# VR-SFP Chapter 20: Premiums

The following sections in the VR-SFP have been revised and will take effect 10-1-21.

## 20.9 Travel Premium

This Travel Premium allows contracted providers to be reimbursed for mileage and other travel-related costs, such as lodging, food, and third-party transportation. When only mileage travel is being submitted, manager approval is not required. For all other travel expenses, VR manager approval is required before the travel occurs.

The Travel Premium may be available to contracted providers serving VR customers who receive the services described in

* VR-SFP chapters:
  + [Chapter 5: Orientation and Mobility Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-05)
  + [Chapter 7: Diabetes Self-Management Education Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-07)
  + [Chapter 9: Assistive Technology for Sight-Related Disabilities](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-09)
  + [Chapter 10: Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (IL-OIB)](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-10)
* [Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual (VRSM) B-403-3: Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation System](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-b-400#b403-3).

### 20.9.1 Definitions

#### Provider Location

The provider's location is defined as the provider's headquarters, as stated in the provider's contract, or the location of the provider's staff that is providing the service, whichever is closest to the location where the service will be provided.

#### Round Trip

A trip where the starting point and final destination are the same (for example, start and end at the provider's location).

### 20.9.2 Service Description

The Travel Premium is based on round-trip travel and payment can include reimbursement of approved:

* lodging,
* per diem,
* airfare (if necessary),
* mileage when provider's own vehicle is used, and
* transportation by taxi, bus, other form of mass transit, or network transportation driver (for example, Uber or Lyft).

The VR program does not reimburse for travel expenses

* to transport customers; or
* if the customer does not show up for a scheduled service (referred to as a "no show").

Providers do not qualify for a state tax exemption.

The Travel Premium may be available to contracted providers serving VR customers:

* who require an eligible SFP service to achieve the long-term goals as identified on the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE) or independent living goals established under the (IL-OIB) program;
* when there is not a qualified SFP provider available within a 50-mile radius of the location where the authorized service is to be provided; and
* who require the provision of a billable service, excluding travel for the sole purpose of obtaining a customer's signature on required documents).

A request to change a Travel Premium requirement listed in the Service Description, Process and Procedures, or Outcomes Required for Payment, must be documented and approved by the VR director using the [VR3472, Contracted Service Modification Request](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html).

### 20.9.2.1 Mileage Only

When considering the cost of personal vehicle travel (mileage) as a transportation alternative, the VR provider considers all related costs, such as the cost of meals, parking, vehicle rental, fuel, or taxi.

VR Manager approval is not required for the provider to be reimbursed for mileage only.

The mileage reimbursement is based on direct travel for each mile traveled over 50 miles within a round trip.

Before traveling, the provider must receive a service authorization from VR that includes the anticipated distance and the number of trips to be traveled.

After traveling, the provider must submit [VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) with all sections related to the mileage reimbursement completed.

To calculate mileage-only amount of the Travel Premium:

1. Determine the round-trip mileage from the provider's location to the service location(s) (can include travel within the customer's community) using MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance and round-trip options selected
2. Subtract 50 miles from the round-trip total; and
3. Multiply the total by the state-approved mileage rate

Example:

* The provider is located in Lubbock.
* The customer lives in Amarillo (126 miles from Lubbock).
* The provider traveled a total of five (5) miles within Amarillo to provide services at several locations. (e.g. Walmart to United Grocery store for a total of 5 miles),
* The provider returns to Lubbock (126 miles).
* The mileage reimbursement is calculated as follows:

126 + 5 + 126 = 257

257 – 50 = 207 miles

207 x (state-approved mileage rate) will equal the mileage reimbursement.

Mileage is reimbursed at the approved state automobile mileage rate found on the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts webpage: <https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php>.

### 20.9.2.2 Other Travel Cost (Excluding Mileage)

To be reimbursed for any other travel costs (excluding mileage) such as meals, lodging, and transportation, the provider must submit a [VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), which includes the projected cost of travel for each customer to be served during the trip. The VR counselor and VR Manager review the projected cost on the VR3436 and supporting documentation. When the VR Manager approves projected cost of travel on the VR3436, then a service authorization is received by the provider to authorize travel cost. The service authorization must be received before the travel occurs.

When applicable, the provider must use the guidelines below when completing the VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report. Copies of all receipts for all costs, excluding mileage, must be submitted with the invoice.

#### Lodging

The cost of lodging is reimbursed only if it is incurred at a commercial lodging establishment.

The provider should use the least expensive lodging available. The provider cannot exceed the rates allowed on the published U.S. General Services Administration’s (GSA) [Federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates website](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem). If the city is not listed but the county is listed, use the daily rate of the county found on the GSA Federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates website.

Reimbursement includes:

* the cost of the room;
* city, county, state and other hotel taxes; and
* fee for self-parking when applicable.

#### Meals

Meals are only reimbursed if:

* the provider is away from the identified provider location for at least six consecutive hours, and
* overnight travel is required for the trip.

Receipts are required for meals to be reimbursed.

Gratuities are not reimbursed. Taxes are reimbursed but are already included in the allowed per diem rate. Alcohol expenses are not reimbursed.

To determine the per diem rate, refer to the [Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem) published by the GSA. If the appropriate city is not listed, but the county is listed, the VR counselor uses the daily rate for the county

#### Air Transportation

Airfare can be purchased to meet a provider's transportation needs only if:

* airfare is the most cost-effective method (flying versus driving);
* airfare is an appropriate means of transportation for the provider based on potential disability-related factors; or
* no reasonable alternative exists.

When considering the cost of airfare as a transportation alternative, the VR provider considers all related costs, such as the cost of transportation to and from the airport, parking, vehicle rental, fuel, or taxi. The VR provider documents the cost comparison clearly, including supporting documentation and submits this as an addendum to the [VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html). A brief justification for the need for air transportation must be included on the VR3436.

For a provider to be reimbursed for commercial air transportation expenses, a copy of a complete passenger receipt issued by a commercial airline company or an itinerary issued by the company or a travel agency is required.

The commercial air transportation expense receipt or itinerary must include the following:

* name of the provider and airline
* ticket number
* class of transportation
* travel dates
* amount of the airfare
* origin and destination of each flight
* proof of payment

The provider should select the most cost-effective airfare available between the airport closest to the identified provider location and the city where services will be provided.

#### Ground Transportation

A provider may be reimbursed for the actual cost of transportation by taxi, bus, other form of mass transit, form a network transportation driver (for example, Uber or Lyft), if needed for the provider to travel to the location where the service will be provided.

* The most cost-effective mode of transportation available must be used
* Receipts for all travel-related expenses must be provided.

### 20.9.3 Process and Procedures

After the VR counselor and regional quality assurance program specialist or regional program support specialist determines there is not a provider to serve the customer within his or her local community, the following process and procedures apply.

#### 20.9.3.1 Mileage Only Reimbursement

To be reimbursed for mileage only, the provider does the following:

* receives a service authorization including the anticipated distance and number of trips to be traveled;
* schedules the services with the customer(s);
* makes travel arrangements;
* travels from the defined provider location to the location(s) of the service;
* provides the service;
* returns to the defined provider location;
* completes all sections of the [VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) that are related to mileage reimbursement;
* obtains required signatures; and
* submits the required documentation for payment.

To calculate mileage reimbursement, use the form and guidelines below:

1. determine the round-trip mileage from the provider's location to the service locations, including travel within the customer's community, using MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance and round-trip options selected;
2. subtract 50 miles from the round-trip total; then
3. multiply the total by the state-approved mileage rate.

After the provider submits all required documentation for payment, a VR staff member:

* reviews the provider's documentation,
* verifies mileage on MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance, and round-trip options selected, and
* authorizes payment if all requirements are met.

#### 20.9.3.2 Reimbursement of Mileage and Other Travel Costs

To be reimbursed for mileage **and** any other travel costs, such as the costs for meals, lodging, and transportation, the provider and VR staff does the following:

* Provider submits the projected cost on the VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report, to the VR counselor to gain preapproval for travel expenses.
* VR counselor reviews VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report and submits to the VR Manager for review.
* VR Manager approves or disapproves the projected cost by documenting the decision on the VR3436.
* VR counselor issues service authorization or multi-customer service authorization (when multiple customers are to be seen in the round-trip travel) for the approved projected cost, after all appropriate approvals are in place and submits the service authorization to the provider. (The service authorization includes separate line items for each of the allowable expenses. The expenses will be split equally between all customers seen within the round-trip.)
* Provider schedules the services with the customer and makes travel arrangements.
* Provider travels from the defined provider location to the location(s) of the service, provides services before returning to the provider location.
* Provider completes all applicable sections of the VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report recording the actual cost.
* Provider obtains required signatures.
* Provider submits the required documentation for payment.

To calculate mileage reimbursement, use the form and guidelines below:

1. determine the round-trip mileage from the provider's location to the service locations, including travel within the customer's community, using MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance and round-trip options selected;
2. subtract 50 miles from the round-trip total; then
3. multiply the total by the state-approved mileage rate.

When other travel cost such as meals, lodging and transportation are included on the VR3436, the provider follows all guidelines in the service definitions on the form and submits copies of all receipts related to:

* lodging,
* meals,
* air transportation, and/or
* ground transportation.

After the provider submits all required documentation for payment, a VR staff member:

* reviews the provider's documentation,
* verifies mileage on MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance, and round-trip options selected (if any),
* verifies all actual travel expenses with receipts and any other required documentation,
* compares actual expense to the approved projected cost recorded on the VR3436 to ensure expenses were allowed and
* authorizes payment if all conditions are met.

### 20.9.4. Outcomes Required for Payment

The service provider is eligible for the Travel Premium when:

* the customer(s) receives the provision of a billable service, excluding travel for the sole purpose of obtaining a customer's signature on required documents
* there is no provider for the service within a 50-mile radius of the customer's location, or the staff of the provider within the 50-mile radius do not meet the qualifications necessary to provide the service; and
* all information required on [VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) is provided.

The VR3436 must include:

* case ID for all customers served during the round trip;
* purpose of the visit provided;
* provider's location at which travel was initiated and completed;
* all addresses traveled to during the round trip;
* For mileage reimbursement
  + each segment of the round-trip travel according to MapQuest shortest mileage and route settings; and
  + mileage calculation for the premium (Total mileage for the round trip, according to MapQuest shortest mileage and round-trip settings minus 50 miles)
* For other travel cost such as meals, lodging and transportation:
  + VR3436 that includes the Management approval for the projected travel expenses;
  + VR3436 that records the actual expenses, following all requirements in the services definition, for the round-trip travel
  + copies of receipts and supporting documentation for all expenses.
* Required signatures

The VR program does not reimburse for travel expenses

* to transport customers; or
* if the customer does not show up for a scheduled service (referred to as a "no show").

Providers may not be paid when customers do not show up for scheduled service.

The Travel Premium is paid when the VR counselor verifies the travel reimbursement and approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report;
* required supporting documents, such as receipts; and
* invoice.

### 20.9.5 Travel Premium Fee

For more information, see [20.11.7 Travel Premium](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-20" \l "s20-9-7).

## 20.10 Brain Injury Premium

### 20.10.1 Service Description

An acquired brain injury (traumatic and nontraumatic) is an injury to the brain that is not hereditary, congenital, degenerative, or induced by birth trauma. The brain injury occurs after birth.

Examples of injuries that affect the brain or the oxygen supply to the brain include:

* stroke;
* aneurysm;
* tumor;
* infectious disease;
* falls;
* car accident;
* sports injury; and
* lack of oxygen to the brain.

A provider is eligible to provide services for the Brain Injury Premium when:

* the customer has been diagnosed with an acquired brain injury;
* the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor determines that the customer requires intervention to remove barriers to employment that are directly related to the diagnosis of acquired brain injury; and
* the direct service provider has a staff member who will provide the services and either:
  + is certified by the Brain Injury Association of America as a certified brain injury specialist (CBIS) (for information go to [Brain Injury of America](https://www.biausa.org/)); or
  + holds a Brain Injury Endorsement from the University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion & Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE).

The contracted provider receives authorization for the Brain Injury Premium through a service authorization.

To receive a service authorization for a Brain Injury Premium, the following must occur:

* Bundled Job Placement must be received when the service authorization for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark A is received.
* Non-Bundled Job Placement must be received when the service authorization for the base service is received.
* Supported Employment Benchmark 1B must be received when the service authorization for Benchmark 1A is received.
* Benchmarks 2–6 must be received when the service authorization for Benchmark 2 is received.
* All other services must be received when the service authorization for the service is issued.

The provider's staff member:

* ensures that all deliverables for the base service are provided; and
* provides interventions, as needed, to remove any barriers related to the customer's acquired brain injury.

The staff member with the UNTWISE Brain Injury Endorsement assigned to work with the customer must:

* provide the base employment service, as defined in the service's associated chapter in the VR-SFP;
* remain on-site (where the employment service is being provided) to provide all necessary interventions, as identified on the referral form and/or service authorization; and
* document in the report for the base service, the interventions and compensatory techniques used to address and/or remove the barriers directly related to the customer's diagnosis of acquired brain injury.

The Brain Injury Premium is paid only after all outcomes have been achieved and approved by the VR counselor for Bundled Job Placement Benchmark C or Supported Employment Benchmarks 1B and/or 6.

The provider may attend the monthly Employment Supports for Brain Injury (ESBI) interdisciplinary team meeting. The fee to attend is paid one time per month.

### 20.10.2 Outcomes Required for Payment

The service provider is eligible for payment of the Brain Injury Premium when:

* the VR counselor confirms and approves that the customer has achieved all outcomes required for the base service, as outlined in the chapter of this manual that corresponds to the base service; and
* the staff member providing the base service meets the qualifications for the base service and maintains a current Brain Injury Endorsement from UNTWISE or is certified by the Brain Injury Association of America as a CBIS.

VR does not pay for fees related to excused or unexcused absences or holidays.

The premium is paid after VR approves the documentation that is required for the base service and invoice.

If the provider attends an ESBI interdisciplinary team meeting, the provider must submit a progress note outlining:

* the information obtained by the provider at the meeting; and
* any services that the employment service provider plans to provide in upcoming months.

## 20.11 Premium Fee Chart

A provider cannot collect money from a VR customer or the customer's family for any service-related charge that exceeds VR's allowable service fees. If VR and another resource are paying for a service for a customer, the total payment must not exceed the fee specified in the VR Standards for Providers.

### 20.11.1 Autism Premium

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Autism Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training | $43.00 |
| Non-Bundled Interview Training | $34.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $551.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $735.00 |
| Supported Employment Benchmark 1B | $276.00 |
| Supported Employment Benchmark 1B (prorated when the Environmental Work Assessment has been completed) | $165.00 |
| Supported Employment Benchmark 6 | $1838.00 |
| Job Skills Training (Individual) | $9.00 per hour |
| Job Skills Training (Group) | $4.00 per hour |

### 20.11.2 Criminal Background Premium

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Criminal Background Premium | Unit Rate |
| Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Supported Employment Benchmark 6 | $613.00 |

### 20.11.3 Deaf Premium

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deaf Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training | $217.00 |
| Non-Bundled Interview Training | $174.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $1305.00 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $1740.00 |
| Supported Employment Benchmark 1B | $653.00 |
| Supported Employment Benchmark 6 | $4349.00 |
| Job Skills Training (Individual) | $22.00 per hour |
| Job Skills Training (Group) | $10.00per hour |
| VAT-Job Search Training | $478.00 |
| VAT-Disability Disclosure | $478.00 |
| VAT-Entering the World of Work | $239.00 |
| VAT-Explore the You in Work | $239.00 |
| VAT-Money Smart | $717.00 |
| VAT-Public Transportation Training (Group) | $10.00 per hour |
| VAT-Public Transportation Training (Individual) | $22.00 per hour |
| VAT-Soft Skills for Work Success | $358.00 |
| VAT-Soft Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success | $478.00 |

### 20.11.4 Professional Placement Premium

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Professional Placement Premium | Unit Rate |
| Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Supported Employment Benchmark 6 | $613.00 |

### 20.11.5 Mileage Premium

Mileage is reimbursed based on the guideline in [20.6 Mileage Premium](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-20#s206), at the approved state automobile mileage rate found on the [Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts](https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php) webpage: <https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php>.

### 20.11.6 Wage Premium

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Wage Premium | Unit Rate |
| Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $613.00 |
| Supported Employment Benchmark 6 | $613.00 |

### 20.11.7 Travel Premium

Mileage is reimbursed based on the guideline in [20.10.3.1 Mileage Only Reimbursement](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-20#s20-10-3) or [20.10.3.2 Mileage and Other Travel Cost Reimbursement](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-20#s20-10-3), at the approved state automobile mileage rate found on the [Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts](https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php) webpage: <https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php>

Reimbursement for the allowable expenses outlined on [VR3436, Travel Premium Travel Plan and Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), which are based on the guidelines found in section [20.10.3.2 Mileage and Other Travel Cost Reimbursement](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-20#s20-10-3).

### 20.11.8 Brain Injury Premium Fee

All premiums are paid after the base service deliverables are approved by a VR counselor. Each rate is paid once—except for the hourly rates noted below. The provider may attend interdisciplinary team meetings one time per month.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Brain Injury Premium** | **Unit Rate** |
| Non-Bundled Employment Data Sheet, Application, and Résumé Training | $60 |
| Non-Bundled Interview Training | $48 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Basic) Benchmark C | $360 |
| Bundled Job Placement (Enhanced) Benchmark C | $480 |
| Supported Employment Benchmark 1B | $180 |
| Supported Employment Benchmark 1B (when prorated for completed Environmental Work Assessment (EWA)) | $108 |
| Supported Employment Benchmark 6 | $1,200 |
| Job Skills Training (Individual) | $6 per hour |
| Job Skills Training (Group) | $3 per hour |
| Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT)—Job Search Training | $120 |
| VAT—Disability Disclosure | $120 |
| VAT—Entering the World of Work | $60 |
| VAT—Explore the You in Work | $60 |
| VAT—Money Smart | $180 |
| VAT—Public Transportation Training (Group) | $3 per hour |
| VA—Public Transportation Training (Individual) | $6 |
| VAT—Soft Skills for Work Success | $90 |
| VAT—Soft Skills to Pay the Bills—Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success | $120 |
| VAT—Specialized (evaluation and training) | $6 per hour |
| Work Experience Placement | $120 |
| Work Experience Monitoring | $33 |
| Work Experience Training—Individual | $6 per hour |
| Work Experience Training—Group | $3 per hour |
| Attending an ESBI interdisciplinary team meeting (Initial Assessment and Evaluation Plan (IAEP) and/or Individual Program Plan (IPP)) | $37.50 per meeting |