



Annual Provider Engagement Webinar

Questions & Answers

VR created this document to capture the questions received during both sessions of the 2019 Annual Provider Engagement Webinar

Q: Will the Summer Youth participants have to be VR clients?

A: VR Leadership has decided to discontinue the Summer Youth Program. We are currently working towards finalizing development of a new contractual model for the delivery of Pre-ETS. The new model will allow interested, eligible, Employment Services and Pre-ETS Providers the opportunity to offer specialized Pre-ETS, outside of those delivered through traditional fee-for-service, year round. This will allow for expansion of unique Pre-Employment Transition Services beyond just the summer months, resulting in more engagement with students with disabilities.

Q: Why are you not accepting new Providers?

A The Division is currently working on several initiatives, including a rewrite of the VR Vendor Qualifications Manual, a fee study, and an analysis of our current Pre-Employment Transition Services fee structure. VR Leadership decided not to bring on any new Providers until we have completed these projects.

Q: How will the new updates to ES Manual and Vendor Manual affect us?

A: We anticipate the results of the updates will have an impact on current Providers. However, until we are finished with the current projects, we are unable to provide more detail.

Q: Can we add a new job coach to our current Employment Services record?

A: Yes. You will need to submit an Employee Contact Form, ES Application and supporting documentation, such as; transcripts, certificates and subcontractor agreement (if applicable) to your Provider Manager for review. You can find both forms, a Helpful Tip on this process, and our Employment Specialist Qualifications on our website: www.rehabworks.org

Q: Will the Summer Youth program be a duplicate of last year? Meaning students can be trained up to 80 hours?

A: VR Leadership has decided to discontinue the Summer Youth Program. We are currently working towards finalizing development of a new contractual model for the delivery of Pre-ETS. The new model will allow interested, eligible, Employment Services and Pre-ETS Providers the opportunity to offer specialized Pre-ETS, outside of those delivered through traditional fee-for-service, year round. This will allow for expansion of unique Pre-Employment Transition Services beyond just the summer months, resulting in more engagement with students with disabilities.

Q: Who do we send our questions/suggestions to for Summer Youth Program...our Provider Liaison or someone at VR specific to Youth?

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specialized Pre-ETS, outside of those delivered through traditional fee-for-service, year round. This will allow for expansion of unique Pre-Employment Transition Services beyond just the summer months, resulting in more engagement with students with disabilities.

Q: Can VR please update Counselors with new OJT paperwork (reminder to them of where to access). Our OJT Invoice was rejected because we didn't use paperwork from the website (our mistake) but rather used paperwork given to us by Counselor.

A: Yes, we have and will continue to alert the VR Counselors when forms have been updated. You can also find the most updated version of all of our forms on our website: www.rehabworks.org

Q: Do the Counselors have a list of Vendors in our Area?

A: Yes, the Service Provider Choice Directory (SPCD) is a tool that the VR Counselors use to know which Providers are in their Area and what services they provide. It is important to keep your profile and information up to date on the SPCD. If you need to update your information you will need to submit a Demographic Form to your Provider Manager.

Q: If a Provider is serving as the "Employer of Record" for OJTs, do employers still need to register?

A: No, employers do not need to register if the Provider is acting as the Employer of Record.

Q: I have a specific question about a vendor receiving an approval letter but was not entered in RIMS – who should address this?

A: Please contact the Vendor Registration Unit at VRVendors@vr.fldoe.org to have them look into this.

Q: If we are already a vendor for OJT, I am understanding that we must already be in the system correctly, is that right?

A: Yes, if you are a certified Provider then you are already in our system and can provide OJT.

Q: Do ES Providers have to apply to be an OJT Vendor to offer OJT to Youth in Pre-ETS?

A: No, certified ES Providers can provide Community-Based Work Experiences (OJT for Youth).

Q: Could you possibly let Counselors know that they can close referrals after the invoice is approved? I have very old cases on my REBA list that Counselors are concerned to close because they are not sure if it has been paid or not.

A: Please reach out to your Provider Liaison directly for assistance.

Q: Our program just initiated OJT services so I would like to clarify. Are employers interested in facilitating an OJT experience for one of our clients required to register through that process in order to move forward with the experience?

A: The employer only needs to register to be an OJT Vendor if they are going to act as the "Employer of Record", pay the Customer, and then request reimbursement from VR. If you, the Provider, are going to act as the "Employer of Record", the employer does not need to register as an OJT Vendor.

Q: So if our agency itself is providing OJT for a person (as the employer of record and the OJT site), we don't have to do any separate registration, correct? And is this allowed?

A: Yes, that is correct. The VR Employment Services Provider manual allows you to act as the employer of record and receive reimbursement for the gross wages paid to the VR participant while acting as employer of record.

Q: What happens if the OJT client/vendor decides not to hire after 90 days, do we still get the benchmarks?

A: Yes. The employer/job site is not required to hire the customer at the conclusion of the OJT.

Q: As the Provider employer of record, and placing a client in an OJT experience outside of the employer of record's business, VR will still provide the workers comp coverage at the off-site locations, correct?

A: Yes, VR covers Workers' Compensation for our Customers for OJT experiences. You can find the forms and more information on this on our website: www.rehabworks.org

Q: Are we still able to provide OJT training for adults clients? I was told that VR stopped providing OJT for adult clients.

A: Yes, you may still provide OJT for adult Customers.

Q: When you make a mistake on referral date on ICP, how do you make the corrections on the referral date and resubmit the ICP for payment?

A: You need to correct the date on the referral or on the ICP form and re-submit in REBA. If you need assistance, please reach out to your Provider Manager.

Q: ICP clarification question: if the person is employed, but is seeking a new job (for example they aren't getting enough hours at current job), can an ICP still be completed and paid or should we still reject?

A: If the Customer wants or is in need of a new job, an ICP should be completed on the Customer. Examples of when an ICP should, and should not be completed are below:

Customer A

Customer A is working at McDonalds while going to mechanics school. Mechanic is their chosen employment goal. They now want to find employment as a mechanic, but want to continue working at McDonalds until they get a new job. The Counselor refers the Customer to a Provider and checks ICP, Placement, etc. In this case, VR would pay for the ICP even though the Customer is working.

Customer B

Customer B is working in an office. They were originally part time, and went to full time. The Customer needs some supports to help them transition to their new job duties/hours. In this case, the Counselor refers the Customer to a Provider and checks ICP, stabilization, etc. VR would not pay this Provider for the ICP since there was no placement involved.

Q: Should we be accepting referrals for Supported Employment customers who do not have transportation organized? For example, if a Counselor makes a note that the person doesn't have transportation set up...should the Counselor be working on that with them first before sending the referral?

A: Yes, transportation is part of the assessment process. The Counselor must work with the Customer to arrange transportation in order to consider the Customer Ready for Employment.

Q: If a person is working, but wants to find a new job, can they reregister for VR services in order to receive placement services while they are working?

A: Yes, if they want a new job. They can reapply for VR services.

Q: If customers have signed an authorization of release to communicate with VR on their behalf, are we not allowed to check on the status of their referral even though that's not a guarantee they will be their vendor due to Informed Choice?

A: Yes, the Provider would be able to check on the Customer's status after providing VR a signed and dated Waiver of Confidentiality. VR staff provide the Customer guidance on confidentiality rights when they meet. A Customer may revoke permissions found under a Waiver for any reason, especially if a Provider holding a waiver is not selected to deliver Pre-ETS or other VR services.

Q: If we cannot ask for referrals and/or contact VR staff and clients what are your suggestions to get more referrals?

A: You may reach out to your Provider Liaison to assist you with setting up meet and greets in the local offices. It is also important to ensure that VR staff have updated materials to share with their Customers during the informed choice process. Sharing success stories and developing relationships to demonstrate unique and exceptional programs can also be beneficial.

Q: Which customers need an ICP?

A: Supported Employment Customers who are in need of employment. Customers who are already working, and are not looking for a new job, do not need an ICP.

Q: Is there a way to get more information as to why a client's case closed to be able to correct issues in house or improve services, can a survey be created that is shared with the Provider?

A: Open and frequent communication with the local VR Counselors is key to effective case collaboration. If you have questions about a case, always feel free to reach out to the VR Counselor. If you need additional assistance, please reach out to your Provider Liaison or Provider Manager.

Q: So as long as we have completed releases, we are able to call Counselors about when a referral may be received?

A: You will need to submit a signed and dated VR Waiver of Confidentiality to the VR office rather than a release of information. A release of information is used to request specific records that VR is permitted to share under law when the signed and dated release is received by the VR office. We suggest you speak with the VR office regarding the best way to submit these requests for better coordination.

Q: My ICP invoice was rejected and I was told to resubmit with one date. However I cannot resubmit in REBA since the NOA has been approved by the Counselor. What do I do?

A: You will need to submit the Invoice with a comment asking for it to be rejected so you can go back and correct the date on the NOA. If you need additional assistance, please reach out to your Provider Manager.

Q: We have always worked on transportation needs for our clients. Can you communicate in Area 5 to Counselors regarding transportation responsibilities (that the Counselors should work out transportation needs for the VR customers rather than the job coach)?

A: Transportation continues to be a big barrier to individuals with disabilities accessing resources statewide. We always encourage communication between the Provider and VRC to ensure that the shared customer is served effectively and remove any barriers or impediments to employment.

Q: Any updates on improving the gaps or turnaround times from the start of the referral to the time customers engage in their VR services? Sometimes customers are waiting weeks for a referral or authorization.

A: VR services are individualized; each case may take a different length of time from referral to completion. VR has federal requirements for timeliness for eligibility determinations and IPE development. Statewide we continue efforts to ensure our customers are able to access VR services as quickly as possible.

Q: When will the internal VR services review process be finalized? Are all new applications being held until that time?

A: We do not have a completion date at this time. We will reevaluate application acceptance in the spring.

Q: Sometimes we accept referrals for adult clients who have not worked in a number of years due to their disability. Is there a VR policy on how many OJTs they can complete to gain employable skills?

A: This is handled on a case-by-case basis. The VR Counselor determines how many OJT experiences the Customer will receive. If the Customer did not gain the required skills during that OJT then the VR Counselor may refer them for another OJT.

Q: I have a client who was placed in employment before the ICP was completed she needed money to pay her rent. The ICP is over three months old.

A: The Provider must complete the ICP prior to Placement.

Q: It's been my understanding that clients can only be given one OJT. Can you explain when clients can be given more than one OJT?

A: This is handled on a case-by-case basis. The VR Counselor determines how many OJT experiences the Customer needs.

Q: Also, how can an OJT employer check on payments they should have received for payroll reimbursement?

A: An OJT employer can reach out to the Provider Manager or Provider Liaison to assist with this.

Q: Could a list of established OJT vendors be shared with Employment Specialists?

A: Yes, VR can share a list of OJT vendors via the Public Records Request process. Your Provider Manager can assist with such a request.

Q: So when the vendor shows up as an approved vendor in MyFloridaMarketPlace this does not mean they are completely approved?

A: MyFloridaMarketPlace registration is the first step in the registration process. The Vendor will still need to submit an application and required documentation for the service(s) they wish to provide.

Q: On average, how long does it take for a business to become approved as an OJT vendor/worksite once the application has been submitted?

A: On average, it takes approximately ten (10) business days to become an approved OJT Vendor.

Q: If the employer is set up as a vendor to do OJT, is it preferred that they are the representative payee or would it be better to go through our company?

A: Either way is acceptable. Since the Provider is involved either way, it may be a smoother process when the Provider acts as the "Employer of Record".

Q: AMA Foundation has been trying to submit MPR and they haven't been able to upload and when we call they say they can see it from their side. What we need to do? We are new vendors, where we can call for technical support? We have placed our first client within the first month.

A: Please reach out to your Provider Manager. Have the Customer's ID# so we can look into this case.

Q: Why does VR ask for an ICP if the Counselor knows the customer is employed and looking for a better placement? We often receive ICP referrals on customers that are employed.

A: An ICP may be appropriate if the Customer is looking for a new job. Information documenting the need should be included in the ICP.

Q: If a placement NOA is not able to be submitted due the fact an MPR was rejected for late submission past 30 days and cannot be attached, is it possible to overcome this oversight/error of the Provider and allow the subsequent benchmarks to be attained? The subsequent benchmarks cannot be created without the placement being either approved or rejected.

A: Please reach out to your Provider Manager. Have the Customer ID# so we can look into this case.

Q: We have employers who want to do OJT; however, they don't want to get reimbursement and go through the entire process. Can we still place them and how do we reflect that on the plan?

A: Yes. As the Provider, you can act as the “Employer of Record”. In this situation, the Provider pays the Customers wages, taxes and benefits so the Employer does not have to. The Provider then requests reimbursement from VR.

Q It appears an increasing amount of employment referrals we are receiving are already employed and don't have time to do a job search with an ES.

A: If you are seeing this trend, please reach out to your Provider Liaison so they can look into why this may be.

Q: If a client requests a Provider change, will a new ICP need to be done or will a copy be provided to the new Provider?

A: This will depend on the customer and their goal. It can also vary based on how long the previous ICP was developed. If you have a question about an individual case, the best option is to discuss it with the VR Counselor.

Q: Does the new Florida minimum wage increase apply to OJT wages? Is there a min. or max. OJT time period?

A: Yes, the new minimum wage increase affects OJT wages. There is no minimum or maximum OJT period. It is decided on a case-by-case basis.

Q: Just for clarification regarding the ICP, if a client is working but the vocational goal is different from their current employment and job development is for a totally different goal, then will the ICP be acceptable for submission?

A: Yes, the Provider should clearly document this information in the ICP.

Q: It may be helpful to show how to fill out an OJT plan and agreement to new Service Providers. I know that I had my first one rejected due to now knowing what boxes to check, depending on if it is paid or not.

A: You can reach out to your Provider Manager for assistance with filling out any of the forms.

Q: If we are the Employer of Record and the DOE's workers' compensation is covering clients participating in OJTs, do we still need a workers' compensation policy since they are our employees or are Providers able to discontinue this policy?

A: DOE's Workers' Compensation extends only to VR customers. Providers should maintain insurance appropriate to their particular business.

Q: Did I hear that it was ok to have an ICP that is different from the Employment Outcome? Or does the Provider need to ensure that it all matches?

A: The Provider needs to ensure the Employment Outcome matches the ICP.

Q: Please clarify the Workers' Comp coverage. If we have VR Customers who receive job training as interns are they covered under the VR workers comp?

A: Yes. You can find more information on Workers' Compensation coverage on our website: www.rehabworks.org

Q: How often are the OJT forms are revised or updated?

A: We update our forms as needed. We will always notify Providers when forms have been updated. You can also access the latest version of all of our forms on our website: www.rehabworks.org

Q: Also, when forms are revised/updated how are we as ES informed?

A: The Provider Manager sends notification to each Provider anytime we update a form. They send the notification to the contact person named by the Provider.

Q: When an OJT needs to be extended past the agreed end date on the form, is there anything that the vendor needs to submit or is it just a verbal agreement between the vendor and the Counselor?

A: If an extension to an OJT is needed, the Provider must request it in writing. There is a section on the bottom of the OJT Wage Reimbursement Form to request and justify extension. The Provider must make this request at least 30 days prior to the original scheduled end date of the OJT.

Q: Traditionally, the VR ICP applies to Supported Employment. No mention of this. Does it apply to Employment Services as well?

A: No. It is only a benchmark for Supported Employment.

Q: Could you clarify independent vendor job placement requirements. I mean independent contractor placements. Forms and approvals needed.

A: We have a form that should be completed and signed prior to the start of the job when a Customer is placed as an Independent Contractor vs. a regular employee. You can find this form on our website: www.rehabworks.org under Employment Service Providers. It is important all signatures are obtained prior to the start date of this job. You should attach this form to the Placement NOA in order for approval.

Q: I would just like to express our concerns (again) regarding this new rigidity of the job goal. I've been working with VR for 17 years and the one constant has always been consumer choice... while job development is going on job opportunities come up that a customer chooses but it is not the original job goal. This new rigidity will mean that the Provider will not be able to place them and be paid for the work put into assisting that client.

A: VR recently implemented new forms in order to assist the customer with selecting a vocational goal. The counseling and guidance process to develop a job goal is extensive. As a Provider if you have concerns regarding the job goal, we encourage you to contact the Counselor to discuss it. Job goals may be amended, however, the customer and Counselor will need to review and re-work the job goal selection process.

Q: With regards to OJT reimbursements, when I am the Employer of Record, we used to receive authorization payment detail, showing what was paid. It used to arrive by mail one to two days after deposit. I was told this process has stopped but now I have no way to track what is being paid and when. Any suggestions? I relied on these to track my payments.

A: You can reach out to your Provider Liaison or Provider Manager to assist with looking these Authorizations up to see if they have been paid. You may also access the FLAIR website <https://fs.fldfs.com/dispub2/cvnhphst.htm> to look up your payment history.

Q: Is the decision matrix available to Providers to look over when the referral is sent?

A: We are encouraging Counselors to send the Career Goal Decision Matrix with referrals to Providers, but it is not a requirement. If the Career Goal Decision Matrix is not included, please request it from the Counselor.

Q: How can we help VR create fast turnarounds for the authorization for wages? Could you ever consider an authorization ahead of time for an estimated capped amount? We were told it had to be the exact amount with the backup documents attached, then an authorization can be created. Sometimes this is delayed. If we were able to have a capped authorization, we would still only be paid for the exact amount of OJT wages, but not have to wait extra time for this process.

A: Unfortunately, we cannot issue an authorization for this service in advance or with a capped amount. Our financial requirements include the OJT Wage Reimbursement form and a pay stub. The best way to ensure your authorization is paid quickly is to follow-up with the Counselor when you submit the required documentation.

Q: After a person decides that they are no longer interested in their referral, how long will the ES continue to input monthly progress reports?

A: If the Customer is no longer interested, they should reach out to their VR Counselor and request to have their referral closed. The Provider should document that the Customer has requested their case be closed in the monthly progress report. The Provider is no longer required to submit Monthly Progress Reports once they have done this.

Q: Question for Nicolette. Earlier you discussed No New Applications... Does that mean as a Vendor we are not allowed at this time to hire new employees? Or did I miss understand?

A: Current Providers can continue to submit new Employment Specialist documentation as they always have. This pertains only to new Provider applications but this does not affect you since you are already a certified Provider.

Q: When submitting information in the monthly progress report, is there a character limit?

A: Yes. We are currently working on expanding this limit. For the time being, you are able to upload multiple MPR's if you are not able to type as much as you need.

Q: If a STAR student has an OJT referral and is not able to complete his/her hours during the anticipated original OJT time frame due to unforeseen barriers but that student wants to come back in the future for an OJT experience, is it best to request a close out of that STAR student's OJT or just leave it open and wait to see if they will come back when they anticipate being able to return? If it's best to wait on the Customer to return for services, how long should that wait be before it is ok to request a close-out?

A: It would be based on each individual circumstance. Please reach out to your Area Liaison or the VR Youth Tech.

Q: We are receiving OJT and Regular Placement referrals for the same adult client at the same time. Is this common? Also, if the adult client changes their mind on the OJT/Placement goal can they change their job goal?

A: Yes, in order to accept an OJT service referral for an adult, the Provider is also required to accept the placement referral. The listed vocational goal will be the same for both the OJT and placement referral, which aligns with the VR Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The Provider may only make changes to the vocational goal when agreed to by the customer and VR Counselor. Changes to the vocational goal also require an IPE amendment, which goes into effect only after it has been signed and dated by the customer and VR Counselor.