



VR Guide for Provision of Interpreting Services for Individuals with Hearing Loss* Part B Purchasing Vendor Services

***This includes individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing,
Late-Deafened, DeafBlind and Deaf Plus**



Florida Department of Education
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
325 W. Gaines St., Suite 1144
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
www.RehabWorks.org



Table of Contents

Section 5. Procedures for VR Interpreting Assignments	3
Coordination and Payment.....	3
Which Payment Method to Use: Purchase Order (PO) or Authorization?	3
Orientation and In-Referral Status.....	3
Transition Students: Traditional VR Client and Potentially Eligible	4
Transition Students: Unverified Potentially Eligible	4
Deaf Family Members of Hearing Individuals.....	4
Individuals who Use Atypical or Non-American Sign Language (ASL)	4
Accommodating Individuals who Require Foreign Sign Language	4
On the Job Training and on the Work Site.....	5
Accommodating Unexpected, Last-Minute Requests for Interpreting Services	5
Virtual Interpreting	6
Interpreting During Partnership Plus or Post-Employment Cases.....	6
VR Staff Members With Hearing Loss	6
Interviews of Applicants for VR Positions	7
Career Counseling Information Referral (CCIR) Presentation.....	7
VR Vendors for VR-Required Training.....	7
Public Events	7
Section 6. VR Vendor Requirements and Considerations	8
Understanding the Vendor Application Process.....	8
Understanding the RIMS Vendor Directory Screens.....	8
Certified and Certified Group.....	8
Managing Participation of Vendor Interns	9
Managing List of Available Local Vendor Interpreters.....	10
Declining a Vendor Request for VR to Sign Agreements for Services.....	10
Requesting Temporary Status/Critical Need Interpreters	10

Section 7. Payment Procedures for VR Interpreting Services:..... 12

Listing of Payment Codes to be Used 12

Processing Invoices for Payment 12

Outlining Billing Practices in the Field of Interpreting..... 13

Contacting DHHDB Services Unite for Technical Assistance..... 17

Note: This document is a continuation of the *Guide for the Provision of Interpreting Services for Persons with Hearing Loss: Part A* (©2021).

Section 5. Procedures for VR Interpreting Assignments

Coordination and Payment

Which Payment Method to Use: Purchase Order (PO) or Authorization?

Authorization	Purchase Order
Orientation (if the application is signed on the same day)	Orientation (if no application is signed on the same day)
Potentially-eligible transition students in RIMS	Unverified potentially-eligible transition students
Family members of all possible scenarios (except potentially-eligible transition students)	Family members of potentially-eligible transition students
Traditional customers in RIMS where other resources cannot be used for individuals who use standard or non-standard sign language	Services for VR employees
Post-employment and Partnership Plus	VR Job Applicants (unless applicant is a client of VR)
	CCIR presentations for individuals who are Deaf
	VR vendor training
	Community events

Orientation and In-Referral Status

For orientations, if you have a staff interpreter assigned to your unit, then request that staff interpreter, if possible.

If no staff interpreter is available, arrange for a vendor interpreter. Generate a single event purchase order (PO) for that date. If using a blanket PO, make sure the PO has sufficient funds.

- If the individual requesting interpreting does not sign the application that day, pay for the interpreter with the PO. The date of the application signature is critical here. If the date of the application signature will be after the date of the orientation, there is no way to pay for the service with an authorization. Process the invoice for payment under the PO.
- If the individual appears and signs the application on the same day, the vendor interpreter can then be paid by an “after the fact” authorization once the case is entered as “Applicant” in RIMS. The “after the fact” authorization will be generated by the VR technician following the procedure listed in Policy 9.01(4) – with the authorization generated within three days of the assignment. A case note justification for an “after the fact” authorization would indicate the date that the application is signed. If an event PO was generated, this PO can be cancelled.

Transition Students: Traditional VR Client and Potentially Eligible

If the student is verified as a potentially-eligible individual or is already a traditional VR client and will receive Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), VR may pay with an authorization (Code Y10400) if the VR staff completing the orientation and intake will comply with requirements found in the technical assistance entitled *Paying for Interpreters Pre-Employment Transition Services*, Oct. 2019.

Transition Students: Unverified Potentially Eligible

Some students are interested in Pre-ETS but may not qualify (e.g., a home-schooled student who has not provided VR with records or a student who may have dropped out/aged out of school). If a VR counselor (VRC) or VR Technician is meeting with an interested but unverified student who is Deaf to discuss Pre-ETS, use the staff interpreter or a PO to provide interpreting services.

Deaf Family Members of Hearing Individuals

If possible, request the staff interpreter to provide accommodations for Deaf family members of traditional hearing individuals. If the staff interpreter is not available, secure a vendor interpreter using an authorization and code G10403.

If a VRC or VR technician is meeting with a potentially-eligible individual who wants or needs a Deaf family member in attendance, request the staff interpreter. If the staff interpreter is not available, any time a vendor interpreter is required, services should be secured with a PO. This situation cannot use code G10403.

Individuals who Use Atypical or Non-American Sign Language (ASL)

For various reasons, some individuals who are Deaf do not use standard (ASL). These individuals can benefit from using a language specialist who is Deaf, referred to as a Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI). CDIs work in partnership with a sign-language interpreter who is hearing to provide full-communication access.

Accommodating Individuals who Require Foreign Sign Language

Sign language varies significantly from country to country. Some individuals who are Deaf have immigrated to the U.S. are not yet fluent in ASL. However, they may be fluent in the sign language of their home country.

Be aware that in various countries, there are distinctly different sign languages that parallel neither similar spoken languages nor ASL. For example, the sign language used in Mexico is completely different from the sign language used in Cuba or other Spanish-speaking countries.

Here are options for accommodating someone fluent in a foreign sign language:

- Some ASL/English interpreters may also be knowledgeable in a foreign sign language (e.g., Cuban Sign Language). Staff Interpreters/interpreter coordinators can work with vendor interpreting agencies to locate an interpreter with a skill set in the foreign sign language needed.

- If no interpreter is located with such skill, the next step is to locate a CDI and a certified hearing interpreter to work as a team to assist this individual.
- If there is a clear indication from a person who is familiar with the individual who is both deaf and is literate in reading and/or fluently speech-reading in a foreign spoken language, a team can be arranged to include a spoken language interpreter who will translate into print and/or speech and a sign language interpreter who will present information in basic high visual mode so they can work together to facilitate communication.
- As a last resort, if a non-credentialed interpreter with necessary skills to communicate with such an individual is found, consultation should be sought with Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind Services Program to determine if this interpreter will be permitted to provide services. This service provider may be approved as a Critical Need interpreter to provide such services on a temporary basis. More information on Vendor Temporary Status is found on page 10.

Document all consultations and attempts to provide effective communication in case notes.

In all cases, the VRC shall also be prepared to provide information regarding efforts to reach the local Deaf community and names of resources including local services and online websites to develop the individual's ASL skills (e.g., a local ASL class).

On-the-Job Training and on the Work Site

VR is responsible to work with the employment services providers, employer and employee at work sites to design long-term, effective communications and educational strategies for co-workers after the VR case is closed. This may include:

- Arranging for rehabilitation engineers to assess the work site
- Training on off-the-shelf communication (e.g., texting)
- Providing information on Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) services as well as listings of local interpreting agencies to provide interpreting after the case is closed for staff meetings, trainings, etc.

Employment service providers shall work in conjunction with VRCs to provide interpreting services for all relevant training and orientation for the new job placement for up to 90 days. These services can be provided by staff or vendor interpreters. If vendor interpreters are used, authorizations are the payment method. Natural supports are critical to successful placements. VR staff interpreters can work with the employee to provide basic sign classes and cues for co-workers and supervisor to assist with daily communication with the employee. The employee can be empowered to teach and create a successful communication environment for the placement. The case should not be closed until communication arrangements are clearly understood and accepted by both the employer and the employee.

Accommodating Unexpected, Last-Minute Requests for Interpreting Services

VR recognizes that certain situations requiring interpreting services can occur unexpectedly and without prior notice. These situations, which directly relate to a successful employment

outcome, will not needlessly be delayed. Examples may include job interviews and other events that can lead to successful placement outcomes that are not within VR's control.

VR staff is expected to make every effort to secure an interpreter for last minute assignments. If the VR staff is able to secure a vendor interpreter for a last-minute appointment, it is to be expected that possible "last minute" or "emergency" fee differential may be assessed in addition to the appearance fee or regular hourly rate.

This kind of situation may also necessitate an authorization to be generated after the date of service rendered. Creation of this "after the fact" authorization requires documentation in a Case Note with a clear explanation of the time line to justify the timeliness. This After-the-Fact authorizations are permitted under the *Counselor Policy Manual*, Chapter 9.01(4).

Virtual Interpreting

When setting up a virtual meeting with an individual who is Deaf, VRCs should first contact their local staff interpreter. If the staff interpreter is not available, the VRC should follow the local procedure to secure a vendor to provide virtual interpreting. Be clear in the request that the assignment is a virtual assignment.

Successful virtual interpreting assignments require three things of all participants: reliable internet, a webcam, and common software access (e.g., Microsoft Teams or other video conferencing platforms). It is a good idea to make a "test call" prior to the assignment to resolve any technology issues.

If a vendor interpreter is secured, the payment method will depend on the situation (i.e., orientation will be paid by a PO; Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) development will be paid by an authorization).

Interpreting During Partnership Plus or Post-Employment Cases

Once the VRC offers Partnership Plus at closure and the individual accepts the service of continued services, the VRC must notify the appropriate Ticket to Work staff members via email that services have been accepted and interpreting will be needed. When the IPE is written for the Partnership Plus services, the service "Interpreting" will be added/added to include "staff interpreter" and/or the names of the same vendors as listed on the prior IPE. The staff interpreter, VRC, and VR technician rehab team will be responsible for arranging any services needed for this Partnership Plus case. If it is a standard post-employment case, the IPE shall also contain "staff interpreter" and the names of any vendors that were listed on the original IPE.

VR Staff Members with Hearing Loss

VR will request, arrange and pay for interpreting services for VR state employees when services are essential for work-related activities. If the staff interpreter is not available because of customer demands or obligations, or if teaming is needed, VR can hire vendor interpreter(s) via PO. Therefore, it is highly recommended to arrange to have a blanket PO for such services with justification that ADA accommodations for the employee are required.

Interviews of Applicants for VR Positions

If an applicant for a VR position opening requests interpreting services, VR will arrange vendor interpreters for the interview. If the applicant is a VR customer, VR can pay by Authorization. If the applicant does not indicate that they are a VR customer, VR can pay interpreters by PO. Staff interpreters are not recommended for these appointments.

Career Counseling Information Referral (CCIR) Presentation

The Work Incentive Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires VR to provide CCIR Services to Floridians working in subminimum wage employment (e.g., sheltered workshops/some adult day training programs). This four-hour course focuses on empowerment and informed choice in employment. CCIR providers may contact VR when needing interpreters for attendees. These individuals likely use atypical or non-ASL language, may require careful coordination of services thus a language specialist may need to be hired. Consult with your staff interpreter or the DHHDB at HQ for information and assistance.

VR Vendors for VR-Required Training

If VR requires VR vendors to go through agency-sponsored training for new procedures or processes and the VR vendor requests an interpreter, VR will pay vendor interpreters with a PO and or use of the staff interpreter.

Public Events

VR may be asked to provide ASL/English interpreting services as a sponsor of a public event either for itself or in conjunction with other partners (e.g., Career Source, other state agencies, local schools). The interpreters for this public event may involve Staff Interpreters but are more likely to involve vendor interpreters. These vendor interpreters are paid with a PO.

Section 6. VR Vendor Requirements and Considerations

Understanding the Vendor Application Process

Directions and Applications for applying for Sign Language Interpreting (SLI) vendor status are located: www.RehabWorks.org/vendor.

The following are general steps to register as a SLI vendor:

1. **Register with My Florida Market Place** as a state of Florida vendor at <https://vendor.myfloridamarketplace.com/>
2. **Complete the electronic Substitute Form W-9** with the Department of Financial Services at <https://flvendor.myfloridacfo.com/>
3. **Complete the appropriate VR Vendor Application.** Applications are not complete until the SLI receives an email verifying approval. Applications are found under New Vendors at www.rehabworks.org/vendor
4. **Fax or email the appropriate application** to the VR Vendor Registration Unit.
Fax: 850-245-3394 or email at VRVendors@vr.fldoe.org
5. **Respond to communication from VR's Background Screening staff** to complete the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) Care Provider Clearinghouse registration and level-2 background screening for each interpreter. VR will contact you with these steps and directions.
6. **Await emailed confirmation of interpreter(s) approval** to provide services for VR individuals, staff and community members.

Additional Information on the Background Screening requirement: The Florida Inspector General has determined that any interpreters providing services for VR fall under the auspices of the Florida Statute (F.S.) 413.208 and F.S. 435.04 that requires all interpreters to complete a level-2 background screening in the AHCA's Care Provider Clearinghouse. This background screening requirement cannot be substituted with results from any of other screening system including those used by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) entities. All interpreters must complete and pass both FDOE and AHCA, and be notified of such before providing services. This includes interns and temporary status. No exceptions.

Understanding the RIMS Vendor Directory Screens

In RIMS, under Outside Resources, under Vendor Directory, click on Vendor Type. Locate Interpreters for the Deaf and click. Click on the binoculars. The list of available of vendors indicate active vendors.

Certified and Certified Group

- Individual Interpreters (listed as Certified in the Certified Status column). Vendors in this category possess at least one of the appropriate credentials for VR to interpret for individuals and have completed the appropriate VR Vendor application and background screening process.

- Interpreting Agencies (listed as Certified Group in the Certified Status column) Vendors listed under this category have completed a VR Vendor Unit Group Sign Language application and submitted appropriate documentation and completed the background screening process for the interpreters showing as Certified on the agency's contact list.
 - If using an interpreter agency, VR staff will remind the agency during the initial contact that the interpreter being assigned for an appointment must be fully approved to provide VR assignments.
 - When the interpreter agency confirms an interpreter to the appointment, the VR staff will receive the name and credentials of the interpreter being used for the VR assignment. All approved interpreters are listed in RIMS on the Contact Screen.
 - VR staff are encouraged to verify interpreters as approved before every assignment.
 - If there is a discrepancy, bring the discrepancy to the interpreting agency's attention immediately so it can be rectified and or another interpreter assigned.

The Bureau of Vendor and Contracted Services, Vendor Registration Unit provides a semi-annual audit of interpreting agency's roster of interpreters to ensure that all registered vendors maintain an identical listing of approved interpreters as the same one as listed in RIMS. Individual vendors must submit their accepted certification card at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1) to the Vendor Registration Unit.

Managing Participation of Vendor Interns

Internship is a valuable part of interpreter education. Vendors may choose to provide mentorship for interns from accredited interpreter education programs. No intern or practicum/observing student may attend a VR-sponsored appointment until VR approves the individual.

1. Mentoring interpreters must submit the Intern/Student Contact Form for Group Agency and Individual Interpreters form with a copy of the intern/student's RID student or associate card.
2. Upon receipt and review, the Vendor Registration Unit will send the request for background screening to the authorized staff of the vendor to have the intern/student complete the screening.
3. Once the background screening is completed and the intern/student is on the vendor's clearinghouse electronic employee/contractor roster:
 - a. The agency will receive notification of approval from VR for the student/intern.
 - b. The intern will be listed in RIMS expiring on the last day of internship.
 - c. Vendor Registration will also notify VR Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafblind (DHHDB) Services unit of the addition.
4. The VRC is required ask the individual for permission for the intern's/student's presence and to sign a *Waiver of Confidentiality*.

Vendors who would like to schedule a fully-approved intern/student to accompany an interpreter/mentor to a VR-sponsored appointment will contact the VRC as early as this possibility is known.

Intern/student shall not work alone and shall always accompany a VR-approved interpreter/mentor.

Information on interns with VR staff interpreters can be found in the accompanying guide, *VR Guide for Provision of Interpreting Services for Individuals with Hearing Loss: Part A*, page 9.

Managing List of Available Local Vendor Interpreters

It is recommended that each local VR office download the *Semi-annual Service Area* document off the VR intranet to which interpreting vendors will provide services in the unit's general area. The listing of interpreter providers is reviewed semi-annually in January and August by the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Services Program team of staff interpreters. This listing will also be used for informed choice of customers on names of providers for their IPE.

Declining a Vendor Request for VR to Sign Agreements for Services

If a vendor approaches VR staff with a document that lists terms and conditions and or contains the work agreement or contract and asks the VR staff to sign said document, the VR staff must immediately forward it to the Bureau of Vendor and Contracted Services for review. VR staff must not sign any document that commits VR to more than an interpreting assignment with specified date and time. The Commissioner of Education is the only person duly authorized to sign anything that binds FDOE.

This prohibition against VR staff signing these document include general rate agreements, terms and conditions, internship agreements, or letters of support/references.

Requesting Temporary Status/Critical Need Interpreters

Any local VR office may experience a severe shortage and/or lack of qualified vendor interpreters with a particular skill in its immediate area, including vendors from neighboring counties. The local VR office will first make every effort to recruit qualified interpreters in its area who may be interested in becoming VR vendors. If a local office is unable to locate enough qualified vendors with appropriate credentials who would be available to provide services to the individuals with hearing loss then the local VR office has a "critical need for interpreters."

Typically, current vendors will locate someone who does not meet the exact requirements to provide services for VR, but has the basics. The vendor could request that the person could be given "Temporary Status." Examples of situations for which VR could award Temporary Vendor Status for "critical need" include:

- A person who completed the necessary interpreter training, but has not completed both performance and written parts in the credentialing process yet but expects to complete it soon.
- On rare occasions, other persons whose skill set are specialized for a particular individual's needs as outlined on pages 6-7 of this guide.

Granting temporary status is a rare and is given only as a short-term approval to an interpreter who has a direly needed skill set but not yet achieved required credentials, and provides necessary documentation that such credentialing is forthcoming.

The vendor agency or interpreter may directly submit a temporary status request to the DHHDB Services Program.

The written request shall include the following:

- A resume with interpreter's name, contact information and listing of interpreting experiences (to indicate acceptable and extensive experience), degrees (if applicable), and any credentials previously obtained (including FRID QA levels and passing the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf [RID] written tests).
- Evidence of professional development – this is especially true of the 40 hours for Deaf interpreter's approval.
- RID card with associate membership to tie the professional to the Code of Professional Conduct and the Ethical Practices Committee.
- Statement of special skill set or considerations (e.g., oral interpreting, trilingual interpreting, Deafblind experience, haptics/ProTactile skills, rural residence, etc.).
- Description of the plan to come into compliance for standard credentials (e.g., receipts for testing, dates of testing, goals for testing).

The request package is reviewed for completeness and sent to a committee of two or three VR administrative-level staff including DHHDB HQ team to review and recommend granting of temporary status (and for how long) or denying temporary status request. If it is granted, the Vendor Registration Unit will work with the interpreter/agency to complete the process. If it is denied, a reason will be shared with the interpreter/agency.

Once fully approved by the Vendor Registration Unit and during the approved temporary status period when the interpreter is working to secure a credential, the interpreter may provide services for VR customers (or customers). Invoices and case notes regarding assignments performed by this interpreter shall reference "Interpreter's name, temporary status."

The interpreter awarded a temporary status is expected to know and abide by RID Code of Professional Conduct for any work involving VR individuals or representing VR.

Section 7. Payment Procedures for VR Interpreting Services:

Listing of Payment Codes to be Used

For General interpreting once the application is signed, any services including the date of signature can be paid through authorization	Use G10400
For interpreting for an identified transition individual (traditional or potentially eligible) for any needs from Initial meeting through Pre-ETS services and any other evaluations planned	Use Y10400
For select and approved post-secondary settings after conferring with HQ DHHDB Services Unit	Use G10401
For Family members who are deaf of individuals in RIMS who are hearing**	Use G10403
For VR-sponsored special events, VR position interviews, staff meetings, group orientations, CCIR	Use Purchase Orders

Processing Invoices for Payment

Florida VR recognizes that interpreting rates vary across the state; therefore, authorizations and POs are generated based on information from local or statewide vendors.

Periodically, VR staff gathers rates and working conditions from interpreting vendors including their appearance fee, cancellation/no show policy, travel rules and other information that are needed to generate an authorization. This information is used to create routine authorizations and arrange for a specific quote to generate an authorization for special situations.

A vendor can supplement their information with pay rate increases or other working conditions with notice. Initiation date cannot be back-dated but can be set for any future dates of service.

It is important to make sure to verify in RIMS that the actual interpreter who provided services is both screened and approved as “Certified” in RIMS under an agency.

- It is less complicated when this is confirmed before the assignment. The vendor commits to send only fully approved interpreters; however, they may occasionally forget. Request the interpreter’s name BEFORE the assignment whenever possible to verify, and to avoid potential complications.
- The invoice shall contain both the interpreter’s name and credential. The name should be verified in RIMS (if not done previously) before processing for payment.

Outlining Billing Practices in the Field of Interpreting

- **Appearance Fee**

Appearance Fee is an industry standard that is sometimes called a “two-hour minimum,” which indicates a minimum payment for a vendor interpreter to accept the interpreting assignment. It is possible for an interpreter to choose a different amount of time in their appearance fee/minimum request fee. This appearance fee will not be reduced for shorter assignments, individual no-shows, or last minute cancellation by either the VR staff or the individual.

- **Hourly Rate Based on Area Standards**

As with the cost of other services, interpreting rates vary by location. There is currently no statewide, uniform rate for interpreting services. The Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafblind Services Program team of staff interpreters annually collect rates and working condition information from all vendors working in the state. This information can be used for generating authorizations and POs for standard services.

- **Partial Hourly Rates**

It is widely-accepted practice in the national interpreting industry to provide pre-determined partial hourly rates. The typical partial hours are 15 minutes or 30 minutes. It is expected that local VR staff who collects information for a particular assignment will request and include this information when factoring an assignment that will last longer than the time allocated in the appearance fee (two hours).

- **Pay Differentials for Needed Skill Sets, Location or Time Needed**

The standard rate for providing services may increase due to differentials for specific types of assignments, the specialized skill required (e.g., trilingual), last-minute/on call interpreting requests, and the schedule based on the time of day (e.g., overnight) or day of the week (e.g., Sunday) of the request.

- **Hiring a Team of Two or More Interpreters**

According to the national standard in the field of interpreting, assignments that last more than one (1) hour for intense/challenging activity (e.g., without breaks or pauses) or that are expected to last two (2) hours or more of routine activity will require two interpreters. When two interpreters are hired through an agency, request and receive both confirmations and quotes/invoices at the same time. Or, if hiring two individual interpreter vendors, each interpreter will need to confirm time and quote/invoice at their particular hourly rate.

Note: It is expected that the interpreter coordinator (e.g., VR staff interpreter, VR technician) will determine when a teamer is needed – especially in situations of long discussions such as preliminary assessments. Should this to occur, the coordinator/staff interpreter will notify the VR technician and VRC that a teamer has been arranged and whether an authorization is required to secure the teamer(s). If a VRC is unsure whether a teamer is needed, it would be more beneficial to discuss concerns with the interpreter coordinator; however, the interpreter coordinator will make the final decision.

- **No-Show or Last Minute Cancellation Policy**

If the hearing person (e.g., job coach) or the individual using the interpreter fails to show up for a scheduled appointment or if the appointment is cancelled with less than the agreed cancellation period, VR will pay the vendor interpreter for the full agreed length of the appointment that the service was confirmed prior to the assignment. Typical cancellation period policies are 24-48 hours. VR staff is expected to verify a vendor's cancellation policy prior to confirming an assignment request.

- **Hiring Interpreter(s) for Unexpected, Last-Minute Assignments**

VR recognizes that any situations requiring interpreting services can be unexpected such as at-the-last-minute, and without prior notice. These situations, which can have an effect on the employment outcome of individuals with hearing loss, shall not be unnecessarily delayed.

VR staff are expected to make every effort to secure an interpreter for such last minute assignments. When VR staff is able to secure a vendor interpreter for a last-minute appointment, it is expected that possible "last minute" or "emergency" fee differential may be assessed in addition to the appearance fee and/or hourly rate.

This last-minute interpreting request situation may also necessitate an authorization to be generated after the date of service rendered. The creation of this "after the fact" authorization requires documentation of a case note with a clear explanation of the time line to justify this authorization. (This after the fact authorizations are permitted under *Counselor Policy Manual*, Chapter 9.01(4)).

- **Assignments that Exceed Scheduled Time**

VR recognizes that any authorizations are generated using the best estimate of time needed for the appointment. On occasions, the appointment may take longer than the time allocated as indicated on the authorization. In the event that the interpreter continues to interpret for the customer beyond the scheduled end of the assignment and then invoices for the actual time interpreted, the authorization and invoice will not match. Nevertheless, VR shall pay for the entire duration of time the vendor interpreter was with the customer for the appointment.

Methods to address the overage on the authorization are covered in the *Field Services Operating Procedures Related to Authorizations* under the "Authorization Checklist Tool" found on VR Avenues (staff intranet).

Any invoice that require appending an authorization for the remainder of the invoice amount or cancellation of the original authorization to generate a new authorization, shall be accompanied by appropriate case notes.

- **Multiple Assignments on the Same Day at the Same Location**

If multiple assignments are arranged in a successive order at the same location and with the same interpreter performing beyond two hours, each of the multiple assignments will not be billed separately for the two-hour minimum. It is important to note that sufficient breaks between assignments are necessary to ensure the ability of the interpreters to continue

interpreting effectively. Again, such interpreting assignment covers a total of time scheduled to interpret, not the number of different meetings at the same location.

- **Standards for Assignments that Lasts Through a Meal Break**

Upon accepting assignment(s), the vendor interpreters schedule the entire time as requested by VR for the appointment (e.g., six hours). As a result, VR is responsible to pay for entire time as scheduled and agreed including any release time for meals or breaks that exists within the assignment duration, if invoiced. If it is a working meal, the vendor or staff interpreter will require “off work” time to be able to eat before being required to work. Because of physical fatigue and repetitive motion concerns, vendor or staff interpreters may choose not to work during meal breaks unless previously scheduled and agreed upon. Similarly, vendor or staff interpreters may be scheduled to work for an entire day with a customer. Some of these situations have breaks that allow the vendor or staff interpreter a full meal break (e.g., typical vocational assessments); while other scenarios may not (e.g., typical job orientation). In the job orientation example, the customer may choose to eat in the break room and will likely be approached by co-workers during break. If the vendor or staff interpreter happens to be with customer during the break, relationships may begin that could develop into natural supports for post-closure, so the interpreter is unable to take a break unless a teamer interpreter is available to assist.

The VR interpreter coordinator (staff interpreter or assigned VR staff person) will need to assess each assignment to determine the likelihood of having appropriate breaks to ensure that vendor or staff interpreter can perform effective interpreting physically and mentally, and without potential for fatigue or injury.

- **Travel Expenses**

A vendor interpreter must provide additional information whenever travel will occur and be invoiced. Traveling expenses may be charged and paid through in one of the three options:

1. Hourly rate for requested interpreting time (numbers of units listed on the authorization) plus mileage. This mileage is only chargeable at the state rate (and is listed as a supplemental service on the authorization and the individual’s IPE). Travel must be added as a supplemental service in RIMS (vendor interpreter profile) the first time such is requested. This is completed by making a request to the program administrator of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind Services. The program administrator will then forward email request to the vendor registration manager who will have travel added as a service provided by the vendor (for the vendor only). Use H20500 for mileage and tolls as the most commonly travel code used.

Note: All others require prior permission.

2. Hourly rate for interpreting portal to portal. Portal-to-portal is defined as counting the interpreter’s hourly rate as totaled by extending from the time leaving the interpreter’s residence/office to the time he/she returns to the residence/office.

NOTE: Vendors cannot charge both portal to portal and mileage.

3. Event charge. An event charge is a specific quote provided for the entire service needed, which lists both interpreting and travel costs; no other charges are permitted in this case.

The VR staff must verify with the interpreter or agency the method the interpreter will charge for travel in order to properly generate the authorization or pay the invoice. Interpreters charging travel expenses other than mileage, tolls, and parking need prior permission before any authorization can be made.

Vendor interpreters must present all appropriate documentation (e.g., map mileage and toll receipts) of these expenses along with the billing invoice.

Contacting DHHDB Services Unite for Technical Assistance

To receive technical assistance concerning all issues covered in this guide as well as other issues related to services to individuals with hearing loss, contact DHHDB Services Program at VR headquarters.

Contact information for DHHDB Services Unit:

- Headquarters' main line 850-245-3399 (Voice/VRS)
- Email at DHHDBConsults@vr.fldoe.org

The Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is an equal opportunity employer. It is against the law for VR as a recipient of Federal financial assistance to discriminate against any individual in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief. The application process used by VR to determine eligibility for services, any subsequent services and the entire VR process are subject to these non-discrimination requirements. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. VR program receives 78.7 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2020 Federal fiscal year, the total amount of grant funds awarded were \$153,000,001. The remaining 21.3 percent of the costs (\$41,409,148) were funded by Florida State Appropriations. Revised October 2020.