative, the applicant/client shall provide written consent to the VR Program of the individual's authority to act as the applicant's/client's authorized representative.

114.1.06 When an individual, advocate or advocacy group, including but not limited to the Client Assistance Program, a legal services agency, independent living advocate, etc., purports to act as an applicant's/client's authorized representative, the applicant/client shall provide written consent to the VR Program of the advocate's authority to act as the applicant's/client's authorized representative.

114.1.07 To revoke the authority of an authorized representative, other than a parent of a minor or a guardian, an applicant/client may either sign the bottom portion of the VR Program release form or provide other written notice to his/her counselor.

116.0.00 CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 370

116.1.00 POLICY:

116.1.01 The VR Program staff shall advise each applicant/client, parent/guardian or authorized representative where appropriate, of the availability of services of the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

116.1.02 VR Program staff shall share information regarding an applicant/client with CAP staff, or any other authorized representative, after the applicant/client, or parent/guardian where appropriate, has authorized that communication by providing written consent to VR Program.

116.1.03 The VR Program staff shall inform each applicant/client of the availability of CAP:

A. At the time of the application by providing the VR Program's Client Services Handbook to the applicant;

B. At the time the work plan is signed by giving the client a signed copy of the plan;

C. At the time of any plan amendment;

D. At the time of case closure using the VR Program's Notice of Change form, except when the client has:

1. Died; or

2. His/her residence is unknown, as indicated by envelope(s) returned by the post office contained in the case file.

118.0.00 PROTECTION AND USE OF APPLICANT/CLIENT INFORMATION

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361.38
O.C.G.A 49-9-16

118.1.00 POLICY:

118.1.01 The VR Program shall hold confidential information regarding applicants and clients developed or purchased by or provided to the Program in the course of the vocational rehabilitation program, including but not limited to name, address, lists of names, photographs and VR Program records containing information regarding any applicant/client.

118.1.02 Confidential information shall be released only in accordance with state law, federal law and regulations, or VR Program policy and is exempt from the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. 50-18-76), and from third party discovery in litigation (O.C.G.A. 9-11-34).

118.1.03 Personal information in the possession of the VR Program shall be used only for purposes directly connected with the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program. Information containing identifiable personal information may not be shared with advisory or other bodies that do not have official responsibility for administration of the program, except that confidential information may be shared with the State Rehabilitation Council as the information relates to its role in conducting a review and analysis of the effectiveness of and consumer satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services and providers in the state. Refer to 128.0.00

118.1.04 All applicants, clients, representatives of applicants or clients, and, as appropriate, service providers, cooperating agencies and interested persons shall be informed of the confidentiality of personal information and the conditions for accessing and releasing this information.

118.1.05 All applicants shall be informed of their right to request removal or amendment of misleading or inaccurate information from their case file. Refer to 118.1.09

118.1.06 Persons who are unable to communicate in English or who rely on alternate modes of communication shall be provided explanations about VR Program policies and procedures affecting personal information through methods that can be adequately understood by them. Refer to 476.0.00, 496.0.00 , and 102.1.04

118.1.07 Each applicant/client case file shall be clearly labeled CONFIDENTIAL on the front of the file.

118.1.08 All applicants and/or their representatives shall be given information concerning the protection, use and release of personal information, contained within the Client Services Handbook, to inform them about the VR Program's need to collect personal information and the policies governing its use, including:

A. Explanation of the principal purpose for which the VR Program intends to use or release the information;

B. Explanation of whether the information is mandatory or voluntary and the effects of not providing requested information to the VR Program;

C. Identification of those situations in which the VR Program requires or does not require informed written consent of the individual before information may be released; and

D. Identification of other agencies to which information is routinely released.

118.1.09 If an individual requests information which he/she views as misleading or inaccurate be removed from or amended in his/her case file, then:

A. The request shall be made in writing and shall include a justification for why the information should be removed or amended;

B. A decision concerning the removal or amendment of any requested information shall be made by the rehabilitation unit manager in consultation with the vocational rehabilitation counselor and, as appropriate, other members of the work team on a case-by-case basis.

C. The rehabilitation unit manager's decision to remove, keep or amend information in a case file shall be documented in the case file and notice of the action provided to the client. If the request is denied, the Notice of Change form shall be used to provide notice of the action; Refer to 104.1.02

D. If the information is not removed or amended, the individual has the right to have his/her rebuttal of the information placed in his/her file.

118.1.10 Active clients who are approved providers for the VR Program may work with other active clients who require their services in order to go to work. Caution should be taken to ensure confidentiality and to avoid conflicts of interest. Both individuals should not be served in the same VR unit; however, with manager approval, this may be allowed due to limited community resources and individual client needs. *(Effective 9/1/05)*

120.0.00 RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361.38

120.1.00 POLICY:

120.1.01 Upon receipt of the informed written consent of an applicant/client, or his/her authorized representative, the VR Program shall release confidential information regarding that applicant/client except in the following, circumstances:

A. Any medical, psychological or other information deemed harmful to the client by the VR Program shall not be released directly to the client but must be provided to the individual through a third party chosen by the individual or a court appointed representative; or

B. Third party information shall never be released, unless a third party release (RS114) has been obtained; or

C. Only information related to the functional limitation(s) of the individual can be released to employers. *(Revised 5/1/13)*

120.1.02 Legal consultation shall be sought in any instance when there is legal notification of pending litigation against the VR Program or its representative. Under no circumstances shall a VR Program employee initiate communication with the office of the attorney general. *(Revised 5/1/13)*

120.1.03 VR Program staff shall report any of the following to supervisory staff and shall immediately notify the VR Program's legal services officer, or Policy Unit or Regulatory Unit Manager, if contact is made, or confidential information is requested, under any of the following circumstances:

A. The VR Program receives any document designated as a lawsuit, subpoena, request for documents or deposition. In this situation:

1. Staff shall not sign any acknowledgement of receipt for any document;
2. Staff shall note the time and method of delivery (e.g., U.S. Mail, facsimile, personal service, etc.); identity, title and employer of the server (if the document is hand-delivered);
3. Staff shall ensure that personal contact is made with either the legal services officer or the Regulatory Unit manager by close of business of the day on which the communication was received by VR Program staff;
4. If VR Program staff receive a subpoena that compels the employee's appearance before assistance can be obtained from the legal services officer, the employee shall provide copies of O.C.G.A. 49-9-16 and 34 C.F.R. 361.38 to the judge and shall notify the judge that the employee can violate applicant/client confidentiality only upon the direct order of the court. If the judge issues such an order, either orally or in writing, then the employee shall testify as ordered.

B. The Program receives any document designated as an "Open Records Act" or "Freedom of Information Act" request. In this situation, staff shall ensure that personal contact is made with the legal services officer, the Policy Unit manager or Regulatory Unit Manager, by close of business of the day on which the communication was received by VR Program staff.

C. An attorney contacts a VR Program employee regarding an applicant/client, either by telephone or in writing, except those routine contacts regarding Social Security disability claims in which the attorney represents the applicant/client. *(Revised 5/1/13)*

D. A law enforcement officer, or other investigator contacts a VR Program employee regarding an applicant/client, either by telephone or writing.

120.1.04 Any information released from a case file shall be stamped with the following:

"Property of the Georgia Program of Rehabilitation Services. This information has been disclosed to you from records whose confidentiality is protected by federal and state law. Any further disclosure by you is prohibited." *(Revised 5/1/13)*

120.1.05 Release of information with the consent of the applicant/client:

A. Confidential information shall be made available to an applicant/client or other person/entity designated by the applicant/client, where the client provides the VR Program with informed written consent for the release.

NOTE: The exceptions to the above policy are listed in 120.1.07.

B. Informed written consent shall include the purpose for which the information is desired, specific information desired, date of expiration of the consent and dated signature of the applicant/client or his/her authorized representative. The VR Program Authorization for Release of Information form shall be used when the Program initiates the request for release; the form should be used whenever possible.

C. Information may be released to another program or authority for its program purposes, to the extent that the program or authority demonstrates that the information requested is necessary for its program. Medical or psychological information which the Program believes may be harmful to the individual may be released only when the other agency or organization assures the VR Program that the information shall be used only for the purposes for which it is being provided and shall not be further released to the involved individual. *(Revised 5/1/13)*

120.1.06 Release of information without applicant/client consent:

A. The VR Program may release confidential information, in an emergency situation, to protect an applicant/client or others when the applicant/client poses a threat to his/her safety or the safety of others. Example: Threat of suicide or of violence against another individual, including program staff.

B. The VR Program shall release information in response to investigations involving law enforcement fraud or abuse, except when expressly prohibited by federal or state laws or regulations.

C. The VR Program shall release information as mandated by judicial order. A judicial order includes any subpoena signed by a judge, clerk of the court, or other direct command of a court. Regardless of how a document is titled, if an attorney (rather than a judge or clerk of court) signed the document, it is not a judicial order.

D. Release of information for Audit, Evaluation and Research:

1. Requests for information to be used for audit, evaluation and research must be routed through the Regulatory Unit and approved by the VR Program director. Program employees shall require appropriate identification and authorization prior to releasing any information to such a request.

2. Personal information may be released to an organization, agency, or individual engaged in an approved audit, evaluation, or research only for purposes directly connected with the administration of the rehabilitation program, or for purposes which would significantly improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities, and only if the organization, agency, or individual assures that:

a. The information shall be used only for purposes for which it is being provided;

b. The information shall be released only to persons officially connected with the audit, evaluation or research;

c. The information shall not be released to the involved individual;

d. The information shall be managed in a manner to safeguard confidentiality; and

e. The final product shall not reveal any personal identifying information without the informed written consent of the involved individual, or his/her representative. *(Revised 5/1/13)*

122.0.00 OBTAINING CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

122.1.00 POLICY:

122.1.01 The VR Program shall obtain sufficient information about an applicant/client to determine the individual's eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs.

122.1.02 The VR Program shall obtain information about a qualified individual to assist him/her in the development of a work plan and/or the provision of services.

122.1.03 To the maximum extent possible, and when appropriate and in accordance with confidentially requirements, the VR Program shall use existing information and such information as can be provided by the individual and, where appropriate, by the family of the individual.

122.1.04 When the VR Program requests information from a third party in order to assess or provide services to an applicant/client, the VR Program shall use the VR Program's Authorization for Release of Information form to document the applicant's/client's informed written consent. The applicant/client shall sign and date the release form.

124.0.00 SECURITY AND DESTRUCTION OF CASE FILES

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361.38

124.1.00 POLICY:

124.1.01 VR Program staff shall exercise care to protect active and stored case files from the possibility of loss or destruction.

124.1.02 Direct access to an individual's case file shall be limited to VR Program staff on a need-to-know basis, unless access has been administratively authorized.

124.1.03 Information and/or data shall only be released from a case file in conformance with the release of confidential information.

124.1.04 Closed case files except those listed below shall be archived or destroyed after three years following closure. Records identified for destruction shall be destroyed in such a way as to eliminate all personal identifying information; burning or shredding is preferred. The regional director is responsible for ensuring proper security and destruction of case files.

124.1.05 The following case files shall be maintained and/or destroyed as stated:

A. Cases in which the clients receive SSI or SSDI shall be maintained for 7 years.

B. Cases with ineligibility closure reasons are maintained indefinitely. Refer to 502.1.13

C. Cases closed status 28 in extended employment shall be maintained and reviewed for two years following closure. If no further reviews are requested by client or his/her authorized representative, the case file can be destroyed after the second annual review.

D. Cases involved in an active audit or investigation shall not be destroyed.

E. Cases involved in litigation, in which the Department or VR Program or a VR Program employee is a named party, shall not be destroyed.

F. TANF cases under assessment contract or any case under special contract shall be retained for the length of time mandated by said contract. The state assessment and evaluation coordinator receives this information and distributes it to the regions.

G. Other cases may be retained at regional management direction.

124.1.06 Case file(s) so retained shall not be merged with any active case file.

126.0.00 EMPLOYEE CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: O.C.G.A. 45-10-1 et seq.

126.1.00 POLICY:

126.1.01 Conflict of interest shall be avoided in the delivery of services to persons with disabilities.

126.1.02 No employee of the VR Program shall determine eligibility or authorize any service to his/her family member or partner. *(Revised 10-29-12)*

126.1.03 No employee of the VR Program shall refer an applicant/client of the Program to a provider who is a relative, family member or partner of the employee for service of any type without supervisory approval.

126.1.04 As an agent of the VR Program, no employee shall advance an applicant/client any personal funds. Reimbursement of personal funds shall not be allowed.

126.1.05 No employee shall hire an applicant/client whose services may be directly influenced by the employee.

126.1.06 Each employee shall maintain a professional relationship with applicants/clients.

126.1.07 No employee shall exploit an applicant/client or his/her property for the employee's own profit or advantage.

126.1.08 Staff and/or relatives, family members or partner of staff who apply for VR services shall be served in a different unit than the one in which the staff works. It is the responsibility of the staff or related staff person to inform his/her immediate supervisor of the referral. It is the responsibility of the rehabilitation unit manager, the regional director, or the program director, as appropriate, to initiate arrangements for the case to be served by another unit. Restrictions shall also be set up in GROW so related staff, family members, partner or the staff person who is applying for services does not have routine access to the case. If staff requests to see the case information, policy in section 120.0.00 shall be followed.*(Revised 10-29-12)*

128.0.00 CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS

126.1.09 A conflict of interest may exist in situations where only the appearance of impropriety exists.

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority 34 CFR 361

128.1.00 POLICY:

128.1.01 The VR Program shall maintain a formal follow-up system to determine client satisfaction with the functions performed by and through the Program.

128.1.02 Client satisfaction questionnaires shall be utilized at specific points in the vocational rehabilitation process:

A. When a client becomes an applicant;

B. When a client, with his/her vocational rehabilitation counselor, develops, amends or reviews a work plan; and

C. When a client's case is closed for any reason.

128.1.03 Client Satisfaction at Application:

The staff person taking the application shall be responsible for giving the applicant the appropriate satisfaction follow-up questionnaire at the time the application is signed.

Note: Vocational rehabilitation counselors meeting with students within a school system will not use this questionnaire

128.1.04 Client Satisfaction at Plan:

The appropriate satisfaction follow-up questionnaire shall be given or mailed to the client at the same time a copy of the work plan, work plan amendment or any work plan review is given or mailed to the client.

128.1.05 Client Satisfaction at Closure:

The appropriate satisfaction follow-up questionnaire shall be given or mailed to the client at the time the case is being closed.

128.1.06 Each region will designate a person(s) to be responsible for ensuring that an adequate supply of all required follow-up questionnaire forms are available in all of the regional unit offices.

130.0.00 CASE STATUSES

Effective Date: October 1, 2002

130.1.00 POLICY:

Case statuses shall be used to indicate an individual's movement through the vocational rehabilitation process. The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall ensure such movement occurs in a timely manner consistent with time frames established by law, regulation and VR Program policy. When appropriate and lawful, such movement shall also consider the needs of the individual and the capabilities of the VR Program. The time frames for movement of cases for each status are indicated below.

130.1.01 Status 00 – Referral

A. A case shall be placed in referral status when an individual has been referred to the vocational rehabilitation program by any means and for whom the following minimum information has been furnished: name, address, reported impairment, age, sex, date of referral and source of referral. This information does not indicate that the referral is an applicant.

B. The individual referred shall be contacted within five working days by appointment letter, telephone call, home visit or other appropriate means.

C. An individual’s case shall remain in this status no longer than 30 calendar days, unless a delay is justified in the case file.

D. No authorization or expenditure shall be made in this status.

130.1.02 Status 02 – Applicant

A. Case shall be placed in applicant status when a document (Program application form, One Stop Center Application Form, letter, or similar document) signed by the individual, or as appropriate, a parent, a family member, a guardian, an advocate or an authorized representative, requesting vocational rehabilitation services has been received. While the individual is in this status, a preliminary assessment shall be conducted. A preliminary assessment consists of a review of existing information and, as appropriate, the collection of additional data to the extent necessary to complete the eligibility determination. Refer to 208.0.00 and Glossary: Preliminary Assessment

B. As required by law, a case shall not remain in this status over 60 days unless there are unforeseen circumstances precluding the completion of the determination of eligibility and the individual agrees that an extension of time is warranted. The individual must sign an agreement of extension form. Refer to 210.0.00.

C. Authorizations/expenditures shall be limited to goods and services including rehabilitation technology, as appropriate, necessary to determine the applicant's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services.

D. Following the preliminary assessment, a determination of eligibility or ineligibility for vocational rehabilitation services is made, or a decision is made to place the applicant's case into extended evaluation (status 06) prior to making such a determination.

E. For an applicant closed within the last six months due to the reason, “did not comply with requirements”, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall accept the application and immediately notify the client that the case will be closed if he/she cannot provide information regarding factors which interfered with his/her ability to comply. Refer to 502.1.14I

130.1.03 Status 04 – Waiting List(s)

A. An individual’s case shall be placed in status 04 from status 06 or 10 when the individual has been:

1. Determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and assigned to a priority category that is closed for services; and
2. The individual chooses to be placed on a waiting list.

B. The case shall remain in status 04 until the individual requests that his/her case be closed or until the Order of Selection priority category for which the individual is classified is opened. If it is determined that the case should be closed from status 04, it shall be closed status 38.

C. The individual should be informed of whether or not a closed category is likely to be opened for services in order that the individual may make an informed choice regarding being placed on a waiting list or seeking services elsewhere.

D. An individual who is on a waiting list should be contacted every six months in order to determine his/her wish to remain on the list. Procedures for contacting clients regarding remaining on a waiting list are outlined in Appendix B and should be carefully followed.

E. No authorization or expenditure shall be made in this status.

130.1.04 Status 06- Extended Evaluation

A. A case shall be placed in this status only for the limited purpose of making a determination regarding whether or not an applicant meets the definition of an individual with a disability who has the capability of benefiting from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome, and as appropriate, determining the nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation services required by the individual to achieve an employment outcome.

B. An extended evaluation plan shall be developed to explore the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations through the use of trial work experience(s) in which the individual is provided appropriate supports and training, except in limited circumstances when the individual cannot take advantage of such trial work experience(s).

C. The period of extended evaluation will terminate and the case will be removed from status 06 when:

1. It has been determined the applicant is capable of benefiting from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome, and, as appropriate;

2. The nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation services required by the applicant for an employment outcome has been determined; or

3. It has been demonstrated, based on clear and convincing evidence, that the applicant is not capable of benefiting from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome.

D. A case in extended evaluation must have a review, which shall be documented in the case file, at a minimum of every 90 days. Refer to 148.0.00 and 210.0.00

E. Authorizations/expenditures in this status shall be limited to goods and services, including rehabilitation technology, that are necessary to complete the determination.

F. To close a case from extended evaluation for reason of ineligibility, it must have been documented by clear and convincing evidence that due to the severity of the disability, the applicant is incapable of benefiting from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome. A Determination of Ineligibility is required.

G. If a case is closed from this status for an intervening reason neither a Determination of Ineligibility, periodic review nor a referral to an independent living program is required. Refer to 508.0.00*(Revised 5/1/13)*

130.1.05 Status 08-Closed from status 00,02,or 06

A. A case processed through status 00, 02 or 06 and not accepted for VR Program services shall be closed in this status. This status includes a case declared ineligible as well as a case closed for an intervening reason which effectively causes the individual to be unavailable to complete an assessment or is a result of the individual declining services.

B. A Determination of Ineligibility is required in a case in which the individual is determined ineligible. Refer to 212.0.00

C. The applicant/client who case is closed from status 02 or 06 shall be notified of the closure in conformance with the requirements of the due process policy. Refer to 104.0.00

D. A VR Program Record of Closure form shall be completed for any case closed in this status. A copy of this form may be provided to the applicant/client.

E. A case closed based on the individual's incapability of benefiting from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome shall be reviewed within 12 months of the date of closure and annually thereafter if requested by the individual.

NOTE: Cases closed for this reason shall have had the benefit of the services provided in extended evaluation (status 06)

130.1.06 Status 10-Work Plan Development

A. A case shall be placed in this status for the purpose of assessment to identify the unique strengths, resources, concerns, abilities, capabilities, informed choice, and, as appropriate, other needs of a qualified individual in order to make a determination of the nature and scope of the goals and the vocational rehabilitation services to be included in the work plan.

NOTE: The Client Services Handbook provides the written descriptions of options for the development of the individualized plan for employment.

B. The assessment shall use, to the extent possible, existing information which can be provided by the eligible individual or his/her family.

C. Only those funds required for assessment necessary to develop the work plan, including assistive work technology services/devices necessary for assessment purposes, may be expended in this status.

D. Only information necessary to identify the vocational rehabilitation needs of the individual shall be obtained.

E. The case remains in this status until the client and vocational rehabilitation counselor complete the development of the client's work plan, and the work plan is written and signed.

F. A case in this status shall have on record the applicant's social security number or a copy of the request to secure a social security number. A case shall not be moved to any other active status until this documentation is recorded in the case file and reported to the client data base.

G. A case shall remain in this status for no more than 90 calendar days unless a delay is justified in the case file.

130.1.07 Status 12- Work Plan Completed

A. A case shall be placed in this status when a work goal has been established and the work plan has been developed with and agreed to by the client.

B. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and client, or as appropriate, a parent, a family member, a guardian, an advocate or other authorized representative, shall sign and date the plan.

C. When planned services begin, the case shall be moved from status 12 and placed in the status indicative of the kind(s) of service being rendered.

D. A case shall remain in this status for no more than 30 calendar days unless a delay is justified in the case file.

130.1.08 Status 18- Provision of Services

A. A case shall be placed in this status when work plan services are initiated.

B. A case shall remain in this status even when scheduled, temporary breaks occur in service provision and until all planned services are completed or services are terminated by the client or VR Program.

130.1.09 Status 20- Placement Services *(Revised 9/1/05)*

A. A case shall be placed in this status when placement services are the major services required by the individual in order to achieve an employment outcome.

B. Other services may be provided in this status. Refer to 454.0.00.

130.1.10 Status 22- Working

A. A case shall be placed in this status when the qualified client, who has been provided services under a work plan, has begun to work.

B. As required by law, a client must be followed in this status for a minimum of 90 calendar days to ensure that the client is adequately employed, considering his/her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and informed choice.

C. As required by law, a client must be working for a minimum of 90 consecutive calendar days prior to the case being closed as rehabilitated. Refer to 510.0.00

130.1.11 Status 24- Services Interrupted

A. A case shall be placed in this status if vocational rehabilitation services are interrupted while the client is in status 14, 16, 18, 20 or 22. The work team and client must be working to resume services to the client. The file must clearly document the reason(s) services cannot be provided.

B. No authorization or expenditure shall be made in this status.

C. This status shall not be used if it interrupts necessary maintenance while the client is awaiting a primary vocational rehabilitation service.

D. This status shall not be used if the client is waiting while arrangements are made for other necessary services.

E. The case remains in this status until services are resumed and the case is returned to one of the active statuses or is closed.

130.1.12 Status 26- Closed Rehabilitated

A. A case shall be closed in this status from status 22 when an applicant has been: provided assessment services, determined eligible, provided appropriate and substantial services under a work plan, and, at the date of closure, is suitably employed and has been determined to be employed for 90 consecutive calendar days immediately prior to closure. Refer to 510.0.00

B. The client shall be notified of the closure in conformance with the requirements of the due process policy. Refer to 104.0.00

C. A VR Program Record of Closure form must be completed for any case closed in this status. Refer to 510.1.08

130.1.13 Status 28-Closed Not Rehabilitated After Work Plan Initiated

A. A case shall be closed in this status from status 14,16,18,20,22, or 24 when it becomes necessary to close the case as non-rehabilitated after services have been initiated.

B. A Determination of Ineligibility is required in a case in which the client is determined ineligible.

C. The client shall be notified of the closure in conformance with the requirements of the due process policy. Refer to 104.0.00

D. A VR Program Record of Closure form must be completed for any case closed in this status. A copy of this form may be provided to the client.

E. A case closed based on the individual's incapability of achieving an employment outcome (disability too severe) shall be reviewed within 12 months of the date of closure and annually thereafter if requested by the individual. Refer to 148.0.00

130.1.14 Status 30- Closed Not Rehabilitated Before Work Plan Initiated

A. A case shall be closed in this status when vocational rehabilitation services included in the work plan have not been initiated and it becomes necessary to close the case. Such a case shall be closed from status 10 or 12.

B. A Determination of Ineligibility is required in a case in which the client is determined ineligible. Refer to 212.0.00

C. The client shall be notified of the closure in conformance with the requirements of the due process policy. Refer to 104.0.00

D. A VR Program Record of Closure form shall be completed for any case closed in this status.

130.1.15 Status 32 –Receiving Post-Employment Service(s)

A. A case shall be placed in this status when the client is receiving post-employment service(s) under an amendment to the work plan.

B. Only a case closed rehabilitated (status 26) shall be eligible to be considered for post-employment services to help the individual retain, regain or advance in employment. Refer to 444.0.00

C. This status is used to provide a relatively minor service to avoid reopening a case.

D. Financial Need criteria apply to the provision of services in post-employment status. Refer to 206.0.00

130.1.16 Status 33- Termination from Post-Employment Services to Enter Referral Status

A. A case shall be placed in this status when it becomes evident that the solution of the client's vocational problem(s) entails a complex or comprehensive vocational rehabilitation effort, or a new and distinct vocational problem has emerged which would be more appropriately handled as a new case.

B. The client shall be notified of this action in conformance with the requirements of the due process policy. Refer to 104.0.00

C. A VR Program Record of Closure - Termination of Post Employment Services form must be completed for any case closed in this status. A copy of this form may be provided to the client. (Form in the forms packet and not generated by Georgia Rehabilitation Online Works {GROW}).

D. Refer to Post-Employment Services for further instructions. Refer to 444.0.00

130.1.17 Status 35- Termination from Post-Employment Services; Continuing in Employment

A. A case shall be placed in this status when the objective(s) of the post-employment service(s) has been completed and the client needs no further vocational rehabilitation services, or those services that are being provided by other resources are adequate to the client's employment need(s).

B. The client shall be notified of this action in compliance with due process requirements. Refer to 104.0.00

C. A VR Program Record of Closure - Termination of Post Employment Services form must be completed for any case closed in this status. A copy of this form may be provided to the client. (Form in the forms packet and not generated by Georgia Rehabilitation Online Works {GROW}).

D. Refer to Post-Employment Services for further instructions. Refer to 444.0.00

130.1.18 Status 37- Termination from Post Employment Services; Not Continuing in Employment.

A. A case shall be placed in this status when post-employment services have been initiated but it becomes necessary to terminate the case for reasons other than continuation in employment (status 35) or entry into referral status (status 33).

B. A case placed in status 37 is not eligible for further post-employment service and, should additional services be required at a later date, shall only be reopened as a new case.

C. The client shall be notified of this action in conformance with the requirements of the due process policy. Refer to 104.0.00

D. A VR Program Record of Closure - Termination of Post Employment Services form must be completed for any case closed in this status. A copy of this form may be provided to the client. (Form in the forms packet and not generated by Georgia Rehabilitation Online Works {GROW}).

130.1.19 Status 38- Closed from Status 04

A. A case shall be closed in status 38 from status 04 when requested by the individual or when the vocational rehabilitation counselor determines the client is no longer eligible or that the case should be closed for an intervening reason. Refer to 518.0.00

B. The client shall be notified of the closure in conformance with the requirements of the due process. Refer to 104.0.00

C. A VR Program Record of Closure form must be completed for any case closed in this status.

132.0.00 CASE FILE REQUIREMENTS

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

132. 1.00 POLICY:

132.1.01 The vocational rehabilitation counselor serves as the case file custodian.

132.1.02 Each case file shall be maintained in accordance with the *Standard for Case File* organization. *(Revised 5/1/13)*

132.1.03 Each case file shall include, to the extent necessary, pertinent information and documentation for the timely processing of the vocational rehabilitation case.

132.1.04 If a client requests that information which he/she considers to be misleading or inaccurate be removed from the case file, documentation of the request and resulting VR Program action shall be placed in the case file. If it is decided that no information is to be removed or amended, then any written rebuttal of the individual shall be placed in the case file. Refer to 118.0.00

132.1.05 Case file documentation shall reflect that informed client choice has been afforded the client throughout the life of the case.

132.1.06 Case file documentation shall reflect counselor contact and/or service delivery progress as required on the work plan or work plan amendment for review of the plan objectives, but shall be done no less than every ninety (90) days. *(Revised 9/1/09)*

132.1.07 The case file shall contain the following as required by the individual case development:

Note: This is not intended to be an exhaustive listing. Any applicable documentation requirement(s) contained in VR Program policy not listed herein shall be included.

A. Justification for Extended Evaluation; Refer to 214.0.00

B. Determination of Eligibility; Refer to 210.0.00

C. Priority category must be separately captioned: The priority category placement and rationale for priority category classification shall appear under the caption. The rationale must include the functional capacities affected and the primary services with their expected durations; Refer to 306.0.00

D. Determination of Ineligibility; Refer to 212.0.00

E. Determination of Eligibility for Supported Employment; Refer to 416.0.00

F. Case transfer summary: This can be a letter to the receiving vocational rehabilitation counselor with a copy to the client's file or a summary included on the case history; Refer to 150.0.00

G. Case notes to document the justification for the delay of case movement through assigned statuses.

132.1.08 The case file shall contain the following information or documentation as appropriate and as required for the individual's case development:

NOTE: This is not intended to be an exhaustive listing. Any applicable documentation requirement(s) contained in VR Program policy not listed herein shall be included.

A. Completed and signed application;

B. Report(s) of progress or grades;

C. Completed, signed and dated authorization for release of information;

D. Specialist and evaluation report(s);

E. Documentation of certain consultations;

F. VR Program's Notice of Change Concerning Rehabilitation Services;

G. Rationale for policy exceptions and supporting documentation;

H. Documentation as to how informed choice was afforded the client with regard to work plan development;

I. Work Program to include a completed and signed vocational plan, supported employment plan, extended evaluation plan and plan amendments;

J. Report of treatment;

K. Completed and signed Financial Need Assessment form, unless non-purchased services or those exempt from the satisfaction of financial need, are being requested;

L. Documentation relating to the eligibility of the individual for any comparable benefits and the use of any comparable benefits;

M. Authorization and Invoice(s);

N. Evidence of any case reviews as required by policy or as requested by the client for the following:

1. Active cases status 12 through status 24;
2. Case closed ineligible status 08, 28, or 30 due to inability to benefit from services based on the severity of the disability;
3. Case closed in extended employment;
4. Reapplication for service.

O. Review of client's case in extended evaluation every 90 days;

P. Documentation concerning any action and decision involving the individual's request for an informal administrative review of VR Program action and fair hearing;

Q. Rationale for an authorization for services involving an acute condition or intercurrent illness;

R. Documentation of counseling progress if the work plan reflects a planned counseling service;

S. Rationale for expenditures not reflected by Program mandated diagnostic services or the work plan;

T. Evidence of client's ability to complete a selected training program;

U. Documentation of the client’s inability to take a full course load of academic hours while in college or vocational training;

V. Rationale for any delay in college training;

W. Documentation of vocational rehabilitation counselor's personal contact while client is in training;

X. Rationale for certain support services being regarded as primary for the client in question;

Y. Rationale for use of an airline or an ambulance;

Z. Written permission from owner to modify a residence or job site;

AA. Written recommendation from attending physician for a private duty nurse;

BB. Written record of provision of reader service which has been dated and signed by client and reader;

CC. Rationale for the purchase of tools and/or equipment;

DD. Client Equipment Responsibilities form;

EE. Lien rights form;

FF. Documentation of stolen tools and/or equipment;

GG. Documentation supporting any decision to authorize or provide purchased services to a family member;

HH. Documentation of work plan services which demonstrates benefit(s) of vocational rehabilitation service(s) in a homemaking closure;

II. Documentation as to the reason for closing the case including the individual's employment status and, if determined to be rehabilitated, the basis on which the employment was determined to be suitable;

JJ. Documentation of any plans to provide post-employment service(s) after employment has been achieved, the basis on which these plans were developed, a description of the service(s) authorized and/or provided and the outcome;

KK. Record of Closure form.

134.0.00 ASSESSMENT

Effective Date: October 1, 2001

Authority: 34 CFR 361

134.1.00 POLICY:

134.1.01 The vocational rehabilitation counselor, with the full participation of the individual, shall utilize assessment procedures and/or information for the purposes of:

A. Determination of the individual's eligibility; Refer to 208.0.00

B. Determination of the individual's rehabilitation needs for work plan development; Refer to 302.0.00

C. Determination of continued eligibility and/or rehabilitation needs during the rehabilitation process. (Existing information shall be used whenever possible and appropriate).

NOTE: Assessment may consist of medical/ psychological information or non-medical information such as that obtained through the utilization of vocational evaluation or trial work experience**.**

134.1.02 Modes of assessment include but are not limited to:

A. Medical/psychological: Medical and/or psychological information is always required for preliminary assessment to document the disability;

B. Trial work experience: Trial work experience is required prior to an ineligibility decision that the individual cannot benefit from services in terms of employment except in those limited circumstances when the individual cannot participate in such experiences; Refer to Glossary: Trial Work Experience

C. Vocational profile;

D. Vocational evaluation, limited and/or comprehensive. *(Revised 1-20-00)*

E. Work Evaluation: Work evaluation is a short term assessment (30 days or less) that uses work or simulated work to assess: an individual's stamina and physical capacities; ability to remain on task and other work habits; interpersonal skills and ability to follow directions; functional skills; and/or ability to perform specific tasks. The purpose of Work Evaluation is to determine client work-related strengths and deficits, to assess client vocational options, and to recommend appropriate interventions or necessary services. (*Effective 9/1/05)*

134.1.03 When appropriate, an appraisal of the health status of the applicant/client may be obtained. The applicant should provide all existing information, and when possible and timely, such information may be utilized if it is from a licensed physician.

134.1.04 If existing medical/psychological information needed to document the disability is not readily available, not current, or inadequate, the vocational rehabilitation counselor may obtain an examination from a specialist in the field of the client's impairment. Such examination may be necessary for:

A. The determination of eligibility (preliminary assessment);

B. The development of a work plan (needs assessment); or

Note: Purchases in status 10 shall be limited to those necessary for needs assessment.

C. At any time the vocational rehabilitation counselor determines such an examination is essential to the continued progress of the rehabilitation process.

Note: Secondary condition(s) which, in the vocational rehabilitation counselor's and/or work team's judgment do not interfere with the client's attainment of the work goal, do not require a specialist report. The lack of relevance of such condition(s) shall be explained on the case history prior to the determination of eligibility.

134.1.05 When choice is available, the applicant/client shall have choice in the selection of the provider of medical/psychological examinations. Such choice shall be documented in the case notes.

134.1.06 A psychological evaluation report from a school system may be used to document an impairment of a mental disorder, mental retardation, and learning disability.

134.1.07 A vocational evaluation, vocational profile, and/or work evaluation may be provided or authorized at any point in the vocational rehabilitation process to assist in determining whether the individual can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome and/or the nature and scope of services to be considered. Refer to Glossary: Vocational Evaluation, Vocational Profile, Work Evaluation. *(Revised 9/1/05)*

134.1.08 Trial work experience shall be utilized by the VR Program to explore the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations, with appropriate supports provided through the VR Program, prior to determining that the individual cannot benefit from rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome. Exempt from this requirement are those limited circumstances when the individual is incapable of participating in a trial work experience.

134.1.09 The following information is required to be present on the specified medical examinations utilized by the program:

A. Purchased medical examination (general health status):

1. Section I of the Examination Form (completed by the vocational rehabilitation counselor with information from the applicant/client);
2. Section II of the Examination Form (completed by the physician's office);
3. Date and signature of the physician. Refer to 134.2.04

B. Specialist report used to determine eligibility:

1. Diagnosis;
2. Recommendations, as appropriate;
3. Signature of the physician, psychologist, etc.; Refer to 134.2.04
4. Information which reflects the current level of functioning of the individual. Refer to 210.0.00

C. Specialist report used to determine ineligibility:

1. The absence of an impairment that meets program requirements; or
2. An unfavorable medical prognosis.

D. Purchased psychiatric evaluation:

1. The individual's ability to relate to other people;

2. The individual's limitation in daily activities;

3. The individual's ability to cope with pressure of work;

4. Diagnosis;

5. Prognosis; and

6. Recommendation(s), as appropriate.

E. Non-purchased psychiatric report used to establish eligibility: (minimum requirements)

1. Diagnosis; and

2. Recommendation(s), as appropriate.

F. Purchased psychological evaluation:

1. Appearance of the individual;

2. Cooperation or non-cooperation of the individual;

3. Assessment of intelligence, social functioning educational progress, achievement, and any maladaptive behavior that is present;

4. Diagnosis;

5. Prognosis; and

6. Recommendation(s), as appropriate.

G. Non-purchased psychological evaluation used for determination of eligibility:

1. An assessment of intelligence;

2. Diagnosis; and

3. Recommendation(s), as appropriate.

NOTE: When using a psychological evaluation from a school system to document a diagnosis of specific learning disability and the diagnosis on the evaluation is unclear, the diagnosis may be established by utilizing the Learning Disability Eligibility Team Report as a supplementary documentation. Refer to 626.0.00.

H. Purchased neuropsychological evaluation:

1. Appearance of the individual including physical limitations affecting the evaluation;

2. Cooperativeness of the individual;

3. Global assessment of the individual's neuropsychological functioning as revealed by either the Luria Nebraska or Halstead Reitan test batteries, as well as supplemental tests for assessment of intelligence, social functioning, academic achievement and cognitive functions including memory, sensory motor, spatial, language, learning and personality;

4. Diagnosis;

5. Prognosis; and

6. Recommendation(s), as appropriate.

NOTE: If the individual's impairment results from a traumatic brain injury, then the evaluation shall also include a description of the circumstances and etiology of the brain injury and recommendation, as appropriate, for cognitive rehabilitation.

I. Non-purchased neuropsychological evaluation:

1. Assessment of intelligence;

2. Description of cognitive function;

3. Diagnosis; and

4. Recommendation(s), as appropriate.

134.1.10 A vocational rehabilitation counselor may authorize and approve payment for medical examinations, records, and reports according to the VR Program's fee schedule. Refer to 140.0.00

134.1.11 The following information is required to be present in a vocational profile authorized by the VR Program:

A. A description of individual's level of family and other support;

B. A description of the individual's education and achievement levels;

C. A description of the individual's work experience;

D. A summary of the individual's present level of performance;

E. A description of the individual's learning and performance characteristics;

F. A statement of the individual's vocational preferences;

G. A description of possible accommodations which may be required;

H. A job development/prospecting list;

I. The results of the profile staffing.

134.1.12 The following information is required to be present on a vocational evaluation authorized by the VR Program:

A. Reason for referral/rehabilitation problem;

B. Vocational history and vocational interests;

C. Education and achievement levels;

D. Behavioral observations;

E. Identification of individual's assets and limitations.

F. Recommendations to include:

1. Occupational recommendations;
2. Intervention recommendations (Examples: assistive work technology, adjustment services, counseling, training/education, medical/psychological services, work readiness, mobility training, job placement, job coaching, etc.) Refer to 134.2.03

134.1.13 When utilizing trial work experience(s) to determine the individual's ability to benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome, the program shall provide the supports necessary for the individual to participate in the trial work experience(s).

134.2.00 INFORMATION:

134.2.01 "Current" as used in this policy means that the information reflects the current level of functioning of the individual.

134.2.02 A vocational profile is an evaluation strategy which attempts to provide effective job matching without relying on traditional testing and work samples. The profile is a comprehensive assessment of an applicant's demonstrated skills, experiences, home, family, friends, neighborhood, informal supports, preferences, connections, and need for accommodation which, when taken as a whole, provides the basis for recommendations to the client and the vocational rehabilitation counselor/work team.

134.2.03 The traditional vocational evaluation is a strategy utilizing work, either real or simulated, as the focal point for vocational exploration, the purpose of which is to assist individuals in vocational development. Vocational evaluation incorporates background information, standardized tests and/or work samples, situational assessments, and behavioral observations to assess the occupational interests, vocational aptitudes and abilities which will be the basis for recommendations to the client and the vocational rehabilitation counselor/work team. Refer to Glossary: Vocational Evaluation, Limited *(Revised 1-20-00)*

134.2.04 A signature may be initials, a stamped signature, electronic signature or a typed or handwritten name.

136.0.00 CONSULTATION

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

136.1.00 POLICY:

136.1.01 The work team shall utilize consultation at any time it may be beneficial to facilitate the timely progression of the vocational rehabilitation process.

136.1.02 Consultation may be with an appropriate specialist and/or VR Program consultant, other professionals including rehabilitation technology providers, supported employment specialists, the individual and his/her family, referral source, and other individuals.

136.1.03 The vocational rehabilitation counselor or other work team member shall utilize the services of an appropriate consultant at any time guidance is needed to facilitate the timely progression of the vocational rehabilitation process.

136.1.04 If documentation is unclear, contradictory, or insufficient the vocational rehabilitation counselor may obtain a consultation from the physician/psychologist/medical professional who completed the original report, the current treating physician/psychologist/medical professional the regional medical/psychological consultant or another appropriate source for clarification and updating. A written record of all consultations shall be maintained in the case file. If the consultant writes a report, it must be signed and dated. *(Revised 10-29-12)*

136.1.05 If a vocational rehabilitation counselor needs additional information or if guidelines in section 134.2.01 indicate that a medical or psychological report does not reflect the applicant's current condition, the regional medical consultant, the physician who completed the original report or the current treating physician or psychologist may be used as a consultant for clarification and updating, as appropriate. When consultation of this nature is obtained, policy 136.1.04 shall be followed.

136.2.00 INFORMATION:

136.2.01 Consultation is recognized by the VR Program as a method by which the work team obtains information to assist in individual assessment for determination of eligibility, vocational rehabilitation needs, work plan development, and case progress.

136.2.02 Face-to-face consultation is preferable. Telephone consultation may be utilized when personal contact is impractical. Either type of consultation must be followed-up in writing to conform with policy 136.1.04.

138.0.00 COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS

Effective Date: October 1, 2002

Authority: 34 CFR 361.53, 34 CFR 361.61
O.C.G.A. 49-9-13

138.1.00 POLICY:

138.1.01 Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation service to an individual, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall determine whether comparable services and benefits are available, unless such a determination would interrupt or delay:

A. The progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the work plan in a significant way; or *(Revised 3/1/13)*

B. An immediate job placement; or

C. The provision of a necessary service to an individual at extreme medical risk.

138.1.02 If comparable services and benefits exist under any other program, but are not available to the individual at the time needed to satisfy the vocational rehabilitation objectives in the individual's work plan, the VR Program may authorize the services needed until the comparable services and benefits become available.

138.1.03 If a comparable benefit for a service is made available to a client in-state, but the client chooses not to accept the benefit or chooses to participate in services out of state, VR support for that service will be limited to the same level of support VR would have provided had the client accepted the benefit and/or remained in-state.*(Effective 3-1-13)*

138.1.04 Prior to the authorization of VR Program funds, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall have in the case file written documentation from the program whose comparable services and benefits are being sought that the qualified individual has applied for any comparable services and benefits appropriate to his/her vocational rehabilitation program. Any comparable services and benefits that are determined available to the individual, shall be utilized and so documented in the case file. All applicable comparable benefits for which the client has been approved must be subtracted from the VR Program's maximum allowed fees. *(Revised 10/1/13)*

138.1.05 The following services do not require that the client apply for comparable services and benefits:

A. Assessment for determining eligibility and identifying vocational rehabilitation needs;

B. Counseling, guidance and referral;

C. Vocational and other training services that are not provided in institutions of higher education, including work readiness training, personal and vocational adjustment training, books/supplies, tools and other training materials;

D. Job placement, follow-up and follow-along services;

E. Rehabilitation engineering services, including necessary rehabilitation technology aids and devices recommended by the rehabilitation engineer;

F. Post-employment services consisting of the services listed above in 138.1.04 A through E;

G. Information and Referral services to secure needed vocational services.

138.1.06 If an exempted services is known to be readily available from an alternative source at the time that services is needed to accomplish a rehabilitation objective in the consumer's Plan, the Counselor must use that source. RSA TAC 98-04
(Effective 10/1/13)

138.1.07 Comparable services and benefits to be utilized in a client's program shall be listed on the work plan. Should a comparable benefit develop after plan development, a case note entry shall be made and the benefit fully utilized.

138.2.00 INFORMATION:

138.2.01 A comparable service or benefit is defined as any comparable service or benefit available under any other program which can be utilized to meet, in whole or part, the cost of vocational rehabilitation services.

138.2.02 Extreme medical risk is defined as a risk of substantially increasing functional impairment or risk of death if medical services are not provided expeditiously.

138.2.03 Immediate Job Placement - Justification of the delay in an immediate job placement shall be documented in the case notes and the case staffed with the rehabilitation unit manager.

138.2.04 While not a comparable benefit, a client sometimes has personal and/or family resources which can be used to pay a portion of the cost of his/her vocational rehabilitation program. The vocational rehabilitation counselor has the responsibility for utilizing these resources when available. Refer to 310.0.00

138.2.05 The following list contains examples of comparable services and benefits. This is not intended to be all-inclusive.

A. Training

1. Veterans Administration (VA) - Funds available for training. Limited to eligible veterans.
2. Workforce Investment System Programs
3. Financial Aid - Funds available for post-secondary training (technical and academic). Fund types include HOPE, PELL, SEOG, grants, non-merit scholarships and merit scholarships, if applicable.
4. Workers' Compensation - Funds available in some situations for On the Job Training (OJT), adjustment and post-secondary training.

B. Restoration

1. Medicaid (Including the Independent Care Waiver) - Funds available for certain medical, medically related and disability related expenses.

NOTE: VR funds cannot be used to supplement Medicaid. Refer to Expenditure of Funds/Medical Services at 142.1.02 NOTE.

2. Medicare - Funds available for certain medical and medically related purchases.

3. Client's Private Insurance - Funds available for certain medical and medically related purchases.

C. Support

1. Worker's Compensation - Funds available for certain support services. Limited to clients involved in a joint VR Program/Workers' Compensation program approved by the insurance carrier.

2. Food Stamps - Funds available to certain clients for the purchase of food as a maintenance service.

D. Self-employment

1. Self-employment training, business consultation and business plan development consultation through the Small Business Administration and/or Small Business Development Center.

2. Financial funding for business loans.

138.2.06 In addition to the comparable services and benefits listed above, there are often resources available locally which should be utilized in the client's vocational rehabilitation program. It is the responsibility of the vocational rehabilitation counselor to seek out locally available services and benefits and to assure their utilization.

140.0.00 EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS/GENERAL

Effective Date: October 1999

140.1.00 POLICY:

140.1.01 Prior to authorizing a service, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall ensure that the service is appropriate, reasonable and provided in the most cost effective manner. (*Effective 3-1-13*)

140.1.02 A written authorization shall be issued either before, or at the same time as, the beginning date of the service. When the A&I and invoice are returned for payment, such authorizations shall be processed for payment within a maximum of 30 days in compliance with state law. In any emergency situation in which verbal authorization is given, a written authorization shall be forwarded on the same date the verbal authorization is given. *(Revised 4/1/03)*

140.1.03 Any purchased service for an applicant/client shall be encumbered and paid utilizing the VR Program's authorization and invoice (A&I) process. The service begin date must be within 45 business days of the effective date of the written authorization. No service shall be authorized (encumbered) for more than six months duration unless approved by the rehabilitation unit manager, regional director or their authorized representatives. *(Revised 8/1/09)*

140.1.04 An authorized fee shall comply with the VR Program's approved schedule of fees, when such fee is published. Fees must be reasonable and shall be based on market prices for comparable services, Medicaid fees or state public post secondary school fee schedules for post secondary training. As appropriate, overrides or exceptions to established fees may be granted by the Business Unit based on the needs of the client and all applicable federal or state laws and regulations. (Refer to Glossary: Reasonable Market Price) *(Revised 10/1/13))*

140.1.05 An authorization shall be made only to a VR Program approved provider except in instances involving acute conditions and intercurrent illness when an approved provider is not available. Refer 430.0.00

140.1.06 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall assist the client with informed choice in selecting a provider for a service.

140.1.07 The case history shall contain a justification for any authorization (A&I) which duplicates a previously obtained report or service even if the former is obtained at no cost.

140.1.08 The VR Program shall not pay bills incurred by an individual for which the Program has not issued a prior written authorization.

140.1.09 The VR Program shall not approve for payment nor make payment in advance for any service until appropriate written documentation has been received that demonstrates the service was provided to the client. *(Revised. 10-29-12)*

A. A bill for service rendered is not in most situations sufficient evidence that a service was provided. Additional evidence may be required such as a report of evaluation, a report of treatment, receipts, time sheet, progress report, client signature, etc.

B. Exceptions: *(Revised 10-29-12)*

1. Rent, meals and other forms of maintenance;
2. Recovery residence - Not to exceed 1 month in advance;
3. Tuition & Fees at educational institutions;
4. Certifications, examinations and boards when required prior to testing;
5. Transportation - not to exceed:
   a. The appropriate number of trips for a month on public transportation, e.g., MARTA card; or
   b. One round trip for distances greater than 50 miles, e.g., travel to out of state school; or
   c. The appropriate number of trips for a month for an individual requiring regular travel or furnishing his/her own transportation to receive a primary service, e.g., commuting to technical school, doctor, etc. *(Revised. 10-29-12)*
6. Medical records if required prior to release.

140.1.10 No VR Program funds shall be authorized or expended on any case that moves into status 12 or above following the effective closing date of a priority category when the classification of the case puts it in a closed priority category. Refer to 306.0.00

140.1.11 No VR Program funds shall be authorized or expended on any case in status 00, 04 or 24. Refer to 130.1.01,130.1.03 and 130.1.13

140.1.12 No VR Program funds beyond those necessary for diagnosis and assessment shall be authorized or expended on any case in which physical and/or mental restoration or training services are anticipated unless and until the clinical status of the disability, as indicated by the prognosis of the specialist's examination, is stable or slowly progressive. Refer to 210.1.03 and 428.0.00

140.1.13 Prior to authorizing a service, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall ensure the service is both appropriate (Refer to 140.2.01) and reasonable (Refer to140.2.02). When a client has requested service(s) which the counselor has denied, the client shall be notified in accordance with policy 104.0.00, and documentation to include rationale for the decision shall be placed in the case notes.

NOTE: As an agent of the state, a vocational rehabilitation counselor must exercise prudence in the authorization of any service.

140.1.14 The assigned vocational rehabilitation counselor shall sign and date an A & I to authorize a service. If the counselor is unavailable to sign the A & I, a rehabilitation unit manager, regional director, regional program manager or another counselor may sign the A & I or the counselor may designate another staff member to sign the A & I. Such designation may be made either verbally or in writing as follows:

A. If such designation is made verbally by the counselor, the staff member signing the A & I shall immediately document the case notes to show that the A & I was executed at the verbal instruction of the assigned counselor. The counselor shall then, at the first opportunity, document the case record to confirm that the A & I was executed at the counselor's express instruction. If anyone other than the assigned counselor does sign an A & I, that person shall sign his/her actual name rather than signing the counselor's name and initialing the signature.

B. If the counselor wishes to give advance written permission for another staff member other than a rehabilitation unit manager or another counselor to execute an A&I in his/her absence, the counselor shall document the following information in the case record or on the VR form entitled "Request for Creating an A&I": *(Revised 7/1/06)*

1. The name of the person to whom permission is being given;

2. The service which is to be authorized; and

3. The duration for which the service is to be authorized.

C. Blanket verbal authorizations are not acceptable; individual cases in which someone other than the assigned counselor, a rehabilitation unit manager or another counselor is issuing A/Is should be appropriately documented. The vocational rehabilitation counselor is always ultimately responsible for case service expenditures and a designee should be used only when necessary.

140.1.15 Should VR Program funds become nearly depleted or otherwise unavailable a determination regarding the closure of a Priority Category(ies) shall immediately be made by the Executive Director**.** Upon closure of a priority category, all cases in the closed Priority Category that have begun services on a Work Plan shall continue to receive services. Work plan amendments are allowed for the continuation and/or provision of new services and/or a change in work goal for these cases. Should all Priority Categories be closed, diagnostic and assessment services for the purpose of determining eligibility and assigning a Priority Category must also continue to be provided.
(Revised 3-1-13)

140.2.00 INFORMATION:

140.2.01 "Appropriate", as used in this policy is defined to mean the service is not only desired, but is also necessary for the client to reach his/her work goal. Refer to the Glossary: Appropriate

140.2.02 "Reasonableness" may be judged by one or more of the following factors.

A. Is the cost of the service(s) extravagant in terms of work goal?

B. Is the cost of the service(s) beneficial in terms of work goal?

C. What is the work expectancy of the client if the service is provided?

D. Is the cost of the service(s) for the client outweighed by the monetary constraints of the VR Program?

E. Is there a strong positive prognosis for employment success?

F. Are there any social, vocational, educational and/or environmental circumstances identified which will negatively impact a successful employment outcome of the individual?

Refer to Glossary**:** Reasonable

142.0.00 **EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS/MEDICAL SERVICES**

Effective Date: October 1, 2002

142.1.00 POLICY:

142.1.01 The VR Program shall authorize and make payment for medical services only to licensed medical providers.

142.1.02 The individual with a disability shall be allowed to choose the medical provider of his/her choice from among those approved licensed providers qualified in the diagnosis and treatment of his/her impairment(s) who are available in the immediate locality if he/she is not eligible for service(s) from a comparable benefit source.

NOTE: If the individual is eligible for medicaid, no VR funds may be used to supplement medicaid.

142.1.03 No VR Program funds shall be authorized or expended on any case that moves into status 12 or above following the effective closing date of a priority category when the classification of the case puts it in a closed priority category. Refer to 306.0.00

142.1.04 No VR Program funds shall be authorized or expended on any case in status 00, 04 or 24.

142.1.05 Service(s) authorized to a specific licensed medical provider must be provided by that individual professional. A report of service(s) rendered should indicate the person authorized to provide the service actually provided same.

142.1.06 The VR Program shall not authorize payment for medical/psychological evaluations or treatment until a report has been received from the provider.

142.1.07 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall use the appropriate Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Code when issuing an authorization for a medical procedure.

142.2.00 INFORMATION:

142.2.01 For information regarding appropriate medical providers, contact the Office of Provider Standards.

144.0.00 **EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS/IMPREST ACCOUNT**
Effective Date: October 1, 1999

144.1.00 POLICY:

144.1.01 VR Program offices and/or facilities of the Program may request the establishment and use of imprest fund accounts.

144.1.02 Funds from the imprest account may be expended when economic need has been established and each of the following conditions exists:

A. The client needs the service immediately; and

B. The service requires immediate payment if delivered.

144.1.03 All imprest accounts shall be operated in accordance with the GVRA VR Program's Client Services Policy Manual, the GVRA VR Program's Procedures Manual, the Program's "Imprest Account Operation Manual" and the GVRA Office of General Accounting. *(Revised 7/1/06)*

144.1.04 The following payment requirements shall apply: *(Revised 5/1/13))*

A. Only one check shall be issued in an amount not to exceed $350.00 for any single service except for payment of rent.

B. The amount allowed for one month of rent, which is also paid by one check, shall not exceed the monthly income amount allowed under Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for a single individual.

C. The imprest account shall only be used to pay rent when it has been verified that there is not sufficient time to make either the landlord or the client a vendor, and to pay through the regular A&I process.

D. Any requests for exceptions over the above established limits for special circumstances other than rent require approval by the regional director. This approval shall be documented in the case file, attached to the A&I and a notification of the exception submitted to the policy unit for tracking purposes.

E. Services provided through the imprest account shall be purchased for only

a short period of time, not to exceed 60 days. If the service will be needed over an extended period, regular A&I procedures shall be followed (i.e. a vendor number shall be obtained and agreement sought from the vendor to receive a payment through A&I, rather than through the impress account). *(Revised 5/1/2013)*

NOTE: To meet the specific operational needs of the Cave Spring Rehabilitation Center, the imprest account maintained at the Center shall be exempt from the financial and time limit restrictions included in this cite. All other policies and procedures in 144.0.00 shall apply.

144.1.05 No VR Program funds shall be authorized or expended on any case in status 12 or above following the effective closing date of a priority category when the classification of the case puts it in a closed priority category. Refer to 306.0.00

144.1.06 No VR Program funds shall be authorized or expended on any case in status 00, 04, or 24.

144.1.07 The same individual cannot complete authorizations and approvals on the imprest account and issue payment by an imprest check. All imprest authorizations are signed by the account custodian. Refer to the Imprest Account Responsibilities/Duties Chart contained in the Imprest Account Operation Manual for a listing of staff responsibilities, required signatures and account payment procedures. *(Revised 7/1/06)*

144.1.08 Checks shall be kept in a safe, secured area accessible only to those persons so authorized.

144.1.09 No airline ticket shall be purchased through the imprest account. Refer to 494.0.00

144.1.10 No check from any imprest account shall be made payable to a VR Program employee.

144.1.11 No imprest account check shall be made payable to cash.

144.1.12 At no time shall an incomplete or blank check be signed.

144.1.13 The VR Program Director, with approval of Executive Director , can authorize the opening, changing or closing of an imprest account. The GVRA Office of General Accounting has final authorization over cancellation of an imprest account. *(Revised 5/1/13)*

144.1.14 Under no circumstances shall the custodian or counselor put any personal money into the imprest bank account.

144.1.15 Deposits to an imprest account may be made only from a check from GVRA's Office of Financial Services made payable to the specific account. One exception to this rule is when a client submits a refund to the account. Refunds shall be paid in the form of cash, money order or a cashier's check. *(Revised 7/1/06)*

144.1.16 No personal money shall be used for expenditures for clients.

144.1.17 There shall be no personal use of the imprest account by the custodian or anyone else.

144.1.18 Each imprest account shall have a Plan of Operation in accordance with the Imprest Account Operation Manual. *(Revised 7/1/06)*

144.1.19 The client's signature is required on the A&I for an imprest check in certain situations, as outlined in the VR Program's Imprest Account Operation Manual at cite 2356.1.05. *(Revised 7/1/06)*

144.1.20 If the counselor is aware that a client has used imprest monies for reasons other than those agreed upon, then the counselor shall request in writing a refund from the client. The written request should state the A & I number, the reason(s) the imprest check was issued, the amount and the counselor's understanding of how the money was misspent. A written copy of this reimbursement request shall be placed in the client's file and regional management shall be consulted as to the continuation of services for this client.

144.2.00 INFORMATION:

144.2.01 The imprest account has been established as a means of providing counselors with a source of funds that is immediately available for client services. These funds are to be used only when the conditions of 144.1.02 A and B are met.

146.0.00 LIEN RIGHTS

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: O.C.G.A. 49-9-14

146.1.00 POLICY:

146.1.01 The VR Program shall claim reimbursement for cost of services authorized and rendered whenever legal action awards a client money as settlement or judgment (or partial settlement or judgment) of a case brought as a result of an action which resulted in the impairment.

146.1.02 The lien right action shall in no way affect the basic eligibility of an individual for VR Program services.

146.1.03 At no time shall any employee of the VR Program other than the VR Program director/designee negotiate or accept in settlement of the Program's lien(s) an amount less than the total amount of the outstanding lien(s). Only the VR Program director/designee may sign a settlement agreement.

146.1.04 Before VR Program service(s) are provided to an individual with a disability involved in litigation for damages or when it is learned an individual is involved in litigation for damages which resulted in his/her impairment, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall make the individual aware of this lien policy. The individual shall be requested to sign a lien acknowledgment form and instructed to keep the vocational rehabilitation counselor advised of the status of all damage claims. An individual's refusal to cooperate in no way affects the validity of the VR Program's claim or lien.

146.1.05 When the vocational rehabilitation counselor learns that the individual with a disability is possibly entitled to recover damages for injury which has resulted in the impairment, and a dollar value for vocational rehabilitation services provided to date can be totaled, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall immediately complete and sign the Lien Claim form. The counselor shall then consult with the legal services officer of the VR Program to ensure that the lien claim form is properly executed. The counselor shall promptly file it with the clerk of the Superior Court of the county where the individual lives. The counselor shall obtain a stamped copy of the form from the clerk after the filing. The form must be filed in the county of the individual's residence. Filing it in any other county or court will make the lien invalid. Since there may be other liens, the form shall be filed as promptly as possible. The counselor shall consult with his or her rehabilitation unit manager for the proper procedure to pay any filing costs.

146.1.06 Within one day after filing the form, the vocational rehabilitation counselor must mail a copy of it to the individual with a disability, his/her legal representative and to each person, firm or corporation listed on the form as being liable for the claim. The one-day time limit is statutory and if not met may void the claim. The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall complete a Mail Certification Form for each person, firm or organization and insert it into the case file.

146.1.07 If the case is on-going and services are continuing, the amount on the lien claim form shall be the dollar value of the paid services to date which are properly chargeable. If there is a delay between the filing of the form and the anticipated receipt by the individual of the award, additional lien claim forms marked Supplemental shall be filed exactly as in 146.1.05 and 146.1.06 for the additional value of authorized services paid.

146.1.08 Upon learning the individual has won an award, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall contact the client and his/her representative promptly and request full reimbursement for services provided as indicated by the lien(s) filed. If the individual does not comply, the matter shall be referred to the legal services officer for legal action to enforce the lien.

146.2.00 INFORMATION:

146.2.01 The Georgia code gives the VR Program lien rights on causes of action accruing to aid individuals with disabilities (clients) who are being or have been provided services.

146.2.02 As an example, an individual is injured in an auto accident and needs medical services. The individual is determined eligible for VR Program services. The client intends or has started legal action to seek a judgment for injuries received. If VR Program services are authorized, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall ask the client to sign a lien form to repay the VR Program in the event he/she wins the case and is awarded a money judgment or agrees to a monetary settlement.

146.2.03 Forms:

A. Lien Acknowledge Form;

B. Lien Claim Form;

C. Verification Form;

D. Mail Certification Form.

D. Mail Certification Form.

148.0.00 REVIEW/CASE

Effective Date: October 1, 2001

Authority: 34 CFR 361

148.1.00 POLICY:

148.1.01 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall formally review a case at intervals indicated on the work plan within the vocational rehabilitation process.

148.1.02 The client and/or his/her representative (parent, family member, guardian, advocate, authorized representative) shall be given a clear opportunity to be involved in any formal review of his/her case.

148.1.03 Evidence and results of each formal review shall be placed in the case file.

148.1.04 Reviews are required at certain intervals, but may also be requested at any time by the vocational rehabilitation counselor, client, parent, family member, guardian, advocate, or other authorized representative, or referral source.

148.1.05 Review of Cases in Status 06

A. A case in extended evaluation (status 06) shall be assessed at least every 90 days.

B. The purpose of this assessment is to determine the results of the provision of services and to ascertain whether a determination of eligibility may be made.

C. Documentation shall include the date and results of the assessment.

148.1.06 Review of Active Cases Status 12 through Status 24. Refer to 312.0.00

A. A client with whom a work plan has been developed, shall have his/her work plan reviewed as often as necessary, but at least annually.

B. The client or his/her representative (parent, family member, guardian, advocate, authorized representative) shall be afforded an opportunity to review his/her work plan to:

1. Determine progress toward objectives;

2. Identify if an objective or service has been completed or deleted; and

3. If necessary, jointly redevelop and agree to its terms.

C. Any revisions or amendments to the work plan resulting from this review shall be incorporated into or affixed to the work plan and shall not take effect until agreed to and signed by the individual or, if appropriate, by a parent, a family member, a guardian, an advocate or an authorized representative of the individual.

D. The results of this review shall be documented using the Work Plan Amendment and Annual Review form.

148.1.07 Review of cases closed 08 from status 00 and 02. No review required.

148.1.08 Review of cases closed 08 from status 06 or cases closed status 28 or status 30 because of the ineligibility determination of disability too severe.

A. As required by regulation, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall schedule a review within 12 months of a case closed for the ineligibility reason of disability too severe (incapable of achieving an employment outcome). If, at the time of review, the individual requests further review, the request shall be honored with another review scheduled within the next 12 months. Reviews will continue to be scheduled at a maximum of 12-month intervals as long as the individual continues to request them unless the disability is found to have resulted in a rapidly progressive or terminal condition, or the client is no longer available to participate in services in the state.

B. The individual shall be notified that a review of his/her case is to be conducted and invited to present any new information concerning his/her situation if he/she wishes to do so.

C. The case file shall be retained indefinitely. This is an exception to the policy of destruction of a case file after being closed for three years. Refer to 124.1.05

D. Certain facts may justify a statement that the case shall not be scheduled for a review. Some reasons for exclusion include a rapidly progressive or terminal medical condition, a recorded statement by the individual that he/she has refused services or no longer requests a periodic review; the individual is no longer available to participate in services in the state; or the individual's residence is unknown.

E. The purpose of this review is to look at any change in conditions and/or review information regarding the assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs.

F. The results of the review shall be dated and documented in the case file indicating:

1. Case requires no further consideration in conformance with 148.1.08; or

2. Case reopened (status 02) and accepted for services (status 10); or

3. Case reopened (status 02) and placed in (status 06) extended evaluation; or

4. Individual has requested further review; case to be reviewed within 12 months.

148.1.09 Review of cases closed status 38 from status 04: No review required.

150.0.00 TRANSFER/CASE

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

150.1.00 POLICY:

150.1.01 A case should be served by the region in which the client resides. When a client moves his/her residence, the case should be transferred to the region which serves the territory where the client is now living.

150.1.02 A case may be transferred from one vocational rehabilitation counselor to another to facilitate services to the client or to satisfy Program management requirements.

150.1.03 Prior to the transfer of a case, the case shall be reviewed and initialed by the rehabilitation unit manager of the transferring vocational rehabilitation counselor to ensure it is up to date, in good order and prepared for transfer.

150.1.04 A case in appeal status should not be transferred.

150.1.05 The VR Program shall honor written commitments in a case made by Program staff in keeping with Program policies unless there are justifiable reasons to modify or terminate the services.

150.1.06 A case must be accepted by the receiving vocational rehabilitation counselor unless it is mutually agreed through consultation with the vocational rehabilitation counselor and the rehabilitation unit managers that the transfer is inappropriate.

150.1.07 Transfer of Single Case

The transferring vocational rehabilitation counselor shall:

A. Discuss the case with the receiving vocational rehabilitation counselor prior to transfer;

B. Discuss the transfer with the client, inform him/her in writing of the transfer, and provide to the client the receiving vocational rehabilitation counselor's name, address and telephone number;

C. Develop a transfer summary. This can be either a letter to the receiving vocational rehabilitation counselor with a copy to the client's file or a summary included on the case history;

D. Clear all A & Is prior to transfer, if possible; and

E. Ensure that the case file is up to date, including the client's current address, telephone number and directions to the client's home, if available.

150.1.08 Mass Transfer of Cases

Regional Management staff shall ensure that in the mass transfer of cases, the following shall be accomplished:

A. Develop a transfer summary for each case when practical;

B. Inform the affected clients in writing of the transfer including the name, address and telephone number of receiving vocational rehabilitation counselor. This may be done by the receiving vocational rehabilitation counselor;

C. Ensure that each case file is up to date including the client's current address, telephone number and directions to the client's home, if available;

D. Consult with receiving vocational rehabilitation counselor as needed.

150.1.09 Any case transferred for any reason other than listed in 150.1.01 shall be approved by the vocational rehabilitation counselor's immediate supervisor.

150.2.00 INFORMATION:

150.2.01 There are circumstances that require the transfer of a case to meet administrative or programmatic needs. For example, when a caseload becomes inactive, cases should be transferred to a new caseload.

152.0.00 TICKET TO WORK

Effective Date: November 15, 2002

Revised Date: August 1, 2009

152.1.00 POLICY:

152.1.01 The VR Program may provide services to a qualified individual who has a Ticket to Work under the Social Security Administration (SSA) Program.

152.1.02 When an individual who is a recipient of either SSI or SSDI based on his/her own disability applies for VR services, the VR counselor shall inquire as to whether or not the client has a Ticket.

152.1.03 The VR counselor shall obtain a signed release for the SSA Program prior to communication with any entity relating to Ticket to Work. This includes the use of computerized systems for information.

152.1.04 For clients receiving SSI or SSDI based on his/her own disability, the VR counselor shall submit a request to the Regional Initiatives Coordinator (RIC) to verify Ticket to Work eligibility and if the Ticket is available for assignment. This information shall be documented in the case file.

152.1.05 When the beneficiary and an employment network (EN) or the beneficiary and the state VR Program agree to work together, and the beneficiary assigns his/her Ticket to VR or another EN, the beneficiary will be exempted from SSA's Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR) as long as his/her Ticket is "in use" or "assigned", as defined by the SSA.

152.1.06 When services are provided to an individual with a Ticket to Work, the VR counselor shall ask the individual to do one of the following:

A. Put the Ticket "in use State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (SVRA)" – If this option is chosen, VR shall notify Maximus electronically; or

B. Assign the Ticket to the VR Program – If this option is chosen, the client must sign Form 1365 at the time the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)/work plan is signed and submit Form 1365 to the RIC.

This decision must be made at the time the IPE/work plan is signed. The option that is chosen will impact the payment method for the VR Program at the time of closure. Refer to 152.2.03.

152.1.07 The Ticket holder may not use his/her Ticket with more than one provider of services (i.e., an EN or a State VR agency) at the same time. A beneficiary can retrieve the Ticket from one provider of services and reassign it to another. If an individual already working with another EN wishes to reassign the Ticket to the VR Program, the VR counselor shall instruct the client to send a written request to Maximus to unassign the Ticket. Maximus will confirm that the Ticket has been unassigned and will send confirmation documentation to the VR Program's Social Security Programs Unit. The Ticket can then be put "in use" or "assigned" to the VR Program. A copy of this verification will be forwarded to the VR counselor and shall be maintained in the case file.

152.1.08 The VR counselor shall ensure that the IPE/work plan of an individual with a Ticket to Work includes the services needed by the individual to go to work:

A. The VR counselor shall indicate the client's Ticket eligibility by checking the appropriate box designated for Ticket holders at the top of the IPE/work plan;

B. The client's informed choice shall be used and documented in compliance with VR Program policy; and

C. The VR counselor shall document progress on the case in compliance with the IPE/work plan, but at least every 90 days.

152.1.09 If an individual obtains a Ticket to Work after VR has developed an IPE/work plan, the VR counselor shall request the client to put the Ticket in use or assign the Ticket to the VR Program. The same process shall be followed as stated at policy cite 152.1.06. The VR counselor shall document the decision and shall document the progress on the case in compliance with the IPE/work plan, but at least every 90 days. Refer to policy cite 152.1.06

152.1.10 The VR counselor shall inform the client of the availability of "Partnership Plus". This is an option that allows a state VR agency and an EN to serve the same individual, one after the other. Under "Partnership Plus" a Ticket holder may receive VR services to meet his/her intensive up front service needs and, after the VR case is closed, assign his/her Ticket to an EN to receive needed continued services such as job retention and/or ongoing support services. Following VR case closure, regardless of closure reason, the beneficiary would have a 90 day period to assign his/her Ticket to an EN for continued services. During this 90 day period, CDR protection for the client still continues. At closure, the VR counselor shall provide the client a list of approved ENs in the area.

152.1.11 A client using a Ticket to Work shall be informed of due process rights under Protection and Advocacy and of the Client Assistance Program.

152.2.00 INFORMATION:

152.2.01 Beneficiary participation in the Ticket Program is strictly voluntary. The beneficiary is free to choose when and whether to use the Ticket to obtain assistance to return to work or go to work for the first time. The beneficiary's non-use of a Ticket will have no impact on his/her Social Security benefits.

152.2.02 To be eligible for a Ticket to Work, the beneficiary who is entitled to benefits under the SSI or SSDI Program must meet the following criteria:

A. The individual must be at least 18 but not yet age 65;

B. The individual must be entitled based on the SSA's disability standard for adults; and

C. The individual must be receiving a Federal cash disability-based benefit from SSA.

152.2.03 The Ticket to Work program and SSA pay state VR agencies and ENs for the services provided to SSI/SSDI recipients if the services result in the individual's achieving work at a specified earnings level. State VR agencies may select the most appropriate Ticket to Work payment option on a case-by-case basis.

A. EN Payment Method – Ticket Assigned: This payment option recognizes that for some clients the return to work is often an incremental and episodic process. This option creates a 3-phase return to work procedure where payment is received when beneficiaries work for lower wages and/or part-time. This option uses the Milestone-Outcome Payment Method which allows payment requests to be made earlier in the overall process. This method is used when it is anticipated that the client will not reach substantial gainful activity (SGA). If this option is chosen, the client must sign Form 1365 when he/she signs the IPE/work plan.

B. Cost Reimbursement Method – Ticket "In Use SVRA": SSA pays state VR agencies for the cost of the services they provide to a beneficiary if such services result in the person's achieving work at a continuous period of SGA. The continuous period of SGA consists of a 9-month period where the beneficiary worked at the SGA level. The VR agency is reimbursed for all direct costs and additional indirect costs such as administrative fees and tracking work activity. This method is used when it is anticipated that the client will achieve SGA. When this option is chosen, Maximus is notified electronically.

152.2.04 Refer to the Glossary for definitions of terms.

Section 200.0.00
Referral/Applicant
Preliminary Assessment
Eligibility
Order of Selection (OOS)

SECTION 200
REFERRAL/APPLICANT • PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT • ELIGIBILITY • ORDER OF SELECTION (OOS)

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SECTION 200
REFERRAL/APPLICANT • PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT • ELIGIBILITY • ORDER OF SELECTION (OOS)

202.0.00 CASE FINDING/REFERRAL SOURCE

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361
The Workforce Investment Act Of 1998

202.1.00 POLICY:

202.1.01 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program staff shall ensure that individuals in their community are aware of available VR services and shall seek to provide appropriate services to qualified individuals with disabilities in their assigned area. The publicizing of the VR Program shall include:

A. Seeking out persons with disabilities who have impediments to employment,
B. Developing referral sources, and
C. Coordinating with other statewide Work Force Investment System partners
(Revised 5/1/13)

204.0.00 APPLICATION FOR SERVICE

Effective Date: October 1, 2001

Authority: 34 CFR 361

204.1.00 POLICY:

204.1.01 An individual for whom the minimum referral information has been obtained shall become an applicant for VR Program services by signing or placing his/her witnessed mark (or, as appropriate, a parent, family member, guardian, advocate, or other authorized representative may sign) on either a VR Program application form or a common intake application form in a one-stop-center, or has otherwise provided the VR Program with the minimum referral information and has requested vocational rehabilitation services.

204.1.02 An individual must be available to participate in his/her determination of eligibility, needs assessment and planned services in the state of Georgia in order to be considered for services from the VR Program. No residency requirement shall be imposed which excludes from services any individual who is present in the state. *(Revised 2/1/06)*

204.1.03 At the time of application, the work team member shall determine if the applicant is requesting, or is in need of, an appropriate alternate mode of communication. If such a mode of communication is necessary, this need shall be indicated on the application. Refer to 102.0.00

204.1.04 An application from a former client of the VR Program whose case was closed for reasons of ineligibility (status 08, 28, 30 or 37) shall not be accepted unless there is reason to believe an appreciable change in the individual's case has occurred which may now make him/her eligible.

204.1.05 An application from an individual who is an inpatient of a hospital may be accepted. The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall ensure the applicant is notified in writing that the VR Program shall not pay for the current hospitalization and associated physician expenses.

204.1.06 An individual who is not a U.S. citizen, with an alleged disability and has the right to work may apply for services. *(Revised. 10-29-12)*

204.1.07 An individual applicant who is not a U.S. citizen must provide the appropriate employment authorization document as identified on Form I-9 by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) prior to a determination of eligibility. *(Revised. 10-29-12)*

204.1.08 Civil employees of the U.S. Government and American Indians may apply for and receive vocational rehabilitation services from the VR Program under the same terms and conditions applied to other individuals with disabilities.

204.1.09 At the time of application, the individual shall be provided, in an appropriate mode of communication, the VR Program's Client Services Handbook. This information must include written information about his/her right to, and procedures by which, he/she may file a request for a fair hearing and redetermination of the Program's action. The Client Services Handbook shall also contain the written descriptions of options for the development of individualized plan for employment including:

A. The availability of assistance to the client with regard to the development of the work plan and related forms;

B. Description of the full range of components that shall be included in a work plan;

C. An explanation of the full range of components that shall be included in a work plan;

D. Information regarding the client's rights to due process;

E. Information regarding the Client Assistance Program (CAP); and

F. The availability to the individual of any additional information that he or she requests or that the VR Program determines to be necessary.

(Effective 3/1/08)

204.1.10 If a former client's application is accepted and information from the closed case file is appropriate for inclusion in the new case file, copies of the information shall be made and placed in the new file. A closed case file shall never be made a part of a new case file nor should information be removed from it.

204.1.11 If an applicant's case was closed within the last six months for the reason, "Did Not Comply With Requirements", the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall accept the application and immediately notify the client that the case will be closed if the individual can show no factors which interfered with his/her ability to comply. Refer to 502.1.14 I

204.1.12 If an applicant's case was closed within the last 12 months for the reason of misrepresentation, fraud, collusion or criminal act, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall accept the application, as necessary, but shall immediately notify the client that the case will be closed if restitution has not been made to the Program. Refer to 502.1.14P

204.2.00 INFORMATION:

204.2.01 An alien may have authorization to work in the United States. The authorization will vary depending upon why and how the person entered the country. Many authorizations are temporary. There are three types of employment authorizations:

A. A work visa obtained from the person's native country;

B. An Employment Authorization Document; and

C. The "Green Card".

The "Green Card" and the Employment Authorization Document are issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. If an applicant is an alien, the individual's permit to work must be carefully reviewed. If the applicant does not have a "Green Card", provision of services may not be appropriate. An employment authorization is not evidence of U.S. citizenship or permanent residence. It is not valid if altered, and may be revoked. It is valid for a specific period of time which is stated on the front of the card.

204.2.02 Although it is not required for the VR Program to have the consent of a parent or legal guardian to provide service(s) to an individual who is a minor or otherwise under the care of another person, good practice dictates, as appropriate, such consent be obtained in the form of a signature on VR Program forms.

204.2.03 The age of legal majority in Georgia is 18 years; until that age, all persons are minors.

204.2.04 Guardian:

A. Unless otherwise provided by law, if both parents are alive, either parent is the natural guardian of a minor child. If a parent is dead or if the parents are legally separated or divorced, the parent having custody of the child is the natural guardian;

B. In general, a person is presumed not to be incapacitated (see O.C.G.A. 29-5-7(c)), despite mental retardation or mental or physical impairment, unless he/she has actually been adjudicated so by a probate judge. In order for a parent or another individual to become the legal guardian of an adult, that person or parent must be appointed by order of a probate judge. This order of appointment of guardianship only arises after a formal legal process involving the filing of a petition, notice, professional evaluations, and a hearing have occurred;

C. At times, staff of the VR Program may be told by a parent of an adult that he/she is the "legal guardian" of the individual. He/she may want to act on behalf of the individual, and thus deny the individual the opportunity to fully participate in the vocational rehabilitation process. If legal guardianship is in question, one may call the office of the probate court of the appropriate county for verification. Appointment of a legal guardian is a matter of public record;

D. If an adult agrees in writing to have a parent represent him/her, then the VR Program shall honor this request.

206.0.00 FINANCIAL NEED ASSESSMENT

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361.54 O.C.G.A. 49-9-9

206.1.00 POLICY:

206.1.01 Financial need criteria shall be applied in each case where VR Program funds are to be utilized, except when an individual has been determined eligible for Social Security benefits under Titles II or XVI of the Social Security Act or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or when receiving the following services: *(Revised 2/4/14)*

A. Assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services except those non-assessment services that are provided to an individual participating in trial work experiences or an extended evaluation; *Refer to 208.0.00 and 210.0.00*

B. Assessment for determining the employment outcome and vocational rehabilitation service needs to be included in the work plan. If appropriate, this may include an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology; *Refer to 302.0.00*

C. Vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice; *Refer to 410.0.00*

D. Referral and other services necessary to assist applicants and eligible individuals to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system, and to advise those individuals about client assistance programs; *Refer to 418.0.00*

E. Job-related services such as job search and placement assistance, job-retention services, follow-up services, follow-along services, and Supported Employment; *Refer to 416.0.00 and 424.0.00*

F. Personal assistance services for daily living activities when provided with other services leading to an employment outcome*; Refer to 480.0.00* *(Revised 10/1/13)*

G. Any auxiliary aid or service that an individual with a disability requires to effectively receive and communicate information in order to participate in the VR program such as reader services, interpreter services, alternate formats; *Refer to 470.0.00 and 476.0.00*

H. Adjustment services including but not limited to community adjustment, work adjustment, personal & social adjustment, work readiness, and adjustment to disability services such as orientation and mobility, technology access training, auditory training and cognitive rehabilitation therapy; *Refer to 404.0.00, 452.0.00. 476.0.00, 436.0.00, 440.0.00*

I. Vocational training provided at a Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency residential rehabilitation program.*(Revised 10/1/13)*

J. The following services when provided in post-employment status: Assessment for determining the employment outcome and vocational rehabilitation service needs to be included in the work plan (See B above); Vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance (see C above); Referral and other services necessary to assist the individual-in securing needed services from other agencies (see D above) and Job-related services (see E above). *(Revised 10/1/13)*

206.1.02 Support Services are subject to the same financial need assessment determination as the primary service(s) they support unless they are specifically exempt from financial consideration.*(Revised 10/1/13)*

206.1.03 The Financial Need Assessment form in Appendix C shall be completed in each case when it is anticipated or known that VR Program funds are to be utilized for services other than those specified in 206.1.01 and 206.1.02. All financial resources of the individual must be considered in completing the Financial Need Assessment form. The form shall be used to project the individual's financial circumstances over the next 52 week period.*(Revised 10/1/13)*

206.1.04 In completing the Financial Need Assessment form, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall ask the individual to supply his/her previous year's federal tax return and their parents, if appropriate. Other written documentation, e.g. payroll receipts, benefit records, etc., maybe required as support for his/her claimed economic circumstances. Vocational rehabilitation services requiring the meeting of financial need criteria shall not be provided until the individual has been determined to meet these criteria. *(Revised 3/1/13)*

206.1.05 Until a client reaches the age of 24, the income and/or resources of the client's parents or guardians shall be included in the financial need assessment unless the individual meets one of the following criteria: *(Revised 5/1/13)*

A) is married,

B) is a graduate or professional student,

C) is a veteran, or a member of the armed forces,

D) is an orphan,

E) is a ward of the court,

F) is someone with legal dependents other than a spouse,

G) is an emancipated minor, or

H) someone who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

I) is exiting a transitional center or correctional facility, *(Effective 10/1/13)*

J) is not claimed as a dependent by his/her parent(s), or *(Effective 10/1/13)*

K) has been determined to be an "independent" student by the financial administrator of a post secondary institution. *(Effective 10/1/13)*

206.1.06 The financial need assessment of an individual shall be reviewed annually and at any time the vocational rehabilitation counselor becomes aware of a change in the individual's economic circumstances which might affect the individual's financial need(including an award of SSI/SSDI/TANF benefits). If the client fails to continue to meet the financial need criteria for paid services, while services are in progress, only those services already authorized for payment and initiated in the work plan and/or any approved amendments shall be provided. No additional authorizations for payment for the service(s) shall be made. If a client is in an academic (college/university) or vocational training program, services already initiated will be continued through the current quarter or semester. When a new case is opened or when post employment services are provided, financial need must be re-established. *(Revised 10/1/13)*

206.1.07 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall complete either section I or II of the Financial Need Assessment form in consultation with the client. Instructions for completing the Financial Need Assessment form: *(Revised 10/1/13)*

A. Dependent on another person:

If the individual is dependent on another person whose income is being counted in the income section, then mark yes. *(Revised 10/1/13)*

B. Number of members in a family unit:

This is the number of family members who are financially dependent on one another. Tax returns may be used to verify dependent relationships. *(Revised 10/1/13)*

C. Certification of receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF):

The individual shall be considered categorically to meet financial need criteria if he/she is a current recipient of SSI, SSDI and /or TANF. The vocational rehabilitation counselor must, however, complete the certification at the bottom of the form.

D. Income:

This section includes gross income anticipated during the next 52-week period. Student financial aid, e.g., HOPE, PELL, SEOG, scholarships, student loans, etc. are not counted as income when determining financial need. Parental or guardian income for a client who has reached 24 years of age or who meets the exception criteria in cite 206.1.05 shall not be counted when determining financial need.
(Revised 10/1/13)

E. VR Program Cost Sharing Chart:

The Cost Sharing Chart is determined by the VR Program Allowance Table for Financial Need both of which are found in Appendix C. The client's participation in the cost of services is based on the amount of income over the VR Allowance. Dependent on this amount, the client will be expected to contribute a percentage of the family unit income up to a maximum amount. The allowance table is computed to be at 150% of the Federal Poverty Level and will be reviewed and/or revised to reflect any changes at the beginning of the state's fiscal year.
(Revised 10/1/13)

F. Disability related expenses:

In this section, the vocational rehabilitation counselor may list any client disability related expenses that are being paid by the client or by anyone counted for financial need assessment. The vocational rehabilitation counselor may request verification of the amount(s) and confirmation of payment(s). Disability related expenses which are included as a part of financial need assessment and, by virtue of their inclusion, cause the financial need criteria to be met may not later be authorized and paid by the Program. Allowable disability related expenses are deducted from the individual's total resources when calculating financial need.
(Revised 10/1/13)

NOTE: The disability related expenses can only be expenses related to the client's disability. Disability related expenses may be considered when they are being paid by the client or by anyone counted for financial need assessment. Future planned/projected expenses may not be included. Past expenses may be included only when they have been financed and payments are being paid routinely and regularly. These expenses may be counted only as they relate to the primary and/or secondary impairment(s) used to establish eligibility.

G. Client certification:

The individual or, as appropriate, his/her parent or guardian, must sign and date the form in the appropriate place certifying the truth of the information which appears at the top portion of the form.

H. Certification of financial need:

The vocational rehabilitation counselor must certify on the form the individual whose name appears as a part of the certification is within the established limit for the provision of paid vocational rehabilitation services. A copy shall be given to the client. *(Revised 10/1/13)*

206.1.08 Individual circumstances may occur wherein rigid adherence to the financial needs policy detailed above would seriously jeopardize an individual's opportunity to achieve appropriate rehabilitation objectives. In such instance the counselor, in consultation with the RUM, may elect to seek an exception to the applicable policy. *(Effective 10/1/13)*

206.1.09 If an individual fails to meet the financial need criteria for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program to purchase all planned services, the counselor shall then determine the appropriate level of the client's participation in the cost of services. The vocational rehabilitation counselor should encourage the individual to utilize his/her personal assets to purchase certain needed vocational rehabilitation services as indicated in the work plan. VR shall not accept liability for a client's financial responsibility. *(Revised 10/1/13)*

206.2.00 INFORMATION:

206.2.01 Income includes money, wages and salaries before any deductions; net receipts from non-farm/self-employment (receipts from a person's own unincorporated business, professional enterprise, or partnership, after deductions for business expenses); net receipts from farm self-employment (receipts from a farm which one operates as an owner, renter, or sharecropper, after deductions for farm operating expenses); regular payments from Social Security, IRA(s), railroad retirement, unemployment compensation, strike benefits from union funds, workers' compensation, veterans' payments, public assistance (including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income emergency assistance money payments, and non-federally funded general assistance of general relief money payments), and training stipends; alimony, child support, and military family allotments or other regular support from an absent family member; private pensions, government employee pensions (including military retirement pay), and regular insurance or annuity payments, dividends, interest, net rental income, net royalties, periodic receipts from estates or trust, and net gambling or lottery winnings. *(Revised 10/1/13)*

206.2.02 By definition, an emancipated minor is a person under age 18 years of age who is totally self-supporting and is not claimed on the last year's tax return of another individual.

206.2.03 Self supporting is defined as providing one's own total support, i.e. food, clothing, housing, health, recreational and travel expenses. Wards of the state are excluded from this definition.

208.0.00 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT FOR DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBIITY

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

208.1.00 POLICY:

208.1.01 Any applicant for vocational rehabilitation services shall be afforded the opportunity of a preliminary assessment for eligibility determination through diagnostic and/or assessment services which establishes:

A. Whether the applicant meets the definition of an individual with a disability in that he/she:

1. Has a physical or mental impairment, which for that individual, constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and
2. Can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome; and

B. Whether the individual requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

208.1.02 The VR Program generally accepts as an impairment any medically determinable condition which meets all requirements of the first basic criterion of eligibility (Refer to 212.1.03A1) if:

A. The diagnosis is medically or psychologically recognized as a physical or mental impairment;

B. Documentation of the impairment is from an acceptable source, i.e. a specialist in the appropriate field;

C. Documentation of the impairment, regardless of age, reflects the current level of functioning of the individual;

D. The diagnosed condition is not specifically excluded by the VR Program as being considered a recognizable impairment. Refer to 602.1.01D

208.1.03 In order to facilitate timely decisions regarding eligibility, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall first determine if there is an existing source of timely and adequate information to establish the presence of a medically determinable impairment.

208.1.04 If it is determined that such information is not available, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall obtain such evaluations as necessary or required by VR Program policy for him/her to make a decision concerning the nature, severity, and impact of the impairment.

208.1.05 The vocational rehabilitation counselor and other work team members shall obtain only such information, reports, evaluations, recommendations and/or assessments as are necessary to complete a preliminary assessment for determining eligibility.

208.1.06 The preliminary assessment shall include:

A. A review of existing data;

B. Assessment of work readiness; and

C. To the extent additional data is necessary and appropriate for each individual case,

1. An appraisal of the applicant's health status; and/or

2. Medical, and/or psychological evaluations which include documentation of the individual's disability(ies).

208.1.07 The following impairments require documentation from the following specialists for determination of eligibility to be based on the specified impairment: *(Revised 5/1/13)*

A. AIDS:

1. Internist; certified and skilled in infectious diseases or immunology; *(Revised 10/1/13)*

2. Specialist in family practice;

3. Other physician skilled in the diagnosis of HIV.

4. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in a public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of HIV (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

B. Alcohol or drug dependency:

1. Physician (MD or DO)

2. Psychologist;

3. Psychiatrist;

4. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in a public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of alcohol or drug dependency (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

5. Licensed Clinical Social Worker *(Effective10/1/13)*

C. Amputation:

1. Vocational rehabilitation counselor observation;

2. Internist or specialist in the field of circulatory problems if diabetes is suspected.

D. Arthritis:

1. Rheumatologist;

2. Specialist in family practice;
3. Internist; certified and skilled in rheumatology; *(Revised 10/1/13)*
4. Orthopedist;
5. Physiatrist;
6. Occupational therapist if the evaluation notes contain a diagnosis from the referring physician.
7. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in a public heath setting and skilled in the diagnosis of arthritis (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

E. Asthma:

1. Allergist;
2. Internist; certified and skilled in disorders of pulmonology or allergies; *(Revised 10/1/13)*
3. Physician specializing in pulmonary diseases;
4. Specialist in family practice.
5. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in a public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of asthma (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

F. Borderline Intellectual Functioning:

1. Licensed psychologist;
2. Psychologist or psychometrist who has been countersigned by licensed psychologist;
3. Psychologist or psychometrist employed by the Department of Education who is certified as either:
    a. School psychologist (doctorate level); or
    b. Associate school psychologist (specialist level); or
    c. School psychometrist (masters level)

G. Burn:

1. Burn specialist;
2. Plastic surgeon;
3. Orthopedist;
4. Dermatologist;
5. Specialist in family practice;
6. Internist;
7. Treating physician;
8. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of burns (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective10/1/13)*
9. Vocational rehabilitation counselor observation.

H. Cancer:

1. Oncologist;
2. Radiologist;
3. Pathologist;
4. Physician skilled in the specialty of the particular body system suspected of containing the malignancy;
5. Internist certified and skilled in oncology; *(Revised 10/1/13)*

I. Chronic Pulmonary Disorder:

1. Pulmonary specialist;
2. Internist; certified and skilled in pulmonary disorders; *(Revised 10/1/13)*
3. Allergist;
4. Specialist in family practice;
5. Thoracic surgeon;
6. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in a public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of chronic pulmonary disorder (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) (*Effective 10/1/13)*

J. Deaf-Blind Disorder:

1. Helen Keller National Center; or
2. The specific specialist used to determine hearing and visual disorders. Refer to 208.1.08 P and CC

K. Diabetes:

1. Endocrinologist;
2. Specialist in family practice;
3. Internist certified and skilled in the diagnosis of endocrine disorders; *(Revised 10/1/13)*
4. Pediatrician, if age appropriate.
5. Advanced Practice Nurse or Physician Assistant working in a public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of diabetes (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

L. Endocrine Disorder:

1. Endocrinologist;
2. Specialist in family practice;
3. Internist certified and skilled in endocrine disorders; *(Revised 10/1/13)*
4. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in a public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of endocrine disorders (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

M. End-stage renal disease:

1. Nephrologists;
2. Internist certified and skilled in nephrology; *(Revised 10/1/13)*
3. Urologist;
4. Specialist in family practice.
5. Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant working in a public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of end – stage renal disease (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

N. Facial Deformity:

1. Endocrinologist;
2. Plastic surgeon;
3. Birth Defect Clinic;

4. Vocational rehabilitation counselor observation.

O. Gynecological disorder:

1. Gynecologist;

2. General surgeon;

3. Advanced Practiced Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in a public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of gynecological disorders (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

P. Hearing Disorder:

Licensed Audiologist *(Revised 1/27/12)*

Q. Heart Disorder:

1. Cardiologist;

2. Specialist in family practice;

3. Internist certified and skilled in cardiology;

4. Cardiac surgeon.

R. Hypertension:

1. Cardiologist;

2. Specialist in family practice;

3. Internist certified and skilled in cardiology, interventional cardiology or clinical cardiac electrophysiology; *(Revised 10/1/13)*

4. Physician skilled in the diagnosis;

5. Neurologist.

6. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of hypertension (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

S. Learning Disorders: (Learning Disability, Specific Developmental Disorder, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders)

1. Licensed psychologist;

2. Psychologist or psychometrist who has been countersigned by a licensed psychologist;

3. Psychologist or psychometrist employed by the state Department of Education who is certified as either:

a. School psychologist (doctorate level); or

b. Associate school psychologist (specialist level); or

c. School psychometrist (masters level).

4. Psychiatrist with the ability to individually administer and interpret general intelligence tests.

5. Licensed Clinical Social Worker skilled in the diagnosis of Learning Disorders *(Effective 10/1/13)*

6. Pediatrician skilled in the diagnosis of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorders (for ADHD Only) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

T. Mental Disorder/General:

1. Licensed psychologist;

2. Psychiatrist;

3. Psychometrist employed by the Department of Education who is certified as either:

a. School psychologist (doctorate level); or

b. Associate school psychologist (specialist level); or

c. School psychometrist (masters level).

4. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, Physician Assistant working in a public mental health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of mental disorders (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

5. Licensed Clinical Social Worker skilled in the diagnosis of Mental Disorders *(Effective 10/1/13)*

U. Mental Retardation:

1. Licensed psychologist;

2. Psychologist or psychometrist who has been countersigned by a licensed psychologist;

3. Psychometrist or psychologist employed by the Department of Education who is certified as either:

a. School psychologist (doctorate level); or

b. Associate school psychologist (specialist level); or

c. School psychometrist (masters level).

4. Licensed Clinical Social Worker skilled in the diagnosis of Mental Retardation *(Effective 10/1/13)*

V. Midget or dwarf:

1. Internist;
2. Specialist in family practice;
3. Orthopedist;
4. Endocrinologist;
5. Pediatrician, if age appropriate.

W. Neurological Disorder:

1. Neurologist;
2. Neurosurgeon;
3. Pediatric neurologist;
4. Physiatrist;
5. Physician skilled in the diagnosis of the neurological disorder.

X. Obesity:

Physician

Y. Orthopedic disorder:

1. Orthopedist;
2. Orthopedic surgeon;
3. Physiatrist;
4. Other physician skilled in the diagnosis of the particular disorder.
5. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in a public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of orthopedic disorders (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

Z. Traumatic brain injury/acquired brain injury:

1. Neurologist;
2. Neurosurgeon;
3. Neuropsychologist;
4. Physiatrist.

AA. Urological Disorder:

1. Urologist;
2. Nephrologist;

3. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in a public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of urological disorders (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*
4. Internist certified and skilled in nephrology (kidney) related disorders *(Effective 10/1/13)*

BB. Vascular Disorder:

1. Internist certified and skilled in cardiology; *(Revised 10/1/13)*
2. Cardiologist;
3. Specialist in family practice;
4. Vascular surgeon;
5. Physician skilled in the particular vascular disorder;
6. Advanced Practice Registered Nurse or Physician Assistant working in a public health setting and skilled in the diagnosis of vascular disorders (Refer to Glossary: Public Health Setting) *(Effective 10/1/13)*

CC. Visual Disorder:

1. Ophthalmologist;
2. Optometrist;
3. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor *(Revised 1-27-12)*

208.2.00 INFORMATION:

208.2.01 Existing information includes but is not to be limited to:

A. Social Security award letter; Refer to 212.1.05

B. Medical information provided by the Disability Adjudication Section (DAS) ;

C. School psychological;

D. Medical documentation by other agencies indicating the existence of an impairment(s). Such agencies include:

1. Workers' compensation programs;
2. County public health offices;
3. Veterans' Administration;
4. Vocational Rehabilitation Agency;
5. United States military;
6. Employers' or other insurance companies' assessments regarding medical benefits or medical retirement;
7. Other rehabilitation service providers.

E. Medical, hospital, or psychologist's records;

F. Vocational rehabilitation counselor's observation of the following impairments:

1. Amputation(s);
2. Burns(s);
3. Facial Deformity;
4. Obesity;
5. Visual Disorder. *(Revised 1/27/12)*

G. Helen Keller National Center and Birth Defects Centers.

210.0.00 EXTENDED EVALUATION

Effective Date: May 1, 2013

Authority: 34 CFR 361

210.1.01 A case shall be placed in extended evaluation when it is documented by the vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC) that provision of vocational rehabilitation services during an extended period of assessment is necessary for the limited purpose of determining an applicant's ability to benefit from services and the nature and scope of services required in terms of an employment outcome. The assessment shall include trial work experience(s) except in those limited circumstances when an individual cannot take advantage of such experiences, or when options for trial work experiences have been exhausted before the VRC can make a determination of eligibility. In these limited circumstances, other extended evaluation services must be provided.

210.1.02 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall justify in writing the necessity for the extended evaluation and shall initiate an extended evaluation plan.

210.1.03 The justification shall be:
A. Captioned "Justification for Extended Evaluation"; and

B. Signed and dated by the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

210.1.04 The justification shall contain the following statements using the applicant's name:

A. The presumption of (individual's name) ability to benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome is in question; and

B. His/her eligibility cannot be determined without the use of a trial work experience; or

C. An indication that eligibility cannot be determined without the use of other extended evaluation services.

210.1.05 An extended evaluation plan shall be developed with each applicant whose case is placed in extended evaluation (06). Only those services necessary to make eligibility and nature and scope of services determinations may be authorized.

210.1.06 Prior to the development of an extended evaluation plan with a client, the client or his/her authorized representative shall be provided with information regarding:

A. The availability of assistance to the client with regard to the development of the extended evaluation plan;
B. A description of the full range of components that shall be included in an extended evaluation plan;
C. An explanation of the Program's guidelines and criteria for financial commitments concerning the extended evaluation plan;
D. Information on the availability of assistance in completing the VR Program's extended evaluation plan and related forms;
E. Information on regarding the applicant's rights to due process and the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

210.1.07 The VR Program's Extended Evaluation Plan form must be used and shall set forth the details of the extended evaluation program that will assist the counselor and client in determining if the client can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of a vocational outcome. A copy of the extended evaluation plan shall be provided to the applicant and the original placed in the case file.

210.1.08 A work goal is not required on the plan for extended evaluation. If a work goal is designated, it may be identified as an occupational division, grouping, or a specific job title.

210.1.09 The following shall be documented on the Extended Evaluation Plan form where indicated:

A. An objective(s) which addresses the identified reason(s) the qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor cannot determine that the applicant can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of a work outcome.
B. Services necessary to complete the plan objectives to include trial work experience(s). Only those services necessary to make the eligibility determination. And, for each service listed, the provider of the service and the funding source shall be specified. Exempt from this requirement are those circumstances in which the individual cannot take advantage of trial work experiences or those times when the use of such trial work experiences has been exhausted before the Vocational Rehabilitation Program can make proper determination. In such cases, other extended evaluation services appropriate for the individual shall be included.
C. A schedule for review of each objective.
D. Client responsibilities: For each objective, the client's responsibilities for the realization of that objective shall be stated. These responsibilities shall be stated from the client's point of view, in terms the client understands.
E. Evaluation criteria for the measurement of progress and the meeting of each objective.
F. An estimated date of completion for each objective, each service and the Extended Evaluation Plan;
G. Verification of informed choice and applicant's involvement.

210.1.10 The trial work experience(s) shall be conducted in the most integrated setting possible and be of sufficient variety and duration to demonstrate either:

A. The eligibility of the individual for vocational rehabilitation services, or
B. The existence of clear and convincing evidence that the individual is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the disability of the individual.

If for medical/psychological reasons an individual cannot participate in trial work experience(s), the individual's ability to work shall be assessed utilizing all available medical/psychological assessments/evaluations and any other pertinent documentation.

210.1.11 A case in extended evaluation (status 06) shall be reviewed by the counselor with the applicant at a minimum every 90 days to determine the results of the provision of services (in particular the use of trial work experiences) and to ascertain whether a determination of eligibility may be made. Such assessments shall be documented by written review in the case history notes.

210.1.12 An individual's case shall be moved from the extended evaluation status (status 06) when a determination has been made whether or not that individual can benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome or the individual cannot participate in the extended evaluation due to an intervening reason.

210.1.13 To close a case from extended evaluation based on a determination of ineligibility, it must have been documented by clear and convincing evidence that due to the severity of the disability, the applicant is incapable of benefiting from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome. A Determination of Ineligibility is required.

210.1.14 A case closed from extended evaluation based on ineligibility shall be reviewed within 12 months and annually thereafter if requested by the individual or if appropriate, by the individual's authorized representative. The results of the case review shall be recorded in the case file.

210.1.15 This review need not be conducted in situations in which the individual has refused it, the individual is no longer present in the state, the individual's whereabouts are unknown, or the individual's medical condition is rapidly progressive or terminal.

210.1.16 An applicant whose case is closed from extended evaluation for reason(s) of ineligibility shall be referred, as appropriate, to an independent living program and shall be offered Information and Referral Services.

210.1.17 If a case is closed from extended evaluation for an intervening reason, it is not necessary to complete a Determination of Ineligibility, conduct further reviews or make a referral to an independent living program.

210.2.00 INFORMATION:

210.2.01 An individual with a disability is defined as an individual who has a physical or mental impairment which constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment, and who can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome.

212.0.00 **DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY**
Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

212.1.00 POLICY:

212.1.01 The determination of eligibility shall be conducted as the first step of the two step process of qualifying for services.*(Revised 5/1/13)*

212.1.02 Within 60 days of acceptance of an application for vocational rehabilitation services, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall certify in writing that the applicant has or has not met the basic eligibility criteria, unless:

A. Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances exist and the applicant agrees to an extension of the 60-day determination period; or

B. An extended evaluation (status 06), which shall include trial work experiences, is required to determine the applicant's capability to benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome. Refer to 210.0.00

212.1.03 The basic eligibility criteria are:

A. The applicant meets the definition of an individual with a disability, in that:

1. The applicant has a physical or mental impairment which materially limits or, if untreated, must be expected to materially limit physical or mental functioning.

   a. The impairment must be stable or slowly progressive.

   b. The impairment cannot be acute or of an emergency nature.

   c. The impairment must be documented in the case file as indicated by the guidelines in section 208.0.00 and 600.0.00.

2. The impairment must, for the applicant, constitute or result in a substantial impediment to employment. The following conditions are not considered by the VR Program to constitute a substantial impediment to employment unless they meet specific criteria: low vision, obesity, and mental retardation.

3. The applicant can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome.

B. The individual with a disability requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for secure, retain, or regain employment.

212.1.04 It shall be presumed that an individual can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome, unless it can be demonstrated by clear and convincing evidence that he/she is incapable of benefiting from such services through the use of trial work experiences within extended evaluation or, in those limited instances when the individual cannot participate in trial work experiences, through the use of other extended evaluation services.

212.1.05 An individual who has already been determined to be eligible for SSI or SSDI shall be:

A. Considered to be an individual with a significant disability; and

B. Presumed to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services provided that the individual intends to achieve an employment outcome.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the vocational rehabilitation counselor or other work team members providing intake services to inform the individual through its application process that individuals who receive services under the vocational rehabilitation program must intend to achieve an employment outcome. The applicant's completion of the application process for vocational rehabilitation services is sufficient evidence of the individual's intent to achieve an employment outcome, and no additional demonstration on the part of the applicant is required.

212.1.06 The eligibility requirements shall be applied without regard to the particular service needs or the anticipated cost of services required by the applicant.

212.1.07 If exceptional and unforeseen circumstances preclude eligibility determination within 60 days of application, the applicant and vocational rehabilitation counselor shall agree upon the necessity for a specified extension of time to complete the determination and shall sign an Agreement for Extension of the 60 Day Time Frame for Determining Eligibility.

212.1.08 When it has been determined by the vocational rehabilitation counselor that an applicant meets the basic eligibility criteria, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall certify in writing that the individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services from this Program.

212.1.09 The determination shall be:

A. Captioned "Determination of Eligibility"; and

B. Signed and dated by the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

212.1.10 The determination shall contain the following statements using the individual's name:

A. For individuals receiving SSI or SSDI: "(individual's name) is a recipient of SSI or SSDI and has expressed an intent to work. He/She is presumptively eligible for vocational rehabilitation services; therefore, it is presumed that he/she meets the definition of an individual with a disability. It is also presumed that he/she requires services to (state all that apply):

1. Prepare for;
2. Secure;
3. Retain; or

B. For individuals not receiving SSI or SSDI:

1. (Individual's name) meets the definition of an individual with a disability;
2. He/she requires vocational rehabilitation services to (state all that apply):
   a) Prepare for;
   b) Secure;
   c) Retain; or
   d) Regain employment ; and
3. (Individual's name) is, therefore, determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

212.1.11 INFORMATION:

212.1.12 An individual with a disability is defined as an individual who has a physical or mental impairment which constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment, and who can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome.

214.0.00 DETERMINATION OF INELIGIBILITY

Effective Date: October 1, 2001

Authority: 34 CFR 361

214.1.01 When it has been determined by the vocational rehabilitation counselor and/or work team that an individual does not meet one of the basic eligibility criteria (Refer to 212.1.03), the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall certify in writing that the individual is not eligible for vocational rehabilitation services from the VR Program.***(Revised 5/1/13*)**

214.1.02 A case may be closed for an ineligibility reason only after full consultation with the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's parent, family member, guardian, advocate or authorized representative, or after giving a clear opportunity, as documented in the case file, for this consultation.

214.1.03 An ineligibility decision based on the severity of an individual's disability may be made only after trial work experiences have been provided in extended evaluation (status 06), except in those limited circumstances when an individual cannot take advantage of such experiences, or when options for trial work experiences have been exhausted before the vocational rehabilitation counselor can make a determination of eligibility. In these limited circumstances, other extended evaluation services (status 06) must have been provided prior to such an ineligibility decision.

214.1.04 The basic eligibility criteria (Refer to 212.1.03) must be continuously applied. It is possible for an individual found eligible to become ineligible at some future time due to changing conditions. In this event, the case shall be closed. Refer to 502.1.13

214.1.05 The Determination of Ineligibility shall be so captioned and shall include a statement citing the specific reason for the ineligibility decision. Any determination of ineligibility after plan completion shall utilize the Work Plan Amendment for Determination of Ineligibility form which shall also include the reason(s) for the decision. The form shall be signed by the client or his/her authorized representative and the vocational rehabilitation counselor. Refer to 312.1.02E

214.1.06 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall complete a Record of Closure form documenting the type of closure. The record of closure must be consistent with the case history and case file documentation. Refer to 502.0.00

214.1.07 The determination shall include the justification for the ineligibility decision which must be consistent with the specific reason identified on the closure statement.

214.1.08 The reason and justification for the ineligibility decision shall be consistent with VR Program policy and case file documentation.

214.1.09 The case file shall document that the individual or his/her authorized representative, as appropriate, had the opportunity to discuss the ineligibility decision with the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

214.1.10 The Determination of Ineligibility shall be signed and dated by the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

214.1.11 Each individual determined to be ineligible shall be notified of the decision in conformance with Due Process unless the case is closed status 08 from status 00. Refer to 104.0.00

214.1.12 An ineligibility decision based on severity of disability shall be made only after it has been demonstrated by clear and convincing evidence that the individual is incapable of benefiting from services in terms of an employment outcome. Such clear and convincing evidence shall be based on the results of trial work experiences or, in limited circumstances, other extended evaluation services. Refer to 210.1.03

214.1.13 An individual whose case is closed from extended evaluation (status 06) for a reason of ineligibility due to inability to benefit from services shall be referred, as appropriate, to an independent living program. The individual shall also be referred to other training or employment-related programs that are part of the one-stop service delivery system under the Workforce Investment Act.

214.1.14 An ineligibility decision in a case of inability to benefit from services must be reviewed within 12 months and thereafter, if such a review is requested by the individual, or, if appropriate, by the individual's representative. Refer to 148.1.08

216.0.00 ORDER OF SELECTION

Effective Date: October 1, 2001

Revised Date: March, 1, 2014

Authority: 34 CFR 361.36

216.1.00 POLICY:

216.1.01 The order of selection shall be imposed when it has been determined by the GVRA Executive Director that services cannot be provided to all persons who apply and who are determined to be eligible for services. *(Revised 5/1/13)*

216.1.02 The order of selection priority category placement is the second step in the two-step process of qualifying individuals for services. Refer to 208.0.00*(Revised 5/1/13)*

216.1.03 After eligibility has been determined and before the work plan is written, each client is assigned to a priority category. The client will be assigned to the highest priority category for which he or she is qualified and a rational will be documented in the case file. If the client's circumstances change or new information is acquired, the category designation can be changed to a higher priority category. Category designation changes will not be made if the change would place the individual in a lower priority category. *(Effective 3/1/14)*

Upon assignment of a priority category under the program's order of selection, a Notice of Change form shall be issued to the client stating the assigned priority category and specifying whether the client shall be provided services under an open category. *(Refer to 104.1.08B2)* *(Revised 4/ 1/03)*

216.1.04 If a client in a closed priority category, or if the client's assigned priority category is closed prior to the initiation of planned services, the client shall be offered to be placed on the wait list and/or referral services. *Revised (5/1/13)*

216.1.05 The order of selection shall in no way regulate the provision or authorization of diagnostic and evaluation services. In the event that all Priority Categories are closed, assessment services for the determination of eligibility and assignment of a priority category must continue to be provided. However, no VR Program funds shall be authorized or expended on any case that moves into status 12 or above following the effective closing date of a priority category when the classification of the case puts it in a closed priority category**.**

216.1.06 Cases in Status 12 or above for which work plan services have begun may not be disrupted as a result of the closing of a priority category. Clients actively participating in work plan services shall continue to receive work plan services. Work plan amendments are allowed for the continuation or provision of new services and/or a work goal change.

216.1.07 Order of Selection Categories:

A. Priority Category A:

An eligible client shall be classified in this category if he/she has been determined by the VR Program to be an individual who:

1. Has a permanent physical or mental impairment(s) which;

2. seriously limits 2 or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome; and

3. requires 2 or more primary services; and

4. at least 2 of these services require provision over an extended period of time.

NOTE: Priority Category A meets the program's criteria for Most Significant Disability. Refer to Glossary: Person with a Most Significant Disability.

B. Priority Category B

An eligible client shall be classified in this category if he/she has been determined by the VR Program to be an individual who:

1. Has a permanent physical or mental impairment(s); which

2. seriously limits 2 or more functional capacity(ies) in terms of an employment outcome; and

3. requires 2 or more primary services; and

4. at least 1 of these services require provision over an extended period of time.

NOTE: Priority Category B meets the program's criteria for Most Significant Disability. Refer to Glossary: Person with a Most Significant Disability.

C. Priority Category C

An eligible client shall be classified in this category if he/she has been determined by the VR Program to be an individual who:

1. Has a permanent physical or mental impairment(s); which

2. seriously limits 1 functional capacity in terms of an employment outcome; and

3. requires 2 or more primary services ; and

4. at least 2 of these services require provision over an extended period of time; or

5. is a recipient of Social Security Disability Benefits (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

NOTE: Priority Category C meets the program's criteria for Significant Disability. Refer to Glossary: Person with a Significant Disability.

D. Priority Category D

An eligible client shall be classified in this category if he/she has been determined by the VR Program to be an individual who:

1. Has a permanent physical or mental impairment (s); which
2. seriously limits 1 functional capacity in terms of an employment outcome; and
3. requires 2 or more primary services; and
4. at least 1 of these services require provision over an extended period of time; or
5. is a recipient of Social Security Disability Benefits (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

NOTE: Priority Category D meets the program's criteria for Significant Disability. Refer to Glossary: Person with a Significant Disability.

E: Priority Category E

An eligible client shall be classified in this category if he/she has been determined by the VR Program to be an individual who:

1. Has a permanent physical or mental impairment (s); which
2. seriously limits 1 functional capacity in terms of an employment outcome; and
3. requires 2 or more primary services; and
4. none of which require provision over an extended period of time

F: Priority Category F

An eligible client shall be classified in this category if he/she has been determined by the VR Program to be an individual who:

1. Has a permanent physical or mental impairment (s); which

2. seriously limits 1 functional capacity in terms of an employment outcome; and

3. requires 1 primary service; which

4. requires provision over an extended period of time

G: Priority Category G

An eligible client who does not meet the criteria for classification in the above categories shall be classified in this priority category.

216.1.08 Post-Employment Service:

Priority category classification under the order of selection during the work plan, unless shown to be in error, shall apply to the authorization or provision of a postemployment service(s) since these services are a continuation of the original plan.

216.2.00 INFORMATION:

216.2.01 Only services that are necessary, as a direct result of the disability, to reduce the impact of limitations on a functional capacity as it relates to an employment outcome are included in the determination of OOS categories. *(Effective 3/1/14)*

216.2.02 Permanent Impairment means any physical or mental condition which, for an individual, seriously limits functional capacity(ies), i.e. mobility, communication, work skills, work tolerance, self-care, self-direction, and interpersonal skills, in terms of employability and which can be expected to impose a lasting reduction in function regardless of medical or psychological intervention.

216.2.03 Extended period of time means at least 6 months.

300.0.00
Needs Assessment
Work Plan

SECTION 300.0.00
NEEDS ASSESSMENT • WORK PLAN
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SECTION 300
NEEDS ASSESSMENT • WORK PLAN

302.0.00 VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

302.1.00 POLICY:

302.1.01 As soon as a determination has been made that a person with a disability is eligible for services and assigned to an open priority category, a comprehensive needs assessment shall be conducted as part of the work plan development process. The purpose of the comprehensive needs assessment is to determine the work goal, objectives, and the nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation services to be included in the work plan. No monetary limits based solely on the anticipated cost of the services shall be imposed. However, services must be both appropriate and reasonable. Refer to Glossary: Appropriate, Reasonable Refer to 140.0.00 *(Revised 3/1/14)*

302.1.02 The vocational comprehensive needs assessment shall address the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and informed choice, and the client's medical prognosis. The assessment may include, as appropriate in each case:

A. A preliminary assessment of existing data gathered during the referral, application and qualifying process, which may be sufficient in some cases to develop the work plan; and/or

B. Additional assessments and/or evaluations when existing information has been determined to be insufficient*(Revised 5/1/13)*

302.1.03 All assessments shall be used by the vocational rehabilitation counselor, work team and client to jointly identify goals, objectives and services that need to be included in the work plan.

302.1.04 When appropriate, rehabilitation technology services shall be provided, to the extent necessary, to assess the potential for developing the capacities of the individual to perform in the work environment. This may include a work site assessment. If appropriate, this assessment shall be provided by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology.

302.1.05 When appropriate, support services may be provided, to the extent necessary, to enable the client to access planned assessment services in settings away from normal care supports.

302.1.06 To the maximum extent possible and appropriate, and in accordance with confidentiality requirements, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall insure that the person with a disability (and/or, if indicated, a parent, family member, advocate, or other authorized representative) is able to make informed choices concerning the selection and identification of appropriate services and providers of such services throughout the vocational rehabilitation process. To ensure the inclusion of informed choice, the client, and/or his/her representative, shall be provided, in writing and in an appropriate mode of communication, with the information regarding the individual's options for developing a work plan. Such options include the availability of professional and technical counseling and assistance, the information regarding the order of selection and other pertinent financial considerations, a description of due process and the client assistance program and any other information the eligible individual requests or the VR Program determines to be necessary.

302.1.07 If supported employment services are identified as needed by the person with a disability, an assessment of the need for supported employment services shall be completed prior to inclusion on the work plan. Employment shall be in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the informed choice of the individual. Appraisal for supported employment and assistive work technology may consist of consultation with other work team members, including the assistive work technology team member. Refer to Glossary: Supported Employment

302.1.08 If the person with a disability is receiving services under an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a copy of the IEP shall be obtained by the vocational rehabilitation counselor. Relevant elements of the IEP shall be used in the work needs assessment process.

302.1.09 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall conduct a pre-assessment of the need for post-employment services and record the result on the work plan.

302.2.00 INFORMATION:

302.2.01 The emphasis of the needs assessment is on understanding the client and his/her natural supports. Efforts should be made to identify who is on the team with the client and the vocational rehabilitation counselor so that meaningful partnerships can be established. Families and natural supports are important factors to be considered. Open communication with the client and his/her natural supports is vital to understanding the client's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and informed choice.

304.0.00 RELATED FACTOR

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

304.1.00 POLICY:

304.1.01 Services may be provided to an eligible individual in order to correct or improve, as appropriate and reasonable, related factors that have been documented and determined to have a significant and direct negative impact on the successful vocational participation of the individual. (Refer to Glossary. Related Factor). *(Revised 5/1/13)*

306.0.00 WORK GOAL

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

306.1.00 POLICY:

306.1.01 A work goal shall be established with the client prior to or simultaneously with the development of a work plan, and the selection of the goal shall incorporate the informed choice of the client. In all cases, the primary emphasis of the vocational rehabilitation program shall be the client's achievement of a work goal consistent with his/her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and informed choice.

306.1.02 The work goal shall be identified as a specific job title listed in the Occupational Information Network (O*NET). *(Revised 3/1/14)*

306.1.03 The work goal shall be stated on the work plan with a brief explanation, consistent with the file documentation, regarding the appropriateness of the work goal considering the unique strengths, resources, concerns, abilities, capabilities and informed choice of the individual.

306.1.04 If there is a change in the work goal, a plan amendment is required. Refer to 310.1.02A

306.1.05 If the work goal involves supported employment, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall follow the special instructions contained in policy 416.0.00.

306.1.06 The VR Program may consider homemaker as a legitimate vocational goal for a qualified person. *(Effective 4/3/04)(Revised 1/27/12)*

A. In order to establish a work goal of homemaker, a Homemaker Duties Assessment Chart shall be completed and:

1. The work goal of homemaker must be consistent with the needs, capabilities and interests of the qualified individual;
2. The qualified individual must be expected to assume primary responsibility for at least four (4) of the duties on the Homemaker Duties Assessment Chart with the provision of appropriate VR services; and
3. The qualified individual must be deficient in three (3) or more of the homemaker duties on the Homemaker Duties Assessment Chart.

B. The counselor shall obtain consultations, as needed, for additional information to complete the Homemaker Duties Assessment Chart (e.g., Assistive Work Technology (AWT) staff, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist or Occupational Therapist).

C. The following are requirements and definitions pertinent to the vocational goal of homemaker.

1. Homemaker Duties are those duties necessary to maintain a suitable living environment within the client's personal domicile for the benefit of those residing in that domicile, whether the person lives alone or is part of a family unit within the same domicile. Such duties are listed and described in the Homemaker Duties Assessment Chart.

2. Primary Responsibility means that the individual is solely responsible for performing the above duties or that he/she performs these duties more than 50% of the time that these duties are completed in the home. The duties must be performed in a manner to ensure orderliness and cleanliness in the home. No compensation is received for the performance of the duties.

3. Adequate Skill Level means that the client has the capabilities, including physical capabilities, to perform the homemaker duties without supervision or assistance. The progress in obtaining an adequate skill level for each responsibility initially identified as deficient shall be documented in the case file.

D. When requesting a low vision or other evaluation for an individual with a work goal of homemaker, the VR counselor should list the deficiencies in the Homemaker Duties Assessment Chart so that they can be addressed in the evaluation. Only those recommendations necessary for the client's employment in the chosen vocational goal may be provided.

NOTE: It is important to recognize the difference between activities of daily living and homemaker duties. (For instance the ability to eat without assistance is an activity of daily living; the preparation of food as described on the Homemaker Duties Assessment Chart is a homemaker duty.) If it is determined that the individual requesting homemaker services really needs activities of daily living services, the VR counselor should refer the individual to other resources such as the Independent Living Centers and the Older Blind Program.

306.2.00 INFORMATION:

306.2.01 In some instances, the work goal may not be established while the client is receiving extended evaluation services through the use of trial work experiences.

308.0.00 INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (WORK PLAN)

Effective Date: October 1, 2001

Authority: 34 CFR 361

308.1.00 POLICY:

308. 1.01 An Individualized Plan for Employment (Work Plan) shall be developed, agreed upon, and signed by the eligible individual with a disability or, as appropriate, that individual's authorized representative. The plan shall also be approved and signed by the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

308.1.02 The work plan shall be designed to assist the individual in achieving a work goal that is consistent with his or her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.

308. 1.03 The work plan shall be developed and implemented in a manner that affords the eligible client the opportunity to exercise informed choice in the selection of:

A. An employment outcome;

B. The specific vocational services to be provided under the plan;

C. The providers of the vocational rehabilitation services; and

D. The means or methods that will be used to procure the services.

308.1.04 Prior to the development of a work plan, the client or his/her authorized representative, shall be provided, in writing and in an appropriate mode of communication, information related to the development of his/her work plan. Refer to 204.1.09 *(Effective 3/1/08)*

308.1.05 Prior to the completion of the Work Plan, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall staff high cost and unusual plans with the rehabilitation unit manager and the work team.

308.1.06 A copy of the work plan, all amendments, and appropriate attachments shall be provided to the client or his/her authorized representative in writing and in an appropriate mode of communication. The original document and all appropriate amendments and attachments shall be retained in the case file.

308.1.07 The eligible individual or his/her representative and the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall review the work plan as often as necessary, but at least annually.

308.1.08 For a qualified student in a secondary school, the work plan must be developed and signed before the student transitions from school to the community.

308.1.09 Work Plan content:

A. A Work Plan shall be developed, using the VR Program's Work Plan form. This plan shall set forth the details of the vocational rehabilitation program that will assist the client in achieving his/her vocational rehabilitation work goal.

B. Each plan shall have a work goal. The work goal may be identified as an occupational division, an occupational grouping, or a specific job title. The work goal may be competitive or non-competitive. Refer to 308.1.02

C. Certain special conditions apply for Work Plans which contain particular types of work goals or services:

1. Work plans with a work goal of "Homemaker" shall have the Homemaker Duties Assessment Chart completed in accordance with the directions on the chart. This form may be used as reference to document attainment of adequate functioning in previously deficient areas as a result of work plan services. A completed copy of the chart shall be placed in the case file. Refer to 510.1.05 B 5

2. The Work Plan Attachment for Post Secondary Academic and Vocational Training or the Work Plan Attachment for Postgraduate College Training, as appropriate, shall be as part of the work plan in training cases and referenced in the appropriate "responsibilities" section of that objective on the work plan. The use of either attachment does not preclude the inclusion of other appropriate responsibilities for such training. *(Revised.10-29-12)*

3. For a work plan in which supported employment services are to be provided, the plan shall not exceed 18 months in duration, unless a longer period to achieve job stabilization has been jointly established and justified in the case file. A work plan for supported employment shall:

   a. Specify the supported employment services to be provided by the VR Program;

   b. Specify the expected extended services needed (which may include natural supports);

   c. Identify the source of extended services or, should specific identification not be possible, describe how extended services are to be made available;

   d. Provide for periodic monitoring to ensure that the individual is making satisfactory progress toward meeting the weekly work requirement established on the work plan;

   e. Provide for any appropriate coordination of services with other state or federal programs;

   f. Identify any job skills training that will be provided on site;

   g. Include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual with the most significant disability.

D. Objectives:

Every plan shall have, at a minimum, the objective of an employment outcome, with the intent that such employment is to occur, to the greatest extent possible, in an integrated setting. The plan may also include additional, intermediate objectives that support the achievement of the work goal.

1. The objective(s) shall only address and be consistent with the capacities and related factors identified as area(s) needing improvement.
2. It is possible for one objective to address more than one capacity or related factor identified as area(s) needing improvement.
3. If more space is needed to record all of the objectives, additional sheets may be attached to the Work Plan form. Such attachments shall be clearly designated as part of the original Work Plan.

E. Services:

The Work Plan shall include the service(s) necessary to complete each plan objective, including, as appropriate, Assistive Work Technology Services. The service(s) shall be provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate.

1. Services shall address only the capacities and related factors identified as areas needing improvement.
2. For each service listed, the provider of the service and the method used to procure the service shall be specified.
3. For each service listed, the funding source for that service shall be specified.
4. Each service must be dated with the projected dates for starting and ending the service.

F. Client Responsibility:

1. For each objective, the client's responsibilities for the realization of that objective shall be stated. Client responsibilities may be expressed in terms of:
   a. Certain behavioral conditions which the client agrees to meet;
   b. Assumption of some or all of the financial responsibility for that objective; and/or
   c. Application for and receipt of comparable benefits.
2. The counselor shall ensure that client responsibilities are stated from the client's point of view, in terms the client understands.

G. Review of Objective:

1. The work plan objective(s) shall be reviewed regularly to evaluate the client's progress toward achieving the stated objective(s.) The results of the review(s) shall be documented by the counselor in the case file.
2. The time frame for the review of each objective shall be established considering the nature of the objective and the services that are being provided to assist the individual with a disability to reach that objective.

H. Evaluation Criteria:

1. The interim evaluation criteria for each objective are expressed on the work plan in terms of how the client will measure his or her progress toward that objective.
2. The full completion of each objective will be expressed on the work plan in terms of what conditions will have been satisfied by the client for the objective to be considered as having been met.

I. Estimated date of completion:

Each work plan shall show an estimated date for the successful completion of the plan, i.e. all services have been completed and the client has worked successfully for at least 90 days.

J. Special Work Plan considerations:

1. For a work plan that has been developed with a qualified high school student, it must acknowledge, on the appropriate place on the work plan, whether the client is receiving services under an Individualized Education Program (IEP). If so, the counselor shall include a copy or summary of the IEP in the client's file.
2. The provision of supported employment services (or lack thereof) shall be indicated on the work plan. If supported employment services are planned, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall indicate on the work plan how extended services are to be made available.

K. Every work plan shall address whether or not post-employment services are anticipated. If post employment services are anticipated, the counselor shall give a description of the expected services.

L. Client Comments:
Verification of informed choice shall be documented on the work plan by:

1. Client's written comments of involvement; or
2. The client's initials at the statement on the Work Plan form.

M. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and the client and/or authorized representative, shall sign and date the plan. Services shall not be initiated until the Vocational Rehabilitation Agency VR counselor approves and signs the work plan. A copy shall be given to the client and the original shall be retained in the client's file.

308.2.00 INFORMATION:

308.2.01 Options for developing a work plan are included in the Client Services Handbook that is provided to all clients at the time of application. The work plan is one component of the Work Program. For each eligible individual, the Work Program consists of:

A. The Work Plan;

B. Work Plan Amendment(s) and Annual Review(s) (Refer to 310.0.00) as appropriate; and

C. Record of Closure form. Refer to 502.1.01, 502.1.10 and 502.1.12

308.2.02 The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 are guided by the presumption of ability. Individuals with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, are generally presumed to be capable of engaging in employment in integrated settings. The Work Plan Program shall be designed to achieve the work objective of the individual, consistent with his or her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to these factors when jointly developing the work plan with the qualified individual.

310.0.00 WORK PLAN AMENDMENT AND ANNUAL REVIEW

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

310.1.00 POLICY:

310.1.01 The work plan shall be revised, as needed, using a Work Plan Amendment and Annual Review Form.

A work plan amendment shall be developed using the same options available for developing the work plan. All requirements for the work plan apply to the work plan amendment(s). Refer to 308.0.00

310.1.02 The work plan must be amended to:

A. Change the work goal;

B. Add or remove an objective;

C. Add or remove a service;

D. Add an amendment if post employment services are provided after the case has been closed in status 26. For such an amendment, continue the sequential numbering of the objectives from the previous active case;.

E. Record an ineligibility decision, as required by federal regulations, for a client for whom a work plan has been developed and has been found to be incapable of achieving a vocational outcome (i.e. the client's disability has been found to be too severe). Such an ineligibility decision shall be recorded on the special work plan amendment form entitled "Work Plan Amendment for Determination of Ineligibility". Refer to 214.1.12

310.1.03 Any revisions or amendments to the program shall not take effect until agreed to and signed by the individual with a disability or, as appropriate, the client's authorized representative, and the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

310.1.04 A copy of all amendments and appropriate attachments shall be provided to the client or, as appropriate, his or her authorized representative, using an appropriate alternative mode of communication when necessary. The original document shall remain in the case file.

310.1.05 Additions:

A. To add an objective:

1. Indicate the new objective with sequential numbering on the Work Plan Amendment and Annual Review form;
2. Give the date and an explanation for the addition in the case notes; Refer to 310.1.09C
3. Show the client's responsibilities; Refer to 310.1.09E and
4. The VR counselor and client or, as appropriate, parent, family member, guardian, advocate or authorized representative, shall sign and date the form.

B. To add a service:

1. Indicate the objective by citing the objective number in the appropriate space on the work plan amendment form and the new service(s) to which it relates on the form;
2. Give an explanation for the addition in the case notes; Refer to 310.1.09D
3. Show the client's responsibilities; Refer to 310.1.09E
4. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and client, or as appropriate, parent, family member, guardian, advocate or authorized representative shall sign and date the form.

310.1.06 Removals:

A. To remove an objective:

1. Identify the objective to be removed by citing the objective number in the appropriate space on the Work Plan Amendment and Annual Review form;
2. Give an explanation for the removal on the Work Plan Amendment and Annual Review form;
3. Show the client's responsibilities; Refer to 310.1.09E
4. The VR counselor and client or, as appropriate, parent, family member, guardian, advocate or authorized representative, shall sign and date the form.

B. To remove a service:

1. Indicate the objective by citing the objective number in the appropriate space on the work plan amendment form and identify the service to be removed;

2. Give an explanation for the removal in the case notes; Refer to 310.1.09D

3. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and client or, as appropriate, parent, family member, guardian, advocate or authorized representative, shall sign and date the form.

310.1.07 Change in work goal:

A. Indicate the change in the appropriate place on the Work Plan Amendment and the Annual Review form.

B. The new work goal shall be stated on the Work Plan Amendment and the Annual Review form with a brief explanation, consistent with case file documentation, regarding the appropriateness of the work goal, considering the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of the individual.

310.1.08 Client Comments:
Verification of informed choice shall be documented on the Work Plan Amendment and Annual Review form by:

1. Client's written comments of involvement; or

2. The client's initials at the statement on the Work Plan Amendment and Annual Review form.

310.1.09 Signature:
The VR counselor and client or, as appropriate, the client's authorized representative, shall sign and date the form.

310.1.10 Annual Review of Work Plans:

A. A client, with whom a plan has been developed, shall have his/her work plan reviewed as often as necessary, but at least annually;

B. The client or his/her representative (a parent, a family member, a guardian, other advocate or an authorized representative) shall be afforded an opportunity to review his/her work plan to:

1. Determine progress toward objectives;

2. Identify if an objective or service has been completed or deleted; and

3. If necessary, jointly redevelop and agree to its terms.

C. The client's statement, or as appropriate, in the words of a parent, a guardian, a family member, an advocate or an authorized representative may appear in the appropriate place on the Work Plan Amendment and Annual Review form;

D. Documentation on the Work Plan Amendment and Annual Review form shall include the date and results of the review;

E. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and client or, as appropriate, parent, family member, guardian, advocate or other authorized representative, shall sign and date the form;

F. A copy of each program review, in accessible format to the maximum extent possible, shall be given to the client after it has been signed and dated. The original shall be retained in the case file.

310.1.11 Review of Extended Evaluation Plans:

A case in extended evaluation (status 06) shall be reviewed at a minimum of every 90 days to determine the results of the provision of services (in particular the use of trial work experiences) and to ascertain whether a determination of eligibility may be made. Such assessments shall be documented in writing in the case history. The Work Plan Amendment and Annual Review Form is not used to document these reviews of the Extended Evaluation Plan. Refer to 210.0.00

Section 400.0.00
Services

SECTION 400
SERVICES

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SECTION 400 SERVICES

402.0.00 SERVICES/GENERAL

Effective Date: October 1, 2001

Authority: 34 CFR 361

402.1.00 POLICY:

402.1.01 The VR Program may provide those services necessary to assist an individual with a disability in meeting the entry-level requirements of the qualified individual's work goal. This applies to both primary and supportive services. Refer to Glossary: Services, Primary; and Services, Supportive.

402.1.02 In order for services to be provided or authorized by the VR Program, such services shall be deemed both appropriate and reasonable. Refer to 140.2.01 and 140.2.02

402.1.03 As services are provided by the VR Program, eligibility requirements shall be continually applied. Refer to 210.0.00

402.1.04 If services which require that financial need criteria be met are being provided and the client's economic circumstances change causing him/her to no longer meet the financial need criteria, the client shall be notified and financial support for the services discontinued in accordance with policy. Should the client's financial situation change such that they meet financial need criteria, appropriate support for services shall be initiated. Refer to 104.1.02 and 206.1.08 *(Revised 10/1/13)*

402.1.05 Services may be provided only by approved providers and, where applicable, only by providers who have met the provider standards and the standards in the outsourcing manual. Clients who are approved VR Program providers may be authorized to provide services as long as there is no apparent conflict of interest and confidentiality needs are addressed. Refer to 118.1.10 and 140.1.05 *(Revised 9/1/05)*

402.1.06 Other purchased services shall not be authorized if the individual refuses approved physical or mental restoration which shall improve his/her disability except refusal by reason of religious belief or substantial risk.

402.1.07 Purchased services provided in Status 22 shall be temporary in nature and for the purpose of job stabilization. If the service is not expected to enable the client to be self sustaining, the service shall not be initiated.

402.1.08 All services shall be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate for the individual's needs.

402.1.09 In the provision of services, the VR Program shall not assume the legal responsibilities of another entity.

402.1.10 Service(s) may be suspended or terminated for clients who fail to comply with policy(ies) and/ or agreed to responsibilities for the provision of the service(s). *(Refer to Cite(s): 104.1.02; 104.1.03)(Effective 12/15/10)*

404.0.00 COMMUNITY PROGRAM ADJUSTMENT SERVICES TRAINING

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

404.1.00 POLICY:

404.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide adjustment services training for a qualified individual for the purpose of developing acceptable behaviors to enter and/or maintain gainful employment.

404.1.02 The vocational rehabilitation counselor may authorize adjustment services training when an individual does not exhibit acceptable work, community, interpersonal and/or job readiness behavior for securing and/or maintaining a job.

404.1.03 Refer to Expenditure of Funds/General (140.0.00), when it is necessary to authorize funds for service.

404.1.04 The community program providing the adjustment services training shall:

A. Provide a monthly progress report for each Program client receiving adjustment services training, and

B. At the conclusion of services, provide a final report to the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

404.1.05 The VR Program may sponsor Facility Work Adjustment Training, (FWAT), for a qualified individual for a period of time that meets the Client's needs, not to exceed 120 authorized training days including absences. *(Revised 4/1/03)*

404.1.06 If FWAT extends beyond 120 authorized training days, the case must be staffed with the rehabilitation unit manager prior to authorization.

404.2.00 INFORMATION:

404.2.01 Adjustment services training includes:

A. Community Adjustment:
Community adjustment covers such areas as money and banking, how to make purchases, types of insurance and transportation.

B. Work Adjustment:
Work adjustment is designed to assist the individual in mobilizing energies toward building tolerances and meeting the entry level demands of the competitive labor market through a learning, earning and experiencing process.

C. Personal and Social Adjustment:
Personal and Social adjustment services cover such areas as communication, grooming and appropriate dress for work. *(Revised 4/1/03)*

D. Work Readiness:
Work readiness covers such areas as knowledge of why people work, various occupational requirements, where and how to look for a job, how to complete a job application and interview skills.

406.0.00 SERVICES FOR GROUPS

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

406.1.00 POLICY:

406.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for groups of individuals with disabilities. Such services shall be used to provide services that promote integration and competitive employment.

406.1.02 Services for a group of individuals with disabilities may be expected to contribute substantially to the vocational rehabilitation of a group of individuals but does not relate directly to the individualized rehabilitation program of any one individual with a disability.

406.1.03 The need for services for groups may be identified at any level within the VR Program or outside the Program.

A. A service identified at the regional level must be approved by the regional director who will forward the request to the program director. Exempt from this requirement are services to groups of transitioning students. Refer to 450.0.00

B. Services identified at the state office must be approved by the VR Program director.

C. The director of the VR Program shall determine the availability of funding and the impact to the Program's budget.

406.1.04 When it has been decided to provide service(s) for groups of individuals, the VR Program fiscal officer shall take the appropriate action to ensure accountability for the cost of the service.

406.1.05 When it has been decided to provide service(s) for groups of individuals, the appropriate regional director shall take the necessary action to ensure the timely implementation of the service.

408.0.00 COMMUNITY WORK ADJUSTMENT

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

408.1.00 POLICY:

408.1.01 Community Work adjustment takes place at a work site that is integrated into the community. Instruction/feedback is provided by a supervisor to assist the client in developing or re-establishing acceptable work habits and behaviors in order to obtain and/or retain employment.

408.1.02 There are two methods for obtaining the service of Community Work Adjustment Training (CWAT) and all applicable policy applies to both:

A. The Direct CWAT program where VR program staff arrange training sites with appropriate jobs, work directly with the employer/trainer, monitor on-site client progress, obtain required documentation, oversee program requirements and pay the training fee to the employer or directly to the client. *(Revised 8/1/09)*

B. The Outsourced CWAT program where approved providers (often Community Rehabilitation Programs), assist with identification of training sites, work directly with the employer/trainer, monitor on-site client progress, obtain required documentation, (which is then submitted to the GVRA-VR counselor), ensure program requirements are being followed and pay the training fee to the employer or directly to the client.

(Revised 8/1/09)

408.1.03 The VR Program shall not pay another state agency, organization or institution to provide community work adjustment training unless such payment is approved by the rehabilitation unit manager. Documentation of the approval must be in the case file.

408.1.04 The VR Program shall only authorize community work adjustment training and a job coach simultaneously with rehabilitation unit manager approval.

408.1.05 CWAT placement of individuals under the age of 18 is restricted to non-hazardous occupations. (Refer to Glossary: *Hazardous Work Site)* *(Revised 4/15/11)*

408.1.06 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall attempt to establish community work adjustment training at no cost or by utilizing third party funding prior to authorizing an expenditure of Program section 110 funds.

408.1.07 The client shall be paid no less than minimum wage.

408.1.08 Community work adjustment training may be provided for a qualified individual for up to 40 hours per week except when the client is enrolled in secondary education. A client who is enrolled in Secondary educational training shall not be placed in community work adjustment training for more than 15 hours per week. No payment by the VR Program shall be made for an individual in CWAT beyond 40 hours per week or beyond 15 hours per week if the individual is enrolled in secondary educational training.

Note: The restriction to 15 hours of CWAT for individuals in secondary educational training does not apply during the time that school is not in session. That is, the individual may participate in CWAT for up to 40 hours per week during the summer break, if such participation is consistent with the individual's rehabilitation needs.

408.1.09 The VR Program may pay the client directly or reimburse the employer/trainer an amount equal to the minimum wage per hour for the client/trainee in secondary education up to 15 hours per week for community work adjustment training. For all other CWAT participants, payment to the client or reimbursement to the employer/trainer shall be made at a rate equal to minimum wage up to 40 hours per week. No payment/reimbursement shall be authorized for any time in training or any administrative costs beyond the established limits. *(Revised 8/1/09)*

408.1.10 The VR Program may sponsor community work adjustment training for a qualified individual for a period of time that meets the client's needs, not to exceed the following limits:

A. For an individual in community work adjustment training 20 hours per week or less, the duration of this training shall be limited to 120 authorized training days including absences, unless an extension is approved by the rehabilitation unit manager to meet the individualized needs of the client. Approval by the rehabilitation unit manager must be documented in the case file. *(Revised 3/1/05)*

B. For an individual in community work adjustment training for more than 20 and up to 40 hours per week, the duration of this training shall be limited to 60 authorized training days including absences, unless an extension is approved by the rehabilitation unit manager to meet the individualized needs of the client. Approval by the rehabilitation unit manager must be documented in the case file. *(Revised 3/1/05)*

408.1.11 A monthly training progress report shall be obtained from the employer/trainer by the vocational rehabilitation counselor to determine satisfactory progress of the client. The client's completed training hours will be included on this report. The VR Program's Training Progress Report Form should be used to document progress or lack thereof.

408.1.12 There shall be documentation in the case file, before the training begins, concerning what is expected of the client/trainee. The client shall sign the CWAT Participant Agreement. When CWAT is provided through the Direct Program, there shall be documentation in the case file of mutual understandings, before the training begins, concerning what is expected of the employer/trainer and the GVRA/VR Program. The employer shall sign the CWAT Employer Agreement. *(Revised 9/1/08)*

408.1.13 When CWAT is provided through the Direct Program, the VR Program shall authorize to the employer/trainer or directly to the client a training fee in an amount equal to the minimum wage per hour for the client/trainee. Administrative costs may also be authorized to the employer/trainer at a rate no greater than 15% of the training fee. No authorization by the VR Program shall be made for an individual in CWAT beyond 40 hours per week or beyond 15 hours per week if the individual is enrolled in secondary educational training. *(Revised 8/1/09)*

408.1.14 When CWAT is provided through the Outsourcing Program, the VR Program shall pay an approved provider the authorized service fee as per their contract or service agreement. The provider shall be responsible to pay the employer/trainer or pay the client directly, an amount equal to the minimum wage per hour. The authorized service fee as per the contract or service agreement covers all payment to the employer or client. *(Revised 8/1/09)*

408.2.00 INFORMATION:

408.2.01 Care must be taken by the vocational rehabilitation counselor or other work team member to select an appropriate community work adjustment site which contributes to the client's ability to achieve his/her work goal.

408.2.02 Community work adjustment has the purpose of assisting a client to obtain appropriate work habits. It should not be authorized for periods of time beyond that which is required to achieve this purpose. When authorized for a client who is enrolled in secondary education, the time in community work adjustment training may be designed to conform with a semester; however, the emphasis is on meeting the training needs of the client, not the curriculum needs of the school.

410.0.00 COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

410.1.00 POLICY:

410.1.01 Counseling and guidance shall be provided for an individual by the VR Program throughout his/her vocational rehabilitation program of services.

410.1.02 Non-planned Counseling and Guidance:

1. Non-planned counseling and guidance is general in nature and is not reflected on the work plan or work plan amendment and annual review;
2. The case file may contain documentation of the provision of this service and the outcomes achieved dependent on the vocational rehabilitation counselor's professional discretion.

410.1.03 Planned Counseling and Guidance:

1. Planned counseling and guidance shall be listed on the work plan/plan amendment and annual review as a specific service designed to achieve a stated objective(s) and must address a specific capacity(ies) limited by the impairment(s) and/or related factor(s) identified in the case file;
2. When planned counseling and guidance is listed as a work plan/plan amendment and annual review service, the case file shall contain documentation of the provision of this service. The language of the documentation must describe any progress or lack of progress toward the accomplishment of the specific behavioral change(s) which is being attempted.

410.2.00 INFORMATION:

410.2.01 Counseling and guidance is addressed in two categories: non-planned and planned. The provision of either or both, as appropriate, shall meet the intent of the Program's policy.

410.2.02 Non-planned counseling and guidance are those activities which take place throughout the rehabilitation process when the vocational rehabilitation counselor is involved in routine information dialogue with the applicant/client, i.e. explaining the vocational rehabilitation program, completing the application, giving directions, reminding of appointments, discussing program progress, making referral to other programs or activities, etc.

412.0.00 EMPLOYMENT: BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361
Randolph-Sheppard Act
O.C.G.A. 49-9-3 (4) & (5)
O.C.G.A. 49-9-40 et al

412.1.00 POLICY:

412.1.01 The VR Program may only provide for the establishment and management of a vending facility under the Randolph-Sheppard Act as a small business enterprise.

412.1.02 Any vending facility operated by the VR Program shall be subject to the laws, regulations and policies governing the Program's Business Enterprises Program.

412.1.03 Referrals for consideration as a vending facility operator are made to the training coordinator of the Business Enterprises Program.

412.2.00 INFORMATION:

412.2.01 The VR Program is responsible for the development and maintenance of all vending facilities established in the program. Business enterprise personnel shall have control with respect to selection, placement, transfer, financial participation and termination of vendors and the preservation, utilization and disposition of VR Program assets.

412.2.02 The Business Enterprises Program is responsible for establishing and maintaining food service operations on federal, state, county and other public and private locations. The program is a single, state-administered enterprise, with a large number of food service outlets. Persons operating these facilities are vendors or managers who are similar in nature to managers of franchise operations in the fast food industry. The vending facilities belong to the VR Program which in turn licenses the vendors to manage the facilities.

414.0.00 EMPLOYMENT: SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Effective Date: October 1, 1999 *(Revised 7/1/06)*

Authority: 34 CFR 361

414.1.00 POLICY:

414.1.01 The VR Program may authorize services for a qualified individual to meet entry level requirements for an approved self employment business.

414.1.02 Self-employment is a viable business venture initiated and operated by the client where that individual performs, supervises or sub-contracts the product or service to be produced. The business must be wholly owned by the VR client. Self-employment shall be consistent with the consumer's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and interests.

414.1.03 The VR Program may authorize a supply of expendable stock(s) and/or supplies, including tools and equipment, which are necessary to the attainment of the self-employment business. All authorizations shall be appropriate and reasonable. Refer to 140.1.12, 140.2.01 and 140.2.02.

414.1.04 Initial stocks and supplies include those items necessary to the establishment of the new business enterprise during the initial establishment period, which may not extend beyond six months. No authorization for any operation costs of the business shall extend beyond six months. Completion of projected start-up expenses and budget for the initial six months of operation shall be done before expenditures on the business are made.

414.1.05 The following services may be provided, if required, but are not included in the cost of allowable start-up business expenses:

A. Training;

B. Business plan development;

C. Adaptive technology/equipment;

D. Disability related modifications.

414.1.06 A self-employment business approved for support by the VR Program must be a viable business and expected to make a profit and contribute significantly to the individual's household income. The anticipated outcome is that the business proceeds will be the primary source of income once the business is established. This expectation shall be assessed and verified prior to approval of the provision of self-employment services.

414.1.07 A Regional Self-Employment Review Team, consisting of 3 to 5 members appointed by the regional director, shall provide consultation to the counselor regarding potential self-employment cases, assessment of clients and an objective and final review of the business plan with recommendations to the counselor. A Release of Information form shall be obtained from the client prior to discussions with team members outside of the VR Program. Refer to 120.0.00.

414.1.08 The VR Program may support two levels of self-employment businesses, one level with support up to $3000 and the second level with support over $3000 and up to $10,000. The regional director may approve expenditures considered as appropriate and reasonable beyond either of the established levels. This approval shall be documented in the case file.

414.1.09 For businesses requiring up to $3,000 in support, a brief business plan shall be completed by the client for review by VR staff and, when appropriate, the Regional Self-Employment Review Team. Normally a client will already have necessary work skills for the business and may require short term training in areas such as bookkeeping and tax requirements. Some examples of this type of self-employment are: lawn care, pressure washing, carpentry, medical billing, massage therapy and cosmetology.

414.1.10 For businesses requiring over $3,000 and up to $10,000 in support, a full business plan shall be completed by the client for review by VR staff. The client will be required to work with an approved provider while developing the business plan, and a formal critique of his/her plan by the provider must be submitted to VR. In addition, the client shall present his/her business proposal to the Regional Self-Employment Review Team. These businesses often require funding in addition to VR support and the client's contribution. Clients require business management skills in addition to skills required to perform business tasks. For example, a person who is a chef or cook would also require training in managing a business before opening a restaurant.

414.1.11 The client shall be responsible for contributing a minimum of 25% of the start-up cost of the business. This contribution shall be either in-kind or financial through provision of actual funding. Examples of in-kind contributions include the individual's providing utilities and property for the business or equipment they already own. Funding contributions may be obtained through a variety of resources including client's assets, family contributions, grants or loans. Resources that are specific to individuals with disabilities such as PASS Plans, Credit Able, etc.may also be available.

414.1.12 Self-Employment services may be authorized only to VR Program approved providers based on approved VR Program fees. An agreement between the VR Program and the provider shall be in place prior to the initiation of any services. Refer to the VR Program Procedures Manual and Outsourcing Manual for self- employment provider requirements and payment processes.

414.1.13 Self-Employment Comprehensive Needs Assessment

The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall utilize an assessment process to assist in determining if self-employment is an appropriate job match as well as to look at the client's needs, strengths, related factors and proposed services. This process shall include:

A. Two phases of formalized assessments specific to self-employment:

1. Phase I is an assessment, by both the client and VR staff, of the individual's capabilities and potential for operating a business. These "entrepreneurial" tests can be administered either via the Internet or in paper form. They consist of the following:

    a. "Self-Employment Entrepreneurial Career Assessment Form" (available through the Georgia Career Information System); and

    b. "Entrepreneur Risk Assessment Quiz: Starting Your Own Business" (available through the Small Business Development Centers).

    NOTE: Continue with Phase II as determined appropriate based on Phase I findings.

2. Phase II consists of the client's completion of information on the feasibility of his/her business, as well as monthly personal and living expenses. They consist of the following:

    a. Business Feasibility Worksheet: The purpose of this worksheet is for the client to provide and clarify business plan details to the VR counselor and/or Regional Self-Employment Review Team. The 25% client contribution shall be identified at this time; and

    b. Monthly Personal and Living Expenses Worksheet: The purpose of this worksheet is to determine how much income the client must have in order to pay his/her routine personal and living expenses.

B. Other assessments as appropriate:

C. Consideration of the following:

1. The individual's ability to sustain himself/herself in the occupation; and

2. The work required; and

3. The likelihood of success; and

4. Available support from approved providers; and

5. The individual's qualifications and/or training and the likelihood of his/her being successful in any required training; and

6. Any transferable skills; and

7. The local economy.

D. Findings from preliminary market research provided by the Rehabilitation Employment Specialist (RES) and/or designated VR staff on local business needs and trends.

414.1.14 VR Program and Provider Collaboration

If the VR counselor and client agree to continue with the self-employment process following completion of the steps in 414.1.13, referral and coordination shall be initiated by the counselor to an approved provider for the following services:

A. Training courses on starting and managing a business, business planning, loan opportunities, etc. Training, as appropriate, may be provided as assessment and/or as a planned service;

B. Business Plan development assistance;

C. Business Plan written critique with recommendations.

414.1.15 Self-Employment Business Plans

A written business plan is required for all self-employment cases:

A. A "Brief Business Plan" shall be completed for businesses requiring up to $3,000 from the VR program. The "Brief Business Plan" packet shall be submitted to the counselor by the client and consists of the following four (4) documents:

1. Business Feasibility Worksheet;
2. Monthly Personal and Living Expenses Worksheet;
3. Business Operations Start-up Expenses Worksheet; and
4. Projected Monthly Cash Flow Worksheet (12 Months).

B. A "Full Business Plan" shall be completed for businesses requesting over $3,000 and up to $10,000 from the VR Program. The "Full Business Plan" packet shall be submitted to the counselor by the client and consists of the four (4) worksheets listed above in Part A, and the following elements:

1. Description of the Proposed Business: The client shall have a detailed description of how the business will be set up, the products and/or services offered, the business location, who the customers will be and why they will patronize the business;
2. Market Research: The client must demonstrate that he/she knows the market and has expertise in this business. This shall include a discussion of the target market, the barriers to entry into the market and the size and location of the market. Facts about local demographics and market research should be presented to support the estimate of potential consumers. All research must be documented and factual;

3. Sales Plans: The client shall discuss his/her sales plans and methods. This should include pricing strategy, cost/benefit analysis and alternatives. The advertising plan shall describe the methods to be used to promote the products or services in the target market;
4. Management: The client shall describe his/her interest and experience in proposed business, including education, work history, personal contacts, skills and knowledge. A description of how the client will manage the company and its operations shall be stated. Also, management supports and related costs shall be given. It is recommended that mentors, advisors and consultants, both formal and informal, be identified as supports for the business;
5. Financial Information and Concise Revenue Projections:
    a. Revenue projections must show the projected monthly and annualized revenue and operational expenses for 3 years. The cost of production must be addressed. This includes facility, supplies, salaries, license(s), taxes, insurance, shipping, transportation and utilities. Include the cost per unit;
    b. There must be a start-up balance sheet, a list of start-up equipment and services and a breakout of what will be provided by the client, by other sources, and by VR;
    c. Description of the amount currently available for investment, the amount of funding sought and how that money would be used. Loan re-payment must be included in the projected income/expense statements;
    d. Description of the method of bookkeeping.
6. Competition: The client must identify competitors in their market area. The discussion should include the difference between their product/service and their competitors, as well as why his/her business would be preferred over the competitors;
7. Risk analysis: An analysis of the risks of the business should be completed; discuss strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the business;
8. Business License: Verify what is required to obtain a business license and that the business will comply with city, county, state, and federal codes and ordinances and that the individual will be eligible to apply and obtain the license;
9. Supporting Documents to be attached when applicable:
    a. List of identified vendors (may require verification from vendors/suppliers of their participation), which may include bookkeeper, tax consultant, etc.;

b. Items requested to be paid by VR and their cost;

c. Items and resources that the consumer will contribute to the plan;

d. Credit Report;

e. A copy of the last two years federal tax return;

f. Specifications of products;

g. Advertising materials.

414.1.16 Self-Employment Determination

The VR counselor shall determine whether or not to support the client in self employment based on the following:

A. Comprehensive Needs Assessment Findings; and

B. Written Business Plan containing all necessary elements; and, when applicable

C. Provider feedback and Business Critique; and

D. Regional Self-Employment Review Team recommendations.

414.1.17 Required Steps Following Self-Employment Approval

The Vocational Rehabilitation counselor shall ensure that:

A. The client obtains a business license and/or permits as required to operate the business. The VR Program may authorize the purchase of an initial business license but not renewals; and

B. The client obtains a lease and/or building permits. If a business property (other than the home) is used, the client shall provide proof of the property availability or lease agreement in the client's name only. The VR Program shall not authorize the lease or purchase of any building; and

C. Any physical modifications to the business property, as recommended by AWT staff, are only those required to make the property accessible to the client. If the client does not own the property, written permission must be obtained from the owner of the property prior to modifying the property. This permission shall be placed in the case file.

414.1.18 Self-Employment Work Plan Requirements

If the individual is approved for self-employment the following work plan requirements shall be followed:

A. Self-employment is not a vocational goal itself, but a method of achieving employment. The work plan may contain several phases, depending on the needs of the client;

B. A Work Plan or Plan Amendment with self-employment as a means to achieve employment may be written only after a Business Plan is approved by the VR counselor;

C. The Work Plan or Plan Amendment including self-employment should encompass a plan to provide the supports, technical assistance and resources necessary to launch, develop, and/or sustain the business;

D. The Work Plan or Plan Amendment must include a clear statement of the role and responsibilities of the participant, and of the nature and extent of VR support and participation (timelines, dollar amounts, specific goals and services) as well as the types and amounts of the client's investment;

E. There must be clear criteria for measuring progress, including monthly reports of business income and expenses;

F. The work goal shall be consistent with the approved business plan and shall be a 9 digit DOT code.

414.1.19 Self-Employment Business Documentation and Case Progress

A. Once the business has begun operation, follow-up shall occur for a minimum of 90 days to access business gains and future stabilization.

B. The case may be placed in Status 22 after start-up expenditures have been finalized.

NOTE: If tools and equipment are purchased for a client, a Client Tools/Equipment Responsibilities Form shall be completed if any item exceeds $350.00. Refer to 492.0.00.

C. The VR Counselor shall verify monthly business income and business expenses through written reports submitted by the client. A business profit results when business income exceeds business expenses.

414.1.20 Employment Outcomes

Self-employment outcomes shall be based on a business profit or a salary the client assigns him/herself from the business.

A. The case shall be considered successfully rehabilitated after:

1. The client demonstrates his/her ability to average a business profit or a salary over a period of 90 days; and

2. A Notice of Change shall be issued when this has occurred; and

3. The case shall be closed 30 days subsequent to the issuance of the Notice of Change.

B. There are two options for self-employment case closure as follows:

1. Case may be closed in competitive employment if the client is averaging a business profit or salary over a 90 day period at a rate equal to or above minimum wage. This is the anticipated outcome to be reached; or
2. Case may be closed in non-competitive employment if client is averaging a business profit or salary over a 90 day period at a rate less than minimum wage. In these cases the VR counselor shall ensure that the client's work is progressing satisfactorily and closure is warranted. All criteria found at cites 510.1.01 and 510.1.07 shall be met.

414.1.21 Disallowed Self-Employment Services

A. The VR Program shall not provide funding or be involved in assisting a client's plan for:

1. Businesses that are speculative in nature, such as investments in real estate, etc.
2. Businesses organized as non-profit;
3. Businesses organized as hobbies, i.e., any business that is not organized to make money or a profit;
4. Refinancing of existing debt;
5. Businesses that may violate community morality.

B. The VR Program shall not authorize the following services:

1. Purchase of any type of motorized vehicle or provision of any transportation support or assistance to get to and from the designated place of business or to render services related to the business.
2. Payment of deposits and continuation of payments for any utilities associated with the self-employment venture such as electricity, gas, telephone, Internet service, water, waste collection, etc.

416.0.00 EMPLOYMENT: SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Effective Date: October 1, 1999 *(Revised 7/1/06)*

Authority: 34 CFR 361 and 34 CFR 363

416.1.00 POLICY:

416.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide time-limited supported employment services for a qualified individual. Individuals who may be appropriate to receive supported employment services are those:

A. For whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a severe disability; and

B. Who, because of the nature and severity of their disabilities, need intensive supported employment services and extended services after transition in order to enter and retain employment.

416.1.02 Supported employment is based on a model of placement followed by extensive job training. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to authorize services such as work adjustment training prior to initiation of supported employment services but, in general, training on job skills and work behaviors can best be provided once a client is employed in his/her actual job setting.

416.1.03 Supported employment is a program made up of individualized services that provide one-on-one supports throughout the client's employment. When determined appropriate by the VR counselor, supports may be provided in an enclave or group setting. The work group can consist of up to eight individual workers managed by a job coach or supervisor. Care must be taken in this situation to ensure all workers receive level of supports required for them to perform satisfactorily on the job.

416.1.04 The maximum period for VR Program services is 18 months following placement on a supported work site. This time frame can be extended if it is determined and included on the work plan that additional time is necessary in order for the client to achieve job stability prior to transition to extended services.

416.1.05 Supported employment services may be authorized only to VR Program approved providers based on approved VR Program fees. An agreement between the VR Program and the provider shall be in place prior to the initiation of any services. Refer to the VR Program Procedures Manual and Outsourcing Manual for supported employment provider requirements and payment processes.

416.1.06 Prior to progressing to supported employment eligibility and identification of supported employment services, an individual must:

A. Meet all basic eligibility criteria and have been determined eligible for VR Program assistance. Refer to 210.0.00; and

B. Undergo a comprehensive needs assessment which identifies supported employment as the appropriate service required to obtain and maintain employment. Refer to 302.0.00; and

C. Meet the requirements for most significantly disabled. Refer to 306.1.06 A. and Glossary: Person with a most significant disability.

416.1.07 Supported Employment Eligibility Criteria:

A. The individual has been determined eligible for VR Program services (Title I);

B. The individual's case file shall contain supporting documentation, via a Comprehensive Needs Assessment, which shows that Supported Employment is the appropriate rehabilitation goal and is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of the individual. Refer to Glossary: Supported Employment;

C. The individual is categorized as a person with a most significant disability/ies;

D. The individual must be placed in an integrated work setting. An integrated work setting is defined as one typically found in the community in which an individual interacts with non-disabled individuals, other than non-disabled individuals who are providing services to the individual, to the same extent that non-disabled individuals in comparable positions interact with other persons;

E. The individual has a documented need for both ongoing support and extended services in order to work in competitive employment or work towards a goal of achieving competitive employment. Competitive employment means work in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting and for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary or usual wage paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

416.1.08 Determination of Eligibility for Support Employment

The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall certify the client's need and eligibility for supported employment services by completing a Determination of Eligibility for Supported Employment.

A. The determination shall be:

1. Captioned "Determination of Eligibility for Supported Employment";
2. Signed and dated by the vocational rehabilitation counselor;
3. The determination shall contain the following statement: "(Individual's name) meets supported employment eligibility criteria."

416.1.09 Supported Employment Needs Assessment and Services Identification

The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall utilize an assessment process to identify client needs, any related factors and appropriate supported employment services.

A. The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall complete the supported employment needs assessment by:

1. Reviewing existing data compiled during the application and prior Comprehensive Needs Assessment process;
2. Completing the Supported Employment Consumer Information Form;
3. Authorizing other applicable assessments.

B. The vocational rehabilitation counselor, approved provider, the client, his/her authorized representative and other interested parties shall meet to collaborate on the client's supported employment needs and services by:

1. Gathering any pertinent information to complete the Supported Employment Consumer Information Form;
2. Discussing the individual's needs and services and identifying responsibilities of VR, the provider and the client; and
3. Completing and signing the Supported Employment Services Agreement Form.

416.1.10 Order of Selection

The supported employment client shall be placed in either Priority Category A or Priority Category B. Refer to 306.0.00

NOTE: Priority category A and B meet VR Program criteria for Most Significant Disability.

416.1.11 Supported Employment Work Plan

Services shall only be authorized or provided in statuses 18, 22 and 32 under a work plan for supported employment. The work plan must specify all anticipated services including:

A. Placement in an integrated work setting;

B. The maximum number of hours per week that the client is anticipated to work;

C. Identification of job skills training (job coaching) needed on the work site;

D. Provision of periodic monitoring to ensure that the individual is making satisfactory progress towards meeting the weekly work requirement established in the work plan;

E. Identification of the source for extended support services, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the actual source, description of how the needed services will be made available;

F. Specification of the expected extended services needed;

G. Provision of appropriate coordination of services with other federal or state programs.

NOTE: The completed Supported Employment Services Agreement Form shall be attached to the approved work plan and maintained in the case file.

416.1.12 On-going Support Services

The VR Program shall authorize on-going support services which are those services required from the time of job placement until transition to extended services. The maximum period for on-going support is 18 months unless otherwise indicated on the work plan. On-going support services must include, at a minimum, twice-monthly contact with the supported employee at the work site to assess job stability or, if requested and appropriate, off-site monitoring. If off-site monitoring is determined to be appropriate, it must consist of at least two face-to-face meetings with the individual and one employer contact monthly. Examples of on-going support services include:

A. The provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site;

B. Training on appropriate work behaviors and interactions with supervisors and co-workers;

C. Regular observation or supervision of the individual;

D. Follow-up services such as contact with parents, family members, guardians, advocates and other suitable professional and informed advisors in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement;

E. Facilitation of natural supports at the worksite;

F. Transportation Assistance;

G. Other services as required.

416.1.13 Supported Employment Case Management and Progress

A supported employment case shall move forward as indicated by the following:

A. Monthly progress reports shall be submitted by the job coach/provider to determine client's progress throughout his/her supported employment program;

B. The client must be placed on the employer's payroll as an employee from the first day on his/her job. Following placement, the VR case shall remain in training status while a job coach is training the client on his/her job duties on site. Training consists of teaching the supported employee to learn his/her specific job duties as well as appropriate work site behaviors;

C. Although not preferred, during the job site training period, a client may be paid a sub-minimum wage by the employer/trainer in keeping with the federal wage and hour regulations. A sub-minimum wage certificate must be signed by all appropriate parties and a copy maintained in the case file;

D. Once the client has stabilized on the job, is making at least minimum wage but no less than the wages equal to his/her co-workers who are not disabled and are performing the same or similar work and, requires a minimal amount of job coach intervention, the client can be moved from VR training status to working status. As a guideline, a case can be moved to working status when job coaching services amount to less than 20% of the client's work time; *(Revised 8/10/12)*

E. When the VR counselor, client, employer and job coach all agree that the job is a good match for the individual and the job duties are being performed satisfactorily, the VR case may be transitioned to extended services;

F. Transition to extended services shall not occur until the individual substantially meets the hourly requirement established in the work plan.

416.1.14 Extended Services

Extended services are:

A. Those services needed to support and maintain the individual's employment; and

B. Are provided for as long as the individual is employed at the same job; and

C. At a minimum, must be provided at the same frequency as those that are provided for on-going support; therefore, they must include two visits per month at the work site or, if determined appropriate, two face-to-face visits off-site with the individual and one employer contact per month.

416.1.15 Employment Outcomes and Program Completion

A supported employment case shall be closed as successfully rehabilitated after a client has:

A. Maintained a supported employment placement for 60 days after making the transition to extended services; and

B. Continued to make at least minimum wage but no less than the wages equal to his/her co-workers who are not disabled and are performing the same or similar work; and *(Revised 8/10/12)*

C. Continued to receive benefits at least equal to his/her co-workers who are not disabled and are performing the same or similar work. *(Revised 8/10/12)*

416.1.16 Transitional Employment

Transitional employment is a type of supported employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness. Services include:

A. A series of temporary job placements in competitive work in an integrated work setting with on-going support services; and

B. The provision of on-going support services must include continuing sequential job placements until job permanency is achieved.

416.1.17 Transitional Employment Outcomes

A case may be closed as successfully rehabilitated after the following criteria are met:

A. The client and employer must be satisfied, i.e., the client is comfortable on the job and the employer is satisfied with the work being produced;

B. The client is maintaining adequate interpersonal relationships and acceptable behavior on the job;

C. The occupation is consistent with the client's capacities and abilities, considering the client's informed choice;

D. The client possesses acceptable skills to perform or continue the work satisfactorily;

E. The employment and working conditions will not aggravate the client's disability and the client's disability will not adversely affect the work activities of others; and

F. The employment is regular, reasonably permanent and the client receives a wage commensurate with that paid to others for similar work under legal requirements.

NOTE: In the case of transitional employment, a provider is obligated to continue provision of services until a permanent employment outcome is achieved which may be long beyond the termination of time limited vocational rehabilitation services.

416.1.18 Program Codes

The following are requirements for Program code reporting and program changes:

A. When supported employment is initiated, the VR program code SE must be reflected in the Client Information System;

B. When transitional employment is initiated, the VR program code TE must be reflected in the Client Information System;

C. A case can move from job coaching only (JC) to supported employment (SE) with rehabilitation unit manager approval if the vocational rehabilitation counselor determines eligibility for supported employment after initiating job coaching only. The justification and approval must be documented in the case file; Refer to 420.0.00

D. The rehabilitation unit manager must approve the change when a case is moved from supported employment (SE) to job coaching only (JC) and the approval must be documented in the case file;

E. Providers of supported employment for persons with serious mental illness may provide supported employment (SE) and/or transitional employment (TE) as VR Program services. Supervisory approval is required to change from TE to SE.

416.1.19 Post Employment Services

A client may be provided post-employment services when needed to maintain the job in which he/she was closed status 26. Services shall be relatively minor and may include, but are not limited to, short term job coaching only services and assistive technology assistance. If more intensive retraining or a new job is required, then the case shall be reopened. Refer to 444.0.00.

418.0.00 INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

Effective Date: October 1, 2001

Authority: Rehab Act - 101(a)(5) and (20)

34 CFR 361

418.1.00 POLICY:

418.1.01 Information and referral services shall be provided to applicants, potential applicants and eligible clients who do not qualify for VR services due to the Program's order of selection and to clients who have been determined to be ineligible for VR services due to inability to benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome. Information and Referral services are provided to assist such individuals in securing needed services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment.

418.1.02 Referral to other federal and state programs, including other statewide workforce investment system programs, shall be provided in order to best meet the individual's needs. Such referrals shall be completed using the VR Program's Information and Referral Form. (All information on the Information and Referral Form must be completed except for the diagnostic information if such information is not appropriate or available.)

418.1.03 A copy of the completed Information and Referral form shall be placed in the client's case file, and the information relating to the referral shall be placed in the VR Program's data base for information and referral.

420.0.00 JOB COACHING

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

420.1.00 POLICY:

420.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide job coaching services to enable a qualified individual to prepare for competitive work.

420.1.02 The work team may choose to utilize job coaches under service agreements or approved collaborative agreement providers of supported employment services for job coaching based on provider resources and resource availability in the local area.

420.1 .03 The VR Program shall not authorize on-the-job training (OJT) and a job coach simultaneously without rehabilitation unit manager approval. This approval shall be documented in the case file.

420.1.04 The client must be on the employer's payroll and receive benefits as any other employee/trainee.

420.1.05 During the job coaching training period a client may be paid a sub minimum wage by the employer in keeping with federal wage and hour regulations. A Sub-minimum Wage Certificate must be signed by all appropriate parties and a copy maintained in the case file.

420.1.06 Job coaching may either be provided as an integral component of supported employment or may be considered as a separate service. Job coaching as a separate service shall not be provided to an individual who qualifies for Supported Employment.

420.1.07 Since the individual receiving job coaching as a separate service is not eligible for supported employment, only section 110 funds may be utilized.

420.1.08 The following statuses are appropriate for job coaching as a separate service:

A. Status 18 - Is used for providing job coaching. The client should be considered to be in training rather than in employment upon initiating job coaching even though the client is on the employer's payroll.

B. Status 22 - Limited job coaching can be provided in this status. A case should be placed in this status when the client stabilizes to the point which requires a minimal amount of job coach intervention. As a guideline, a case can be moved to status 22 when job coaching services amount to approximately twenty percent of the client's total work hours per month.

420.1.09 The time guidelines for job coaching only services are: 100 hours per client. If additional hours are needed for job coaching services, the case must be staffed with the work team and approved by the rehabilitation unit manager. Should the service be extended, documentation of the staffing and the rehabilitation unit manager’s approval for extending job coaching services must be in the case file.

420.1.10 Job Coaching Reports:

A. Monthly Training Progress Report;

This report is completed monthly and shall be submitted to the VR Counselor in a timely manner.

B. Job Coaching Services Time Sheet;

The job coach completes this form daily noting the hours of services provided to the client. The provider shall certify job coaching hours provided, prior to the payment for services.

420.2.00 INFORMATION:

420.2.01 Job coaching is intended to be an individualized service. However, if a job coach is working with more than one individual on the same job site at the same time, then the hourly rate of pay for the job coach is prorated among the individuals with whom the job coach is working. Typically, a job coach will not be utilized to serve more than two clients concurrently. The ratio shall be consistent with the needs of the clients to ensure quality services.

422.0.00 JOB OPPORTUNITIES DEVELOPMENT/GENERAL

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Revised Date: September 1, 2008

Authority: 34 CFR 361

422.1.00 POLICY:

422.1.01 The work team shall initiate and expand employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The team is responsible for coordinating and building working relationships with business and industry in the team's assigned area.

422.1.02 Programs and services shall be developed in cooperative partnerships with business and industry and collaborative relationships with appropriate agencies leading to job and career opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

422.1.03 Although the entire work team is responsible for job placement, the rehabilitation employment specialist (RES) shall take the lead role in identifying and developing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. RES lead responsibilities include the following:

A. Cultivation of Job Orders and Job Placement

1. RES shall identify job openings and obtain usable job orders, resulting in an interview, by establishing relationships with employers.
2. The job openings and usable job orders shall be documented and shared with team members via Employer Profiles. Profiles shall include:
   a. Business contact information; and
   b. Recruitment and hiring practices; and
   c. Current and projected hiring needs.
3. Job carving and one-on-one placement efforts may be necessary to ensure successful employment outcomes for certain clients. RES shall coordinate with employers to try to establish job carving when existing jobs do not provide work opportunities for clients with significant disabilities.

B. Provision of Business Services

1. RES shall be the key team member in determining the needs and priorities of business services, and in coordinating, providing, or assisting other team members in the provision of these services. VR business services include:

   a. Accessibility Surveys: A systematic physical analysis of the work site/business location in order to improve user access to services and activities for individuals with disabilities.

   b. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Consultation: A service that provides technical assistance, information, and clarification to employers about ADA and how it relates to their business. As necessary, consultation will be sought from the State ADA Coordinator.

   c. Disability Awareness Training: The process of educating managers, supervisors, and other employees about the potential impact of stereotypical attitudes towards persons with disabilities on the job.

   d. Job Analysis: A study of a job that defines the purpose of the job, the tasks performed, and the aptitude/skill requirements needed to perform the job competently. This service can provide businesses with clarification of essential functions which can be used to develop or update written job descriptions, to make hiring decisions, to address issues in the area of Workers' Compensation, EEO, ADA, staff training needs, etc.

   e. Job Accommodation/Modification: VR can identify adjustments to improve a job function, such as redesigning the work environment, changing the sequencing of tasks, or providing assistive devices/equipment. Consult with AWT staff as appropriate.

   f. Identification of Qualified Applicants: The end result of assessing an applicant's abilities and interests and matching them to a specific job. Recommended job matches are based on an in-depth understanding and assessment of the candidate and the job requirements.

   g. Assistive Work Technology: VR uses technologies or other adaptations to facilitate the successful functioning of people with disabilities at a competitive level on the job. Services may include rehabilitation engineering and provision of assistive technology devices.

   h. Tax Incentives Consultation: Tax incentives vary from year to year. The rehabilitation employment specialist has the responsibility of being knowledgeable about tax incentives and current legislative action affecting their statuses. Examples of such incentives are: Small Business Tax Credit; Architectural/ Transportation Tax Deduction; and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

C. Marketing VR to businesses in the community.

422.1.04 The RES shall present job orders and employment opportunities at unit meetings and individual case staffings to enable successful job matches and placements.

422.1.05 All RES activities on individual cases shall be documented in case notes in the client file.

422.2.00 INFORMATION:

422.2.01 Use of Department or VR program approved marketing tools and materials are required.

422.2.02 Employer Profiles shall be used to:

A. Provide a consistent model for the RES in employer relationships;

B. Facilitate sharing information with the team; and

C. Permit orderly transfer of responsibility between rehabilitation employment specialists.

422.2.03 The RES has a unique role in serving both clients and employers as customers. Therefore, the RES will take the primary lead in assisting the team with job placement.

422.2.04 The team, in recognition that there will be variations in the degree of job readiness among clients, shall afford each client the maximum opportunity for a successful employment outcome.

424.0.00 JOB PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Revised Date: September 1, 2008

Authority: 34 CFR 361

424.1.00 POLICY:

424.1.01 The VR Program shall assist a qualified job-ready individual in finding and/or securing suitable work consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. Refer to 308.0.00

424.1.02 The rehabilitation employment specialist (RES) is the lead team member in providing specialized employment services to include individualized job placement services, as appropriate, for job-ready persons with disabilities. The Job Search Record form shall be used with the individual as appropriate.

424.1.03 When the individual has completed preparation for employment and is ready to go to work, the case shall be placed in status 20. Refer to 130.1.11

424.1.04 The rehabilitation employment specialist (RES) is the lead team member in providing specialized employment services to include individualized job placement services, as appropriate, for job-ready persons with disabilities. The Job Search Record form shall be used with the individual as appropriate.

424.1.05 The client is responsible for taking an active role in job search activities as documented on the work plan. An emphasis is placed on working with the team to identify appropriate potential employers and employment opportunities. The Job Search Record form shall be used by the client as appropriate.

424.1.06 The rehabilitation employment specialist shall assume the lead role in the development of a Client Placement Plan. The Client Placement Plan shall be included in the case file.

424.1.07 The rehabilitation employment specialist shall document job placement activities in the case notes. These may include but are not limited to:

A. Job market information;

B. Work readiness assessments;

C. Consults;

D. Job club activities;

E. Self-employment opportunities;

F. Job search activities;

G. Placement information including:

1. Employer contact information;
2. Job title;
3. Job duties;
4. Pay rate;
5. Benefits;
6. Follow-up notes.

H. Employer needs or concerns as related to a client placed into employment and follow-up activities.

424.1.08 The case shall be placed in status 22 at the time the individual begins to work. Refer to 130.1.12

424.1.09 The case shall remain in status 22 for a minimum of 90 consecutive days immediately prior to a status 26 closure. Refer to 130.1.14A and 510.1.02

424.1.10 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall ensure follow-up services according to the needs of the individual for a minimum of 90 consecutive days to:

A. Determine the suitability of the job;

B. Ascertain the individual's level of adjustment to the job;

C. Detect and resolve possible problems;

D. Assist the employer, co-workers, etc. in accepting the new employee.

424.2.00 INFORMATION:

424.2.01 The VR Program's goal is to assist individuals with placement in entry-level jobs within their vocational goals which offer career opportunities.

424.2.02 Attention and planning must be given to placement concerns early in the individual's program. Specific attention must be given to the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. Placement services usually become more concentrated toward the end of the vocational rehabilitation process.

424.2.03 The following are examples of some types of placement services which are provided by the most appropriate team member:

A. Evaluation of the individual's work readiness;

B. Provision of guidance related to work during individual assessment and work plan development;

C. Guidance in development and execution of a plan for job seeking activities;

D. Instructions for completing a job application;

E. Counseling with regard to proper conduct and appearance during an interview;

F. Employer contact and job development;

G. Registration of the individual with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency;

H. Individual and group counseling for job retention skills;

I. Modification, job restructuring and assessment (directly related to a specific job) for assistive work technology services including assistive work technology device(s);

J. Assistance with, and consultation on, removal of architectural and transportation barriers and job modification;

K. Provision for post-employment or on-going support/extended services prior to closure;

L. Job coaching;

M. Provision of counseling with regard to strategies for career advancement.

424.2.04 The vocational rehabilitation counselor's responsibility for placement includes**,** but is not limited to, the coordination of services provided by others on behalf of the individual. It is not necessary in every circumstance for the vocational rehabilitation counselor to have direct involvement in placement.

424.2.05 It is the vocational rehabilitation counselor's responsibility to ensure that the individual's case is closed in an appropriate employment outcome. Refer to 510.0.00

424.2.06 Placement of individuals under the age of 18 is restricted to non-hazardous occupations. Refer to Glossary: Hazardous Work Site.

426.0.00 ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT)

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

426.1.00 POLICY:

426.1.01 The VR Program may authorize the provision of on-the-job training (OJT) for a qualified individual to achieve entry level job skills to meet their work plan goal of competitive employment. Refer to Glossary: Competitive Employment

426.1.02 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall attempt to establish on-the-job training at no cost or by utilizing third party funding prior to authorizing an expenditure of VR Program funds.

426.1.03 The VR Program shall not pay another state program, organization or institution to provide OJT unless approved by a rehabilitation unit manager. Documentation of the rehabilitation unit manager approval shall be included in the case file.

426.1.04 The VR Program shall not authorize OJT and a job coach simultaneously without rehabilitation unit manager approval.

426.1.05 The client must be placed on the employer's payroll, paid at least minimum wage and receive benefits as any other employee/trainee. *(Revised 9/1/08)*

426.1.06 The VR Program may reimburse the employer/trainer one-half the agreed upon starting wage of the client/trainee for up to 40 hours per week. No reimbursement may be authorized for overtime.

426.1.07 An OJT salary supplement may be authorized for up to six months. *(Revised 9/1/08)*

426.1.08 A monthly training progress report shall be obtained from the employer/trainer by the vocational rehabilitation counselor to determine satisfactory progress of the client. The VR Program's Training Progress Report form should be used to document progress or the lack thereof.

426.2.00 INFORMATION:

426.2.01 Care must be taken by the vocational rehabilitation counselor and/or other work team member to select an appropriate OJT site to accomplish the client's work goal.

426.2.02 There should be documentation in the case file of mutual understandings before the training begins concerning what is expected of the trainer/employer, the client/trainee and the VR Program.

428.0.00 PHYSICAL/MENTAL RESTORATION

Effective Date: October 1, 2002

Authority: 34 CFR 361

O.C.G.A. 49-9-1 (8)

428.1.00 POLICY:

428.1.01 The VR Program may authorize the provision of a physical or a mental restoration service(s) for a qualified individual to correct or substantially improve a physical or a mental condition which affects his/her work outcome.

428.1.02 The VR Program shall not authorize or provide medical restoration service(s) for the following procedures:

A. Abortion;

B. Acupuncture;

C. Gastrointestinal bypass surgery;

D. Sex change procedure, medical or otherwise, nor any supportive service(s) associated with such a procedure(s);

E. Stomach stapling;

F. Transplant of the heart, liver, lung(s) or any combination thereof;

G. Tubal ligation;

H. Vasectomy;

I. Routine medical and dental preventive care;

J. Liposuction;

K. Wiring of the Jaws (for weight loss);

L. Any medical procedure which:

1. Is not listed in the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Manual;

2. Has a high mortality rate;

3. Has a success rate reported to be less than seventy-five percent successful;

4. Reputable medical sources question the delivery system for the treatment or have shown the treatment to be useless or ineffective;

5. Is determined by the VR Program's policy consultant to be experimental; or

6. Does not substantially affect the client’s employment outcome.

428.1.03 The VR Program shall not authorize or provide mental restoration services for the following:

A. Hypnotherapy;

B. Primal therapy;

C. Any treatment which reputable medical sources question or have shown to be useless or ineffective;

D. Any treatment which is determined by the VR Program's policy consultant to be experimental;

E. Any treatment which does not substantially affect the client's employment outcome.

428.1.04 The individual with a disability shall be allowed to choose the medical provider of his/her choice from among licensed specialists qualified in the diagnosis and treatment of his/her impairment(s) if he/she is not eligible for service(s) from a comparable benefit source. The medical provider must be willing to accept the VR Program's established fee(s).

428.1.05 The following criteria shall be met for the Provision of Services:

A. The clinical status of the impairment, as indicated by the prognosis of the specialist's examination, must be stable or slowly progressive;

B. The anticipated outcome of the proposed treatment must benefit the individual in terms of a work outcome; and

C. The restoration service(s) is included on an approved work plan.

428.1.06 When physical or mental restoration is the primary service, the case shall be placed in status 16 on or just prior to the day it is to begin.

428.1.07 Authorization of Services

Prior to authorizing a physical or mental restoration service(s) consideration shall be given to all available comparable benefits. Refer to 138.0.00

A. The authorization for service(s) must be in writing and be issued prior to or simultaneously with the initiation of the service(s). Refer to 140.0.00 and 142.0.00

B. The service shall be authorized utilizing licensed specialists based on applicable VR Program fees except as noted in the case of an intercurrent illness. Refer to 430.0.00

1. For mental restoration services, a licensed specialist is a psychiatrist, psychologist, Neuropsychologist, an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, or Licensed Professional Counselor skilled in the treatment of mental illness or cognitive disabilities. When psychotherapy sessions exceed twenty-four sessions or a period of six months, the rehabilitation unit manager, vocational rehabilitation counselor, and, as appropriate, other team members shall staff the case to determine progress toward employment. The results of this staffing shall be documented in the case file. Further provision of mental restoration services shall require a staffing for determination of progress every 10 sessions. Such staffings shall include the rehabilitation unit manager and shall be documented in the case file. *(Revised 10/1/13)*
2. For physical restoration, the licensed specialist is a physician, advanced practicing registered nurse or physician assistant who is recognized as being a specialist in the appropriate field, or a licensed medical provider (i.e. audiologist or optometrist) who has knowledge and expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of the specific condition. *(Revised 10/1/13)*

428.1.08 The VR Program may authorize or provide dental restoration services for a qualified individual only when the evidence indicates:

A. A facial deformity from birth and correction required involves the mouth and/or teeth; Refer to 604.0.00

B. Serious dental infections which affect other body systems (pericarditis, etc.) which must be documented by a physician specializing in the body system affected, specialist in family practice or internist; Refer to 430.0.00

C. Serious injury (accidental) to teeth or mouth requiring dental or medical attention or other condition requiring facial plastic surgery; Refer to 604.0.00

D. A dental condition, which if not treated, will directly interfere with the individual's primary physical impairment. The condition must be documented by the physician treating the primary physical impairment; or Refer to 430.0.00

E. Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Syndrome. Refer to 604.0.00

428.1.09 Treatment Out-of-State

A. A physical or mental restoration service(s) shall not be authorized out of state if the service(s) is available in Georgia except:

1. In geographical areas routinely used for the convenience of the individual;
2. Where it shall be economically beneficial for the VR Program;
3. In situations approved by the VR Program's Office of Provider Standards; or

4. In situations involving informed choice in which the individual agrees to pay any costs in excess of allowable state fees, as applicable.

B. Standards and fees established by the vocational rehabilitation program in the other state shall be followed and utilized for payment of service(s).

428.1.10 Treatment of Complications

A. The VR Program may assume responsibility for arranging for physical restoration services which, in addition to those initially authorized, may be needed for the safety of the client and the achievement of his/her physical restoration objective and ultimately of his/her work goal.

B. If a medical complication does occur, the vocational rehabilitation counselor should act promptly to arrange for necessary treatment.

C. If the seriousness of the complication(s) is such that it interferes with the possibility of the individual achieving the work goal, it may be necessary to reevaluate the person or even to close the case as currently not eligible. In such a case the VR Program shall continue service(s) only until the acute medical condition has been resolved. Refer to 212.0.00

428.1.11 Long-Term Restoration

A. If a physical or mental restoration service(s) is authorized for six months or more, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall monitor and document the client's progress in the case file at least every 60 days.

B. Annual or more frequent specialist examination(s) may be needed to assess the client's ability to progress toward his/her work goal.

C. The criteria of eligibility shall be continually applied.

D. The VR Program recognizes that, in some cases, the client's condition will extend beyond the rehabilitation process. In order to ensure the client's success on the job, community based treatment should be arranged by the vocational rehabilitation counselor prior to case closure to the extent reasonable and possible based upon availability of treatment through other resources or sponsorship.

428.1.12 In cases involving hospitalization, refer to 432.0.00.

428.1.13 The VR Program shall recommend that a qualified individual accept an approved physical or mental restoration service(s) when the service(s) shall improve the disabling condition.

428.1.14 Other purchased services cannot be authorized if the individual refuses approved restoration which shall improve his/her disability except for refusal by reason of religious belief or substantial risk.

428.2.00 INFORMATION:

428.2.01 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall not authorize a physical or mental restoration service(s) for a condition or impairment which does not affect the client's work outcome.

430.0.00 ACUTE CONDITION OR INTERCURRENT ILLNESS

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

430.1.00 POLICY:

430.1.01 The VR Program may authorize the provision of medical care for a qualified individual for an acute condition or intercurrent illness occurring during the time the individual is receiving planned vocational rehabilitation services and meets all of the following criteria:

A. The client shall meet financial need criteria;

B. The client shall be in status 06, 14, 16, 18, 20 or 22; and

C. The acute condition or intercurrent illness shall be such that it would complicate or delay either extended evaluation or the client's achievement of his/her work goal.

430.1.02 No VR Program funds shall be authorized or expended on any case that moves into status 12 or above following the effective closing date of a priority category when the classification of the case puts it in a closed priority category. Refer to 306.0.00

430.1.03 The VR Program shall not authorize medical care for an acute condition or intercurrent illness for an eligible individual who has been placed in a closed priority category under the Program's order of selection.

430.1.04 Physicians who are specialists in the field and/or approved hospitals should be used when practical. Payment shall be based on the applicable Program fee schedule.

430.1.05 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall provide a rationale in the case file which justifies the service.

430.1.06 The authorization for service(s) should be in writing prior to or simultaneously with the initiation of the services. Refer to 140.0.00 and142.0.00

430.1.07 Prior to authorizing the service(s), consideration shall be given to all available comparable benefits. Refer to 138.0.00

430.1.08 If the acute condition or intercurrent illness leads to changes in the client's condition, it may be necessary to reevaluate the client, amend the work plan or close the case.

430.2.00 INFORMATION:

430.2.01 Acute conditions are those injuries or acute illnesses of short duration (30 days or less) occurring during the course of extended evaluation or rehabilitation such as unrelated accidental fractures, acute appendicitis, etc. If the intercurrent illness develops into a secondary disability, refer to 212.0.00

432.0.00 HOSPITALIZATION

Effective October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361
O.C.G.A. 49-9-13

432.1.00 POLICY:

432.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide hospitalization for an individual for diagnosis, surgery or other treatment of an impairment.

432.1.02 Hospitalization is limited to those hospitals which have been approved by the VR Program except in a situation of an acute or intercurrent illness.

432.1.03 Authorization and payment for service shall comply with 140.0.00 and 142.0.00.

432.1.04 If the individual has private hospitalization insurance, Medicare or Medicaid, it must be utilized.

432.1.05 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall inform the individual in writing before he/she is to go to the hospital that he/she shall not be placed in a private room unless:

A. The attending physician recommends it;

B. The hospital does not have semi-private or ward rooms; or

C. There is no semi-private room or ward space available and the hospitalization cannot be postponed.

432.2.00 INFORMATION:

432.2.01 When practical, public hospitals should be utilized for inpatient treatment of a client.

432.2.02 Placing a hospital patient on a caseload is acceptable as long as it is understood the VR Program shall not pay for the current hospitalization and associated physician(s) expenses. The purpose of accepting the referral is to allow for a continuum of service to determine if the applicant qualifies for rehabilitation services.

434.0.00 CLINICS/GENERAL

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

434.1.00 POLICY:

434.1.01 The VR Program shall, when appropriate and available, use clinical facilities in the provision of service(s) for a qualified individual.

434.1.02 Authorization of Services

A. Prior to an authorization for treatment, consideration must be first given to any clinical service available from a public hospital, public clinic or other community rehabilitation program offering the service for which the individual may be eligible. Refer to 138.0.00

B. Authorization and payment for service(s) shall comply with 140.0.00 and 142.0.00

434.1.03 Out of State Clinic

The use of an out of state clinic shall not be authorized if the service(s) is available in Georgia except as noted in 428.1.09.

436.0.00 AUDITORY TRAINING

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

436.1.00 POLICY:

436.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide auditory training to enable a qualified individual to prepare for, secure, or retain employment.

436.1.02 Auditory training must be recommended by a VR Program approved audiologist or speech pathologist.

436.1.03 Auditory training or aural rehabilitation shall be conducted by a licensed audiologist or speech pathologist with special training in this field. Program fees shall be utilized for authorization and payment.

436.2.00 INFORMATION:

436.2.01 Auditory training or aural rehabilitation teaches the individual how to effectively use his/her remaining hearing. It is usually accomplished with the aid of amplification.

436.2.02 Auditory training, lip reading training and aural rehabilitation are considered to be part of speech-language therapy.

438.0.00 SPEECH - LANGUAGE THERAPY

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

438.1.00 POLICY:

438.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide speech - language therapy to enable a qualified individual to prepare for, secure, or retain an employment goal.

438.1.02 A speech-language evaluation must be obtained from a licensed speech pathologist or a VR Program approved speech and hearing clinic.

438.1.03 A speech-language evaluation shall include:

A. An oral peripheral examination and an assessment of articulation, voice, fluency and language; and

B. Specific recommendations must describe how speech-language therapy including augmentative communication aids may significantly benefit the individual in terms of his/her specific work goal. Refer to 456.0.00

438.1.04 The service(s) shall be authorized from a licensed provider based on applicable Program fees.

438.1.05 Prior to the authorization of an augmentative communication device, the vocational rehabilitation counselor should consult with the vocational rehabilitation technologist team member to ensure the usability or appropriateness of the device as it relates to the individual's work goal.

438.2.00 INFORMATION:

438.2.01 The following factors concerning the individual should be carefully considered before providing speech-language therapy:

A. Age at the time the hearing loss occurred;

B. Intellectual ability;

C. Previous experience with speech-language therapy; and

D. Prognosis for further improvement with additional speech-language therapy.

438.2.02 Speech-language therapy attempts to develop or maintain intelligible speech for a person with a hearing loss, speech-language disorder or a fluency, voice or language disorder.

438.2.03 Speech-language therapy is unlikely to be significantly beneficial if the individual has been deaf since childhood unless the individual has previously benefited from speech-language therapy.

440.0.00 COGNITIVE REHABILITATION

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

440.1.00 POLICY:

440.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide cognitive rehabilitation for a qualified individual to assist the person in improving or compensating for a variety of impaired cognitive processing abilities which affect the client's employment outcome.

440.1.02 A neuropsychological evaluation shall be used to determine the need for cognitive rehabilitation. In addition to the neuropsychological evaluation, other additional evaluations may be obtained from approved providers to determine the need for cognitive rehabilitation when information from the case file warrants further investigation. An evaluation recommending a program of cognitive rehabilitation should contain an outline of the specific goals and objectives to be used and the criteria for measuring progress of the intervention.

440.1.03 Continued VR Program sponsorship of cognitive rehabilitation shall be based on successful past progress as evidenced by the attainment of specified criteria for measurement. Such progress shall be measured and reported at a minimum of every month.

440.1.04 The cognitive rehabilitation service(s) shall be authorized from a Program approved provider based on applicable fees.

440.2.00 INFORMATION:

440.2.01 Cognitive rehabilitation refers to a systematic, goal-oriented intervention designed to improve or compensate for a variety of impaired cognitive processing abilities. Rehabilitation of these cognitive processes is not meant to take the place of education, activities of daily living and counseling, but to enhance responses to these activities. The purpose of cognitive rehabilitation should be to allow the individual to think, perceive, make decisions and respond with minimal or no assistance from others.

440.2.02 Cognitive rehabilitation can only be authorized or provided by the VR Program for qualified individuals to assist in the attainment of the work goal as identified in the work plan and supported by the evaluation of the neuropsychologist or the approved provider(s). Cognitive rehabilitation services authorized or provided by the VR Program should be part of a program for individuals who are brain injured that also includes daily living skills related to job acquisition and performance, and appropriate training and development of compensatory psychosocial adjustment skills an individual needs to survive in the work place.

442.0.00 PHYSICAL OR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

442.1.00 POLICY:

442.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide physical therapy and/or occupational therapy for a qualified individual in order to assist in the attainment of the individual's work goal.

442.1.02 The therapy must be prescribed by the treating physician.

442.1.03 The therapy may only be provided by a qualified therapist.

442.1.04 A therapist who is in private practice may be used if he/she is a Program approved provider.

442.1.05 The service shall be authorized from a Program approved provider based on applicable Program fees.

442.1.06 Continued VR Program sponsorship of physical or occupational therapy shall be based on successful past progress as evidenced by the attainment of specified criteria for measurement. Such progress shall be measured and reported monthly.

444.0.00 POST-EMPLOYMENT

Effective Date: October 1, 2002

Authority: 34 CFR 361

444.1.00 POLICY:

444.1.01 Any service(s) which may be authorized in Statuses 14 through 22, except those service(s) related to an acute condition or intercurrent illness, may be authorized in status 32. Supportive services such as maintenance, transportation, personal assistance service, etc. are only permissible in conjunction with a primary vocational rehabilitation service(s). Supportive services cannot be used to support an individual in work. Financial need criteria must be re-determined prior to the provision of a service requiring economic eligibility.

441.1.02 The concept of post-employment service recognizes that an individual may need additional services after closure in order to maintain employment. The intent is to provide short term, minor services to supplement those services provided prior to closure.

444.1.03 The VR Program may authorize or provide a post-employment service(s) for a qualified individual:

A. Who has received service(s) under a work plan;

B. Who has been determined to be rehabilitated; and

C. Whose case has been closed (status 26) employed.

444.1.04 A post-employment service(s) may be authorized or provided only under the same conditions which apply to the provision of any service under a work plan.

444.1.05 The Record of Closure shall contain an assessment of the need for post-employment service(s). Refer to 502.0.00

444.1.06 Post-employment service(s) may be initiated at any time during the 36 months following the date of the status 26 closure.

444.1.07 Post-employment service(s) shall relate to previously identified, emergent, or persistent problems related to the impairment(s) under which the individual originally qualified for service(s).

444.1.08 Specific post-employment services may be provided to assist a qualified individual to maintain, regain, or advance in employment.

444.1.09 Post-employment services shall not include a complete vocational rehabilitation process or a complex effort. If such services are indicated, the individual's case shall be closed and may be reopened and reassessed.

444.1.10 At the time the vocational rehabilitation counselor determines post-employment services to be needed, the rationale for the service(s) must be clearly documented in the case file:

A. This documentation must explain why the relatively minor service(s) shall be necessary to maintain work or regain other suitable employment;

B. Medical and/or psychological information supporting the need for the service may be required.

444.1.11 To initiate post-employment service(s):

A. The case shall be placed in status 32; and

B. A work plan amendment shall be completed with the individual;

NOTE: In a case when a diagnostic or assessment service becomes necessary, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall provide a rationale in the case notes which describes why the service is needed.

C. Financial Need shall be determined if services which require this are anticipated.

444.1.12 If, while the case is in status 32, the service(s) needed evolves into a complex or comprehensive vocational rehabilitation effort, or a new and distinctive disabling condition arises then:

A. The service(s) shall be suspended;

B. The individual's case terminated in status 33; and

C. The individual may then be considered a new referral and a new case may be opened. Refer to 204.0.00

444.1.13 Any case remaining in status 32 for as long as six months or in which authorizations are greater than $1,000.00 must be staffed with the rehabilitation unit manager. Additional increments of three months in status 32 or authorization(s) that total more than $1,000.00 shall also require rehabilitation unit manager approval. The approval shall be documented in the case file.

444.1.14 When all planned post-employment services identified in the work plan have been completed or the service(s) is being provided by another resource, the individual's case shall be terminated in status 35. Refer to 130.0.00

444.1.15 In the event a post-employment service(s) is initiated and it becomes obvious the individual cannot or will not remain in or return to work, the case shall be terminated in Status 37. The case shall not be reopened for further post-employment service(s). Refer to 130.0.00

444.1.16 Although a case file must be retained for three years after the date of termination (status 35 or 37), the case file may not be returned to status 32 from any status after 36 months from the date of the status 26 closure.

446.0.00 POST SECONDARY ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Effective Date: October 1, 2002

Authority: 34 CFR 361.46;361.48(f);361.50(b);361.53;361.54;RSA PAC90-7;

RSA PD 92-02;RSA PD 97-04

446.1.00 POLICY:

446.1.01 The VR Program may authorize and assist with post secondary academic or vocational training for a qualified individual sufficient to meet the entry level requirements of a specific occupation as agreed to by the individual and vocational rehabilitation counsel and as indicated by the work goal.

NOTE: If the client is in default on a federal school loan, the client must repay the loan, arrange a repayment plan, or obtain an approved deferral prior to the authorization of VR training related services. *(Revised 7/1/08)*

446.1.02 Prior to agreeing to academic training as part of the Work Plan and prior to authorizing primary or support services in support of post secondary academic training, the following criteria must be met: (*Revised 2/1/06*)

A. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and client must agree that the training is necessary for the client to reach the entry level of the specific occupation for his/her work goal;

B. There must be evidence in the case file to support the vocational rehabilitation counselor's rationale that the client has the ability to complete the training selected. Such evidence may include the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), psychological examination, vocational evaluation and prior college transcripts. If the client has previously attended college or vocational training, those transcripts should be included in the case file;

C. If the client has a substantial work history and training is being considered, a vocational evaluation should be considered in addition to the vocational needs assessment to determine transferable work skills and an appropriate work goal. Utilization of or need for assistive work technology services/devices should be considered when determining transferability of work skills or the appropriateness of the work goal.

446.1.03 The VR Program may assist with tuition, required school fees, books/supplies and, as appropriate, maintenance (housing and meals) only at any approved state, private, out-of-state post secondary school, or proprietary school for an approved course of study. Verification that the school is approved must be made prior to any obligation to the client verbally, in a Work Plan or through an authorization of funds. VR support for approved tuition and fees shall be determined by the Business Unit and based post secondary school public fee schedules for the appropriate level of each public post secondary schools in Georgia under the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) or the Board of Regents. Levels of post secondary Georgia public schools include technical schools, junior colleges, senior colleges, regional universities, and universities. If a specific course of study for a specialized skill which is required as an industry standard for employment in a specific vocational goal is not available in Georgia public schools, as determined by the Business Unit, tuition and fees shall be determined by the Business Unit based on the actual cost of the specialized skills training at institutions offering the required course of study. Labor market information based on actual statistics must be obtained and reviewed prior to agreeing to provide VR Support. Refer to Glossary: Comparable Program of Study; Proprietary School; Specialized Skills Training) *(Revised 10/1/13)*

446.1.04 Gallaudet University and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf are exempt from the restriction to use the state public school fees for tuition and required fees for a client. However, comparable benefits must be deducted where applicable. *(Revised 7/15/12)*

446.1.05 The client must apply for, and present proof of, a completed application for any available comparable benefits including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). (Refer to 138.0.00) The client must provide a copy of his/her Student Aid Report (SAR), an award letter and a copy of their student account detail report from the institution for the current and where applicable previous semester/quarter, before the VR Program shall authorize payment for post secondary training expenses. *(Revised 7/1/08)* These documents must be provided by the client no later than 30 days prior to the institution's due date for payment of tuition and fees for the semester/quarter or no later than five days after the information is made available by the institution(s). Failure to submit the required documentation by the due dates may result in non-payment by the VR Program or a late payment. Any late fees associated with a client's failure to submit required documentation by the due date shall be the responsibility of the client. An exception may be granted by the RUM when case documentation clearly reflects that the client has not been able to provide all required documentation due to institutional delays (FAFSA or PST institutions), and the client will be adversely affected if the authorization is not created prior to receiving all the documentation. In such cases, authorizations should not exceed 12 credit hours. *(Revised 10-29-12)*

446.1.06 All applicable comparable benefits for which the client has been approved must be subtracted from the VR Program's maximum allowed rates for tuition, fees, books/supplies and maintenance (housing and meals) prior to the authorization/utilization of VR funds. *(Revised 10-29-12)* Comparable benefits for training may include, but are not limited to, grants, non-merit scholarships and all HOPE Program funds. **(**Refer to 138.0.00**)** Comparable benefits do not include merit scholarships unless the scholarship is specifically designated for services that the VR Program would otherwise fund (e.g. tuition or fees). (Refer to Glossary: Merit Scholarship) *(Revised 10-29-12)*

NOTE: The HOPE Scholarship is a comparable benefit because the state program provides public funds to all Georgia students who meet the eligibility requirements and the funds are specifically designated for services that the VR Program would otherwise fund.

446.1.07 The client must inform the VR Counselor within 10 days of any approval for comparable benefits for school support or if the client directly receives such funds related to school. *(Revised 7/1/08)*

446.1.08 The client shall not be required to borrow money to cover educational expenses; however, this is an option for those who choose to attend a school where all costs are not covered in some way by an entity other than the client.

446.1.09 The VR Program shall not sponsor housing in support of academic training if the client lives within 35 miles of the school unless the unique circumstances of the individual are proven to make commuting to and from school to be unreasonable for that particular individual. Examples of such circumstances include but are not limited to the following:

A. The nature and limitations of the individual's disability;

B. Lack of public or private transportation;

C. Traffic and commuting time required;

D. Length of time between classes;

E. Proximity of handicapped parking to classes.

In order to justify payment for school related housing for an individual who lives within 35 miles of the school, the VR counselor shall consult with his/her rehabilitation unit manager regarding the circumstances of the client. The VR counselor shall document the consultation and the client's special circumstances in the case file. *(Effective 2/15/04)*

446.1.10 VR Program assistance with post secondary training shall be limited, during the first two years, to a public institution within 35 miles of the client's residence unless:

a) The required coursework for the client's program of study is not available at the local college or,
b) The coursework will not transfer to a four year institution when a four year degree is required for the work goal. *(Effective 3/1/2013)*
c) The local institution cannot accommodate the disability needs of the client. *(Effective 3/1/2013)*

446.1.11 Support shall be authorized for fall, spring and/or summer semesters or for fall, winter, spring and/or summer quarters. *(Effective 5/19/2015)*

446.1.12 The client shall take a full course load, as defined by the institution, unless:

A. Medically contraindicated as documented in his/her case file each semester/quarter by a licensed specialist in the field of the client's disability or by the regional medical consultant;

B. The client does not need a full load to complete his/her course work; or

C. The required courses in the client's program are not available due to scheduling.

The client shall not take less than a full course load for more than two semesters/quarters during his/her training program. Blanket approval for taking less than a full load based solely on the disability cannot be given.

446.1.13 The VR Program shall authorize and make payment for only those courses and electives outlined in an approved curriculum for a specific certification**,** diploma or degree from the approved school, and only for courses that lead to the certification, diploma or degree required for entry level into the chosen work goal. The client must submit a schedule of his/her classes each semester/quarter prior to VR Program authorization for the following semester/quarter.

(Revised 7/1/08)

446.1.14 The VR Program shall not sponsor a qualified individual for more than three remedial or non-credit courses during the training or degree period.

446.1.15 The vocational rehabilitation counselor may authorize and make payment for the taking of any credit course only once. A rehabilitation unit manager may approve a counselor's request to authorize the repeating of a credit course by a qualified individual. Such approval may be granted only once for the same course. The manager's approval shall not be granted for the repetition of a remedial course.

446.1.16 The client must present a copy of his/her semester/quarter grades to the VR counselor within 5 days of the school posting of grades. This information shall be maintained in the case file.

446.1.17 The client must maintain a minimum cumulative or 2.0 grade point average, or the minimum cumulative grade point average necessary to maintain good standing with the school and to graduate from his/her approved course of study required for the vocational goal, whichever is greater. One probationary semester or quarter may be authorized to allow the client to raise his/her grade point average. If the client does not achieve the required cumulative grade point average at the end of the probationary period, the VR Program shall not resume sponsorship until the client has reached the required minimum cumulative grade point average.

NOTE: When the client's grade point average drops below 2.0 or the grade point average necessary to maintain good standing, whichever is greater, the VR counselor should immediately provide the client notice using a Notice of Change that VR sponsorship may be terminated and the actions required to avoid termination. Doing so provides the 30 day notice required prior to a reduction or termination of service. *(Revised 9/1/14)*

446.1.18 The VR Program shall authorize or make payment for no more than two probationary semesters/quarters during the entire training program. The vocational rehabilitation counselor may not authorize two probationary semesters/quarters sequentially.

446.1.19 The VR Program shall not authorize payment for the provision of a tutor for the purpose of individualized instruction to supplement that instruction which is already being provided to the individual in a training course.

446.1.20 The client shall maintain regular contact with his/her vocational rehabilitation counselor. Any change in the client's work goal or training program must be agreed upon, in advance, by the client and vocational rehabilitation counselor, and must be reflected by an amended work plan. The client shall not withdraw from any class or the school itself without first contacting and obtaining agreement from the vocational rehabilitation counselor. *(Revised 7/1/08)*

446.1.21 The VR Program sponsorship for a freshman pursuing an undergraduate degree (bachelor's degree) shall be limited to five years and for each year thereafter shall be decreased by one year based on the client's enrollment status (sophomore, junior, senior). If the VR Program sponsors a client, as stated above, for an undergraduate degree and the client has not met graduation requirements, one additional semester/quarter may be authorized with rehabilitation unit manager approval. (This restriction applies to both support and primary services). Documentation of RUM approval shall be recorded in the case file.

If the time sponsored by the VR Program (either support or primary services) in other post secondary training extends beyond the expected date of successful completion as defined by the curriculum and reflected on the client's work plan, one additional semester/quarter may be authorized with rehabilitation unit manager approval. Documentation of RUM approval shall be documented in the case file. *(Revised 7/1/08)*

446.1.22 For all post secondary school cases, an annual in-depth review is required to assess the client's training results and to determine if the client is making adequate progress towards the established work goal. Satisfactory progress shall not be occurring for those individuals who continuously attend training on less than a full time basis. If the client is not progressing satisfactorily in his/her approved course of study, training shall be suspended, and the VR counselor and client shall work together to identify a more appropriate work goal. The annual review shall be documented in the case file. *(Revised 7/1/08)*

446.1.23 The VR Program may authorize the provision of correspondence training for a qualified individual if this is the most reasonable means by which the individual may receive the necessary training from an approved vendor.

446.1.24 The VR Program may assist with payment for the following ancillary services: *(Revised 10-29-12)*

A. Any admission test required by the school or institution;

B. Vocational occupational training supplies may be approved based on a list of required items provided by the professor, syllabus or other official document.

C. Required books/supplies up to the maximum rate as determined by the Business Unit but not exceeding the actual cost. Proof of payment reflecting books/supplies purchased is required.

D. Training aids and/or assistive work technology;

E. Interpreter, readers or note takers for a qualified individual who is deaf, blind or deaf-blind;

F. Required parking fees for students who are commuting to and from school;

G. Certification and/or licensure examinations required by program;

H. Occupational license required to complete training and enter employment in the agreed upon work goal.

NOTE: Should any of the above items be considered reasonable accommodations for which the school should be responsible, payment for these services shall be sought from the school prior to the authorization of VR funds. *(Effective 3/1/05)*

446.1.25 If a client receives an overpayment during a semester/quarter, the client must immediately refund the VR Program, agree to a payment plan or agree to have future payments adjusted to deduct the overpayment. The client shall reimburse the VR Program when the following circumstances apply: *(Revised. 10-29-12)*

A. The client receives financial assistance from comparable benefits for services (tuition, required school fees, books/supplies and maintenance (housing and meals,) already paid for by VR;

B. The client receives a refund as a result of dropping a class;

C. The client has not utilized VR training funds for the purpose they were intended.

The client shall reimburse the VR Program per the following VR reimbursement procedures:

A. The client shall pay the full amount of required reimbursement; no later than 45 days prior to the institution's due date for payment of tuition and fees for the next semester/quarter, or

B. The client shall have the amount deducted from the next authorization(s) until the balance has been paid in full.

If the client refuses to refund VR, post secondary training support shall be suspended, and/or the case may be closed for fraud/misuse of Program funds. Refer to 502.1.14P (Refer to the VR Client Reimbursement Agreement Form – RS048 *(Revised 6/15/12)*

446.1.26 The vocational rehabilitation counselor and client shall pursue accommodations/support services for training that may be available from post secondary training institutions in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and with the American with Disabilities Act of 1996. If the school will not provide the necessary accommodations, the VR Program may authorize the needed services but shall seek reimbursement from the school.

446.1.27 The Work Plan Attachment for Post Secondary Academic and Vocational Training must be reviewed, signed and dated by the VR counselor and client. This attachment is a part of the Work Plan when post secondary training is provided. The client's failure to comply with his/her responsibilities as written in the Work Plan Attachment will result in suspension and/or termination of VR Program sponsorship for training and related support services (including housing and meals) and may result in case closure. Refer to 310.1.09 *(Revised 7/1/08)*

448.0.00 POST GRADUATE TRAINING

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361.46; 361.48(f); 361.50(b); 361.52: 361.53, 361.54; RSA PAC 90-7; RSA PD 92-02; RSA PD 97-04

448.1.00 POLICY:

448.1.01 The VR Program may provide post graduate training when such training is necessary to obtain entry level work in the client's agreed to specific occupation. Care must be taken in the joint development of the work plan not to plan services that surpass those required for entry level into the agreed upon occupation as indicated by the work goal on the work plan. VR Program sponsorship for a post graduate degree shall be defined by the training curriculum. If the time sponsored by the VR Program extends beyond the expected date of successful completion, per the curriculum and as reflected on the client's work plan, one additional semester/quarter may be authorized with rehabilitation unit manager approval and shall be documented in the case file. *(Revised 7/01/08)*

448.1.02 The VR Program may authorize the provision of post-graduate university training for a qualified individual whose work goal requires a post-graduate degree for entry level work in a specific occupation under the following conditions:

A. The client must be accepted in good standing (not probationary or provisional status) before he/she may be considered for program sponsorship to an approved graduate school;

B The client sponsored by the VR Program for graduate level work must maintain the minimum grade point average (GPA) required by the accredited program from which graduation is planned. Program sponsorship may be suspended or terminated for failure to maintain the required grade point average;

C. All policies relating to post secondary academic and vocational training shall apply.

448.1.03 The Work Plan Attachment for Post Graduate Training must be reviewed, signed and dated by the VR counselor and client. This attachment is a part of the Work Plan when post graduate training is provided. The client's failure to comply with his/her responsibilities as written in the Work Plan Attachment will result in suspension and/or termination of VR Program sponsorship for training and related support services (including housing and meals) and may result in case closure. Refer to 310.1.09 *(Revised 7/15/12)*

450.0.00 TRANSITIONING STUDENTS

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

450.1.00 POLICY:

450.1.02 Transition services shall be provided to eligible students with disabilities to facilitate the transition from the receipt of educational services in secondary school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services oriented toward an employment outcome. Transition services may be either services to eligible individuals or services to groups.

450.1.03 The coordinated transition activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests and shall include:

A. Consultation and technical assistance to assist the schools in planning for the transition of students with disabilities;

B. Outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transitioning services;

C. Transition planning that facilitates the development and completion of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Individualized Transition Plan (ITP);

D. Development of a work plan which identifies the work plan goal and the vocational rehabilitation services to enable the student to obtain an employment outcome.

450.1.04 The work plan shall be completed and signed by the student prior to his or her graduation from high school. Refer to 310.0.00

450.1.05 Transitioning services may be provided for groups of students and may be provided prior to any or all of the students becoming applicants for vocational rehabilitation services.

450.1.06 Consultative and technical assistance services may be provided to schools as services to groups for the benefit of groups of transitioning students with disabilities.

450.2.00 INFORMATION:

450.2.01 Services to groups are vocational rehabilitation services that are provided to a group of individuals in a group setting or provided for the benefit of groups of individuals.

450.2.02 Technical assistance and consultative services to school system personnel are considered services for groups, since all transitioning students may benefit from those services.

452.0.00 WORK READINESS TRAINING

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

452.1.00 POLICY:

452.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide work readiness training for a qualified individual for the purpose of developing pre-employment skills (to prepare for a job search), work maturity skills (to keep a job) and/or life skills (core skills necessary to function productively in society) for the attainment of work readiness.

452.1.02 Whereas the entire team is responsible for job placement, the rehabilitation job readiness specialist shall take the lead role in provision of job readiness assessment and training in order to develop pre-employment skills.

452.1.03 The evaluation of work readiness shall be initiated during the preliminary assessment and then reviewed and updated continuously throughout the provision of work readiness training.

452.1.04 Prior to the provision of work readiness training:

A. The individual must have a work readiness assessment to determine the work readiness training needs; and

B. The work team and the client must agree that work readiness training is necessary for the client to reach his/her employment goal.

452.1.05 The rehabilitation job readiness specialist or a community based provider providing work readiness training shall:

A. Provide a monthly progress report on each client receiving work readiness training; and

B. At the conclusion of training, provide a final report to the vocational rehabilitation counselor/work team.

452.2.00 INFORMATION:

452.2.01 Work readiness training may include any or all of the following components:

A. Pre-employment:

1. Making career decisions;
2. Using labor market information;
3. Preparing a resume;
4. Completing an application;
5. Interviewing.

B. Work Maturity:

1. Being consistently punctual;
2. Maintaining regular attendance;
3. Demonstrating positive attitudes and behavior;
4. Presenting an appropriate appearance;
5. Completing tasks effectively.

C. Life Skills:

1. Self-concept/Self-esteem/Self-confidence;
2. Dealing with emotions, conflict, and stress;
3. Setting priorities and goals;
4. Making decisions and solving problems;
5. Planning and managing time;
6. Productive thinking;
7. Identifying interests and work styles;
8. Why we work;
9. Education as opportunities;
10. Resources for achievement;
11. Dealing with failure;
12. Effective listening and speaking;
13. Assertiveness;
14. Relating to people;
15. Systems thinking;
16. Information seeking skills;
17. Giving and following directions.

453.0.00 EMPLOYMENT SKILLS TRAINING

Effective Date: September 1, 2005

Authority 34 CFR 361

453.1.00 POLICY:

453.1.01 Employment Skills Training may be authorized for a qualified client who requires such training for entry into his/her chosen vocational goal.

453.1.02 The provider of such training must be an approved provider with demonstrated skills in the area in which the training is provided. The provider shall provide an outline and organized procedures for the training prior to its initiation.

453.1.03 Employment Skills Training shall be:

A. Consistent with the needs and abilities of the client;

B. Limited to occupations with a specific vocational preparation time SVP of level 4 or below (Refer to Select Characteristics of Occupations Defined in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles);

C. Limited to a specific skill or set of skills within an occupation (Examples: plasterer, wall-paper hanging/faux painting, carpenter's helper);

D. Limited to hands on training.

453.1.04 The duration of Specific Skills Training shall not exceed 125% of the SVP for the occupation.

453.1.05 Skills or occupational goals requiring certification or licensure are excluded from this training.

454.0.00 SUPPORTIVE SERVICES/GENERAL

Effective Date: October 1, 2002

Authority: 34 CFR 361

454.1.00 POLICY:

454.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide a supportive service(s) only to enable an individual to participate in or receive benefit from another authorized or provided diagnostic, assessment or primary service which is in support of the individual's attainment of an appropriate work goal.

The VR Program shall not authorize reinstatement of driver's license, occupational license, or any other permit that was revoked due to illegal activity by the client. *(Effective 10/15/04)*

454.1.02 The Program shall consider the following services as supportive services:

NOTE: This is not intended to be an exhaustive listing.

A. Personal assistance;

B. Child care;

C. Convalescent care;

D. Deposits;

E. Drugs and expendable medical items;

*F. Glasses or contact lenses;

*G. Hearing aid(s); Augmentative communication aids;

H. Interpreting service(s);

*I. Low visual aid(s);

J. Maintenance;

K. Nurse; aide; sitter;

L. Permit or occupational license;

M. Reader service;

N. Recovery residence;

O. Referral;

*P. Residence modification;

Q. Housing and meals or lodging;

R. Services to family members;

*S. Tools and equipment/occupational or medical;

T. Transportation;

U. Uniform/occupational clothing;

*V. Vehicle modification;

*W. Work site accommodation and/or modification;

X. Any service which cannot be provided independently of another service, i.e., gait training for a prosthetic wearer.

*NOTE: In some circumstances, these services may be considered a primary service. When it is a primary service, a rationale shall be provided in the case file.

454.1.03 Supportive services may be provided to support an individual in work for stabilization purposes only and shall not exceed 45 days. *(Revised 3-1-13)*

454.1.04 A supportive service cannot be provided independently of a primary rehabilitation service. Therefore, when the primary service is terminated the supportive service(s) shall also be terminated. *(Revised 3-1-13)*

454.1.05 Financial need criteria must be applied. Support Services are subject to the same financial need assessment determination as the primary service(s) they support unless they are specifically exempt from financial consideration.

454.1.06 Order of selection must be applied.

454.1.07 Comparable benefits must be applied.

454.1.08 Any requirement contained in a VR Program policy topic and not listed herein shall be applied.

454.2.00 INFORMATION:

454.2.01 A supportive service is another service which may be provided in conjunction with a diagnostic and/or assessment service(s) only to assist in determining if an applicant is qualified or to derive the full benefit of a primary rehabilitation service(s) being provided to achieve a rehabilitation objective.

454.2.02 The listing contained in 454.1.02 is intended to be a reference guide. It is not all inclusive.

456.0.00 ASSISTIVE WORK TECHNOLOGY

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

456.1.00 POLICY:

456.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide, where appropriate, assistive work technology for the purpose of assessment, including assessment in extended evaluation, for an individual in need of an appropriate mode of communication, for the provision of Information and Referral services, or when it directly contributes to the individual's employment outcome.

(*Revised 1/15/09*)

456.1.02 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall consult with AWT staff when considering assistive work technology. *(Revised 1/15/09)*

456.1.03 Given the rapid process of technology development and given that assistive work technology devices are often personalized, devices that are complex, new, or of questionable value may be appropriate to provide. The device may be authorized if the specialist, as appropriate, the VR counselor, and AWT agree that the device will be beneficial to the client in reaching his/her work goal. (*Revised 1/15/09)*

456.2.00 INFORMATION:

456.2.01 Care must be taken by the vocational rehabilitation counselor to ensure other appropriate policy topics have been reviewed and applied when considering authorizing a service under this topic, e.g. 498.0.00 and 499.0.00.

456.2.02 Assistive work technology services include:

A. Diagnostic assessment using a systematic application of technology and technology related services;

B. Technical consultation for Program staff;

C. Search for assistive work technology devices that already exist which could help in the individual's vocational rehabilitation;

D. Research to develop innovative devices and procedures that could help in the vocational rehabilitation of clients;

E. Instruction of Program staff and clients in the application of assistive work technology and assistive work technology related service; and

F. Assistance in finding assistive work technology funding sources to pay for devices and/or services.

456.2.03 Examples of services provided by the assistive work technology team include:

A. Transdisciplinary assistive work technology team consultation;

B. Architectural adaptations to help with accessibility;

C. Customization of existing equipment or devices;

D. Assistance with work site accommodation and/or modification;

E. Computer adaptations for environmental control and work site needs;

F. Adjustments, maintenance and repair of devices;

G. Telecommunication devices.

456.2.04 Assistive Work Technology Definitions

A. Assistive work technology device: Any item, equipment and/or system which is used to improve, protect or maintain the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. A device may be acquired commercially and used as is, or customized, or may be developed as a prototype.

B. Assistive work technology service: Any service that assists a person with a disability in selecting, obtaining or using assistive technology as follows:

1. Assessing an individual's need for assistive work technology in appropriate settings (clinic, home, work, school);

2. Identifying and coordinating other technology related interventions and services;
3. Selecting, adapting, designing, applying, repairing or replacing an assistive work technology device(s);
4. Purchasing, leasing or obtaining an assistive work technology device(s);
5. Training or technical assistance to professionals, consumers and his/her representative, teachers or employers.

C. Assistive work technologies include:

1. Augmentative communications;
2. Computer access;
3. Job accommodation and restructuring;
4. Cognitive remediation;
5. Transportation and mobility access;
6. Environmental access;
7. Seating and positioning;
8. Sensory aids;
9. Robotics.

D. Assistive work technology occupations include:

1. Rehabilitation engineer; (software, electrical, etc.)
2. Rehabilitation technologist;
3. Fabricator;
4. Occupational therapist;
5. Physical therapist;
6. Speech pathologist;
7. Special education teacher;
8. Orthotist and Prosthetist;
9. Physiatrist;
10. Rehabilitation Technician.

458.0.00 CHILD CARE

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

458.1.00 POLICY:

458.1.01 The VR Program may authorize child care for children twelve years old and younger only to enable an individual with a disability to participate in a primary vocational rehabilitation service.

458.1.02 The VR Program may authorize childcare only for those hours, plus two, that the individual with a disability is actively participating in a primary vocational rehabilitation service.

458.1.03 The VR Program may not authorize childcare to enable an individual with a disability to participate in another service overnight or to otherwise be away from home for prolonged periods of time.

458.1.04 A family member (any relative by blood or marriage or any other person living in the same household with whom the individual has a close interpersonal relationship) shall not be paid for child care services.

458.1.05 The individual (parent) with a disability should, in consultation with the VR Program staff, choose the child care provider. Where feasible, providers licensed by the Department of Human Resources should be used.

458.1.06 Fees, not to exceed the Program's maximum allowable fee for the service, may be negotiated with the provider.

458.1.07 If the individual needs child care services for a period longer than three months, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall consult with the rehabilitation unit manager to determine the appropriateness of the Program authorizing the provision or continuance of the service. Refer to 140.0.00

458.1.08 Any comparable benefit shall be utilized prior to the authorization of any VR Program funds for childcare.

458.1.09 A rationale which justifies the need for the service shall be documented in the case notes.

458.2.00 INFORMATION:

458.2.01 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

460.0.00 CONVALESCENT CARE

Effective Date: October 1, 2002

Authority: 34 CFR 361

460.1.00 POLICY:

460.1.01 The VR Program may authorize the provision of convalescent care for a qualified individual.

460.1.02 Convalescent care may be authorized after surgery under one or more of the following conditions:

A. The individual's home conditions are not conducive for satisfactory convalescence;

B. The distance from home to hospital makes it impractical for the individual to be transported back and forth for medical follow-up;

C. The cost of private care can be reduced by using a convalescent care facility; and/or

D. When recommended by the attending physician.

460.1.03 Any convalescent home used shall be approved by the Department of Human Resources.

460.1.04 The Office of Provider Standards shall determine the appropriate fee prior to the authorization of service.

460.1.05 If an individual needs convalescent care for a period longer than three months, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall consult with the rehabilitation unit manager and/or regional medical consultant to determine the appropriateness of the VR Program authorizing the provision or continuance of the service. Refer to 136.0.00.

460.1.06 A rationale which justifies the provision of the service, unless recommended in writing by the attending physician, shall be documented in the case notes.

460.2.00 INFORMATION:

460.2.01 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

461.0.00 DEPOSITS

Effective Date: October 1, 2002

Authority: 34 CFR 361

461.1.00 POLICY:

461.1.01 The Program may authorize the provision of deposits for a qualified individual when necessary for participation in a primary service away from home or when necessary for relocation for the purpose of job placement.

461.1.02 Deposits may be provided:

When payment for maintenance is necessary to defray the additional costs of shelter to enable the individual to participate in a primary rehabilitation service away from his/her normal residence. This deposit may only be made one time;

When a housing security deposit is required for an individual to relocate for a job placement, a one-time security deposit may be included as part of the relocation costs;

When charges for deposits of utilities are required for an individual to relocate for a job placement, a one-time initiation fee may be included as part of the rehabilitation costs;

The recipient of the payment for the deposits shall be informed that, if the deposit is returned, it shall be refunded to the VR Program;

The VR Program may authorize a deposit only once for a qualified individual for a primary service other than for relocation for the purpose of job placement;

The VR Program may authorize a deposit only once for a qualified individual for relocation for the purpose of job placement. Refer to 484.0.00

461.1.03 Deposits can never be the only service provided. It is a supportive service to be provided only to enable an individual with a disability to participate in a primary vocational rehabilitation service(s) by paying the extra costs incurred by the individual as a direct result of participation in the vocational rehabilitation program.

NOTE: Deposits are not considered maintenance and, therefore, not counted as part of the maintenance being authorized.

461.2.00 INFORMATION:

461.2.01 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

462.0.00 DRUGS AND EXPENDABLE MEDICAL ITEMS

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

462.1.00 POLICY:

462.1.01 The VR Program may authorize the provision of prescribed drugs and/or expendable medical items for an individual.

462.1.02 The VR Program shall not authorize a drug or expendable medical item which is considered experimental or which is being utilized for research purposes.

462.1.03 Prescribed drugs and/or expendable medical items shall only be authorized to diagnose, treat or alleviate the disabling condition(s) or acute/intercurrent illness. Refer to 428.0.00 and 430.0.00

462.1.04 The VR Program may authorize no more than a 1-month supply of an individually prescribed drug at any one time.

462.1.05 The VR Program may authorize no more than a 2-month supply of any expendable medical item at any one time.

462.1.06 Authorization for prescribed drugs and/or expendable medical items may not be made after a client has been employed more than 30 days except as a prelude to the provision of an identified post-employment service(s).

462.1.07 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

464.0.00 EXAMINATION/ENTRANCE, OCCUPATIONAL BOARD AND QUALIFYING

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

464.1.00 POLICY:

464.1.01 The VR Program may authorize payment for an examination for a qualified individual to enable him/her to qualify for entrance into training or for the practice of the agreed upon work goal.

464.1.02 The VR Program shall not authorize the payment of union dues, membership fees or bonding.

464.1.03 The VR Program may only authorize any particular examination once.

464.2.00 INFORMATION:

464.2.01 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

466.0.00 GLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

466.1.00 POLICY:

466.1.01 The VR Program may authorize the provision of glasses or contact lenses.

466.1.02 Glasses or contact lenses may be provided:

A. If prescribed by an approved licensed ophthalmologist or an optometrist; and

B. When they will vocationally benefit a person who is legally blind or visually impaired; or

C. As a service for a person who needs corrective lenses to determine eligibility; or

D. As a service for a client being served for a disability other than blindness or visual impairment when they are vocationally necessary.

Note: Prior to purchasing progressive or transitional lenses for a client, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall obtain a statement from the ophthalmologist or optometrist that such lenses are recommended because of the client's vocational or medical needs and are necessary for the client's optimal performance. *Effective: 2/1/05*

466.2.00 INFORMATION:

466.2.01 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

468.0.00 HEARING AID(S)

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

468.1.00 POLICY:

468.1.01 The VR Program may authorize the provision of hearing aid(s) for a qualified individual.

468.1.02 A hearing aid(s) may only be provided when:

A. Recommended by a licensed audiologist or approved speech and hearing center; and

B. It will benefit a person who is deaf, hard of hearing or deaf/blind by Program standards in terms of an employment outcome; or

C. The aid(s) is a support service for a person who needs corrected hearing to determine eligibility; or

D. The aid(s) is a service for a client being served for a disability other than hearing disorder if the client's hearing impairment will have an impact on work outcome and the vocational rehabilitation counselor can document in the case notes the effect of the hearing loss on the client's employment in terms of specific job requirements.

468.1.03 An audiogram must be obtained prior to the purchase of a hearing aid.

468.1.04 Medical clearance for fitting an aid must be obtained from a physician skilled in diseases of the ear.

468.1.05 Medical clearance shall precede the purchase of a hearing aid. A hearing aid evaluation shall come after the audiological evaluation and medical clearance.

468.1.06 Hearing aid(s) evaluation

A. A hearing aid evaluation report provides a general description of the amplification device recommended and indicates the individual's preference regarding the device;

B. When there is an existing hearing aid which has problems, the hearing aid evaluation shall include an evaluation of the client's functioning with the old aid. The report shall have a description of the general characteristics of the old amplification device and a description of the functional problems the client is experiencing with the old device. A comparison shall be made in the report between client's functioning with the old device and with the recommended device.

468.1.07 The authorized price for hearing aid(s) shall be consistent with the VR Program's fee schedule.

468.1.08 Each individual provided a hearing aid shall be instructed to return to the prescribing audiologist or speech and hearing center to have the aid checked within 20 days.

468.2.00 INFORMATION:

468.2.01 A hearing aid evaluation is a prescriptive evaluation to determine if the individual can benefit from amplification and to determine the characteristics that an aid should have for this individual to help improve receiving and understanding. Standard (non-vented) or adjustable molds are available and appropriate for the hearing aid evaluation. Refer to 608.0.00

468.2.02 A hearing aid analysis is the acoustic and electronic analysis of the aid while it is on the individual to determine if it is working properly.

468.2.03 Amplified Communication includes aided Pure Tone Average, aided speech audiometry (speech reception), and aided speech discrimination with background noise scores to clarify how the client's residual hearing and amplification device will function in a work setting.

468.2.04 Devices that dry the hearing aid may be purchased if the client's vocational goal requires them to be in a humid or hot environment to prevent the aid from being corroded by moisture.

470.0.00 INTERPRETING\TRANSLITERATING SERVICE

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

470.1.00 POLICY:

470.1.01 The VR Program may use a qualified interpreter\transliterator, including tactile interpreting, when necessary to assist an individual in receiving a service or instruction from any provider except as noted in 470.1.02.

470.1.02 Interpreting\transliterating services shall not be authorized when another authority is legally responsible for providing the interpreting service in connection with its activity or service delivery. Where cooperative agreements exist, the terms of the agreement shall be followed.

470.1.03 The authorization of interpreting\transliterating services does not require that the individual meet the financial need criteria. Refer to 206.0.00

470.1.04 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall determine the need for an interpreter/transliterator.

470.1.05 A VR Program staff person skilled in the use of sign language or tactile communication, as appropriate, shall be utilized to ensure the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services provided during assessment or under a work plan. When such a staff person is not available, or appropriate for the situation, an interpreter\transliterator shall be used who meets the standards of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

470.1.06 Payment of an interpreter shall be in accordance with the Program's approved interpreter fee schedule.

470.1.07 Any qualified interpreter\transliterator or agency with a service agreement with the Program may be used for interpreting assignments beyond the capability of local VR Program staff.

470.1.08 The VR Program's procedures for billing and payment for an interpreting\transliterating service shall be followed.

470.1.09 An interpreter\transliterator may function under the following circumstances as a job coach if specifically contracted as such by the Program. When an interpreter\transliterator is functioning as a job coach, his/her role change must be clearly explained to the client, the employer, and any significant other person involved with the case. In this situation, the individual may be paid either a job coach fee or an interpreter fee, but not both.

470.1.10 Examples of appropriate uses of an interpreter\transliterator are:

A. Emergency situations - Last minute cancellation by a previously scheduled job coach;

B. Multiple need situations - Only one signing job coach is available and more than one client needs signing job coach services simultaneously.

470.2.00 INFORMATION:

470.2.01 Comparable Services and Benefits shall be applied. If another entity is responsible for providing an interpreter\transliterator but will not do so, the Program should negotiate a shared cost. Client services should not be delayed or interrupted while negotiations occur.

Note: Community Rehabilitation Facilities and other vendors may be obligated by their agreement with the program to provide interpreter/transliterator services. Refer to Provider Standards or the Outsourcing Manual.

470.2.02 The counselor needs to determine which form of sign language their client uses. Some Deaf individuals communicate with American Sign Language (ASL), while others use a form of signed English. An 'interpreter' uses American Sign Language and a 'transliterator' uses signed English. These are separate skills in two different languages and not all 'interpreters' have the ability to perform at the required level in both areas.

470.2.03 The Georgia standard for an interpreter/transliterator is that the person shall be Certified by:

A. The Registry Of Interpreters For The Deaf (RID);

B. The National Association of the Deaf at Levels III, IV or V, which is considered a qualified interpreter\transliterator; or

C. The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Vocational Rehabilitation Program's Quality Assurance testing at Levels III, IV or V, which is considered a qualified interpreter\transliterator.

472.0.00 MAINTENANCE

Effective Date: April 1 2003

Authority: 34 CFR 361

472.1.00 POLICY:

472.1.01 The VR Program may authorize maintenance for an individual.

472.1.02 Maintenance refers solely to the payment of those additional costs incurred by an applicant or qualified client while participating in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs, or while receiving services under a work plan.

472.1.03 Maintenance may be authorized only as a supportive service. Maintenance shall never be the only service an individual is receiving at a given time.

472.1.04 No maintenance shall be authorized in status 00, 04 or 24.

472.1.05 In all cases where maintenance is to be paid by the VR Program, comparable benefits or other sources of maintenance shall be utilized first.

472.1.06 The amount of maintenance shall be based upon the out-of-ordinary or extra costs brought upon the applicant or client as a result of the provision of other primary vocational rehabilitation services.

472.1.07 There are two types of maintenance:

A. Regular Maintenance, which includes:

1. Housing;
2. Meals;
3. Lodging (i.e. hotels, motels, and other transient quarters);
4. Other items required by the client due to his/her participation in the vocational rehabilitation process.

B. Incidental maintenance, which refers to the purchase of necessary personal items not otherwise provided for an individual who is participating in a rehabilitation program away from home.

472.1.08 Maintenance shall be paid as follows: *(Revised. 10-29-12)*

A. An authorization for either regular or incidental maintenance shall not exceed thirty days at any one time exception as allowed for training away from home lasting over a month;

B. The amount authorized for regular maintenance shall depend upon the actual amount of the extra costs incurred by an individual as a result of his/her participation in other services. The total amount authorized per month shall not exceed the monthly income amount allowed under Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for a single individual. This total amount allowed includes incidental and regular maintenance combined. Exempt from the limitation to the maximum amount of SSI is maintenance paid for housing for participants of specifically designated employment training programs.

C. Housing, Meals and Lodging shall not be authorized in status 00, 04, 24 or if the individual is not receiving a primary service. They must be in support of another vocational rehabilitation service; *(Revised 4/1/03)*

D. Authorization for housing, meals and authorization for lodging shall not be made simultaneously unless the individual is required to be away from the site of his/her usual housing and meals or lodging as a part of his/her vocational rehabilitation program; *(Revised 4/1/03)*

E. Meals may be authorized at a cost not to exceed the VR Program's maximum allowable fee per meal. One meal may be authorized for every 7 hours an individual is away from home participating in a primary vocational rehabilitation service. However, up to three meals may be authorized if the individual is away from home participating in a primary vocational rehabilitation service for a 24-hour period; *(Revised 10/1/13)*

F. The amount authorized for incidental maintenance shall not exceed $3.00 per day; *(Revised 4/1/03)*

G. An authorization for maintenance shall not exceed thirty days from the date the individual begins employment except as a provision of an identified post-employment service(s); *(Revised 4/1/03)*

H. Upon the approval of the rehabilitation unit manager, maintenance may be authorized for an interim period of forced inactivity (i.e. break in service) of thirty days or less. (For example, while the client is between sessions in a training program); *(Revised 4/1/03)*

I. Regularly occurring maintenance shall be paid through the regular authorization/invoice process. Periodic maintenance may be paid through the regular authorization/invoice process or through the Imprest Account as appropriate; Refer to 140.0.00 and 144.0.00

472.2.00 INFORMATION:

472.2.01 Maintenance is not intended to pay for those living costs such as food, clothing, or shelter that exist irrespective of one's status as an applicant or client of the VR Program. However, when status as an applicant/client of the VR Program increases the nature of one's living expenses, then maintenance may be appropriate to assist the applicant/client in covering the extra costs of participating in the vocational rehabilitation program.

474.0.00 NURSE; AIDE; SITTER

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

474.1.00 POLICY:

The VR Program may authorize a private duty nurse, aide or sitter for a qualified individual recovering from surgery.

474.1.00 The VR Program shall not authorize a member of the individual's family to provide any service covered by this policy.

474.1.01 A written recommendation from the attending physician shall be placed in the case file prior to authorizing the service.

474.1.02 A fee may be authorized at the lesser of the following rates:

474.1.03 A. Program's established fee;

474.1.04 B. The prevailing rate within the community; or

C. A rate lower than those above negotiated by the vocational rehabilitation counselor with the provider.

474.1.05 The provider shall maintain a record of the provision of the service. The record must be signed and dated by the provider and the individual receiving the service. The record shall include:

A. Individual's name;

B. Provider's name and address;

C. Date(s), time(s) and type(s) of service; and

D. Rate per hour and total fee.

474.1.06 This service should be restricted to two weeks or less. If more time is anticipated, then convalescent care should be considered. Refer to 460.0.00

476.0.00 ORIENTATION, MOBILITY, READER, REHABILITATION TEACHING/VISION REHABILITATION THERAPY SERVICES

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

476.1.00 POLICY:

476.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide orientation, mobility, reader, and rehabilitation teaching/vision rehabilitation therapy services for a qualified individual to assist the individual in attainment of the work goal. *(Revised 7/1/06)*

476.1.02 The need for orientation and mobility services, reader services, or rehabilitation teaching/vision rehabilitation therapy services must relate to the disability(ies) of the client. *(Revised 7/1/06)*

476.1.03 The VR Program shall not authorize orientation and mobility instruction, reader or rehabilitation teaching/vision rehabilitation therapy services when: *(Revised 7/1/06)*

A. The individual is receiving service from another authority that is legally responsible to provide a reader or rehabilitation teaching/vision rehabilitation therapy services in connection with its activity or service delivery (When other authorities or institutions are not meeting their responsibilities, shared cost shall be negotiated);

B. A member of the individual's family provides the service (see certification requirements needed to provide orientation and mobility and/or rehabilitation teaching/vision rehabilitation therapy services); or

C. Comparable benefits are available to provide the needed service(s).

476.1.04 Orientation and/or Mobility Instruction

A certified orientation and mobility specialist may provide O&M services through a private community rehabilitation program, a state community rehabilitation program or as an individual contractor. *(Revised 7/1/06)*

NOTE: The individual must hold certification from the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) as a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) or must hold a National Orientation and Mobility Certification (NOMC) from the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB). *(Revised 7/1/06)*

476.1.05 Reader

A. A maximum of two hours reader service per week per quarter/semester hour scheduled may be authorized. Example: An individual taking three five-hour courses may receive a maximum of 30 hours reader service per week.

B. A fee for reader service(s) may be authorized at the lesser of the following rates:

1. Minimum hourly wage;
2. The hourly rate established for student employment at the school the individual is attending; or
3. A rate less than those above negotiated by the vocational rehabilitation counselor with the reader.

C. The individual receiving the service shall maintain a record of the reading time he/she has been provided. The record must be signed and dated by the reader and the individual, and returned to the vocational rehabilitation counselor. The record shall include:

1. Individual's name;
2. Reader's name and address;
3. Date service started and ended;
4. Subjects read;
5. Date and number of hours for each subject; and
6. Rate per hour and total fee.

D. The individual receiving the service should select the reader when possible.

Rehabilitation teaching/vision rehabilitation therapy service(s)

A certified rehabilitation teacher/vision rehabilitation therapist may provide rehabilitation teaching/vision rehabilitation therapy service(s) through a private community rehabilitation program, a state community rehabilitation program or as an independent contractor. *(Revised 7/1/06)*

476.1.06 NOTE: The individual must hold certification from the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) as a Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT). *(Revised 7/1/06)*

476.2.00 INFORMATION:

476.2.01 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

476.2.02 In 2004, the rehabilitation teacher designation was renamed to Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT). *(Revised 7/1/06)*

Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

478.0.00 PERMIT AND/OR OCCUPATIONAL LICENSE

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

478.1.00 POLICY:

478.1.01 The VR Program may authorize an occupational license and/or permit necessary for a qualified individual to enter employment in an agreed upon work goal. *(Effective 10/15/04)*

NOTE: The VR Program shall not authorize payment for a permit or occupational license that has been revoked because of illegal activity. (Examples: DUI and suspension of driver's license; Illegal drug activity and suspension of medical license.) *(Effective 10/15/04)*

478.1.02 The VR Program shall not authorize the payment of union dues, membership fees or bonding.

478.1.03 The VR Program shall be restricted to authorizing only the initial permit/license.

478.2.00 INFORMATION:

478.2.01 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

478.2.02 Most licenses and permits must be renewed on a yearly basis. It is not the intent of the VR Program to continually pay for these ongoing needs of the individual. The individual must assume responsibility by carefully preparing for the requirements of the selected employment.

478.2.03 An occupational license is defined as any license, permit or other written authority required by a state, city or other governmental unit to be obtained in order to enter an occupation, a small business or self-employment.

478.2.04 Care should be exercised before authorizing training or other vocational rehabilitation service(s) leading to work requiring a special license(s) or permit(s) to assure that conditions do not exist which would prohibit the qualified individual from securing the necessary license.

480.0.00 PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT SERVICES

Effective Date: October 1, 2001,

Revised: February 18, 2013

Authority: 34 CFR 361

480.1.00 POLICY:

480.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide personal care attendant services for an individual with a significant physical disability to assist in the attainment of his/her work goal. The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall provide a rationale in the case notes which justifies the need for assistance.

480.1.02 Personal care attendant service will only be considered for an individual if:

A. a Georgia Waiver has not been made available to the individual,

B. the client is receiving services/training out of state because the service or training is not available in state or

C. the number of hours needed to participate in a primary VR services, as determined by the AWT Unit Occupational Therapist, exceeds the number of waiver hours funded. In this instance, VR may approve additional hours.

The client will need to provide proof that he/she is on a waiting list before an authorization will be made. *(Revised 3/1/13)*

480.1.03 Personal care attendant services by the VR Program shall be:

A. Provided by a fully licensed home health care agency; or

B. Provided by an individual chosen and hired by the client who has at least a CNA certification; or

D. Provided by a Home companion/aid.

480.1.04 The VR Program may authorize or provide personal assistance services only as a supportive service that enables the individual with a significant physical disability to participate in a primary vocational rehabilitation service that is away from his/her customary source of personal assistance. Only those additional costs incurred by an individual as a direct result of participation in his/her vocational rehabilitation program shall be authorized.

NOTE: Such personal assistance services, as necessary, may be provided on weekends and holidays for the individual with a significant physical disability to enable him/her to continue participating in a primary vocational rehabilitation service which occurs regularly during weekdays. Personal assistance services shall not be provided for periods of longer than 30 days during breaks in the primary service(s), e.g. summer vacation between spring and fall terms of training.

480.1.05 Before initiating Personal Care Attendant Services, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall consult with the client, the client's medical provider, and the AWT occupational therapist (OT) to determine the type of assistance and level of care required. The number of personal care attendant hours required by each individual shall be determined by AWT OT assessment. This assessment shall include identification of assistive work strategies and devices that may assist the individual. Medical recommendations and the AWT OT assessment shall be documented in the case file.

480.1.06 Care conferences (refer to glossary) may be conducted during the provision of personal assistance services in order to review client needs.

480.1.07 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall consult with the VR Health Consultant to:

A. Determine the fee;

B. Negotiate the payment agreement with the service provider; and

C. Assist with coordination of benefits.

480.1.08 The fee authorized for personal assistance shall be dependent on the type of personal assistance being provided and shall be consistent with the Program's established fees through consultation with the VR Health Consultant.

480.1.09 The VR Program shall not authorize more than eight hours of Personal Care Attendant during any 24 hour period unless:

A. The individual to receive the primary service is living away from home;

B. A primary VR Program service requires the individual with a significant physical disability to be away from home overnight; or

C. A health problem exists which requires other services. *(Revised 3/1/13)*

480.1.10 A family member (any relative by blood or marriage or any person living in the same household with whom the individual has a close interpersonal relationship) shall not be paid for personal assistance services. He/she may be compensated for travel and subsistence if traveling with an individual with a significant physical disability for the purpose of providing personal assistance services so that the individual may receive a primary vocational rehabilitation service.

480.1.11 Travel and subsistence for the personal assistant while traveling with the client in support of the primary service shall be paid up to the rate of reimbursement for state employees.

480.1.12 Personal assistance may be authorized directly to a licensed agency. If personal assistance is being provided by an individual chosen and hired by the client, the personal assistance shall be authorized to the client for payment to his/her employee.

480.1.13 The provider shall maintain a record of the provision of the service. The record shall be signed and dated by the provider and individual receiving the service. The record shall include the following:

A. Individual's name;

B. Provider's name and address;

C. Date(s), time(s) and type(s) of service; and

D. Rate per hour and total fee.

480.1.14 When one personal assistant is providing services to two or more individuals with significant physical disabilities at the same time and location, the VR Program shall not authorize nor pay double the single hourly rate and travel for the service, but may authorize and pay a negotiated prorated fee for the service.

480.1.15 The individual with a significant physical disability, in consultation with the vocational rehabilitation counselor, is responsible for selecting, hiring and supervising the personal assistance service provider in a manner consistent with program requirements.

480.1.16 The personal assistance provider shall meet provider qualifications and standards established by the VR Program.

480.1.17 Personal assistance services are exempt from financial need requirements.

482.0.00 RECOVERY RESIDENCE

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR361

482.1.00 POLICY:

482.1.01 The VR Program may authorize placement in a recovery residence for a qualified individual recovering from alcohol or drug dependency.

482.1.02 Placement in a recovery residence may be authorized only for a qualified individual who is receiving treatment as a primary rehabilitation service.

482.1.03 An authorization for placement in a recovery residence shall be made only to a VR Program approved provider. Provider standards are available from the Office of Provider Standards.

482.1.04 An authorization for placement in a recovery residence shall not exceed:

A. Thirty days at a time; and

B. The Program's schedule of fees.

482.1.05 The vocational rehabilitation counselor may authorize placement in a recovery residence for up to three months. Additional months may be authorized with rehabilitation unit manager approval not to exceed a combined total of six months.

482.2.00 INFORMATION:

482.2.01 A recovery residence for persons with chemical dependence is a facility providing lodging, meals (or provisions for meals) and a recovery support program for persons making the transition to independent alcohol and drug free living. The focus is on abstinence, restoration, group therapy and extensive use of self-help groups. Vocational and academic issues may also be addressed. Gainful employment is a significant objective of the recovery residence's program. Duration of residency can vary.

482.2.02 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

484.0.00 RELOCATION

Effective Date: October 1, 2001

Authority: 34 CFR361

484.1.00 POLICY:

484.1.01 The VR Program may authorize the physical movement of a qualified individual's personal goods from one location to another if suitable work has been obtained or promised in writing by an employer.

484.1.02 To qualify for relocation, the place of employment must be a distance greater than 50 miles from the qualified individual's residence.

484.1.03 The VR Program may authorize only one relocation for a qualified individual.

484.1.04 The VR Program may authorize the initial one-time cost of a security deposit and/or charges for the initiation of utilities that are required for an individual to relocate for a job placement. The VR Program may not authorize the further payment of utility bills. Refer to 461.0.00

484.1.05 A qualified individual who is being relocated at VR Program expense may be authorized assistance with one-month rent at his/her new location if it is documented as necessary. The amount authorized may not exceed the actual rent or the VR Program fee for maintenance.

484.1.06 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall verify and document in the case notes the details of the job commitment.

484.1.07 If the moving company cost will exceed $1,000, the vocational rehabilitation counselor must secure three bids from reputable moving companies and utilize the company that submits the lowest bid.

484.1.08 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

486.0.00

RESIDENCE MODIFICATION

EFFECTIVE DATE: OCTOBER 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

486.1.00 POLICY:

486.1.01 The VR Program may authorize the modification of the residence of a qualified individual who has a severe physical disability(ies) only if such modification is essential for the individual's attainment of the work goal.

486.1.02 Only the following structural modifications may be authorized:

A. A maximum of two exterior doors may be widened per dwelling; however, in keeping with fire code restrictions, the primary egress cannot be made through a garage; *(Revised 7/1/06)*

B. The addition of a ramp and landing pad, if necessary to give access, to the exterior door; *(Revised 7/1/06)*

C. The widening of one interior bathroom door;

D. Grab bars at the toilet and bath tub/shower if the individual has use of his/her arms;

E. The widening of one interior bedroom door;

F. The widening of one kitchen door;

G. Environmental controls, as appropriate; and/or

H. Other essential modifications as required to participate in his/her work plan for employment.

486.1.03 For a residence not owned by the client, the Program must have prior written permission of the property owner that specifies the modification being authorized. This written permission shall be placed in the case file.

486.1.04 The client must give his/her written consent to the recommended modification(s) before it is begun. The consent document shall be placed in the case file.

486.1.05 The vocational rehabilitation counselor must provide a rationale in the case notes stating why the modification(s) is necessary to the achievement of the individual's work goal.

486.1.06 Any structural modification(s) to a residence shall be recommended and submitted in writing by the AWT rehabilitation engineer to the vocational rehabilitation counselor for approval. This written recommendation must be included in the case file.*(Effective 2/15/04) (Revised 1/15/09)*

486.1.07 Should the cost of a residence modification exceed $2,500, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall engage the AWT rehabilitation engineer in securing a minimum of 2 written bids. The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall assist AWT in the review of qualified bids and in the selection of an appropriate bidder. Client informed choice shall be utilized as appropriate. The lowest qualifying bid should be accepted. *(Revised 1/15/09)*

NOTE: The AWT rehabilitation engineer shall determine bidder qualifications. *(Effective 2/15/04) (Revised 1/15/09)*

486.1.08 Prior to any VR sponsored residential modification, the client's/homeowner's residence must meet local building codes and be stable structurally (as determined by the AWT engineer or appropriate contractor). It is the client's/homeowner's responsibility to meet these standards prior to or during the VR modification. *(Effective 7/1/06)*

486.1.09 Subsequent residential modifications may be considered upon review of recent work history, work expectancy, and changes in the nature of the disability (i.e. exacerbation of existing disability). Reasonable and appropriate policies shall be applied in all cases. *(Effective 7/1/06)*

486.2.00 INFORMATION:

486.2.01 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

488.0.00 EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT TRANSITIONAL SERVICE

Revised Date: October 15, 2010

Authority: 34 CFR 361

488.1.00 POLICY:

488.1.01 Extended Employment Transitional Service (EETS) provides practice and learning of basic work behaviors necessary for supported or competitive employment to those persons with significant disabilities who require such practice and learning in a sheltered environment prior to working in an integrated setting. If an individual chooses to pursue long-term extended employment or is best suited for long-term extended employment, the service must be provided outside of VR and the counselor must provide information and referral services to local extended employment providers.

488.1.02 EETS may be authorized for up to three months for a qualified client who requires such service as long as the client is making adequate progress and still needs the service to enter supported or competitive employment. If necessary, up to an additional three months may be granted with Rehabilitation Unit Manager (RUM) approval.

488.1.03 EETS must be provided in a non-integrated or sheltered setting by a non-profit agency or organization. And, the provider must reimburse in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. *Refer to Glossary: Extended Employment Transitional Service (EETS)*

490.0.00 SERVICES TO FAMILY MEMBERS

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

490.1.00 Policy

490.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide certain services for members of a qualified individual's family when necessary to support the individual in achieving an employment outcome.

490.1.02 In order for a service to be authorized to a family member:

A. The case must be in extended evaluation or in status 14 or above;

B. The needed service must not be available through existing community agencies or programs; and

C. The service(s) must support the work plan by contributing to the client's vocational rehabilitation.

490.1.03 The rationale for the authorization of the service(s) for the family member(s) shall be included in the case notes.

490.1.04 The client's name and the provider information shall be typed on the A&I in the usual manner. The family member's name shall not be placed on the A&I.

490.2.00 INFORMATION:

490.2.01 Family member includes any relative by blood or marriage or any other person living in the same household with whom the individual has a close interpersonal relationship.

490.2.02 Services may include:

A. Aide training to prepare a family member(s) to assist the individual with a disability in a program of activities of daily living;

B. Group counseling to assist the family member(s) in understanding the needs of the individual;

C. Child care which enables the individual to participate in another primary rehabilitation service; and/or Refer to 458.0.00

D. Assistance with locating suitable housing.

490.2.03 Refer to Supportive Services/General 454.0.00

492.0.00 TOOLS/EQUIPMENT: OCCUPATIONAL OR MEDICAL

Effective Date: October 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361 O.C.G.A. 49-9-15

492.1.00 POLICY:

492.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide, where appropriate, assistive work technology device(s) and/or equipment sufficient to assess an applicant's ability to benefit from services, and as appropriate, the nature and scope of services needed by an individual in extended evaluation.

492.1.02 The VR Program may authorize or provide, where appropriate, assistive work technology device(s), equipment and/or tools necessary for a qualified individual to prepare for or to perform the entry level requirements of an occupation indicated by the work goal. The counselor shall consult with and refer to AWT staff whenever assistive work technology devices are being considered. Refer to 456.0.00 *(Revised 1/15/09)*

492.1.03 When an adapted mobility device such as modified golf cart, a segway, or an all terrain vehicle is necessary to perform tasks associated with the vocational goal, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall consult with the AWT occupational therapist (OT). The AWT OT will provide written recommendations about whether the proposed adapted mobility device is safe and appropriate. The AWT OT may also recommend referral and consultation with either a qualified therapist such as a recreational therapist or physical therapist, or with a certified driver rehabilitation specialist (CDRS), depending on the needs of the client. Other requirements include:

A. AWT OT consultation, when appropriate, with the AWT rehabilitation engineer for recommendations on specific adaptations required for such mobility devices;

B. The client must obtain and required licenses and insurance;

C. The counselor shall authorize purchase of an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) helmet if recommended by the AWT OT. *(Revised 1/15/09)*

492.1.04 When it has not been conclusively documented that the individual can benefit from an assistive work technology devise(s) or equipment or when it is cost beneficial to the Program, the Program shall authorize the rental of an item(s) as opposed to authorizing the purchase of the item(s).

492.1.05 A purchased item(s) remain the property of the VR Program until:

A. The established depreciation date has expired at which time the individual becomes sole owner. The depreciation date for a removable, transferable vehicle modification (e.g., hand controls, lifts, electro-mechanical floor-mounted restraint systems) shall be five years from the date of delivery. *(Effective 2/15/04) (Revised 1/15/09)*

B. The item(s) is transferred to another state agency; or

C. The item is transferred to a State Surplus Property Warehouse.

NOTE: Equipment that is not readily transferable for use by another individual is exempt from this policy.

492.1.06 A rationale for the purchase of an assistive work technology device(s), equipment and/or occupational tools must be included in the case file. The rationale must state why the item(s) is required by the individual to complete the rehabilitation process as specified in his/her work plan or amendment.

492.1.07 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall execute a Client Tools/Equipment Responsibilities form with the individual for removable, transferable, occupational or medical tools, equipment or an assistive work technology device(s) on any item(s) when the cost(s) exceeds $350.00. This form shall contain a listing of the client's responsibilities, a list of equipment authorized and the dates that apply to inventory. *(Revised 1/15/09)*

A. A copy of this form shall accompany the authorization for tools and equipment and shall be signed by the client when he/she signs the authorization.

1. A copy of the form shall be printed for the client, a copy shall be placed in the case file and a copy shall be provided to the regional tool and equipment coordinator.

2. The region's designated tool and equipment coordinator shall use the form for placement of items in the region's inventory file.

B. If a client intentionally disposes of tools and/or equipment while they are still on inventory, such activity can be grounds for case closure.

492.1.08 The vocational rehabilitation counselor may transfer occupational or medical tools, equipment or assistive work technology device(s).

A. The transfer of an item(s) from one individual to another must be documented in the case file of each individual. The receiving vocational rehabilitation counselor shall execute a new agreement form.

B. When an individual is not using the item(s) for the purpose for which it was originally purchased, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall require that the individual return any item(s), which can be transferred to another individual. The item(s) may then be transferred to another individual.

492.1.09 The designated regional tool and equipment coordinator shall have the following responsibilities:

A. Maintain the region's inventory;

B. Ensure the computerized inventory is accurate and current for the region; and

C. Transfer the item(s) to one of the State Surplus Property Warehouses located at Atlanta, Swainsboro and Americus.

Medical equipment and/or assistive work technology device(s) shall be prescribed/ recommended by a specialist qualified to write prescriptions or make recommendations for the purchase of such equipment or device(s).

492.1.10 When tools and/or equipment, etc. are no longer of value, the designated tools and equipment coordinator may arrange for the disposal of the item(s) and removal from the inventory.

492.1.11 If any item covered by this policy is stolen or destroyed, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall:

A. Document the circumstances of what happened to the item(s) in the individual's case file;

B. Notify the regional tools and equipment coordinator in writing of the disposition of the item(s); and

C. If the item(s) was stolen, report the incident to the local law enforcement officials for investigation and notify the rehabilitation unit manager.

INFORMATION:

492.2.00 Equipment shall include such items as computers, software, wheelchairs, closed circuit televisions (CCTVs), recorders, etc. *(Revised 1/15/09)*

492.2.01 The following time frames can be used to establish depreciation dates which must appear on the Client Tools/Equipment Responsibilities form. If a specific item is not listed, use these a guidelines to establish your own time frames:*(Revised 1/15/09)*

492.2.02 A. Two-year property: occupational tools to include tools-of-the-trade, hand tools, and small electrical tools, equipment and other such similar items. Also, durable medical equipment, and rehabilitation technology equipment/devices not elsewhere classified;

B. Three-year property: large electrical tools-equipment and other such similar items. Also, manual wheelchairs and computer software and hardware;

C. Five-year property: all power wheelchairs; adaptive equipment for vehicles which is removable; video magnifiers such as CCTVs; and alternative augmentative communication devices.

494.0.00 TRANSPORTATION

Effective Date: October 1, 1999
Revised Date: October 15, 2010

Authority: 34 CFR 361

494.1.00 POLICY:

494.1.01 The VR Program may authorize assistance with transportation expenses, including fares or travel costs, as well as adequate training in the use of public transportation, necessary for an individual to participate in a primary vocational rehabilitation service(s) at the established VR rate.

494.1.02 When the client is not living in his/her primary residence due to participating in training services, the VR Program may assist with no more than two one-way trips per training period (e.g. quarter/semester). In an emergency situation the Rehabilitation Unit Manger may grant an exception to this policy.

496.0.00 TRANSLATOR

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

496.1.00 POLICY:

496.1.01 As appropriate, a translator shall be used to ensure that an applicant for, or a recipient of rehabilitation services, whose native language is not English or whose English speaking ability is otherwise limited, is able to avail him/herself of the services offered by the Program.

496.1.02 Prior arrangements should be made through volunteers, organizations, churches, consuls and embassies to develop a pool of individuals who can be called upon to translate for non-English speaking individuals. Such a pool should consist of people who are able to translate in languages which represent substantial segments of the population in a region.

496.1.03 If the services of a translator can not be obtained at no cost, the vocational rehabilitation counselor may authorize the service at an hourly rate based on approved fees.

496.2.00 INFORMATION

496.2.01 Refer to 102.0.00

496.2.02 The AT&T language line is an available resource.

UNIFORM/OCCUATIONAL CLOTHING

497.0.00 Effective Date: October 1, 1999
Revised Date: September 1, 2008

Authority: 34 CFR 361

497.1.00 POLICY:

497.1.01 The VR Program may authorize the provision of uniforms or other suitable occupational clothing which is required for an individual to participate in employment preparation activities including job readiness training, job search and job interviewing. Additionally, clothing may be authorized when necessary for a qualified individual to participate in training and/or employment.

497.1.02 A rationale for the purchase of uniforms or other occupational clothing must be included in the case notes. The rationale must state why the item(s) is required. Rehabilitation unit manager approval must be given for total clothing purchases over $200. All purchases must be appropriate and reasonable. Refer to 140.2.01 and 140.2.02

497.2.00 INFORMATION:

497.2.01 Uniforms and occupational clothing include: single and multi piece uniforms; work shirts and pants; protective clothing and shoes; and street clothes appropriate for an office environment.

All alternative resources for quality used clothing such as civic and church resources shall be considered before purchasing new clothing items.

498.0.00 VEHICLE MODIFICATION

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Revised Date: January 15, 2009

Authority: 34 CFR 361

498.1.00 POLICY:

498.1.01 The vocational rehabilitation counselor may authorize a qualified client to receive modification(s) or assistive work technology device(s), or both, as needed on a vehicle, which includes farm machinery, when the vehicle modification(s) is necessary to achieve the client's work goal. The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall consider the cost effectiveness of the modification(s), i.e., the client's projected job earnings and ability to maintain the equipment in the future. The policy related to appropriate and reasonableness shall be continuously applied. Refer to 140.0.00

498.1.02 The VR Program shall not authorize the purchase of any motorized vehicle used on public roadways.

498.1.03 Prior to the decision to approve a vehicle modification(s), the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall determine that all of the following criteria are met:

A. There is no other means of transportation (A vehicle modification(s) cannot be authorized if the client can use public transportation effectively);

B. The client shall have the means to maintain the vehicle and the modification(s), which includes automobile insurance on both the vehicle and modification(s). The vocational rehabilitation counselor and the AWT rehabilitation engineer shall complete the Financial Consideration for Vehicle Modification Worksheet with the client in order to make this determination;

C. The vehicle modification(s) is necessary to support the client's participation in his/her rehabilitation service at the time the modification(s) is purchased. (Example: on campus housing should be considered prior to the authorization of a vehicle modification(s) if it is proposed in order to support attending school, particularly for those who are new students or who are taking remedial classes.)

498.1.04 Prior to the driver evaluation, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall engage the AWT rehabilitation engineer to conduct a preliminary assessment of the client's readiness to drive independently, or to be transported as a passenger-only. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and AWT rehabilitation engineer shall consider whether the client has reached his/her maximum medical improvement and can benefit from recommended vehicle modification(s) long term. The client shall provide the vocational rehabilitation counselor a copy of his/her valid Georgia driver's license or learner's permit and driving history report (MVR) from the Department of Driver Services (DDS) to be used as a part of the AWT preliminary assessment of the client. Staff should *also consult with the AWT rehabilitation engineer to determine* the appropriateness of the vehicle to be considered for modification(s), either for a vehicle already owned or being considered for purchase.

498.1.05 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall provide a rationale in the case notes stating why the modification(s) is necessary to achieve the client's work goal. This rationale shall include the AWT rehabilitation engineer's preliminary assessment report and the Financial Consideration for Vehicle Modification Worksheet.

498.1.06 If the results of the preliminary assessment and Financial Consideration for Vehicle Modification Worksheet support securing a driver evaluation, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall include in the work plan the need for driver evaluation and shall engage the AWT rehabilitation engineer to secure this evaluation from a certified driver rehabilitation specialist (CDRS) and a licensed occupational therapist (OT) of an approved driver evaluation vendor. The purpose of this evaluation is to determine the specific type of modification(s) needed, (i.e., which may include adapted driving equipment, or minor or major modification(s)), the practicality of the modification(s) and if the client can drive the adapted vehicle safely in the environment in which the vehicle will be used.

A. The VR Program shall not accept a driver's evaluation independently obtained by a client without prior oversight of the vocational rehabilitation counselor and the AWT rehabilitation engineer.

B. The recommendations from the licensed OT and CDRS shall include only those modification(s) that are essential for the client to drive safely or to be transported safely.

498.1.07 The VR Program shall not authorize the modification(s) of an existing van/mini-van/SUV/truck for a client who can be functional in an automobile, except to the extent of what it would cost to equip an automobile. If the client chooses to use a van/mini-van/SUV/truck where such need does not exist, the client shall be responsible for the payment above the cost of equipping an automobile except when a van/mini-van/SUV/truck is his/her existing primary vehicle and meets the requirements of policy 498.1.10. A SUV can be approved for minor modification(s) only.

A. The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall determine the need for a van/mini-van modification(s) based on an evaluation by a licensed occupational therapist and CDRS who state that the client/driver cannot transfer in and out of an automobile independently; or

B. If the client/passenger requests a van/mini-van modification(s) for transportation, with the intent to use another person as the driver, the AWT rehabilitation engineer and/or the AWT OT shall determine whether the client/passenger cannot transfer independently in and out of an automobile as in "A" above. A van/mini-van modification(s) for a client who must use a wheelchair to ride as a passenger-only may be authorized in this situation.

498.1.08 The title to the vehicle to be modified shall be in the client's name or that of an immediate family member.

498.1.09 Vehicle modifications are classified as either “minor” or “major”. These two types of modifications are defined as:

A. Minor modifications include:

1. The installation of equipment such as hand controls, a car-top carrier, or rear carrier;
2. A van/mini-van modification(s) for a client using a wheelchair to ride as a passenger-only that does not include structural changes to the van/mini-van, such as raising a roof or lowering a floor or part of a floor, or where the client cannot transfer to an automobile but can transfer from a wheelchair to a power seat in order to drive safely and does not include structural changes to the van/mini-van, such as raising a roof or lowering a floor or part of a floor.

B. Major modifications include:

1. A van/mini-van modification(s) for a client using a wheelchair who must drive from the wheelchair that includes structural changes to the van/mini-van, such as raising a roof or lowering a floor or part of a floor; or
2. Any other vehicle adaptation that requires altering the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) vehicle’s structure itself.

498.1.10 A full-sized van considered for major modification(s) shall be in good mechanical condition, less than 5 years old, and with less than 50,000 miles on the odometer. A mini-van considered for major modification(s) shall be in good mechanical condition, less than 3 years old, and shall have less than 36,000 miles on the odometer. Any minor modification(s) on an older vehicle, where the adapted equipment can be transferred easily, will require only that the vehicle be in good mechanical (safety) condition; the above limitations in mileage and age shall not apply.

NOTE: The VR Program shall not authorize a vehicle modification(s) for a client who already owns a modified vehicle if that vehicle has passed safety inspections performed by an Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certified mechanic and a National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA) certified vehicle modifications vendor.

498.1.11 A vehicle shall be determined to be in good mechanical condition in an inspection by an ASE certified mechanic. The auto mechanic shall inspect the mechanical and safety components of the vehicle to assure the vehicle is safe to drive. The client is responsible for making required repairs before the vehicle can be modified. The client is responsible for maintenance on the vehicle, both before and after VR assists in the modification(s).

498.1.12 If the driver evaluation supports that a vehicle modification be performed and all above policies have been addressed satisfactorily, the vocational rehabilitation counselor shall include vehicle modification on the work plan and proceed with the service. The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall ensure that all required vehicle modification forms and attachments are signed by the client and that all required documentation is included in the case file prior to the delivery of the modified vehicle. This includes:

A. Financial Consideration for Vehicle Modification Worksheet;

B. Valid Georgia driver's license or learner's license and driving history report (MVR) from Department of Driver Services (DDS);

C. Work Plan Attachment for Transportation Assistance for Vehicle Modifications;

D. Client Tools/Equipment Responsibilities form and the Addition to Tools/Equipment Responsibilities for Vehicle Modifications and Adapted Driving Equipment form;

E. Vehicle Modification Maintenance Agreement (required only on vehicles equipped with high technology driving equipment).

NOTE: The Client Tools/Equipment Responsibilities form establishes the date that vehicle modification(s) is to be removed from state inventory and becomes the property of the client. Vehicle modification(s) shall be the property of the state for 5 years; this shall be reflected on the Client Tools/Equipment Responsibilities form. Refer to 492.0.00

498.1.13 Each vehicle modification(s) shall have a final inspection to ensure that the equipment operates correctly, and that the client can use the equipment properly and safely. The final inspection shall be conducted by the AWT rehabilitation engineer, the client, the CDRS, and, as available, the vocational rehabilitation counselor. Either prior to but no later than at this inspection, the client shall provide proof of insurance coverage on the vehicle and the adapted driving equipment.

498.1.14 At the time the modified vehicle is delivered, the client shall receive training on the proper use and care of the adapted driving equipment from the CDRS vendor who performed the original driver evaluation. The client shall not drive the vehicle independently until he/she has obtained a valid driver's license, and is approved and released by the CDRS who provided the original evaluation.

498.2.00 INFORMATION:

498.2.01 The vocational rehabilitation counselor and the AWT rehabilitation engineer shall select an appropriate vendor from the approved National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA). The vendor shall be certified as a NMEDA-QAP (Quality Assurance Program) dealer.

498.2.02 The NMEDA vendor shall provide instructions and written information with regard to the vehicle modification(s) and scheduled maintenance on the adapted equipment.

498.2.03 The Georgia Assistive Technology Law of 1993 (called the Lemon Law) applies to vehicle modifications. Refer to O.C.G.A. § 10-1-870 to 10-1-875.

498.2.04 Refer to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program Outsourcing Services Manual: Vehicle Modification

499.0.00 **WORK SITE ACCOMMODATION AND/OR MODIFICATION**
Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

499.1.00 POLICY:

499.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide technical assistance to advise an employer on how to accommodate a work site for a qualified individual.

499.1.02 The VR Program may authorize or provide technical assistance to accommodate or modify a work site, as appropriate, for a qualified individual to obtain or retain suitable employment. If the individual has not been employed, a letter of intent to hire from the prospective employer must be in the case file before authorizing any work site accommodation and/or modification.

499.1.03 Work site accommodation(s) and/or modification(s) shall not be authorized when the employer or other authority is legally responsible under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, to provide such accommodation(s) and/or modification(s).

499.1.04 The VR Program may only authorize a work site accommodation(s) and/or modification(s) for a qualified individual when the employer or another apparent entity cannot provide it. A rationale to this effect shall be in the case file.

499.1.05 A work site accommodation and/or modification may consist of any appropriate selection of the following:

A. A ramp and landing pad;

B. Widening of one entrance and/or one bathroom door;

C. Environmental controls;

D. Ergonomic redesign of work space;

E. Occupational equipment, tools and/or assistive work technology device(s); Refer to 492.0.00 and 456.0.00

F. An accessible parking place;

G. Adjustments to one each of electronic switches such as elevator buttons and security pass locks; and/or

H. Other essential modifications, as appropriate to the needs of the individual in the work site.

499.1.06 The vocational rehabilitation counselor and/or rehabilitation employment specialist must provide a rationale in the case notes stating why the accommodation and/or modification is necessary to the achievement of the individual's work goal.

499.1.07 When considering accommodation(s) and/or modification(s) to a work site, a Program approved assistive work technology service provider should be consulted when appropriate. Such recommendation(s) shall be included in the case file.

499.1.08 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall document in the case file that any accommodation(s) and/or modification(s) which will alter the facility have been discussed and approved in writing by appropriate management personnel at the work site before the accommodation(s) and/or modification(s) is made.

499.1.09 Written documentation shall be provided in the case file that the client's immediate supervisor has consented to the accommodation(s) and/or modification(s).

499.1.10 The vocational rehabilitation counselor and/or rehabilitation employment specialist should notify the service provider in writing that all work must meet applicable building codes and must satisfy both the VR Program and the employer.

Section 500.0.00
Case Closure

SECTION 500
CASE CLOSURE

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SECTION 500
CASE CLOSURE

502.0.00 CASE CLOSURE/GENERAL

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

502.1.00 POLICY:

502.1.01 An individual's case shall be closed or terminated utilizing the Program's Record of Closure form when further VR Program services are no longer appropriate, reasonable, or anticipated in the immediate future for the vocational rehabilitation of the individual. Refer to 130.0.00

502.1.02 An individual's case shall not be closed prior to the Program making an eligibility determination unless the applicant declines to participate in or is unavailable to complete an assessment due to an intervening reason.

502.1.03 If a qualified individual receiving vocational rehabilitation services is underemployed, services including job search and placement assistance shall not be discontinued until the vocational goal specified in the individual's work plan is reached. If the vocational goal is no longer appropriate, a plan amendment shall be developed. Refer to 510.1.03

502.1.04 A case may be closed from any status above 00 for an ineligibility reason only after full consultation with the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's authorized representative, or after giving a clear opportunity, as documented in the case history, for this consultation.

502.1.05 The justification for the case closure recorded in the case notes shall be consistent with VR Program policy. Case file documentation shall reflect a pattern of informed choices made by the client throughout the rehabilitation process.

502.1.06 A notice of change shall be sent, as appropriate, prior to the closure of a case. Refer to 104.1.08

502.1.07 The applicant/client shall be notified of any closure, except as noted in 504.1.01 and 502.1.14 A, B, E, and J, using the Program's Notice of Change form.

502.1.08 The vocational rehabilitation counselor shall complete the Record of Closure form for each case closed status 08, 26, 28, 30, 33, 35, 37, or 38.

502.1.09 The Determination of Ineligibility shall contain a summary of services provided to the client whose case is being closed status 08, 28, 30, 33, or 37.

NOTE: The requirement for the provision of trial work experience applies only to cases closed status 08 from status 06 due to severity of disability though similar services may have been provided to clients with cases in other statuses. *(Revised 4/1/03)*

502.1.10 The Record of Closure form shall be completed for every closure.

502.1.11 The Case Notes shall be used to document justification for closure and discussions or efforts to discuss those justifications with the client or the client's representative.

502.1.12 The Record of Closure form is considered an extension of the Work Plan, as is the Work Plan Amendment(s) and Annual Review(s), as appropriate.

502.1.13 The Definitions for Ineligibility Reasons for Closure are:

A. Not all criteria for impairment met – The case file reflects the absence of a medical or psychological diagnosis, or there is a diagnosis but one or more criteria for impairment are not met. The diagnosis shall be made by a specialist qualified to make the diagnosis which meets Program policy requirements. Status 08 from 00 or 02 only.

B. No vocational impediment – The case file reflects that there is no functional limitation(s) emergent from the disability, or the functional limitation(s) emergent from the disability does not negatively impact successful vocational participation, i.e. the individual's ability to work. Status 08 from 00 or 02 only.

C. Disability too severe - The case file reflects that the VR Program has demonstrated by clear and convincing evidence that the individual cannot benefit from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome. This closure reason may be used in status 08 (from 06 only), status 28, and status 30. Refer to Appendix A: Glossary, for the definition of clear and clear and convincing evidence.

NOTE: If a case is closed status 08 from status 06 (extended evaluation), trial work experience must have been provided unless the individual was unable to participate in trial work experience or unless the use of such experience was exhausted prior to extended evaluation.

D. Does not require vocational rehabilitation services – The case file reflects that the individual meets the definition of an individual with a disability; however, the individual does not require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment. Status 08 from status 00 and 02 only.

E. Unfavorable medical/psychological prognosis – The case file reflects a medical prediction that the likely course or outcome of the impairment is rapidly progressive or terminal. Status 08 from 00 or 02, status 28 or 30.

F. Failure to achieve employment goal – The case file reflects that the provision of vocational rehabilitation service(s), as identified in the work plan and any work plan amendments, has not resulted in the client becoming employed and, in the judgment of the vocational rehabilitation counselor and other work team members, further services would not result in the client becoming employed. Status 28 only.

502.1.14 The Definitions for Intervening Reasons for Closure are:

A. Individual did not request vocational rehabilitation services – The case file reflects that the vocational rehabilitation counselor attempted to contact the individual on at least two occasions and the individual did not respond. Written contacts shall not include the Notice of Change form letter. Status 08 from 00 only.

B. Referral source withdrew referral – The case file reflects that, prior to the vocational rehabilitation counselor's contact either verbally or in writing with the individual, the referral source indicates either verbally or in writing that the referral is inappropriate at this time. Status 08 from 00 only.

C. Applicant/client is not present in the state – The case file reflects that the individual is not available to participate in assessment and/or planned services in the state of Georgia. *(Revised 7/1/06)*

D. Applicant/client is an alien who does not have permission to work - The case file reflects that the applicant/client is an alien who does not have permission to work in the United States.

E. Applicant/client residence is unknown – The case file reflects that the vocational rehabilitation counselor does not know where the individual is residing as the result of at least one letter being returned from the post office, or the vocational rehabilitation counselor obtains information from significant others indicating the individual no longer resides at case file address(es) and there are no known forwarding addresses.

F. Applicant/client failed to respond – The case file reflects that the vocational rehabilitation counselor has attempted to contact the individual on at least two occasions and the individual does not respond. At least one of the efforts to contact the individual shall be in writing. The written contacts shall not include the Notice of Change letter.

G. Applicant/client is unable to utilize vocational rehabilitation services to work due to life circumstances – The applicant/client expresses a desire to work and vocational rehabilitation services have been discussed with the vocational rehabilitation counselor; however, certain circumstances interfere with the applicant/client going to work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, the following: lack of sufficient day care, adverse impact on other benefits, or living in an abusive or unstable environment.

NOTE: This reason is to be used when an applicant/client does not voluntarily refuse services, but life circumstances make it unfavorable for him/her to pursue employment at the time of closure.

H. Applicant/client refused or declined service(s) – The case file reflects that the individual or, as appropriate, parent, guardian, advocate, or authorized representative, indicates verbally or in writing that he/she does not wish to participate or cannot participate in a plan of service(s).

I. Applicant/client did not comply with requirements – The case file reflects that the applicant/client failed to cooperate with actions determined necessary by VR staff in order for the case to proceed satisfactorily through the vocational rehabilitation process. The case file reflects that the applicant/client fails to keep scheduled appointments initiated by a rehabilitation staff member or other service provider on at least two different dates without reason(s) acceptable to the vocational rehabilitation counselor, or the applicant/client fails to adhere to the requirements for receiving services from a service provider scheduled by the vocational rehabilitation staff member, and/or the applicant/client fails to adhere to the objectives and/or conditions of the work plan and or work plan amendments or to the requirements of the Client Tools and Equipment Responsibilities Agreement. The case file shall contain copies of written notice of scheduled appointments encouraging the applicant/client to participate. This closure reason prevents the provision of services for six months following closure unless there is reason to believe that the applicant's/client's noncompliance was due to extenuating circumstances which no longer exist. The applicant/client shall be fully informed of these conditions in the Notice of Change Form. Refer to 104.1.02 *(Revised 9/1/08)*

NOTE: The written notice to the applicant/client will inform the applicant/client that failure to comply will result in closure of his/her case and he/she will not receive further services unless restitution is made.

J. Applicant/client has died – The case file reflects the applicant/client is no longer living.

K. Duplicate case – There exists within the VR Program another open case for the applicant/client.

L. Applicant/client is institutionalized – The case file reflects that the applicant/client is in an institution and is therefore prevented from participating in a plan of service(s).

M. Applicant/client is referred to another rehabilitation supplier – The case file reflects that the applicant/client has been referred to another supplier.

N. Transportation is not feasible or available – The case file reflects that the provision of suitable transportation for the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services or the acceptance of employment is either not feasible (too costly) or not available.

O. Applicant/client did not meet order of selection priority – The case file reflects that the applicant/client did not express an interest in being placed on a waiting list after being notified that he/she did not meet the VR Program's order of selection criteria to receive vocational rehabilitation services, or the case file reflects that the applicant/client was not available for or not interested in a later offer of vocational rehabilitation services. Status 38 from status 04 only.

P. Services were obtained or were attempted to be obtained through misrepresentation, fraud, collusion, or criminal conduct – The applicant/client has failed to provide honest and/or complete information to the Program; has misused program services, funds, or properties; and/or has committed a criminal act, including but not limited to threats against Program staff. Under these circumstances of closure, services may be terminated immediately. Services will not be provided for a period of one year following closure unless restitution is made to the Program. Refer to Glossary: Criminal Act

Q. Applicant/client transferred to another state agency – The case file reflects that the services needed by the applicant/client are more appropriately provided elsewhere. Transfer to the other agency should be accompanied by referral information that can assist the other agency to serve the individual. *(Revised 1-20-00)*

R. Client is in extended employment – The case file reflects that after the individual has received rehabilitation services he/she has chosen to remain in extended employment. (Status 28 is the only status for which this closure reason is appropriate).

S. An intervening reason coded z by the rehabilitation unit manager – The case file reflects that the reason for closing the case is not consistent with one of those identified in 502.1.14 A through R.

504.0.00 CASE CLOSURE 08 FROM REFERRAL STATUS

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

504.1.00 POLICY:

504.1.01 An individual's case shall be closed status 08 from referral (status 00) when the individual meets one of the ineligibility or intervening reasons as specified below. Since the referral has not progressed to applicant status (02), a determination of ineligibility is not required. No notice to the individual is required.

504.1.02 When closing a case status 08 from referral (Status 00), the case file shall contain a clear rationale supported by case file documentation of how the determination of ineligibility was reached, or the intervening reason which prevents a determination of eligibility.

A. The ineligibility reasons for closure are:

1. Not all criteria for impairment met;

2. Unfavorable medical/psychological prognosis;
3. No vocational impediment;
4. Does not require vocational rehabilitation services.

NOTE: Refer to 502.1.13 for definitions.

B. The intervening reasons for closure are:

1. Individual did not request vocational rehabilitation services;
2. Individual is not available to participate in assessment/services in the state; *(Revised 7/1/06)*
3. Individual's residence is unknown;
4. Individual is an alien who does not have permission to work;
5. Individual is unable to utilize rehabilitation services to work due to life circumstances;
6. Individual refused or declined service(s);
7. Referral source withdrew referral;
8. Individual has died;
9. Duplicate case;
10. Individual is institutionalized;
11. Individual is referred to another rehabilitation supplier;
12. Individual transferred to another state agency; *(Revised 1-20-00)*
13. An intervening reason coded **z** by the rehabilitation unit manager.

NOTE: Refer to 502.1.14 for definitions.

504.1.03 Even though policy permits case closure for ineligibility reasons, when indicated, an application should be taken and appropriate data collected before a determination is made.

506.0.00 CASE CLOSURE 08 FROM APPLICANT STATUS

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

506.1.00 POLICY:

506.1.01 An individual's case shall be closed status 08 from applicant (status 02) when the applicant/client meets one of the ineligibility or intervening reasons specified in this topic. Notice to the applicant is required except when the applicant has died or residence is unknown. Refer to 104.1.08F

506.1.02 When closing a case status 08 from applicant status, the case file shall contain either a Determination of Ineligibility or documentation of the intervening reason which prevents determination of ineligibility. Refer to 212.0.00

A. The ineligibility reasons for closure are:

1. Not all criteria for impairment met;
2. Unfavorable medical/psychological prognosis;
3. No vocational impediment;
4. Does not require vocational rehabilitation services.

NOTE: Refer to 502.1.13 for definitions.

B. The intervening reasons for closure are:

1. Applicant is not available to participate in assessment/services in the state; *(Revised 7/1/06)*
2. Applicant's residence is unknown;
3. Applicant failed to respond;
4. Applicant is an alien who does not have permission to work;
5. Applicant is unable to utilize rehabilitation services to work due to life circumstances;
6. Applicant refused or declined service(s);
7. Applicant did not comply with requirements;
8. Applicant has died;
9. Duplicate case;
10. Applicant is institutionalized;
11. Applicant referred to another rehabilitation supplier;

12. Applicant obtained or is attempting to obtain services through misrepresentation, fraud, collusion or the commitment of a criminal act, including but not limited to threats against Program staff; Refer to Glossary: Criminal Act.

13. Individual transferred to another state agency; *(Revised 1-20-00)*

14. An intervening reason coded **z** by the rehabilitation unit manager.

NOTE: Refer to 502.1.14 for definitions.

508.0.00 CASE CLOSURE 08 FROM EXTENDED EVALUATION

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

508.1.00 POLICY:

508.1.01 An individual's case shall be closed status 08 from extended evaluation (status 06) when the applicant/client is found to be ineligible based on the severity of his/her disability or an intervening reason prevents eligibility/ineligibility determination.

508.1.02 The applicant may be determined ineligible only after the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for the limited purpose of determining the applicant's/client's ability to benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome. Further, it shall have been demonstrated by clear and convincing evidence, which shall include the provision of trial work experience(s) (if the individual is able to participate in trial work experience), that the applicant/client is incapable of benefiting from such services in terms of an employment outcome. Refer to 214.0.00

508.1.03 When closing a case status 08 from extended evaluation (status 06), the case file shall contain either a Determination of Ineligibility or a rationale for closure due to an intervening reason. A notice to the individual is required except when the applicant has died or residence is unknown.

A. The only ineligibility reason for closure is: Disability Too Severe. Refer to Glossary: Clear And Convincing Evidence.

NOTE: Refer to 502.1.13C for definition.

B. The intervening reasons for closure are:

1. Client is not available to participate in assessment/services in the state; *(Revised 7/1/06)*

2. Client’s residence is unknown;

3. Client failed to respond;

4. Client is an alien who does not have permission to work;

5. Client is unable to utilize rehabilitation services to work due to life circumstances;
6. Client refused or declined service(s);
7. Client did not comply with requirements;
8. Client has died;
9. Duplicate case;
10. Client is institutionalized;
11. Client referred to another rehabilitation supplier;
12. Client obtained or is attempting to obtain services through misrepresentation, fraud, collusion or the commitment of a criminal act, including but not limited to threats against VR Program staff; Refer to Glossary: Criminal Act.
13. Client transferred to another state agency; *(Revised 1-20-00)*
14. An intervening reason coded **z** by the rehabilitation unit manager.

NOTE: Refer to 502.1.14 for definitions.

510.0.00 CASE CLOSURE 26

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

510.1.00 POLICY:

510.1.01 A case may be closed status 26 (rehabilitated) from status 22 when an individual with a disability has been, at a minimum:

A. Determined to be qualified for vocational rehabilitation services; and

B. Provided the essential vocational rehabilitation services of assessment for determining eligibility and identification of vocational rehabilitation needs; and

C. Provided appropriate and substantial vocational rehabilitation services in accordance with the work plan which have contributed to the employment outcome; and

D. Determined to have achieved and maintained a suitable work goal for at least 90 consecutive days. Refer to 308.0.00

NOTE: If the specific occupation changes, a plan amendment is required. Refer to 312.0.00

510.1.02 The requirement that a client be employed 90 consecutive days prior to closure is the minimum requirement mandated by law. Should job changes occur during this 90 days, follow up services shall be provided for a sufficient period of time to ensure the client's satisfactory adjustment to the employment.

510.1.03 If a qualified individual receiving vocational rehabilitation services is underemployed (i.e. placed in a job that is not consistent with the individual's work plan, which is based on the individual's unique strengths, priorities, resources, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice), the case shall not be closed in status 26.

510.1.04 Volunteer work is not an acceptable employment outcome.

510.1.05 Prior to a case being closed status 26 with an employment outcome, the type of employment shall be determined.

A. There are two types of employment, competitive and non-competitive.

1. Competitive Employment is work in the competitive labor market that is performed full-time or, if appropriate, part-time in an integrated setting; and for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

2. Unpaid Family Worker is an individual working on a family farm or in a family owned business for no wages. In these instances, the salary is paid in kind, rather than in cash, and shall be of significant economic benefit to the individual.*(Revised 7/15/11)*

B. There are six (6) types of employment outcomes which may be either competitive employment or non-competitive employment, depending upon the circumstances. The circumstances determine which definition is met.

1. Supported Employment is competitive work in an integrated work setting, or employment in an integrated work setting in which the individual is working toward competitive employment, consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual with a most significant disability, with ongoing and extended support services. Refer to 416.0.00

2. Supported Employment Transitional Employment is a series of temporary job placements in integrated settings with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness. In SE transitional employment, the provision of extended support services shall include continuing sequential job placements until job permanency is achieved. Refer to 416.0.00

3. Business Enterprise Program is employment in state-agency managed business enterprises by persons with significant visual disabilities. Refer to 412.0.00

4. Self-Employment is working for oneself in the individual's home, shop, or office selling goods or services for the purpose of making a profit. Self-employment includes farmers. Refer to 414.0.00

5. Homemaker is recognized federally as an employment outcome and may be appropriate for any individual, male or female, depending upon the individual's circumstances. A homemaker is defined as a person who has the uncompensated, primary responsibility for personally completing the majority of duties necessary to maintain a suitable living environment within his/her personal domicile for the benefit of those residing within that domicile, whether that person lives alone or is part of a family unit within the same domicile. Individuals living alone may be considered as homemakers.

   In order for homemaker to be considered as a gainful occupation for an individual, the individual shall be the primary person responsible for these duties in the home as defined in the Homemaker Duties Assessment Chart. Evidence in the case file shall show the benefits derived from the Program's services which enable the individual to perform homemaker responsibilities. Refer to 308.1.06

6. Unpaid Family Worker is an individual working on a family farm or in a family owned business for no wages. In these instances, the salary is paid in kind, rather than in cash, and shall be of significant economic benefit to the individual. *(Revised 7/15/11)*

510.1.06 Prior to a case being closed status 26 with a competitive employment outcome, all of the following criteria, in addition to those in 510.1.01 A through D, shall be verified:

A. The individual and the vocational rehabilitation work team agree the individual is performing well in the employment;

B. The employment is full-time or, if appropriate, part-time, in an integrated setting;

C. The individual is compensated at or above minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled; and

D. The employment is consistent with the individual's strengths, priorities, resources, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.

510.1.07 When closing a case status 26 with a noncompetitive employment outcome, all of the following criteria, in addition to those found in 510.1.01 A through D, shall be met:

A. The services provided shall contribute to the improvement of the individual's adjustment or ability to function in the noncompetitive occupation;

B. As a result of the improved level of functioning and the work activity performed, significant socio-economic benefits shall be realized;

C. The employment shall be consistent with the individual's strengths, priorities, resources, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice; and

D. The individual and the vocational rehabilitation work team agree the individual is performing well on the job and closure is warranted.

510.1.08 When a case is closed as successfully rehabilitated (status 26) or successfully closed from post-employment services(s) (status 35), the Record of Closure form shall contain:

A. The client's specific occupation, as listed in the U. S. Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT), with DOT code;

B. The name and address of the employer;

C. The client's gross weekly earnings and number of hours worked the week of closure;

D. Indication of medical insurance;

E. Indication of insurance availability through employer;

F. Indication of discussion with client regarding reassessment of the client's need for post-employment services (PES) and/or extended support services to be provided or arranged through cooperative agreements with other service providers;

G. Placement code: direct; indirect; none; job referral only; or job placement as the result of job referral;

H. Identification of the services contributing to employment; and

I. If in competitive employment:

1. Documentation that a work team member verified the individual is employed at or above minimum wage in an integrated work setting; and

2. The individual's wages and level of benefits are not less than those paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by non-disabled individuals.

510.1.09 Rationale for primary work plan service(s) provided the client and how the service(s) contributed to employment shall be documented in the case notes or on the Record of Closure form.

510.1.10 The employment outcome shall be verified on the day of closure.

510.1.11 Notice to the client is required.

510.2.00 INFORMATION:

510.2.01 Employment outcome is not limited to specific earnings or hours worked. Employment outcome is not limited to employment for wages; it also includes homemaker and unpaid family worker which have no earnings or measured hours of work. *(Revised 7/15/11)*

512.0.00 CASE CLOSURE 28

Effective Date: October 1, 2001

Authority: 34 CFR 361

512.1.00 POLICY:

512.1.01 A case shall be closed status 28 from status 14, 16, 18, 20, 22 or 24 when, after the initiation of planned service(s), the client meets one of the ineligibility or intervening reasons as specified below. A notice to the client is required except where the individual is deceased or cannot be located.

512.1.02 When closing an ineligible case status 28, the case file shall contain a Determination of Ineligibility. When it has been determined that case closure is warranted due to an intervening reason specified below, the reason shall be documented in the case file.

A. The ineligibility reasons for closure are:

1. Disability too severe;
2. Unfavorable medical/psychological prognosis;
3. Failure to achieve employment goal.

NOTE: Refer to 502.1.13 for definitions.

B. The intervening reasons for closure are:

1. Client is not available to participate in assessment/services in the state; *(Revised 7/1/06)*
2. Client's residence is unknown;
3. Client failed to respond;
4. Client is unable to utilize rehabilitation services to work due to life circumstances;
5. Client refused or declined service(s);
6. Client did not comply with requirements;
7. Client has died;
8. Duplicate case;

9. Client is institutionalized (vocational rehabilitation counselor should consider the appropriate utilization of status 24 prior to closing the case);
10. Client is referred to another rehabilitation supplier;
11. Transportation not feasible or available;
12. Client obtained or is attempting to obtain services through misrepresentation, fraud, collusion or the commitment of a criminal act, including but not limited to threats against Program staff; Refer to Glossary: Criminal Act.
13. After receiving services, the client has chosen to participate in extended employment rather than continuing toward a recognized employment outcome;
14. An intervening reason coded **z** by the rehabilitation unit manager.

NOTE: Refer to 502.1.14 for definitions.

514.0.00 CASE CLOSURE 30

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

514.1.00 POLICY:

514.1.01 A case shall be closed status 30 from status 10 or 12 when, prior to the initiation of service(s), the client meets one of the ineligibility reasons, or an intervening reason, specified below, prevents the client from initiating the service. Notice to the individual is required except where the individual is deceased or residence is unknown.

514.1.02 When closing an ineligible case status 30 the case file shall contain a Determination of Ineligibility. Refer to 212.0.00

A. The ineligibility reasons for closure are:

1. Disability too severe;
2. Unfavorable medical/psychological prognosis;

Note: Refer to 502.1.13 for definitions.

B. A case may be closed status 30 when it has been determined that the client can no longer benefit from service(s) due to an intervening reason. Determination of Ineligibility is not required. The intervening reasons are:

1. Client is not available to participate in assessment/services in the state; *(Revised 7/1/06)*
2. Client's residence is unknown;

3. Client failed to respond;
4. Client is unable to utilize rehabilitation services to work due to life circumstances;
5. Client refused or declined service(s);
6. Client did not comply with requirements;
7. Client has died;
8. Duplicate case;
9. Client is institutionalized;
10. Client is referred to another rehabilitation supplier;
11. Transportation not feasible or available;
12. Client obtained or is attempting to obtain services through misrepresentation, fraud, collusion or the commitment of a criminal act, including but not limited to threats against VR Program staff; Refer to Glossary: Criminal Act
13. An intervening reason coded **z** by the rehabilitation unit manager.

Note: Refer to 502.1.14 for definitions.

516.0.00 CASE CLOSURE 33, 35, AND 37

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

516.1.00 POLICY:

516.1.01 A client shall be terminated from status 32 (receiving post-employment services) to:

A. Status 33 when the solution of the problem entails a complex or comprehensive vocational rehabilitation effort;

B. Status 35 when employment appears secure; or

C. Status 37 when, after post-employment services have been initiated, it becomes necessary to terminate the client's case other than continuing in employment.

518.0.00 CASE CLOSURE 38

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Authority: 34 CFR 361

518.1.00 POLICY:

518.1.01 An individual's case shall be closed status 38 from status 04 when: Refer to 130.1.03

A. The individual requests that his/her case be closed; or

B. The vocational rehabilitation counselor determines the client is no longer eligible; or

C. An intervening reason, as specified below, prevents the further consideration of delivery of vocational rehabilitation services:

1. Client is not available to participate in assessment/services in the state; *(Revised 7/1/06)*
2. Client's residence is unknown;
3. Client failed to respond;
4. Client has died;
5. Client is institutionalized;
6. An intervening reason coded **z** by the rehabilitation unit manager.

Note: Refer to 502.1.14 for definitions and 418.0.00 for Information and Referral.

Section 600.0.00
Impairments

SECTION 600
IMPAIRMENTS
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SECTION 600.0.00
IMPAIRMENTS

602.0.00 IMPAIRMENTS/GENERAL

Effective Date: October 1, 2002

Authority: 34 CFR 361

602.1.00 POLICY:

602.1.01 The VR Program accepts as an impairment any medically determinable condition which meets all criteria of the first basic requirement of eligibility (Refer to 210.1.03) if*(Revised 4/15/11)*:

A. The diagnosis is medically or psychologically recognized as a physical or mental impairment; and

B. Documentation of the impairment is from an acceptable source, i.e. a specialist in the appropriate field (Refer to 208.1.08); and

C. Documentation of the impairment, regardless of age, reflects the current level of functioning of the individual (Refer to 208.1.03C); and

D. The diagnosed condition is not specifically excluded by the VR Program from being considered as a recognizable impairment. The conditions that the Program does not recognize as impairments include but are not limited to:

1. Routine dental conditions; Refer to 428.1.08

2. Controlled hypertension;

3. Nicotine dependence;

4. Sleepwalking;

5. Any V code listed in the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) except for the impairment of Borderline Intellectual Functioning;

6. Transvestitism, transsexualism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual dysfunction disorders, gender identity disorders not resulting from physical impairments, or other sexual behavior disorders;

7. Homosexuality and bisexuality;

Note: Services for which an individual may otherwise be eligible shall never be denied on the basis of discrimination due to sexual orientation.

8. Substance abuse disorders *(Revised 4/15/11)*

9. Substance dependence disorders resulting from the current illegal use of drugs or the current use of alcohol. *(Revised 4/15/11)*
10. Compulsive gambling, kleptomania, or pyromania;
11. Pain relating to any area of the body, excluding migraine or cluster headaches. Pain is considered a symptom.

602.1.02 The counselor shall obtain such documentation as necessary to establish the presence of an impairment. Such documentation shall be obtained from an acceptable source and shall reflect the individual's current level of functioning. Refer to 208.0.00

602.2.00 INFORMATION:

602.2.01 Any impairment will involve one or more of the following body systems or groups of disorders:

A. Musculoskeletal System;

B. Respiratory System;

C. Special Senses and Speech;

D. Cardiovascular System;

E. Digestive System;

F. Genito-Urinary System;

G. Hemic and Lymphatic System;

H. Skin;

I. Endocrine System and Obesity;

J. Neurological;

K. Mental Disorders, including Substance Dependence Disorders;

L. Learning Disorders;

M. Neoplastic Diseases, Malignant;

N. Immune System.

602.2.02 There are some medical and psychological impairments which shall require special procedural considerations. These considerations are discussed within the section pertaining to the appropriate body system or group of disorders. The list of disorders in this section are not inclusive.

602.2.03 The vocational rehabilitation counselor should utilize medical consultations, team staffings, and appropriate reference material (such as the Merck Manual, Steadman's Medical Dictionary, and other pertinent guides on disability and disease), as needed, to assure that he/she adequately understands the diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitation considerations for a given impairment, particularly when multiple body systems may be affected. (For example, the condition of dwarfism may involve endocrine as well as orthopedic considerations.)

604.0.00 MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

604.1.00 POLICY:

604.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with a musculoskeletal impairment.

604.1.02 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

604.2.00 INFORMATION:

604.2.01 Musculoskeletal disorders include but are not limited to the following:

A. Active rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, gouty arthritis, and post-traumatic arthritis;

B. Arthritis of a major weight-bearing joint or a major joint of the upper extremities (due to any cause);

C. Disorders of the cervical or dorsilumbar spine, including arthritis, osteoporosis, spondylolisthesis, or other vertebrogenic disorders (e.g. herniated disc, spinal stenosis, or degenerative disc disease), chronic back strain and chronic low back syndrome;

D. Severe congenital or acquired facial deformity;

E. Temperomandibular joint disorders (TMJ);

F. Osteomyelitis or septic arthritis;

G. Amputation or anatomical deformity (including dwarfism) which produces substantial impediment to employment.

604.2.02 There is a wide range of treatments for musculoskeletal disorders, including medication, injections, bracing and supporting, physical and occupational therapy, and various surgeries. Refer to: 428.0.00, 140.0.00, and 142.0.00

606.0.00 RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

606.1.00 POLICY:

606.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with a respiratory impairment.

606.1.02 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

606.2.00 INFORMATION:

606.2.01 Respiratory disorders include but are not limited to the following:

A. Obstructive airway disease (e.g. emphysema, chronic bronchitis bronchiectasis, extrinsic and intrinsic asthma, and cystic fibrosis);

B. Restrictive pulmonary disorders with primary loss of lung volume (e.g. pulmonary resection, thoracoplasty, and chest cage deformity, as in kyphoscoliosis or obesity);

C. Infiltrative interstitial disorders (e.g. diffuse pulmonary fibrosis);

D. Disorders involving the pulmonary circulation (e.g. primary pulmonary hypertension, recurrent thromboembolic disease, primary or secondary pulmonary vasculitis) which may produce pulmonary vascular hypertension and eventual pulmonary heart disease (cor pulmonale);

E. Chronic infection, caused most frequently by mycobacterial or mycotic organisms, which produces extensive and progressive lung destruction;

F. Severe, chronic respiratory allergies.

606.2.02 In cases of allergy or asthma, consideration should be given to the frequency, degree, and duration of symptomatic episodes when assessing the disabling significance of these conditions.

608.0.00 VISION, HEARING AND SPEECH

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

608.1.00 POLICY:

608.1.01 The VR Program may provide services for a qualified individual with an impairment of vision and/or hearing and/or speech.

608.1.02 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current functioning of the individual. *(Revised 1/27/12)*

NOTE: A visual examination by an ophthalmologist or an optometrist, which specifically investigates visual dysfunction associated with hearing loss, may be necessary for an applicant who is identified as deaf. Besides desiring to preserve the other sense, there may be hereditary factors, such as Usher's Syndrome, that would have bearing on training and employment.

608.1.03 Visual impairments must be established on the functioning of the better eye with best correction. An impairment of legal blindness or visual impairment may be established if the individual meets one of the following criteria*(Revised 7/15/11)*:

A. Legal blindness may be established if:

1. The individual has a central visual acuity for distance of 20/200 or poorer; or
2. The individual, in whom best corrected visual acuity is better than 20/200, has a central field of vision no greater than 20 degrees in its widest diameter.

B. Visual impairment may be established if: *(Revised 9/1/08)*

1. The individual has a central visual acuity for distance of no better than 20/60; or
2. The individual has a contraction of the visual field of 20 degrees or less from the point of fixation, meaning the individual has a central field of vision no greater than 40 degrees; or
3. The individual has other ocular or neurological pathologies diagnosed by an appropriate medical provider which result in a significant impairment of visual functioning and a significant impediment to employment.

608.1.04 Low vision aids may be authorized if determined necessary to achieve the work goal. Assistive Work Technology staff shall be consulted when determining the appropriateness of low vision aids. Refer to 456.0.00 *(Revised 9/1/08)*

608.1.05 An impairment of deaf-blind disorder may be established if the individual meets either A or B as follows *(Revised 1/27/12)*:

A. If the individual can be appropriately tested for both vision and hearing and meets the definition of legal blindness in 608.1.03A;

B. If the individual cannot be appropriately tested for either vision or hearing because of the severity of other disabilities, a diagnosis of the impairment with recommendations, as appropriate, from the proper specialist may be substituted for the test results and it shall be assumed that the individual meets eligibility criteria for hearing loss and the criteria outlined in 608.1.03.

Note: For individuals with deaf-blind disorder, the Helen Keller National Center regional representative can provide valuable consultation.

608.1.06 A disorder of speech may be established if the capacity to use expressive language is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in speech, such as articulation and/or voice, and/or using spoken language. *(Revised 7/15/11)*

608.1.07 Disorders of vision, hearing and speech include but are not limited to

A. Hearing loss; *(Revised 1/27/12)*

B. Disturbance of labyrinthine-vestibular function (including Meniere's disease)

C. Deafness;

D. Auditory Processing Disorder;

E. Auditory Neuropathy

F. Total bilateral opthalmoplegia

G. Cortico-visual Impairment;

H. Hemianopic Defect;

I. Organic Loss of Speech

J. Impaired Articulation

K. Stuttering

L. Language Impairment; or

M. Any substantial vision, hearing, or speech impairment resulting from congenital conditions; degenerative or infectious diseases; accidents, injuries or poisoning.

610.0.00 CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

610.1.00 POLICY:

610.1.01 The VR Program may provide services for a qualified individual with an impairment of the cardiovascular system.

610.1.02 The VR Program shall not authorize a heart transplant.

610.1.03 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

610.2.00 INFORMATION:

610.2.01 There are two general categories of cardiac disorder, congenital and acquired.

610.2.02 Cardiovascular disorders include but are not limited to the following:

A. Chronic heart failure;

B. Hypertensive cardiovascular disease;

C. Ischemic heart disease;

D. Recurrent arrhythmias;

E. Symptomatic congenital heart disease;

F. Valvular heart disease or other stenotic defects or valvular regurgitation;

G. Cardiomyopathies;

H. Cardiac transplantation;

I. Aneurysm of aorta or major branches (due to any cause);

J. Peripheral arterial disease.

610.2.03 Cardiovascular impairment results from one or more of four consequences of heart disease:

A. Chronic heart failure or ventricular dysfunction;

B. Discomfort or pain due to myocardial ischemia, with or without necrosis of heart muscle;

C. Syncope, or near syncope, due to inadequate cerebral perfusion from any cardiac cause such as obstruction of flow or disturbance in rhythm or conduction resulting in inadequate cardiac output; and/or

D. Central cyanosis due to right-to-left shunt, arterial de-saturation, or pulmonary vascular disease.

610.2.04 Impairment from diseases of arteries and veins may result from disorders of the vasculature in the central nervous system, eyes, kidney, and other organs.

610.2.05 Primary (or "essential") hypertension, in which there is no related end-organ damage, would not generally produce functional limitations that would constitute an impediment to employment.

612.0.00 DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

612.1.00 POLICY:

612.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with a digestive system impairment.

612.1.02 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

612.2.00 INFORMATION:

612.2.01 Digestive system disorders include but are not limited to:

A. Peptic ulcer disease (where the ulcer condition is not acute or of an emergency nature);

B. Chronic liver disease (e.g. portal, postnecrotic, or biliary cirrhosis; chronic active hepatitis; or Wilson's disease);

C. Stricture, stenosis or obstruction of the esophagus;

D. Chronic ulcerative or granulomatous colitis;

E. Severe weight loss or recurrent upper gastrointestinal hemorrhage due to any persisting gastrointestinal disorder.

614.0.00 GENITO-URINARY SYSTEM

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

614.1.00 POLICY:

614.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with a genito-urinary system impairment.

614.1.02 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

614.1.03 In cases of end-stage renal disease, the treatment facility, social worker, or administrator, as well as the individual's vendor for home dialysis supplies, shall be notified in writing when the individual's case is ready for closure.

614.2.00 INFORMATION:

614.2.01 Genito-urinary system disorders include but are not limited to:

A. Chronic nephritis;

B. Nephrolithiasis;

C. Polycystic disease;

D. Bilateral hydronephrosis;

E. Hypertensive vascular disease with associated renal impairment;

F. End-stage renal disease;

G. Nephrotic syndrome.

614.2.02 The VR Program's vocational rehabilitation program is not intended to be a long-term health maintenance program. Provision of long-term purchased services for an individual who is on dialysis or is status post-transplant must not be undertaken.

614.2.03 Most gynecological disorders do not have associated functional limitations which result in an impediment to employment. Such an impediment must be clearly documented.

616.0.00 HEMIC AND LYMPHATIC SYSTEM

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

616.1.00 POLICY:

616.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with an impairment of the hemic and lymphatic system.

616.1.02 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

616.2.00 INFORMATION:

616.2.01 Hemic and lymphatic system disorders include but are not limited to:

A. Chronic anemia;

B. Sickle cell disease, or one of its variants;

C. Chronic thrombocytopenia;

D. Hereditary telangiectasia;

E. Polycythemia vera;

F. Myelofibrosis;

G. Leukemia;

H. Chronic gramdocytopenia;

I. Myeloma;

J. Aplastic anemia or hematological malignancies.

618.0.00 SKIN

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

618.1.00 POLICY:

618.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with a skin disorder.

618.1.02 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

618.2.00 INFORMATION:

618.2.01 Disorders of the skin include but are not limited to:

A. Exfoliative dermatitis, ichthyosis, ichthyosiform erythroderma;

B. Pemphigus, erythema, multiforme bullosum, bullous pemphigoid, dermatitis herpetiformis;

C. Deep mycotic infections;

D. Psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, dyshidrosis;

E. Hydradenitis suppurative, acne conglobota;

F. Severe burns.

618.2.02 Considerations for impairments involving the skin include:

A. Skin lesions may result in a marked, long-lasting impairment if they involve extensive body areas or critical areas such as the hands or feet and become resistant to treatment;

B. The treatment for some skin diseases may require the use of high dosages of drugs with possible serious side effects. These side effects should be considered in the overall assessment of the impairment;

C. Certain skin lesions are associated with systemic disease and/or involve more than one body system (e.g. systemic lupus erythematosus, scleroderma, and severe burns). In such cases, the vocational rehabilitation counselor should factor in all manifestations when assessing the degree of impairment.

620.0.00 ENDOCRINE SYSTEM AND OBESITY

Effective Date: October 1, 1999 Revised March 1, 2013

620.1.00 POLICY:

620.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with an endocrine system disorder or obesity.

620.1.02 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

620.1.03 Endocrine system disorders involve glands and hormones and include but are not limited to the following:

A. Thyroid disorders;

B. Hyperparathyroidism;

C. Hypoparathyroidism;

D. Neurohypophyseal insufficiency (diabetes insipidus);

E. Hyperfunction of the adrenal cortex;

F. Diabetes mellitus (with related neuropathy), acidosis, diabetic necrosis, and or retinitis proliferans.

620.1.04 An impairment of obesity may be established only if the individual is diagnosed as morbidly obese. Refer to Glossary: Morbid Obesity *(Revised 3/1/13)*

622.0.00 NEUROLOGICAL

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

622.1.00 POLICY:

622.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with a neurological impairment.

622.1.02 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

622.1.03 In any case of epilepsy or other convulsive disorder, the type, frequency, duration, and sequelae of seizures should be determined along with the individual's compliance with and response to prescribed treatment and the prognosis for seizure control.

622.2.00 INFORMATION:

622.2.01 Neurological disorders include but are not limited to the following:

A. Epilepsy and other convulsive disorders;

B. Central nervous system vascular accident;

C. Brain tumors;

D. Parkinsonian syndrome;

E. Cerebral palsy;

F. Spinal cord or nerve root lesions, due to any cause;

G. Multiple sclerosis;

H. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis;

I. Anterior poliomyelitis;

J. Myasthenia gravis;

K. Muscular dystrophy;

L. Peripheral neuropathies;

M. Tabes dorsalis;

N. Subacute combined cord degeneration (pernicious anemia);

O. Traumatic brain injury or acquired brain injury;

P. Syringomyelia;

Q. Other degenerative neurological diseases (such as Huntington's chorea, Friedreich's ataxia, and spino-cerebellar degeneration).

622.2.02 The most appropriate scale to use in identifying the effects of head injury is the "Rancho" scale, because it measures post-injury behavioral and cognitive responses. It should be applied only in the first weeks and months post-injury. A Rancho level of seven is generally indicative of an impairment which will result in an impediment to employment.

624.0.00 MENTAL DISORDERS, INCLUDING SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE

DISORDERS AND MENTAL RETARDATION

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

624.1.00 POLICY:

624.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with a mental disorder, including a substance dependence disorder, mental retardation, and/or Borderline Intellectual Functioning.

624.1.02 For an individual who is eligible for services on the basis of a substance dependence disorder the individual must have completed detoxification and must be participating in or, must have successfully completed a supervised drug and/or alcohol rehabilitation program and provide documentation of participation in a maintenance program such as AA/NA. An individual diagnosed with substance dependency may be required to undergo a drug screen for eligibility determinations. (Refer to Glossary: *Detoxification)* *(Revised 4/15/11)*

624.2.00 INFORMATION:

624.2.01 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field and shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

624.2.02 The VR Program gives priority to the utilization of facilities of the Georgia Department of Behavior Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) in providing treatment for individuals with mental disorders. Treatment for a mental disorder, other than a substance dependence disorder, may be purchased from a Program approved private psychiatrist or psychologist instead of utilizing DBHDD program only in the following circumstances: *(Revised 3/1/13)*

A. Case file documentation reflects that appropriated treatment services cannot be initiated by a DBHDD facility within 30 calendar days; or

B. The rehabilitation unit manager documents in the case notes that appropriate treatment services are not available at a DBHDD facility; or

C. The case file contains documentation that:

1. an applicant was being treated by a VR Program approved psychologist or psychiatrist prior to referral for VR Program services; or
2. an applicant was referred by a medical group covered by a state or local agreement; or
3. A DBHDD facility is not accessible to an individual's disability.

624.2.03 For a qualified individual with a substance dependence disorder, the vocational rehabilitation counselor may purchase treatment from a qualified psychiatrist, psychologist, or physician skilled in the diagnosis and treatment of dependence, only if the services are not readily available through a DBHDD clinic.

624.2.04 To establish eligibility of an individual based upon an impairment of mental retardation or an impairment of Borderline Intellectual Functioning, the psychological evaluation shall indicate a performance IQ, a verbal IQ, and a full scale IQ. To determine eligibility based on Mental Retardation, the psychological report shall indicate a FSIQ of 70 or below. (Intelligence tests include standard errors of measurement; FSIQs within the Standard Error of Measurement of 70 may be used to support a diagnosis of Mental Retardation.) To determine eligibility based on Borderline Intellectual Functioning, the psychological evaluation shall indicate a FSIQ between 70 and 85. However, a diagnosis of either Mental Retardation or Borderline Intellectual Functioning shall not be based solely upon an I.Q. score; the specialist report must also identify impairment(s) in adaptive functioning.

624.2.05 Examples of deficits in adaptive functioning in the presence of Mental Retardation or Borderline Intellectual Functioning include but are not limited to:

A. Marked restriction in the activities of daily living that limit ability to work; or

B. Marked difficulties in maintaining appropriate interpersonal relationships necessary for employment; or

C. Deficiencies of concentration, persistence or pace resulting in frequent failure to complete tasks in a timely manner; or

D. Repeated episodes of deterioration or decompensation in work or work-like settings that cause the individual to withdraw from that situation or to experience exacerbation of signs and symptoms (which may include deterioration of adaptive behaviors); or

E. Difficulty in understanding and following written or multiple verbal instruction to a degree that would impede functioning in employment; or

F. Problems with judgment to the degree that would impede decision making on the job; or

G. Inability to establish priorities or to determine the next job task to be accomplished without direct instruction; or

H. Inability to complete an application for employment without assistance; or

I. Limited recall to the degree that instructions on the job would have to be repeated frequently; or

J. Inability to remain on a job task to its completion.

624.2.06 Mental disorders include but are not limited to the following:

A. Organic mental disorders: characterized by psychological or behavioral abnormalities associated with a dysfunction in the brain.

B. Schizophrenic, paranoid and other psychotic disorders: characterized by the onset of psychotic features with deterioration from a previous level of functioning.

C. Affective disorders: characterized by a disturbance of mood, accompanied by a full or partial manic or depressive syndrome.

D. Mental Retardation, Borderline Intellectual Functioning or Autism:

1. Mental retardation refers to a significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning with deficits in adaptive behavior initially manifested during the developmental period (before age 22). Mental retardation is classified as follows:

Classification	Performance, verbal, or full-scale IQ
Mild	55-70
Moderate	40-54
Severe	25-39
Profound	Below 25

2. Borderline Intellectual Functioning includes the Full Scale IQ range of 71 through 85. Persons with this diagnosis, as with any other diagnosis, must be assessed individually to determine if the diagnosis or impairment presents a substantial impediment to employment. The presence of maladaptive behaviors shall be documented in the case file to specify the employment related limitations of individuals with Borderline Intellectual Functioning.

3. Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder characterized by significant social and communication deficits originating in the developmental period.

E. Anxiety related disorders: In these disorders, anxiety is either the predominant disturbance or it is experienced if the individual attempts to master symptoms; for example, confronting the dreaded object or situation in a phobic disorder or resisting the obsessions or compulsions in obsessive compulsive disorders.

F. Somatoform disorders: characterized by physical symptoms for which there are no demonstrable organic findings or known physiological mechanisms.

G. Personality disorders: A personality disorder exists when personality traits are inflexible and maladaptive and cause either significant impairment in social or occupational functioning or subjective distress. Characteristic features are typical of the individual's long-term functioning and are not limited to discrete episodes of illness.

H. Substance dependence disorders: The diagnosis includes substantial and chronic behavioral changes or physical changes associated with the regular use of substances that affect the central nervous system. *(Revised 4/15/11)*

626.0.00 LEARNING DISORDERS

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

626.1.00 POLICY:

626.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with a learning disorder.

626.1.02 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

626.2.00 INFORMATION:

626.2.01 Learning disorders include but are not limited to the following:

A. Learning disabilities;

B. Specific developmental disorders;

C. Attention deficit disorders;

D. Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorders.

626.2.02 For VR Program purposes, a specific learning disorder may be defined as a disorder involving one or more of the cognitive processes including understanding, perceiving, and/or using language (written or spoken). The disorder manifests itself as discrepancies associated with listening, thinking, reading, speaking, writing, spelling, or in performing mathematical calculations.

626.2.03 Referral procedures and joint provision of services to a public school student with a disabling condition are addressed within state and local cooperative agreements. An adult with a learning disorder may be referred to the VR program and served in accordance with applicable VR Program policies.

626.2.04 Services to individuals in the cooperative school program should be directed toward vocational preparation and transition work services. Remediation of specific learning disorders is considered to be the responsibility of the school system.

628.0.00 NEOPLASTIC DISEASES, MALIGNANT (CANCER)

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

628.1.00 POLICY:

628.1.01 The VR Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with a malignant neoplastic disease.

628.1.02 The VR Program shall not authorize diagnostic surgery for an individual with a presumptively grave prognosis.

628.1.03 If a malignancy is discovered or suspected after an individual has been accepted for services, the Program may authorize a biopsy with the objective of reassessing the individual's rehabilitation potential.

628.1.04 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

628.2.00 INFORMATION:

628.2.01 The level of impairment resulting from malignant tumors is determined from a consideration of:

A. The site of the lesion;

B. The formation and development (i.e. histogenesis) of the tumor;

C. The extent of involvement (whether primary, recurrent or metastatic);

D. The apparent and/or predicted adequacy and response to therapy (surgery, irradiation, hormones, chemotherapy, etc.);

E. The magnitude of the post-therapeutic residuals, which should be evaluated according to their effect on involved body systems.

628.2.02 Careful consideration shall be give to the prognosis of the individual when determining eligibility on the basis of malignant neoplastic disease. With early detection and treatment, many cancers now carry an excellent prognosis and impose no lasting functional limitations or vocational impediment. On the other hand, some cancers carry a presumptively grave prognosis in which the disease can be expected to progress rapidly. The counselor must understand the full ramifications of the individual's condition before making an eligibility decision in any case of malignant neoplastic disease. Refer to 210.0.00

628.2.03 Malignant neoplastic diseases include but are not limited to:

A. Head and neck, including the tongue and pyriform sinus;

B. Sarcoma of the skin, including angiosarcoma and mycosis fungoides;

C. Sarcoma of soft parts;

D. Malignant melanoma;

E. Lymph nodes, including Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and metastatic or epidermoid carcinoma in a lymph node;

F. Salivary glands;

G. Thyroid gland;

H. Breast (carcinoma or sarcoma);

I. Skeletal system (excluding the jaw);

J. Mandible, maxilla, orbit, or temporal fossa;

K. Brain or spinal cord;

L. Lungs;

M. Pleura or mediastinum;

N. Abdomen;

O. Esophagus or stomach;

P. Small or large intestine;

Q. Liver or gallbladder;

R. Pancreas;

S. Kidneys, adrenal glands, or ureters - carcinoma;

T. Urinary bladder - carcinoma;

U. Prostate gland or testicles;

V. Uterus - carcinoma or sarcoma (corpus or cervix);

W. Ovaries;

X. Leukemia (evaluate under "Hemic and Lymphatic system");

Y. Uterine (Fallopian) tubes - carcinoma or sarcoma;

Z. Penis or Vulva - carcinoma.

630.0.00 IMMUNE SYSTEM

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

630.1.00 POLICY:

630.1.01 The Program may authorize or provide services for a qualified individual with an immune system disorder.

630.1.02 Information used to document the impairment shall be obtained from a specialist in the field or other appropriate source and such information shall reflect the current level of functioning of the individual.

630.2.00 INFORMATION:

630.2.01 Immune system disorders generally involve the deficiency of one or more components of the immune system (i.e. antibody-producing B cells; a number of different types of cells associated with cell-mediated immunity including T-lymphocytes, macrophages and monocytes; and components of the complement system).

630.2.02 Dysregulation of the immune system may result in the development of a connective tissue disorder. Connective tissue disorders include several chronic multisystem disorders that differ in their clinical manifestation, course, and outcome. They generally evolve and persist for months or years and may result in loss of functional abilities.

630.2.03 Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection is caused by a specific retrovirus and may be charactized by susceptibility to one or more opportunistic diseases, cancers, or other conditions.

630.2.04 Individuals who have HIV infection or other disorders of the immune system may undergo tests to determine T-helper lymphocyte (CD4) counts. The extent of immune depression correlates with the level or rate of decline of the CD4 count. In general, when the CD4 count is $200/mm^3$ or less (14 percent or less), the susceptibility to opportunistic disease is considerably increased. However, a reduced CD4 count alone does not establish a definitive diagnosis of HIV infection, or document the severity of functional effects of HIV infection.

630.2.05 Important factors to be considered in evaluating the functioning of individuals with HIV infection include but are not limited to: symptoms, such as fatigue and pain; characteristics of the illness, such as the frequency and duration of manifestations or periods of exacerbation and remission in the disease course; and the functional impact of treatment for the disease, including the side effects of medication.

630.2.06 The concepts in determining eligibility for persons with symptomatic HIV infection are comparable to the considerations given to establishing eligibility for persons with certain types of cancer. Some individuals with symptomatic HIV infection, whose condition appears to be reasonably stable and slowly progressive, may have the potential for a significant work life. Therefore, the vocational rehabilitation counselor may determine eligible for services some carefully selected applicants with symptomatic HIV infection when documentation of potential significant work life exists. Refer to 210.0.00

630.2.07 A person who has qualified for services, who has a work plan and is receiving services, may develop symptomatic HIV infection (for example, persons with hemophilia, end stage renal disease, drug dependence, or severe trauma which necessitated blood transfusions or the parenteral use of blood products). For such individuals, symptomatic HIV infection may be considered an intercurrent illness. (Refer to 430.0.00) Acute episodic care may be provided for such persons while they are continuing to undergo vocational rehabilitation. However, the Program should not provide prolonged medical care that may be needed by such a client should it become evident that the condition of the client is not stable or slowly progressive.

630.2.08 Immune system disorders include but are not limited to:

A. Systemic lupus erythematosus, which is generally manifested by one or more of the following:

1. Joint involvement;
2. Muscle involvement;
3. Ocular involvement;
4. Respiratory involvement;
5. Cardiovascular involvement;
6. Digestive involvement;
7. Renal involvement;
8. Skin involvement;
9. Neurological involvement;
10. Mental involvement.

B. Systemic vasculitis, involving one or more organs or body systems;

C. Systemic sclerosis and scleroderma, in which involvement may be muscular, respiratory, cardiovascular, digestive, or renal, or which may be manifested by generalized scleroderma with digital contractures or by severe Raynaud's phenomena, characterized by digital ulcerations, ischemia, or gangrene;

D. Polymyositis or dermatomyositis, which is generally manifested by proximal limb-girdle (shoulder and/or pelvic) muscle weakness, cervical muscle weakness, impaired swallowing with dysphagia, impaired respiration and/or generalized connective tissue disease;

E. Undifferentiated connective tissue disorder, which is generally manifested by involvement of one or more organs/body systems and symptoms and signs of severe fatigue, fever, malaise, and weight loss;

F. Immunoglobulin deficiency syndromes or deficiencies of cell-mediated immunity, excepting HIV infection;

G. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection - Symptomatic HIV infection may be characterized by any of a myriad of opportunistic infections, cancers, and other complications signaling the compromise and decline of the immune system. These include but are not limited to:

1. Bacterial infections;
2. Fungal infections;
3. Protozoan or helminthic infections;
4. Viral infections;
5. Malignant neoplasms;
6. Dermatological conditions;
7. Hematologic abnormalities;
8. Neurological abnormalities;
9. HIV wasting syndrome;
10. Persistent diarrhea;
11. Cardiomyopathy;
12. Neuropathy;
13. Other infections which are resistant to treatment or require hospitalization or intravenous treatment (such as sepsis, meningitis, pneumonia, septic arthritis, endocarditis, or radiographically documented sinusitis).

APPENDIX A
GLOSSARY

APPENDIX A GLOSSARY

A

Adjustment to Disability Services:

Those services needed to assist an individual in adjusting to environmental challenges and/or in developing coping skills and strategies to compensate for new limitations as a result of a disability. It is not treatment of/for the disability (i.e. mental and physical restoration).

Appropriate (Revised 10/01/02):

Appropriate, as it relates to provision of services, is defined to mean the service is not only desired, but is necessary for the client to reach his/her work goal.

Appropriate Modes Of Communication:

Specialized aids and supports that enable an individual with a disability to comprehend and respond to information that is being communicated. Appropriate modes of communication include, but are not limited to, the use of interpreters, open and closed captioned videos, specialized telecommunications services and audio recordings, brailed and large print materials, materials in electronic formats, augmentative communication devices, graphic presentations, and simple language materials.

Assessment:

(*See Glossary: Core Competencies*)

Assessment, Comprehensive:

When additional information is needed to determine the work goal to assign priority for the order of selection, or to identify the services that need to be included in the work plan, a comprehensive assessment is completed. The comprehensive assessment considers the client's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests, temperament, interpersonal skills, informed choice, and related functional capacities as well as any medical, psychological and psychiatric data to determine vocational rehabilitation needs. A comprehensive assessment is a vocational rehabilitation needs assessment.

Assessment, Preliminary:

A review of existing data and if appropriate and, to the extent necessary, the provision of appropriate assessment activities to obtain necessary additional data to make a determination of eligibility.

Assistive Technology Device:

Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of an individual with a disability.

Assistive Technology Service:

Any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device, including: (i) the evaluation of the needs of an individual with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the individual in his or her customary environment; (ii) purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition by an individual with a disability of an assistive technology device; (iii) selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices; (iv) coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs; (v) training or technical assistance for an individual with a disability or, if appropriate, the family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of the individual; and (vi) training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services), employers, or others who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of individuals with disabilities, to the extent that training or technical assistance is necessary to the achievement of an employment outcome by an individual with a disability.

Authorized Representative:

Any representative chosen by an applicant or eligible individual, including a parent, a guardian, other family member, or an advocate, unless a representative has been appointed by a court to represent the individual, in which case the court-appointed representative is the individual's representative.

Auxiliary Aids and Services:

Those services needed to effectively make aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments; and, visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments.

C

Care Conference:

A VR Program care conference is a collaborative discussion/meeting held to discuss the client's needs and coordinate personal assistance services. Participants may include VR professionals, the client and his/her representatives, school personnel, medical providers, personal assistance providers and other interested parties. Topics of discussion may include, but are not limited to, the following: physical, psycho-social, nutritional and financial needs, medical equipment, assistive technology and fee negotiations.

Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (Individualized Training):

This adjustment service is to restore safe functioning in all areas of daily living and work life after vision has decreased or been lost. Strategies include, but are not limited to, alternate methods for personal care, housekeeping, meal preparation, child care, finances, clothing care, communication, and transportation.

Clear And Convincing Evidence:

Evidence that demonstrates a high degree of certainty that an individual, due to the severity of his/her disability, is incapable of benefiting from services in terms of an employment outcome. The “clear and convincing” standard constitutes the highest standard used in our civil system of law and is to be individually applied on a case-by-case basis. The term clear means unequivocal. Given these requirements, a review of readily available information generally would not provide clear and convincing evidence. For example, the use of an intelligence test result alone would not constitute clear and convincing evidence. The demonstration of “clear and convincing evidence” must include a functional assessment of individual’s abilities, capabilities and capacity to perform in work situations through the use of trial work experiences, with appropriate supports (including assistive technology) and training.

Community Rehabilitation Program:

A program that directly provides or facilitates the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities to enable the individual to maximize opportunities for employment, including career advancement.

Comparable Program of Study:

A post-secondary training program spanning Vocational technical certificates/diplomas, Associate; Bachelor's; Master's; or Doctoral degrees which meets the training requirement of the specific occupation (as identified by a Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) code) documented on the client's individual plan for employment (Work Plan) . These training programs also include specialty professional degrees such as Medical, Veterinary, Law, and other similar professional disciplines.

Comparable Services and Benefits:

Services and benefits that are: (i) provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other Federal, State, or local public agencies, by health insurance, or by employee benefits; (ii) available to the individual at the time needed to achieve the employment outcome identified in the work plan; and (iii) commensurate to the services that the individual would otherwise receive from the vocational rehabilitation agency.

Competitive Employment:

Work: (i) in the competitive labor market that is performed full-time or, if appropriate, part-time, in an integrated setting; and (ii) for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

Consultant:

Any professional from whom the vocational rehabilitation team obtains information to assist in determination of eligibility, work plan development and case progress.

Cooperative Agreement:

A formal agreement with other partners in the statewide work force investment system to ensure cooperation, collaboration and coordination. The agreements are designed to ensure that clients receive employment services.

Core Competencies:

The essential skill areas that are required of the vocational rehabilitation work team members. These include:

Assessment (Revised 1/15/09):

Assessment includes any one or any combination of the following: work readiness assessment, assistive technology assessment, personal assessment, transferable skills analysis, vocational evaluation, vocational profile, vocational analysis and work force assessment.

Competency in this area ensures accurate determination of eligibility (only qualified individuals receive services) and determination of the nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation services required for the individual to work.

Assistive Technology:

This area of focus requires staff to be sufficiently skilled in the following: rehabilitation engineering, job modification/accommodation, technical assessment, technology acquisition and technology training. Competency in this field ensures improved employer access, better prepared workers and an improved work environment.

Resource Consultation:

Staff must be knowledgeable about community resources available for individuals with disabilities, employers and strategic partners. This strong knowledge base should include resources related to ADA, insurance, disability awareness, Social Security Administration laws, technology and legislative issues, and other sources for services. Continuous learning and updating of knowledge ensures our customers have access to needed services.

Work Preparation:

This competency focuses on preparing an individual with a disability for work. It includes job analysis, teaching job readiness skills, and how to conduct effective job searches, exploring appropriate career options and work adjustment. Competency in this area ensures a job-ready individual who will better meet the needs of employers.

Work Force Development:

Competencies required to develop a qualified and productive workforce are: job development, job placement, follow-along, job carving, job coaching, supported employment, self-employment and ongoing support services. These capabilities ensure employment opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities.

Criminal Act:

Any crime, including an act, omission, or possession under the law, which poses a substantial threat of personal injury, notwithstanding that by reason of age, insanity, or intoxication or otherwise the person engaging in the act, omission, or possession was legally incapable of committing a crime.

Current:

As used in the policy "current" accurately reflects the condition of the individual at the present time. Thus, the information being used reflects the current level of functioning of the individual.

D

Detoxification:

The process of allowing the body to rid itself of a drug while managing the symptoms of withdrawal. Due to the possibility of serious if not fatal outcomes during detoxification, it is highly recommended that detoxification be provided via medical interventions in order to safely manage acute intoxication and/or withdrawal symptoms. The detoxification process includes: evaluation, stabilization and fostering readiness and entry into treatment.

Disability:

A physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment.

Disability Related Expenses: *(Effective 3-1-13)*

A disability related expense is any medical or assistive work technology expense that is a direct result of a client's disability which is paid by the client or by anyone counted for the financial need assessment. The vocational rehabilitation counselor may request verification of the amount(s) and confirmation of payment(s). Disability related expenses which are included as a part of financial need assessment and, by virtue of their inclusion, cause the financial need criteria to be met may not later be authorized and paid by the Program.

E

Employment Network:

An entity that offers employment related or vocational rehabilitation service and that has been approved by the Social Security Administration to provide such services to beneficiaries under the Ticket to Work Program.

Employment Outcome:

This term refers to any one of several options for employment: (1) entering or retaining full-time or, if appropriate, part-time competitive employment in an integrated labor market; (2) satisfying the vocational outcome of supported employment; (3) satisfying the vocational outcome of self-employment, telecommuting, or business ownership; or (4) non-competitive employment.

Extended Employment (Revised 4/1/03):

Extended Employment: Work in a non-integrated or sheltered setting for a public or private nonprofit agency or organization that provides compensation in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act and any needed support services to an individual with a disability to enable the individual with a disability to continue to train or otherwise prepare for competitive employment, unless the individual through informed choice chooses to remain in extended employment.

Note: This definition is a quote from the Federal Regulations. Extended employment cannot be counted as a successful closure (26).

Extended Employment Transitional Service (Effective 9/1/05):

Extended Employment Transitional Service are work experiences in a non-integrated setting consistent with the definition of Extended Employment Services that are provided to a qualified client in need of these services to be able to enter supported or competitive employment.

Extended Period of Time:

Six (6) months or greater.

Extended Services:

As used in the definition of "Supported employment," means ongoing support services and other appropriate services that are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment and that are provided by a State Program, a private nonprofit

organization, employer, or any other appropriate resource, from funds other than funds received under this part, 34 CFR part 363, 34 CFR part 376, 34 CFR part 380, after an individual with a most significant disability has made the transition from support provided by the VR Program.

Existing Information:

Assignments, reports, evaluations and other documentation, as appropriate, addressing the client's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and interests that exist prior to application.

F

Family Member:

For purposes of receiving vocational rehabilitation services means an individual - (i) who either (a) is a relative or guardian of an applicant or eligible individual, or (b) lives in the same household as an applicant or eligible applicant (ii) and whose receipt of vocational rehabilitation services is necessary to enable the applicant or eligible individual to achieve an employment outcome.

Follow-along:

A resp**o**nsibility of the rehabilitation employment specialist. The rehabilitation employment specialist offers on-going maintenance of the employer and client/worker relationship that is not time-limited. Follow-along involves servicing community "employer accounts." The rehabilitation employment specialist makes periodic checks with the employer to assure things are going well with placed workers and to offer interventions when needed.

Follow-up:

A responsibility of the vocational rehabilitation counselor. Once the client secures gainful employment (status 22), a problem-solving relationship continues for at least ninety (90) days. Follow-up does not obligate the vocational rehabilitation counselor to constant monitoring, rather the client is encouraged at time of employment to notify and/or involve the counselor before problems (personal or job related) escalate to threaten the job.

Forgiveness Loans: *(Effective 10-29-12)*

Financial aid offered as a loan for which some or all of the loan amount will be eliminated in return for the recipient choosing certain careers, military service, employment settings or volunteer work as prescribed by the grantor. Example: RSA award grant scholarships.

Functional Capacity:

A functional capacity refers to an individual's ability to perform work-related activities in areas such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, and/or work skills.

Functional Limitation:

A medically documented constriction or reduction in an individual's activities which limits a functional capacity. Consequentially, it must hinder the individual from preparing for, entering into, engaging in, or retaining employment consistent with the individual's abilities and capabilities.

H

Hazardous Work Site:

For a non-agricultural occupation, a hazardous work site is a site for an occupation which has been declared to be hazardous by the Secretary of Labor under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Such occupations involve the following:

1. Manufacturing and storing of explosives;
2. Motor vehicle driving and outside helper;
3. Coal mining;
4. Logging and sawmilling;
5. Power-driven woodworking machines;
6. Exposure to radioactive substances;
7. Power-driven hoisting apparatus;
8. Power-driven metal-forming, punching, and shearing machines;
9. Mining, other than coal mining;
10 Slaughtering, or meat-packing, processing, or rendering;
11. Power-driven bakery machines;

12. Power-driven paper-products machines;
13. Manufacturing brick, tile, and kindred products;
14. Power-driven circular saws, band saws, and guillotine shears;
15. Wrecking, demolition, and ship-breaking operations;
16. Roofing operations;
17. Excavation operations.

For more information regarding hazardous work sites refer to:

Child Labor Requirements in nonagricultural occupations under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

I

Informed Choice:

The act of choosing based on factual knowledge. Informed choice requires that the client or, as appropriate, client's authorized representative, know about the available options and understand the personal implications of each of the options. This requires that VR Program staff person(s) provide information through appropriate modes of communication to assist the individual in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process. An informed choice is a decision based on the facts and is consistent with the facts.

Information and Referral:

Referrals made to Federal and State programs, any providers of the Workforce Investment Act, and, as appropriate, local extended employment providers, to ensure that individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals who do not meet the agency's order of selection and individuals determined ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services, receive information regarding employment assistance available from other sources. (Ex. Career Centers, Career Resource Centers, Independent Living Centers, Extended Employment Centers (previously called sheltered workshops).

Individual's Representative:

Any representative chosen by an applicant or eligible individual, including a parent, a guardian, other family member, or an advocate, unless a representative has been appointed by a court to represent the individual, in

which case the court-appointed representative is the individual's representative.

Intercurrent Illness: *(Effective 3-1-13)*

An intercurrent illness is an acute condition, which occurs during the course of rehabilitation which if not treated will constitute a significant barrier to the achievement of the client's employment outcome. The illness need not be related to the impairment(s) upon which eligibility is based.

Integrated Setting:

With respect to the provision of services, means a setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non-disabled individuals other than non-disabled individuals who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals. With respect to an employment outcome, means a setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non-disabled individuals, other than non-disabled individuals who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals, to the same extent that non-disabled individuals in comparable positions interact with other persons.

Interpreter Services: *(Refer to RSA PD 12-05) (Effective 3/1/2013)*

Interpreter services are sign language or oral transliteration services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and tactile interpretation services for individuals who are deaf – blind. Specially trained individuals perform sign language or oral transliteration. This service also includes real-time captioning services for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. It does not include foreign language interpretation.

J

Job Analysis:

A service which involves a systematic study of a job and the work demands of that job. It involves defining what the worker does in relation to data, people, and things; identifying methodologies and techniques used; the machines, tools, and equipment used; materials, products, and services which result; and the traits required of the worker.

L

Local Workforce Investment Board:

Local boards established by local elected officials to work in partnership with them in setting policy for coordinated workforce investment systems in local regions and labor market areas. The local boards will design and oversee the "one-stop shops". (Authority: Workforce Investment Act of 1998)

M

Maintenance:

Provision of supportive services such as food, shelter, and clothing that are in excess of the normal expenses of the individual and that are necessitated by the individual's participation in his/her vocational rehabilitation program. Maintenance includes room and board, lodging, and meals.

Market Price *(Effective 10/1/2013)*

The prevailing price, as determined by supply and demand, at which goods, services etc., may be bought or sold in an open market.

May:

Allowed or permitted. When "may" is used, professional judgment shall be used to determine the most appropriate choice, given the unique needs and situation of the client.

MAXIMUS (Revised 11/15/02):

The company with the computerized system that is used by the Social Security Administration for the operation of the Ticket to Work Program.

Mediation:

A voluntary process of alternative dispute resolution regarding a determination made by VR program staff involving the provision of services to an applicant or eligible individual.

In mediation, an independent third party assists the parties to reach a mutually acceptable solution and does not favor either party.

Merit Scholarships:

Financial aid for which eligibility is not based on financial need, but is based on an individual's unique talents, skills and abilities. Examples of areas in which merit scholarships may be awarded include, but are not limited to, academics, athletics and the arts.

Morbid Obesity: (Effective 3-1-13)

A diagnosis based on an excess of body fat greater than a BMI of 40, or weighing 100 pounds over the ideal body weight resulting in co-morbidities or the increase risk of co-morbidity(ies).

N

Negotiation:

An informal, voluntary process of alternative dispute resolution regarding a decision made by VR Program staff involving the provision of services to an applicant or eligible individual. This form of dispute resolution is a process of negotiating an agreement or settlement among the involved parties (usually the client, his/her representative, and VR Program staff). Negotiation may occur with or without CAP involvement. If CAP is involved, the CAP representative will be advocating on behalf of the client. Negotiation is not limited to clients and VR staff. Negotiation may involve other agencies or external entities.

Non-Ticket Case (Effective 11/15/02):

A case in which the individual is not eligible for Ticket to Work.

P

Partnership Plus:

An option that enables a state VR agency and an employment network (EN) to provide services to the same Ticket holder consecutively. Following case closure, regardless of closure reason, the client has a 90 day period to assign his/her Ticket to another EN which allows the beneficiary to receive additional services such as job retention and ongoing support.

Permanent Impairment:

Any physical or mental condition which, for an individual, seriously limits functional capacity(ies), i.e., ambulation, communication, speech, upper/lower extremity functioning, vision, etc. in terms of employability and which can be expected to impose a lasting reduction in function regardless of medical or psychological intervention.

Person with a Most Significant Disability:

An individual who has a permanent physical or mental impairment(s) which seriously limits 2 or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome and who requires multiple primary services for rehabilitation with at least 1 primary service requiring provision over an extended period of time. Refer to 306.0.00

NOTE: Priority categories A and B meet the program's criteria for Most Significant Disability.

Person with a Significant Disability:

An individual who has a severe, permanent physical or mental impairment(s) which seriously limits 1 functional capacity in terms of an employment outcome and who requires multiple primary services for rehabilitation with at least one primary service requiring provision over an extended period of time. Refer to 306.0.00

NOTE: Priority categories C and D meet the criteria for Significant Disability.

Personal Assessment:

A detailed evaluation of a client's life situation relative to the goal of work which can occur throughout the vocational rehabilitation process.

Personal Assistance Services: *(Revised 3/1/2013)*

A range of services provided as necessary to assist an individual with a qualified disability in performing daily living activities (including self care) ordinarily performed without assistance (in the absence of a disability) in order to achieve an employment outcome. The services must be designed to increase the individual's control in life and ability to perform everyday activities on or off the job. Reader services, interpreter services, and personal care attendant services are considered personal assistant services (Refer to RSA PD 12-05). This service must be necessary and is only provided to allow or assist with an individual in participating in primary VR services. The services may include training in managing, supervising, and directing personal assistance services.

Personal Care Attendant Services: *(Effective 3/1/2013)*

Personal care attendant services are those personal services that an attendant performs for an individual with a disability such as bathing, feeding, dressing, toileting, transferring, providing mobility, transportation and similar activities. *(Refer to RSA PD 12-05)*

Physical or mental impairment:

An injury, disease, or other condition that materially limits, or if not treated is expected to materially limit, mental or physical functioning.

Planned Counseling and Guidance: *(Revised 5/1/13)*

Planned counseling and guidance means discrete therapeutic counseling and guidance services including: personal adjustment counseling, counseling that addresses medical, family, or social issues and vocational counseling for the purpose of determining an appropriate work goal. This service is distinct from the general counseling and guidance relationship that exists between the counselor and the individual during the entire rehabilitation process. (Based on RSA 911 Reporting Instructions)

Post Employment Services:

Services identified subsequent to the achievement of an employment outcome that are necessary for an individual to maintain, regain, or advance in employment, consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. These services are provided under an amended individualized plan for employment services and do not require a complex and comprehensive provision of services and, thus, should be limited in scope and duration.

Primary Services:

Major services that can be provided independently of any other service and are necessary to prepare the eligible individual for employment. For the purpose of determining the Order of Selection Priority Category assignment, the primary service must address an identified functional capacity as it relates to the individual's disability. Primary services include: information and referral services; physical and mental restoration services; vocational and other training services; job related-services; supported employment services; post employment services; Self employment services; rehabilitation technology; transition services; technical assistance and discrete therapeutic counseling and guidance. Routine counseling and guidance to facilitate participation in the VR process may not be counted as a primary service. (Revised 3/1/14)

Proprietary Schools:

For-profit businesses which provide education and training. They may offer non-degree (diploma/certificate) vocational training, bachelor's, master's or doctoral degrees. They may be privately owned, a partnership or a corporation.

Public Health Setting: (Effective 10/1/2013)

State hospitals, State operated Community Services, and provider agencies with a state contract, letter of agreement, or provider agreement.

Q

Qualified Individual:

An individual who has been assessed and determined eligible for services and qualified for an open category under the order of selection.

R

Reader Services: (Effective 3/1/2013)

Reader services are for individuals who cannot read print because of blindness or other disabilities. Reader services include, in addition to reading aloud, transcription of printed information into Braille or sound recordings if the individual requests such transcription or similar activities.

Reader services are generally for individuals who are blind or deaf-blind, but may also include individuals unable to read because of serious neurological disorders, specific learning disabilities, or other physical or mental impairments. *(Refer to RSA PD 12-05)*

Reasonable:

Reasonable is defined to assist VR Program staff in being prudent in the authorization for payment of any service. Factors to be considered include the cost of service in relation to the employment goal, work expectancy following the provision of the service, and the presence of a strong positive prognosis for successful employment. Reasonableness should be considered throughout the life of the case.

Related Factor: (Revised 5/1/13)

Any social, educational, and/or environmental circumstance identified as exerting a direct, significant negative impact on the ability of the client to successfully achieve an employment outcome

Required: *(Revised 10-1-13)*

VR services are required when an individual needs specialized services related to their disability in order to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice and the services are not available elsewhere or cannot be provided without VR assistance. If a person is in jeopardy of losing a job due to disability related factors, then the person may requires VR services. *Senate Report 1998 Rehab Act Amendments (31)*

Restricted Merit Scholarship: *(Effective 10-29-12)*

A financial aid award based on an individual's unique talents, skills and abilities such as exceptional GPAs, athletic talents or artistic skills which is restricted by the grantor to specific post secondary expenses (e.g. tuition, books). This type of scholarship is a resource which should be treated like a comparable benefit. The amount deducted from the amount VR would ordinarily have paid must equal the actual cost paid by the scholarship for the restricted item. Any remainder amount cannot be applied to other services for VR purposes.

S

Secure, retain, and regain: *(Effective 7-1-12)*

Secure: To obtain initial employment; *Retain:* To keep or maintain employment; *Regain:* To reenter the work force

Shall: Shall is used chiefly in formal contexts and legal documents and means "mandatory," "must," or "required." When "shall" is used, there is no choice; the term is imperative.

Specialized Skills Training: *(Revised 6/15/12)*

Skill focused training which is required for employment at the entry level of a specific occupation designated by the O*NET. The requirement of this specialized training must be demonstrated by documentation of industry standards (ie standard qualifications for the job and/or required certification for the job).

Stable:

A physical or mental condition which is not unpredictable in nature or subject to rapid decompensation and allows for identification of limitations and capabilities affecting occupational performance.

Statewide Workforce Investment Board:

A newly formulated board, appointed by and including the governor, which has the broad authority to guide the development of the workforce investment system and to assist in the development of the state plan of federally funded programs of job training, adult education and literacy, and vocational rehabilitation. The board members include representatives from business, partners in the workforce investment system, employers, local elected officials state legislators, economic development officials, labor unions, and the general public. (Authority: Workforce Investment Act of 1998)

Statewide Workforce Investment System:

The workforce investment act of 1998 created a statewide system of linkages among federal, state, and local employment and job training agencies in order to improve coordination, to increase efficiency, and to ensure that those agencies work together. The components of the workforce investment system are streamlined and more flexible programs are statutorily linked to provide workforce investment activities that increase the employment, job retention, and earnings of participants. (Authority: Workforce Investment Act of 1998)

Substantive Policy Change (Revised 10/1/13):

Changes that directly impact the nature and scope of the services provided to individuals with disabilities, or the manner in which individuals interact with the VR agency, particularly as it pertains to communication with the VR counselor or the delivery of VR services. Examples of substantive policy changes include: any changes to policies or procedures that fundamentally alter the rights and responsibilities of VR consumers in the VR process; proposed organizational changes to the VR agency that will likely effect the manner in which services are delivered; any changes that affect the nature and scope of VR services provided; changes in formal or informal dispute procedures; the adoption or amendment of policies instituting an order of selection; and changes to the VR consumer financial participation policies. Changes that are administrative in nature are not considered substantive policy changes. (Refer to RSA TAC 12-02)

Substantial Impediment to Employment: (Revised 10/1/13)

A physical or mental impairment which (in light of medical, psychological, vocational, educational, and other related factors) results in functional limitations that hinders an individual from preparing for, securing, retaining or regaining employment consistent with his/her strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. The existence and extent of the impairment must be the primary reason that the individual is unable to achieve an employment outcome such that there is a direct relationship between the disability or disabilities and employability.

Supported Employment:

Competitive work in an integrated work setting, consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual with the most significant disability, with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Supported employment also includes transitional employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness. *(Revised 8/10/12)*

Supportive Services

Services which support a primary service. Supportive services are never provided alone (e.g. Childcare, Transportation, Personal Assistance, Maintenance). They are only provided in conjunction with a primary service. Support services must be both appropriate and reasonable.

T

Technology Access Training:

Refers to individualized training in the use of adaptive technology for the purpose of participating in VR services leading to an employment outcome. Technology access training includes but is not limited to, learning the use of braillers, note-takers, scanners, screen readers, Augmentative Communication Devices, and computers which may require basic training in computer software such as word processing et al.

Ticket Assigned:

If the client places a Ticket with an employment network (EN) or a VR agency acting as an EN, the Ticket will be considered assigned. The VR agency has elected to receive the EN payment option.

Ticket In-Use SVRA:

If the state VR agency elects the Cost Reimbursement payment option, the beneficiary will be considered to be in a status called "In Use SVRA".

Ticket to Work (Effective 11/15/02):

A program for eligible SSI and SSDI recipients who are seeking employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services to assist them in obtaining, regaining, and maintaining self-supporting employment.

The goal of the program is to help beneficiaries earn enough income from working that they will no longer be dependent on Social Security cash benefits.

Transition Services:

A coordinated set of activities for a student to facilitate movement from school to post school activities, including post secondary education, vocational training and integrated employment. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on individual student's needs and preferences and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school objectives, and, when appropriate, functional vocational evaluation and acquisition of daily living skills. Transition services must promote or facilitate the accomplishment of long-term rehabilitation outcome identified in the student's work plan.

Transitional Employment:

A series of temporary job placements in integrated settings with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness. In transitional employment, the provision of ongoing support services must include continuing sequential job placements until job permanency is achieved.

Trial Work Experience:

Work, or simulated work, either in the community or in a community rehabilitation program to enable the determination of whether an applicant can benefit from rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome.

V

Vocational Assessment:

A multi-disciplinary process involving the coordination, collection, and analysis of formal evaluative data to assist in making decisions regarding work goals. It is also an informal process that occurs routinely throughout the life of a rehabilitation case, beginning with observations of client behaviors and characteristics during the initial meeting and including the reading and synthesizing of subsequent evaluative information.

Vocational Evaluation, Comprehensive:

An individualized service which helps to identify a client's viable vocational options and employment goal. The comprehensive vocational evaluation incorporates background information (e.g., education,

psychological and work history, medical/physical capabilities, and behavioral status) and uses a combination of standardized testing, work samples, situational assessments, community-based job tryouts, assistive work technology and other techniques to develop vocational recommendations for the client and vocational rehabilitation counselor/work team. The planning for and provision of the vocational evaluation should incorporate respect for the client's personal process of growth and development of insight leading to the client's informed choice.

Vocational Evaluation, Limited (Revised 1-20-00):

An individual service for assessing an individual's aptitudes, interests, and/or academic levels to develop a realistic vocational goal. The Limited Vocational Evaluation is designed to measure the skills and abilities of an individual for a specific training program or vocational objective. This is a time-limited assessment and is used when the comprehensive vocational evaluation and vocational profile are not indicated.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program Allowance

The amount of income not considered in determining financial eligibility. This amount is calculated at 225% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Spend-down:

The process by which an individual may become financially eligible by first expending his/her own resources to pay for work plan services.

W

Work Evaluation *(Effective 9/1/02)*

A short term assessment (30 days or less) that uses work or simulated work to assess an individual's stamina and physical capacities; ability to remain on task and other work habits; interpersonal skills and ability to follow directions; functional skills; and/or ability to do specific tasks.

APPENDIX B
Procedures for Closing Active Cases from Status 04 (Waiting List)

APPENDIX B
PROCEDURES FOR CLOSING ACTIVE CASES FROM STATUS 04
(Waiting List)

The following procedures are to be carefully followed in closing active cases from Status O4 (Waiting List):

- Review the caseload to determine which clients' cases will be affected.
- Using the sample letter, located in the "VR Program Auto Forms," write each affected individual a personal letter. Do not deviate from the wording of the sample letter.
- Using the sample Notice of Change concerning Rehabilitation Services, located in the "VR Program Auto Forms," complete an individual notice and attach it to the client's letter. Again, do not deviate from the sample.

  Note: The date of the letter and the date of the notice must be the same. The date of action of the notice is to be 30 calendar days to the nearest work day from the date of the letter, i.e., if the 30th day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday, move the date of the closure to the first working day following.

- If you do not hear from the client by the date the action is taking place, paper process the case through status 04 (if it is not already in this status), and close it status 38.
- If a client notifies you he/she does not want to have his/her case closed but wants to remain on the waiting list, notify your rehabilitation unit manager and place or keep the case in status 04. Do not object nor go forward with an appeal.

APPENDIX
C
FINANCIAL NEED ASSESSMENT

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
Vocational Rehabilitation Program

FINANCIAL NEED ASSESSMENT

Economic Circumstances Anticipated For the Next Year

I I certify that I am a current recipient of

- ☐ Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- ☐ Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- ☐ Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

Signed _____ Date _____

Client or Guardian or Parent

II A. Dependent of another person ☐ Yes ☐ No

Number in family unit _____

Resources

1. Income:
   - a. Wages or business…….. _____
   - b. TANF……. _____
   - c. Insurance, unemployment compensation…… _____
   - d. Insurance, workers' compensation……. _____
   - e. Insurance, other…….. _____
   - f. Pension, any type…… _____
   - g. Contribution, family members…… _____
   - h. Other (Specify)…… _____
   - i. Social Security…… _____

   Total Resources (Add lines II.A.1.a-i) _____

B. Disability Related Expenses

1. VR Program basic allowance (see Appendix C-Table A) _____
2. Disability related expenses (itemize). Attach additional page(s) if needed.
   - a. _____
   - b. Total from additional pages _____
   - c. Total disability related expenses _____
3. Total Expenses (Add lines II.B.1 and II.B.2.c) _____

C. Total Household Income (Formula A2 - B3) _____

I, _____ *(print name)*, certify that the above is a true statement of my financial circumstances. I understand that it is my responsibility to notify my counselor if my financial

circumstances change. I understand that certain purchased services depend on my continued financial need and on the availability of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program funds. **I understand my cost sharing percentage of each purchased service will be _____%. This amount will not exceed my Household's MAX Out-of-Pocket Yearly Expense which is _____% of the total household income (line C).**

Signed

_____ Date _____

Client signature

CERTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL NEED

I certify that this Financial Need Assessment has been completed in consultation with _____.

Signed _____ Date _____

Counselor Signature

Revised: 08-18-2014

Appendix C

Table A – 2014/2015 VR Program Allowance Table

FAMILY SIZE	150% OF FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL
1	$17,505.00
2	$23,595.00
3	$29,685.00
4	$35,775.00
5	$41,865.00
6	$47,955.00
7	$54,045.00
8	$60,135.00
9	$66,225.00
10	$72,315.00
11+	$6,090 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUAL

Appendix C Table B - VR Program Cost Sharing Chart

Amount of Income Over the VR Allowance (Line II E on FNA)	VR's Percentage of Approved Fee (for a single service)	Client's Percentage of Approved Fee (for a single service)	Household's MAX Out-of-Pocket Yearly Expense (Line II C on FNA)
$0.00 (Financial Need Met)	100%	0%	0%
$0.01 - $2,000.00	99%	1%	5%
$2,000.01 - $4,000.00	99%	1%	5%
$4,000.01 - $6,000.00	99%	1%	5%
$6,000.01 - $8,000.00	99%	1%	5%
$8,000.01 - $10,000.00	99%	1%	5%
$10,000.01 - $12,000.00	96%	4%	10%
$12,000.01 - $14,000.00	93%	7%	10%
$14,000.01 - $16,000.00	90%	10%	10%
$16,000.01 - $18,000.00	87%	13%	15%
$18,000.01 - $20,000.00	84%	16%	15%
$20,000.01 - $22,000.00	81%	19%	15%
$22,000.01 - $24,000.00	76%	24%	15%
$24,000.01 - $26,000.00	71%	29%	20%
$26,000.01 - $28,000.00	66%	34%	20%
$28,000.01 - $30,000.00	61%	39%	20%
$30,000.01 - $32,000.00	56%	44%	25%
$32,000.01 - $34,000.00	51%	49%	25%
$34,000.01 - $36,000.00	46%	54%	25%
$36,000.01 - $38,000.00	41%	59%	30%
$38,000.01 - $40,000.00	36%	64%	30%
$40,000.01 - $42,000.00	31%	69%	30%
$42,000.01 - $44,000.00	26%	74%	35%
$44,000.01 - $46,000.00	21%	79%	35%
$46,000.01-$48,000.00	16%	84%	35%
$48,000.01 - $50,000.00	11%	89%	40%
$50,000.01-$52,000.00	6%	94%	40%
$52,000.01-$54,000.00	1%	99%	45%
$54,000.01 and above	0%	100%	50%