# VR-SFP Chapter 18: Supported Employment Services

The following sections of the VR Standards for Providers have been revised. These requirements will take effect July 1, 2021.

## 18.1 Supported Employment Overview

VR Supported Employment (SE) is a comprehensive service package for VR customers.

VR SE enables customers with the most significant disabilities to enter competitive integrated employment by:

* providing individualized assistance in finding an appropriate job match;
* providing ongoing support services; and
* establishing extended services, sometimes called long-term supports, for the customer to maintain a long-term competitive integrated employment outcome by:
	+ identifying resources to deliver the extended services;
	+ training extended services providers;
	+ confirming that extended services are in place, if needed, to make sure the job is stable; and
	+ ensuring all known needs are met before achievement of SE Benchmark 6, Service Closure.

Refer to [VRSM C-1201: Legal Authorization](https://www.twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1200#c-1201) for the definition of competitive integrated employment.

Before paying for VR services, the VR counselor will ensure that the customer is placed in competitive integrated employment. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) emphasizes the term "work unit" in the definition of competitive integrated employment. A work unit may refer to all employees in a job category or to a group of employees working together, depending on the employer's organizational structure (Federal Register Vol.81, at 55643). Individuals with disabilities experience differing levels of integration in various work environments, and those levels are dependent on the circumstances of the job within each work unit of an organization. Therefore, some jobs are considered to be in "integrated locations," and thus satisfy the definition of "competitive integrated employment," while others do not. If an individual with disabilities is placed with an employer that complies with a mandated direct labor-hour ratio of persons with disabilities, before benchmark payments are made, VR staff must complete a competitive integrated employment checklist to determine whether the employment is competitive integrated employment.

The VR Supported Employment Outcome-Based System uses the "Place, Then Train" model of employment placement to place customers in a job and then train them in order to help them find and keep long-term competitive integrated employment.

By being matched to a job first and then receiving ongoing supports and training, the customer develops job-readiness skills while on the job. An employer who hires a VR customer is expected to provide the same training to the VR customer as the employer would provide to other new employees, with help and support from the VR counselor and the SE specialist.

Customized employment practices develop the best job match for the customer using flexible strategies to meet the individual's needs and the employer's unmet business needs. These practices address the unique skills, interests, abilities, capabilities, and support needs of an individual with a most significant disability. Many times, jobs must be created and/or designed with flexible strategies to allow for a suitable job match.

SE services may be used for customers with any type of disability, but a customer must:

* have a most significant disability (three or more functional limitations);
* require individualized assistance in finding an appropriate job match;
* require ongoing supports to learn the job and establish accommodations; and
* require extended services (long-term supports) to maintain the employment after VR closes the case.

A VR counselor may purchase SE when the customer has a most significant disability and:

* will benefit from the Place, Then Train model of job placement;
* needs extensive comprehensive training and support to compete in the labor market;
* needs ongoing supports to maintain an employment outcome;
* requires considerable help competing in the open job market;
* has not had competitive integrated employment or has experienced interrupted or intermittent employment; or
* is likely to be able to find and keep a competitive integrated job when necessary supports are in place.

Benchmark outcome payments are made when the provider achieves the outcomes required for each benchmark. Each benchmark is paid only once for each customer between Active Status (customer has an IPE) and Closure Status of a VR case.

Any request to change any Supported Employment Service Definition, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR director, using the [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), before the change is implemented. For more information, refer to [VR-SFP 3.6.4.2 Evaluation of Service Delivery](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03#s3-6-4).

The customer's job must:

* be full-time or part-time based on customer choice;
* exist in a competitive, integrated work setting; and
* be permanent, not seasonal.

If a business hires a customer in a temp-to-hire position, the job is acceptable if not considered short-term or project specific employment that will end upon completion of the project. A customer can be employed by a third party such as a temp agency when this is a prerequisite for continued employment after the probationary period ends. Pro re nata (PRN) or "as needed" employment is allowed, as long as the customer can achieve all employment conditions outlined on the VR1642. VR will not accept seasonal employment placements, unless approved by the VR Director using the [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request form](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html). Seasonal employment pertains to labor performed at certain seasons or periods of the year and which may not be continuous or carried out throughout the year.

VR pays for Supported Employment only if the customer is placed with an organization or business that is not owned, operated, controlled, or governed by the service provider providing the job placement service. Service providers that are state agencies, state universities, or facilities that are a part of a state university system are exempt from this requirement.

When a customer obtains a new position with the current employer or begins a new job with another employer, an updated [VR1643, Supported Employment Services Plan 2, Placement, Job Analysis, & Training Plan (SESP-2)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) must be submitted to reflect the new position.

SE services may not exceed 24 months. Services may be extended if the customer needs additional time to reach job stabilization. [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request for Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) must be completed and submitted for approval if a customer's SE services will be provided for longer than 24 months. If an extension is granted, the SE provider receives a copy of the approved VR3472, and the VR counselor issues a new service authorization and sends it to the provider. The VR counselor and the customer must agree to extend services and document the approved extension in the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE).

SE services must include ongoing support services, such as:

* social skills training;
* job skills training;
* observation of customer performance;
* setting up or training individuals who are the customer's natural supports or extended service providers; and
* setting up accommodations at the work site.

Ongoing support services must be provided in person at least twice monthly to monitor the customer at the work site and/or, as necessary, off-site to ensure the customer maintains successful competitive integrated employment. If under specific circumstances, especially at the request of the customer and with approval from the VR counselor, the required monitoring meetings may take place off-site and must occur at least twice monthly. If off-site monitoring is determined to be appropriate, at least one contact with the employer each month is required.

The following VR services may not be purchased while a customer is receiving SE services from an Employment Services Provider:

* Job Development
* Bundled Job Placement
* Job Skills Training
* Non-bundled Job Placement
* On-the-Job Training (OJT)
* Personal Social Adjustment Training (PSAT)
* Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT)
* Environmental Work Assessment
* Vocational Evaluation
* Work Adjustment Training (WAT)
* Work Experience Services (WE)

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## 18.4 Benchmark 1A: Supported Employment Assessment and Supported Employment Assessment Review Meeting

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### 18.4.2 Benchmark 1A Process and Procedure

#### Discovery

The SE specialist begins the process for achieving Benchmark 1A by completing the discovery process.

The discovery process helps the provider gather the information needed to answer all the questions on the [VR1641, Supported Employment Assessment Report (SEA)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html). The SEA report must clearly describe the customer and the customer's skills, abilities, and interests related to employment.

The following may be held remotely:

* meetings between the Supported Employment specialist and the customer's circle of supports; and
* SESP-1 meeting to develop the Supported Employment Service Plan.

The customer and, as appropriate, the customer's representative must attend the SESP-1 meeting.

For more information about remote services, refer to VR-SFP 3.6.4.1 Remote Service Delivery.

The following cannot be held remotely:

* customer's interviews to observe skills and identify interests;
* home visits;
* work skills observations; and
* informational interviews.

Any request to change a Supported Employment service description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR Director using the [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) or Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services form before the change is implemented. For more information refer to [VR-SFP 3.6.4.2 Evaluation of Service Delivery](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03%22%20%5Cl%20%22s3-6-4).

VR recommends the person-centered planning process be used when collecting information for the SEA. The SEA is based on a person-centered planning approach to holistically assess all aspects of a customer's life.

The discovery process completed by the SE specialist includes:

* an interview with the customer;
* development of the person-centered plan;
* interviews with members of the customer's circle of support and discussions with any extended services providers the customer will use (see [Texas HHS Employment Guide for People with Disabilities](https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/employment/employment-first/employment-guide-people-disabilities));
* observing the customer's work skills, life skills, and behaviors at home and in the community;
* visiting current or potential work environments with the customer;
* identifying and observing vocational interests and preferences;
* collecting personal, school, and employer reference information;
* assessing the customer's learning styles and needs for adaptive technology, accommodations, and on-site supports;
* assessing and identifying the customer's strengths, challenges, and transferable skills by exploring the customer's interests, capabilities, preferences, motivations, learning styles, challenges, ongoing support needs, and resources;
* learning about employment conditions related to the customer's preferences, resources, and support needs to achieve and maintain employment outcomes;
* understanding the customer's need for extended services and support at or away from the job site to ensure competitive integrated employment success;
* informational interview and work skills observations completed by the customer; and
* an assessment summary.

Best practice indicates the discovery process takes 20 to 30 hours per customer.

#### Supported Employment Assessment

When completing the [VR1641, Supported Employment Assessment Report (SEA)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), the SE specialist incorporates information that is:

* obtained during the discovery process;
* provided by VR on benefits planning; and
* gathered from assessments of the customer's cognitive and physical abilities.

The VR1641 must include the following information:

* Findings of the discovery interview
* Findings of the Circle of Support interviews
* Residential history and domestic information
* Customer's community resources and supports
* Medical and psychological history
* Customer's education history
* Customer's volunteer and work history
* Discovery of customer's interests leading to informational interview and work skills observations
* Findings of the informational interview and work skill observations
* Summary of the customer's present level of functioning as observed by the provider
* Support needs that family, friends, and professionals provide to help the customer maintain a high-quality life at home and in the community (for example, financial assistance, assistive technology, room and board, supervision for safety, and transportation)
* Extended services and support needs that might be necessary for a successful employment outcome

#### Use of Environmental Work Assessment

If an Environmental Work Assessment (EWA) is purchased for a customer, the SEA must be prorated. The findings of the informational interview or work skills observations section of the SEA will not be completed, and information from the EWA will be used in place of this section in the SEA. For more information about fees, refer to 18.11 Supported Employment Fee Schedule.

#### Deadline for Submission of the SEA

The SEA must be submitted to the VR counselor at least one week before the SEA review meeting. If the SEA does not meet the above-mentioned standards, the SEA is returned to the provider, so the necessary information can be added before the SEA review meeting.

#### SEA Review Meeting

The SEA review meeting is held after the discovery process and the VR1641, Supported Employment Assessment Report, have been completed. The SEA review meeting is held to determine whether an employment outcome for the customer can be achieved through SE or if no employment outcome will be pursued, and to identify the next steps that must take place.

The SEA review meeting may be held by teleconference.

The SEA review meeting must include the:

* VR counselor;
* SE specialist;
* customer; and,
* as appropriate, the customer's representatives and circle of support.

The SEA review meeting must:

* be led by the VR counselor and the SE specialist;
* include a review of the SEA for accuracy and completeness;
* occur before the SESP-1 meeting (Benchmark 1B); and
* help determine whether the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan - 1](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) , must be completed.

The SESP-1 meeting to develop the Supported Employment Service Plan may be held immediately following the SEA review meeting and may be held remotely if the customer and, as appropriate, the customer's representative, are present. For more information, refer to [VR-SFP 3.6.4.1 Remote Service Delivery](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03#s3-6-4).

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## 18.6 Benchmark 2: Job Placement and Supported Employment Service Plan – 2

### 18.6.1 Service Description

The customer achieves Benchmark 2 when the customer:

* starts work in a job that is consistent with the requirements of the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan – 1 (SESP-1)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) matching:
	+ 100 percent of the nonnegotiable conditions;
	+ 50 percent or more of the negotiable conditions; and
	+ at least one job task; and
* works at the job for five days/shifts.

Note: Do not start the day/shift count until the placement abides by the conditions of the SESP-1. If the customer begins employment in the middle of the employer's workweek, the days worked can count toward the five days/shifts as long as all other nonnegotiable hours/shifts criteria are met. Any updates to the SESP-1 must be approved and signed by the customer, provider, and VR counselor before starting the day count. See [VR-SFP 18.5.2 Benchmark 1B: Supported Employment Services Plan – 1 Process and Procedure](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-18#s18-5-2) for further information.

The job in which the customer is placed must be in an organization or a business that is not owned, operated, controlled, or governed by the provider of SE services. Exception: State agencies, state universities, and facilities that are a part of a state university system that are also employment service providers are exempt from this requirement.

To achieve Benchmark 2, the SE specialist must have a minimum of two in person visits with the customer at or away from job site, and one contact with the employer to monitor the employer's satisfaction of the customer's performance during the benchmark period, and must:

* complete the VR1643, Supported Employment Services Plan – 2, Placement, Job Analysis, & Training Plan (SESP-2);
* collect all signatures from the customer and, as appropriate, the customer's representative, on the VR1643; and
* receive approval from the VR counselor.

For information on acceptable signatures refer to [VR-SFP 3.11.1 Documentation and Signatures](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03#s3-11-1).

Any request to change a Supported Employment service description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR Director using the [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) or Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services form before the change is implemented. For more information refer to [VR-SFP 3.6.4.2 Evaluation of Service Delivery](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03%22%20%5Cl%20%22s3-6-4).

### 18.6.2 Benchmark 2 Process and Procedure

The SE specialist must collect all information needed to complete an accurate SESP-2 through interviews with and observations of the customer, employer, supervisor, and coworkers.

To achieve Benchmark 2, the SE specialist submits the [VR1643, Supported Employment Services Plan – 2, Placement, Job Analysis, & Training Plan (SESP-2)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) matching the customer's employment criteria as indicated on the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan – 1 (SESP-1)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html).

#### Job Placement

To achieve Benchmark 2, the SE specialist must assist the customer in activities related to gaining the job placement, such as, but not limited to:

* writing résumés and proposals to assist in placement;
* contacting employers from target lists and developing customer jobs;
* performing a job analysis;
* reviewing job match information;
* assisting the customer with:
	+ job applications;
	+ preemployment forms;
	+ practice interviews; and
	+ preemployment testing or physicals;
* accompanying the customer to interviews and business visits, when necessary;
* assisting the employer with the Work Opportunity Tax Credit;
* providing disability awareness training;
* assisting the employer and customer with tasks related to job carving, job matching, task analysis, job restructuring, or job creation to establish job responsibilities and/or a job description for the customer;
* developing the customer's transportation plan;
* training the customer to travel to and from the job;
* ensuring the customer's supports, training, and accommodation needs are met and implemented to ensure successful employment at placement;
* identifying potential extended services and supports necessary for the customer to maintain employment after achievement of Benchmark 5: Job Stability; and
* evaluating the job placement and customer's performance to collect information to establish the customer's training and support plan to ensure long-term job stability through the completion of the [VR1643, Supported Employment Services Plan – 2, Placement, Job Analysis, & Training Plan (SESP-2)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html).

Job leads may come from the customer's circle of support and other sources.

#### Documentation

Services provided must be documented on [VR1643, Supported Employment Services Plan – 2, Placement, Job Analysis, & Training Plan](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html). Hours worked must be documented on the [VR1644, Supported Employment Services, Time Tracking Log](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html).

The information documented in the VR1643 must include the following:

* Employer's contact information (for example, name, phone, email);
* .
* Customer's employment information (for example, job title, work schedule, first day of employment);
* Customer's rate of pay and earnings;
* Job analysis (for example, essential work duties, episodic work duties, physical and other demands of the job);
* Accommodations;
* Training plan; and
* Extended services necessary for a successful employment outcome.

The information included in the VR1643 must be unique and individualized for each customer. VR may contact the customer, customer's representative (if applicable), or employer to verify the employment conditions on the SESP-1 have been met and the SESP-2 information is accurate.

If the customer does not achieve 100 percent of the nonnegotiable employment conditions, at least 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions, and at least one targeted job task listed on the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan – 1 (SESP-1)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), the VR1642 must be updated to be accurate through a new SESP-1 meeting  before the count of days of employment can begin. (See the policy in [18.5 Benchmark 1B: Supported Employment Service Plan Part 1](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-18#s18-5).) If the VR counselor and customer or the customer's representative do not choose to make changes to the original SESP-1, the customer does not achieve all the nonnegotiable conditions (at least 50 percent of the negotiable conditions) and at least one job task listed on the VR1642, VR will not accept the job placement.

### 18.6.3 Benchmark 2 Outcomes Required for Payment

Payment for Benchmark 2 is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* [VR1643, Supported Employment Services Plan 2, Placement, Job Analysis, & Training Plan (SESP-2)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), which is submitted following the fifth day/shift of employment and documents achievement of 100 percent of the nonnegotiable employment conditions, 50 percent or more of the negotiable employment conditions, and at least one targeted job task;
* [VR1644, Supported Employment Services, Time Tracking Log](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html); and
* invoice.

The SE specialist submits a fully complete, accurate, signed, and dated VR1643 that has been completed on a computer. For information on acceptable signatures refer to [VR-SFP 3.11.1 Documentation and Signatures](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03#s3-11-1).

The VR1643 must verify and document that the customer:

* has maintained employment by working for five days/shifts in the job that is described in the SESP-2;
* is in a competitive integrated work setting;
* is being compensated at or above the minimum wage but not less than the customary wage paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who do not have disabilities; and
* met the supported employment specialist in person at or away from the job site a minimum of two times and one contact with the employer to monitor the employer's satisfaction with the customer's performance during the benchmark period.

The VR1643 must also document:

* ongoing support services;
* monitoring of the customer at the work site or during off-site visits to ensure the customer maintains successful competitive integrated employment; and
* the customer's job placement, training needs, and supports, including:
	+ the job placement activities the SE specialist has provided for the customer;
	+ the customer's position and job responsibilities;
	+ the name of the customer's employer and contact information for the customer's supervisor;
	+ the customer's employment information and earnings;
	+ the results of a job analysis (for example, essential work duties, episodic work duties, and physical and other demands of the job);
	+ the training the employer provides to individuals in the customer's position; and
	+ specific training needs, accommodation needs, and identified extended services the customer might require to maintain successful competitive integrated employment.

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## 18.7 Benchmark 3: Four-Week Job Maintenance

### 18.7.1 Benchmark 3 Service Description

The customer achieves Benchmark 3, Four-Week Job Maintenance, when the customer:

* is employed by the employer listed on the most recent [VR1643, Supported Employment Services Plan 2, Placement, Job Analysis, & Training Plan](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html); and
* has achieved 28 cumulative days of employment.

The job must be consistent with the requirements of the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan – 1 (SESP-1)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) including:

* the requirement that 100 percent of nonnegotiable conditions and at least 50 percent of negotiable conditions must be met; and
* the requirement that at least one job task listed on the VR1642 is met.

The Supported Employment Specialist must have a minimum of two in person visits with the customer at or away from the job site and one contact with the employer to monitor the employer's satisfaction of the customer's performance during the benchmark period, and address:

* training related todisability issues;
* training to assist the customer to meet the employer's expectations; and
* training of extended service providers.

Any request to change a Supported Employment service description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR Director using the [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) or Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services form before the change is implemented. For more information refer to [VR-SFP 3.6.4.2 Evaluation of Service Delivery](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03%22%20%5Cl%20%22s3-6-4).

To complete Benchmark 3, the SE specialist:

* must have at least two in person visits at or away from job site with the customer and one contact with the employer during the 28 days of the benchmark period to monitor the employer's satisfaction with the customer's performance and the customer's satisfaction with the job;
* provides or arranges for a job skills trainer to provide intensive on- and off-job site supports, as described in VR1643 and/or [VR1645, Supported Employment Training and Progress Report](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), during the benchmark period;
* who provided the services and supports or who supervises the assigned job skills trainer completes the VR1645; when a job skills trainer is used with a customer, the trainer may complete the job skills training sections of the VR1645 and sign the report; and
* completes the [VR1644, Supported Employment Services, Time Tracking Log](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html).

When necessary, the VR1642 must be updated with changes to employment or job skills by means of a new SESP-1 meeting before the count of days of the benchmark period can begin or resume. For more information, see the policy in [18.5 Benchmark 1B: Supported Employment Services Plan Part 1](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-18#s18-5).

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### 18.7.3 Benchmark 3 Outcomes Required for Payment

Payment for Benchmark 3 is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, and signed:

* [VR1645, Supported Employment Training and Progress Report](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) for the 28th cumulative day of employment listing the progress and/or achievement of the identified goals; a minimum of two in person visits with the customer at or away from job site; services provided; employer contacts; identified extended services; and average number of hours worked by the customer, including signatures that confirm the customer has met:
	+ 100 percent of nonnegotiable employment conditions;
	+ at least 50 percent or more of negotiable employment conditions; and
	+ at least one targeted job task listed on the current VR1642, Supported Employment Services Plan 1;
* [VR1644, Supported Employment Services, Time Tracking Log](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html); and
* invoice.

The customer must maintain employment for 28 cumulative days without a seven-day or greater break within a workweek that is consistent with the requirements of the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan – 1,](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) that 100 percent of the nonnegotiable requirements and at least 50 percent of the negotiable requirements were met, and at least one job task listed on the VR1642 was met.

The SE specialist monitors, arranges, and/or provides:

* short-term supports;
* long-term supports;
* training; and
* accommodations.

The SE specialist submits a fully complete, accurate, signed, and dated VR1645 that has been completed on a computer and collects all signatures. For information on acceptable signatures refer to [VR-SFP 3.11.1 Documentation and Signatures](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03#s3-11-1).

The completed VR1645 describes the customer's identified goals and the training supports and accommodations used to assist the customer in maintaining competitive integrated employment. The SE specialist and/or the job skills trainer documents the goals and focus areas in descriptive terms. Goals and focus areas may include, but are not limited to:

* challenges the customer encountered while meeting the employer's expectations;
* training, strategies, support needs, and accommodations that were identified in the [VR1643, Supported Employment Services Plan 2, Placement, Job Analysis, & Training Plan (SESP-2)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) and were addressed during the benchmark reporting period;
* plans to address outstanding training, supports, and accommodation needs before job stability;
* the SE specialist's and the job skills trainer's roles in the setup, delivery, or monitoring of services designed to help the customer meet the employer's expectations;
* the customer's and, if applicable, the customer's legal representative's level of satisfaction with the job and the work environment and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP can be verified through either a signature on the VR1645, or a VR staff member's contact with the customer;
* the training the employer provided for the customer; and
* verification of customer employment for four weeks (28 cumulative days), working at least one day in each week and without a break of a full workweek ("workweek" as defined by the employer) for reasons such as illness, injury, vacation, or short-term disability.

VR1645 also must document supported employment specialist met the customer in person at or away from the job site a minimum of two times and one contact with the employer to monitor the employer's satisfaction of the customer's performance during the benchmark period.

The SE specialist records the customer's status at the 28th cumulative day of employment on the VR1645 listing any identified extended services. The VR1644 indicates the dates and hours worked and is completed by the SE specialist.

The information documented in the VR1645 must be unique and individualized for each customer. VR contacts the customer, the customer's representative (if applicable), or employer to verify the information in the VR1644 and VR1645 is accurate.

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## 18.8 Benchmark 4: Eight-Week Job Maintenance

### 18.8.1 Benchmark 4 Service Description

The customer achieves Benchmark 4, Eight-Week Job Maintenance, when the customer is employed by the employer listed on the most recent [VR1643, Supported Employment Services Plan – 2, Placement, Job Analysis, & Training Plan (SESP-2)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) and:

* has achieved 56 cumulative days of employment;
* has worked at least one day for each workweek included in the reporting period; and
* the job is consistent with the requirements in the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan – 1 (SESP-1)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) including:
	+ 100 percent of the nonnegotiable conditions and at least 50 percent of the negotiable conditions were met; and
	+ at least one job task listed on the VR1642 was met.

The Supported Employment Specialist must have a minimum of two in person visits with the customer at or away from the job site and one contact with the employer to monitor the employer's satisfaction of the customer's performance during the benchmark period, and address:

* training related to disability issues;
* training to assist the customer to meet the employer's expectations; and

training of extended service providers. Any request to change a Supported Employment service description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR Director using the [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) or Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services form before the change is implemented. For more information refer to [VR-SFP 3.6.4.2 Evaluation of Service Delivery](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03%22%20%5Cl%20%22s3-6-4).

To complete Benchmark 4:

* the SE specialist must have at least two in person visits at or away from job site with the customer and one contact with the employer during the 28 days of the benchmark period to monitor the employer's satisfaction with the customer's performance and the customer's satisfaction with the job;
* the SE specialist provides or arranges for a job skills trainer to provide the customer with intensive on- and off-job site supports, as described in the VR1643;
* the job skills trainer (if different from the SE specialist) who provided the supports completes the job skills training sections of the [VR1645, Supported Employment Training and Progress Report](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), and signs the report;
* the SE specialist and/or job skills trainer provide training to any paid or unpaid extended support providers addressing the customer's needs; and
* the SE specialist completes the [VR1644, Supported Employment Services, Time Tracking Log](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html).

When necessary, the VR1642 must be updated with changes to employment or job skills by means of a new SESP-1 meeting before the count of days in the benchmark period can begin or resume. For more information, see [18.5 Benchmark 1B: Supported Employment Services Plan – 1 (SESP-1)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-18#s18-5).

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### 18.8.3 Benchmark 4 Outcomes Required for Payment

Payment for Benchmark 4 is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, and signed:

* [VR1645, Supported Employment Training and Progress Report](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) for the 56th cumulative day of employment listing the progress and/or achievement of identified goals; in person visits customer at or away from job site; services provided; employer contacts, and identified extended services; employment conditions; targeted job tasks; extended services; and hours worked by the customer with signatures to confirm meeting:
	+ 100 percent of nonnegotiable employment conditions;
	+ at least 50 percent or more of negotiable employment conditions; and
	+ at least one targeted job task listed on the current VR1642, Supported Employment Services Plan 1 (SESP1);
* [VR1644, Supported Employment Services, Time Tracking Log](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html); and
* invoice.

The customer must maintain employment for a minimum of 56 cumulative days without a break of seven days or more, consistent with the requirements of the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan – 1 (SESP-1)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) that 100 percent of the nonnegotiable conditions and at least 50 percent of the negotiable conditions were met and at least one job task listed on the VR1642 was accomplished.

The SE specialist must have at least two in person visit at or away from job site per 28 days with the customer.

The SE specialist monitors, arranges, and/or provides:

* short-term supports;
* long-term supports;
* training; and
* accommodations.

The completed [VR1645, Supported Employment Training and Progress Report](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) describes customer's identified goals and the training supports and accommodations used to assist the customer in maintaining competitive integrated employment. The SE specialist or job skills trainer documents the goals and focus areas in descriptive terms. Goals and focus areas may include, but are not limited to:

* challenges the customer encountered while meeting the employer's expectations;
* training, strategies, support needs, and accommodations that were identified in the [VR1643, Supported Employment Services Plan 2, Placement, Job Analysis, & Training Plan (SESP-2)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) and addressed during the benchmark's reporting period;
* plans to address—before job stability—outstanding training, supports, and accommodation needs;
* the SE specialist's and the job skills trainer's roles in the setup, delivery, or monitoring of services designed to help the customer meet the employer's expectations;
* the customer's and, if applicable, the customer's legal representative's level of satisfaction with the job and the work environment and service delivery as described in the VR-SFP can be verified through either a signature on the VR1645, or a VR staff member's contact with the customer;
* the training the employer provided for the customer; and
* verification of customer employment for eight weeks (56 cumulative days), working at least one day in each week and without a break of a full workweek ("workweek" as defined by the employer) for reasons such as illness, injury, vacation, or short-term disability.

VR1645 also must document supported employment specialist met the customer in person at or away from the job site a minimum of two times and one contact with the employer to monitor the employer's satisfaction of the customer's performance during the benchmark period.

The SE specialist records the customer's status at the 56th cumulative day of employment on the VR1645 listing any identified extended services. The [VR1644, Supported Employment Services, Time Tracking Log](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) indicating the dates and hours worked is also completed by the SE specialist.

The information documented in the VR1645 must be unique and individualized for each customer. VR contacts the customer, customer's representative (if applicable), or employer to verify the information on the VR1644 and VR1645 is accurate.

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## 18.9 Benchmark 5: Job Stability

### 18.9.1 Benchmark 5 Service Description

Benchmark 5 is achieved when the customer:

* maintains employment for 56 days or more;
* meets 100 percent of the nonnegotiable conditions on the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan – 1 (SESP-1)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html);
* meets at least 50 percent or more of the negotiable conditions on the VR1642;
* performs at least one job task on the VR1642;
* meets or exceeds the employer's performance expectations;
* has in place all Extended Services and supports, as identified on the VR1646, such as Supported Employment Services, Job Stability Report, or that have emerged, such as:
	+ the customer's LTSS; or
	+ alternate funding, agencies, or individuals established to provide Extended Services for the customer; and
* attends a job stability meeting with the customer, his/her representative, if any, the SE, and VR counselor, and all agree the customer has achieved job stability. Extended service providers are invited to attend, but their attendance is not mandatory.

A Job Stability meeting between the customer, provider, customer’s circle of supports and VR staff may be conducted remotely.

The Supported Employment Specialist must have a minimum of two in person visits with the customer at or away from the job site and one contact with the employer to monitor the employer's satisfaction of the customer's performance every 28 days until Job Stability is achieved, and address:

* training related to disability issues;
* training to assist the customer to meet the employer's expectations; and
* training of extended service providers;

Any request to change a Supported Employment service description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR Director using the [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) or Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services form before the change is implemented. For more information refer to [VR-SFP 3.6.4.2 Evaluation of Service Delivery](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03%22%20%5Cl%20%22s3-6-4).

The Extended Services and long-term supports identified on the [VR1646, Supported Employment Services, Job Stability Report](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) must be in place and working effectively before the VR counselor can determine whether the customer is stable in the job.

The employment service provider providing the Extended Services sponsored by TWC-VR for youth with disabilities must be identified on VR1646 as an Extended Services provider.

The customer must achieve Supported Employment Job Stability status before VR can purchase Job Skills Training for Extended Services. Extended Services may be purchased simultaneously with the Supported Employment Benchmark 6: Case Closure.

If the customer finds a new position, a new job, or requires additional supports from the SE specialist or job skills trainer, at least 30 cumulative days of employment must occur before job stability is reestablished.

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### 18.9.3 Benchmark 5 Outcomes Required for Payment

Payment for Benchmark 5 is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, and signed:

* [VR1646, Supported Employment Services, Job Stability Report](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) indicating a job stability meeting has occurred with the VR counselor, the customer, customer's representative (if applicable), and the SE specialist, with all in agreement that the customer is job stable;
* [VR1644, Supported Employment Services, Time Tracking Log](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html); and
* invoice.

The customer must maintain employment for a minimum of 56 cumulative days without a break of seven days or more and consistent with the requirements of the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan – 1 (SESP-1)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html): 100 percent of nonnegotiable employment conditions were met, at least 50 percent of negotiable employment conditions were met, and at least one job task listed on the VR1642 was accomplished.

The SE specialist must:

* have a minimum of two in person visits at or away from job site with the customer each month during the job stability period to monitor the customer's extended services, natural supports, and employment status;
* have a minimum of one contact with the employer each month to monitor the employer's satisfaction with the customer's performance during the benchmark period; and
* monitor extended service providers to ensure the customer maintains the competitive integrated employment with the supports, training, and accommodations listed in the VR1646.

Neither the SE specialist nor the job skills trainer may provide the long-term support needs, training needs, and/or accommodations, unless funding from a source other than VR is secured.

The SE specialist submits a fully complete, accurate, signed, and dated VR1646 that has been completed electronically. For information on acceptable signatures refer to [VR-SFP 3.11.1 Documentation and Signatures](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03#s3-11-1).

The completed form describes the customer's job placement, training supports, and accommodations.

The form must include:

* a description of the customer's job duties and ability to perform job duties, including whether the customer is meeting the employer's expectations;
* a list of modifications and/or accommodations necessary to enable the customer to meet the employer's expectations;
* a description of the customer's transportation plan to get to and from work, with a backup transportation plan in place;
* documentation that the extended services and natural supports identified on the VR1646 are operational;
* identification of long-term support providers, extended services providers, and natural supports;
* information about the frequency and method long-term support providers, extended service providers, and/or natural supports will use to monitor the customer's progress and any employer concerns; and
* verification by the SE specialist that the:
	+ customer's accommodation needs are documented with the employer;
	+ customer has primary and secondary transportation plans to get to and from work;
	+ customer is working in a competitive integrated work environment;
	+ customer is compensated at or above the minimum wage and not less than the customary wage paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who do not have disabilities; and
	+ customer is employed for at least eight weeks (56 cumulative days), working at least one day in each week and without a break for a full workweek ("workweek" as defined by the employer) for reasons such as illness, injury, vacation, and short-term disability, before the customer is determined to be job stable.
* the customer's and, if applicable, the customer's representative’s level of satisfaction with the job, work environment, and service delivery as described in VR-SFP Extended Services can be verified through either a signature on the VR1646, or VR staff member's contact with the customer.

If the customer gains a new position or new job, a minimum of 30 cumulative days of employment is required before the customer is eligible to be determined job stable.

The SE specialist records the customer's status of employment on the VR1646 listing all identified extended services (the customer's Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) and Services Plan of Care for other state agencies have been establish or alternate funding, agencies, or people have been established to provide all extended services for the customer), after the VR counselor determines Job Stability. The SE specialist also completes [VR1644, Supported Employment Services, Time Tracking Log](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), indicating the dates and hours worked. The information documented in the VR1646 must be unique and individualized for each customer. VR may contact the customer, customer's representative, or employer to verify that the VR1644 and VR1646 information is accurate.

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## 18.10 Benchmark 6: Service Closure

### 18.10.1 Benchmark 6 Service Description

Benchmark 6 is achieved when the customer:

* is employed in a job for at least 146 days;
* completes 90 cumulative days of employment stability from the final job stability date;
* performs at least one job task on the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan – 1 (SESP-1)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html);
* meets 100 percent of the nonnegotiable conditions on the VR1642;
* meets at least 50 percent or more of the negotiable conditions on the VR1642;
* meets or exceeds the employer's expectations;
* has received at least two in-person visits at or away from the job site from the Supported Employment Specialist every 30 days during the 90-day count; and
* is satisfied, along with his or her representative, if any, with:
	+ the job placement,
	+ work environment,
	+ service delivery as described in the VR-SFP, and
	+ the establishment of Extended Services and support.

Satisfaction can be verified through either a signature on the VR1646, or a VR staff member's contact with the customer. Additionally, all extended services and support identified on the [VR1646, Supported Employment Services, Job Stability Report](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) must be in place and working.

The SE specialist and the job skills trainer must not have provided any direct services for or on behalf of the customer, such as training the employer or Extended Service providers, after the job stability date has been set. The only exception is for youth with disabilities when VR has agreed to sponsor Extended Services because no other resource is available. Extended Services may be purchased simultaneously with the Supported Employment Benchmark 6: Case Closure for youth with disabilities when VR is purchasing Extended Services as identified on the IPE.

At Benchmark 6: Service Closure, the Extended Service providers, employer, and other supports must be in place and providing the necessary supports as defined on the VR1646, and must be documented on the [VR1647, Supported Employment Closure Summary](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html).

The SE specialist must have a minimum of two in person visits at or away from job site per month during the job stability period to:

* monitor the customer's employment to ensure the customer continues to meet the employer's expectations;
* monitor the employer's satisfaction with the customer's performance during the benchmark period; and
* monitor the customer's extended service to ensure the customer maintains the competitive integrated employment with the supports, training, and accommodations listed in the [VR1646, Supported Employment Services, Job Stability Report](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html).

Any request to change a Supported Employment service description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR Director using the [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) or Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services form before the change is implemented. For more information refer to [VR-SFP 3.6.4.2 Evaluation of Service Delivery](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03%22%20%5Cl%20%22s3-6-4).

### 18.10.2 Benchmark 6 Process and Procedure

The SE specialist must:

* monitor the extended services and support, as outlined in the [VR1646, Supported Employment Services, Job Stability Report](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), to verify the supports are effective and to ensure the customer can maintain successful long-term competitive integrated employment; and
* not provide any direct services to the customer during the cumulative 90-day period between job stability and service closure.

When a job skills trainer is used, the job skills trainer must not provide any direct services to the customer during the cumulative 90-day period between job stability and service closure.

The VR counselor determines whether the customer maintained the required 90 cumulative days of job stability from the most recently established job stability date. Ninety cumulative days of job stability are necessary to achieve Benchmark 6: Service Closure.

If the customer does not work because of illness, injury, vacation, or short-term disability for seven or more days of a workweek after the achievement of Benchmark 5: Job Stability, a new job stability date must be established in a job stability meeting before a new cumulative 90-day count starts for the achievement of Benchmark 6: Service Closure. If a customer does not work during the time periods for Benchmarks 5 and 6, but then returns to work and is still stable, a [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request or Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services form](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) may be submitted to allow for the period of time to be "frozen" so that a new start of the cumulative 90-day count is not required.

Any request to change a Supported Employment service description, Process and Procedure, or Outcomes Required for Payment must be documented and approved by the VR Director using the [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) or Job Placement, Job Skills Training, and Supported Employment Services form before the change is implemented. For more information refer to [VR-SFP 3.6.4.2 Evaluation of Service Delivery](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03%22%20%5Cl%20%22s3-6-4).

If at any time it becomes necessary to provide direct services to the customer; to train or extensively consult with the extended service provider, the employer, or the customer's natural supports; or to address issues related to the customer's performance, employment situation, or transportation, the current job stability period ends.

If the customer finds a new position or a new job or requires additional supports from the SE specialist or job skills trainer, a minimum of 30 cumulative days of employment must occur before job stability is reestablished and a new 90-day count is started toward the achievement of Benchmark 6: Service Closure.

If the customer works more than 32 weeks, the VR counselor uses the [VR1644, Supported Employment Services, Time Tracking Log](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), the same form used to record earlier employment. VR1644 is used to record all employment hours until Benchmark 6: Service Closure is achieved.

### 18.10.3 Benchmark 6 Outcomes Required for Payment

Payment for Benchmark 6 is made when the VR counselor approves a complete, accurate, and signed:

* [VR1647, Supported Employment Closure Summary](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), 90 days from the last job stability date achieved, stating achievement of 100 percent of nonnegotiable and at least 50 percent or more of negotiable employment conditions, at least one targeted job task, and extended services;
* VR1644, Supported Employment Services Time Tracking Log; and
* an invoice.

The customer must be job stable for a cumulative 90-day period of employment without a break of seven days or more and consistent with the requirements of the [VR1642, Supported Employment Service Plan – 1 (SESP-1)](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html): 100 percent of nonnegotiable employment conditions were met, at least 50 percent of negotiable employment conditions were met, and at least one job task listed on the VR1642 was accomplished.

The SE specialist must:

* have a minimum of two in person visits at or away from job site per month with the customer during the job stability period to monitor the customer's extended services, natural supports, and employment status;
* have a minimum of one contact per month with the employer to monitor the employer's satisfaction with the customer's performance during the benchmark period; and
* monitor extended service providers to ensure the customer maintains the competitive integrated employment with the supports, training, and accommodations listed in the VR1646, Supported Employment Services, Job Stability Report.

The SE specialist submits a fully complete, accurate, signed, and dated [VR1647, Supported Employment Closure Summary](https://www.twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) that was completed electronically. The customer must be employed on the date the customer signs the VR1647. For information on acceptable signatures refer to [VR-SFP 3.11.1 Documentation and Signatures](https://www.twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-03#s3-11-1).

The completed forms describe the customer's job placement and extended services.

The forms must include:

* a description of the customer's employment information;
* identification of extended services and natural supports;
* documentation of the extended services and natural supports identified on the VR1647 and verification they are in place and working;
* a statement of the frequency and method for routine visits from the long-term extended service provider and natural supports who have agreed to monitor the customer's progress with the employer and/or customer; and
* verification by the SE specialist that the customer:
	+ is working in a competitive integrated work environment;
	+ is compensated at or above the minimum wage and not less than the customary wage paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who do not have disabilities; and
	+ was employed at least 146 cumulative days, working at least one day in each week and without a break for a full workweek ("workweek" as defined by the employer) for reasons such as illness, injury, vacation, and short-term disability before the customer was determined job stable.
* the customer's and, if applicable, the customer's representative level of satisfaction with:
	+ the job,
	+ the work environment,
	+ service delivery as described in the VR-SFP, and
	+ the establishment of Extended Services and supports.

Satisfaction can be verified through either a signature on the VR1646, or VR staff member contact with the customer.

If the customer obtains a new position, changes employers, or has significant challenges in the job, a new job stability meeting must be held, after the customer is job stable, to set a new 90-day count for achievement of Benchmark 6.

The SE specialist must have at least two monitoring contacts per month with the customer, employer, extended service provider, and/or individuals providing natural supports, as described in the VR1647, to ensure that the customer can maintain a successful long-term competitive integrated employment outcome.

The SE specialist records the customer's status at 90 cumulative days from the final job stability date on the VR1647.

The information documented on the VR1647 must be unique and individualized for each customer. VR may contact the customer, customer's representative, or employer to verify the information on the VR1644 and VR1647 is accurate.

If the VR1642 indicates the provider is eligible for any Employment Premium Service, and if VR staff has verified the required outcomes have been achieved, payment is made at the achievement of Benchmark 6.