



Eric Holcomb, Governor
State of Indiana

Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
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Interim Guidance: Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services March 26, 2020

Remote Service Delivery

Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services continue to be provided. VR and employment service provider staff should convert service delivery to be delivered remotely (by phone or other virtual options) to the maximum extent feasible. If a service or activity cannot be provided remotely, the Employment Services team should determine if the services can be delivered safely in person or if the team should consider postponing the service and revisiting at a later time. The guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Indiana State Department of Health, and the Executive Orders issued by Governor Holcomb should be followed when making this determination.

Factors staff should consider in determining if a service can be delivered safely in person:

- presence of COVID-19 symptoms (cough, fever, and/or shortness of breath)¹
- the age of the participant or participating staff (ages 60 and older are at higher risk)
- presence of medical conditions including but not limited to diabetes, heart, kidney, or lung disease
- likely exposure to individuals (including household members) with higher risk for severe illness
- likely exposure to environments/communities with laboratory-confirmed positive COVID-19 cases

Additionally, VR has outlined the following guidance to assist in determining when services can be provided remotely.

- Activities must be meaningful and purposeful. If the service or activity cannot be provided remotely in a meaningful way, consider postponing the service or activity and revisiting at a later time.
- Examples of meaningful employment services:
 - For new referrals:
 - Remote interviews to get to know the participant
 - Explain the employment services process
 - Answer participant questions

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>



- During Discovery:
 - Discussion of participant likes, dislikes, preferences especially if early in the process
 - Discussion of activity that has already occurred if that has not been reviewed yet (such as what was learned in recent work experience)
 - Provision of online or other written tools and resources to help with vocational goal selection; reviewing, discussing, explaining results
 - Working together on the discovery profile
 - Virtual team meeting with participant, Employment Specialist, and VR Counselor on the Job Development & Placement Plan
- During Job Development:
 - Discussion of job openings, where to apply, application process
 - Working on applications together may involve email exchange or video conferencing
 - Email exchange or video conference discussion of resume and updates
 - Discussing responses to interview questions and interview practice
 - Following up on interviews – discussing what was learned
- After placement:
 - Discussion of current job, how it is going, addressing any issues/accommodation needs, identifying and arranging for possible natural supports
 - Provision and review of online or other written resources to help address areas of need (e.g. getting along with coworkers)
 - Virtual team meetings with participant, Employment Specialist and VR Counselor
 - Audio-video observation, if feasible, of the participant to reinforce or stabilize the job placement (including any remote work setting)

Funding

In situations where a participant loses their job specifically due to COVID-19, VR funding is available to assist the individual in seeking new employment. The employment services manual outlines guidance regarding the use of hourly fee for service as well as repeat milestone payments for these situations. As a reminder, milestone payments can be paid more than one time for participants experiencing a job loss, as applicable to the situation.

All services will be funded as outlined in the Manual of Employment Services, with the following exceptions:

Employment Service Milestone Payments

In situations where VR participants are progressing well and on track to achieve the timeframes outlined in milestone payment criteria (e.g. one week after placement, four weeks after placement, 90 days after stabilization), but employment is disrupted due to a layoff, furlough or related specifically as a result of COVID-19, VR funding will be provided as follows:

- If an individual is working but is laid off, furloughed, etc. due specifically to COVID-19, providers may request funding for actual time spent providing support to the individual in lieu of the milestone payment. An example is outlined below for each milestone – please note these are examples and do not address every possible scenario:
 - *Milestone 1 Example: An individual began their job on March 23, 2020 however the business closed on March 25, 2020 because it provided non-essential goods or services. The individual's employment was terminated and Milestone 1 will not be achieved.*
 - In this example, VR may issue an authorization for up to 30 hours of hourly job development. The provider will be reimbursed for up to 30 hours of hourly job development upon submission of a claim and a thorough monthly progress summary supporting the job development activity being claimed for the month.
 - *Milestone 2 Example: Milestone 1 was achieved and paid, but an individual was furloughed prior to working four weeks because their job was not able to be completed remotely. There is a likelihood the individual can resume work at the same place of employment at some point in the future, but the date is unknown. Milestone 2 will not be achieved.*
 - In this example, VR may issue an authorization for 10-45 hours of supported employment (if participant is MSD) or on-the-job supports short-term (if NOT MSD), depending on length of employment, weekly work hours, and amount of support needed. The provider will be reimbursed for up to 45 hours of hourly supported employment or on-the-job supports short-term, upon submission of a claim and a thorough monthly progress summary supporting the supported employment or on-the-job supports short-term activity being claimed for the month.
 - *Milestone 3 Example: Milestones 1 and 2 were achieved and paid, and stabilization has occurred. An individual was laid off prior to achieving 90 days after stabilization. Milestone 3 will not be achieved.*
 - In this example, VR may issue an authorization for up to 30 hours of supported employment (if participant is MSD) or on-the-job supports short-term (if NOT MSD), depending on number of days post-stabilization, weekly work hours, and amount of support needed. The provider will be reimbursed for up to 30 hours of hourly supported employment or on-the-job supports short-term, upon submission of a claim a thorough monthly progress summary supporting the supported

employment or on-the-job supports short-term activity being claimed for the month.

- Providers should contact the designated VR Counselor as soon as possible upon job loss. Upon notice, VR will issue the appropriate authorizations as outlined above. An authorization request form is not required in these situations.
- The examples and funding guidance above is intended specifically as a replacement of funding for relevant job search and supports provided to VR participants when milestones are not achieved due to COVID-19 related events. All other employment services funding, such as Discovery and SE will continue per business as usual.

Project Search

In situations where a VR participant began a rotation/internship (likely the third rotation) at the Project Search host site, but is unable to complete at least 8 weeks at that rotation due to closure of the business site or other interruption in the Project Search program, VR funding will be provided as follows:

- VR is unable to pay for a rotation if less than 8 weeks of activity was completed. Instead, VR will issue authorizations for up to 30 hours of work experience, based on the number of weeks completed and amount of support needed. The provider will be reimbursed for up to 30 hours of hourly work experience for supporting an individual in their rotation, upon submission of a claim and supporting documentation verifying activity provided (e.g. chronos, activity log, etc.). Please note, as outlined in the Employment Service Manual, reimbursement for hourly work experience is based on the total hours of support provided during the work experience, and not the total hours of work experience. For instance, if the participant works 20 hours per week during their rotation, but only needed support for 8 hours each week, the provider will be reimbursed for 8 hours.
- Additionally, hourly Discovery is available to the provider to complete the Discovery Profile or other assessment activities completed during this time.
- Providers should contact the designated VR Counselor as soon as possible upon disruption or anticipated incompleteness of a milestone. Upon notice, VR will issue the appropriate authorizations as outlined above. An authorization request form is not required in these situations.