

1 **CHAPTER 850. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE**
2 **RULES AND PROCEDURES**

3
4 **ADOPTED RULES TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE *TEXAS REGISTER*. THIS**
5 **DOCUMENT WILL HAVE NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES BUT IS SUBJECT TO**
6 **FORMATTING CHANGES AS REQUIRED BY THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**
7 **OF STATE.**

8
9 The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) adopts amendments to the following sections of
10 Chapter 850, relating to Vocational Rehabilitation Services Administrative Rules and
11 Procedures:

12
13 Subchapter A. Vocational Rehabilitation General Rules, §§850.3 - 850.5 and §850.11
14 Subchapter C. Councils, Board, and Committees, §§850.33 - 850.35
15 Subchapter E. Vocational Rehabilitation Services Appeals and Hearing Procedures,
16 §§850.60 - 850.62, 850.69, 850.82, and 850.84

17
18 TWC adopts the following new section to Chapter 850, relating to Vocational Rehabilitation
19 Services Administrative Rules and Procedures:

20
21 Subchapter A. Vocational Rehabilitation General Rules, §850.7

22
23 TWC adopts the repeal of the following section of Chapter 850, relating to Vocational
24 Rehabilitation Services Administrative Rules and Procedures:

25
26 Subchapter C. Councils, Board, and Committees, §850.32

27
28 The amendments to §§850.3 - 850.5, 850.11, 850.33 - 850.35, 850.60 - 850.62, 850.69, and
29 850.82; new §850.7; and the repeal of §850.32 are adopted *without changes*, to the proposal as
30 published in the September 2, 2022, issue of the *Texas Register* (47 TexReg 5307), and,
31 therefore, the adopted rule text will not be published. The amendment to §850.84 is adopted *with*
32 *changes* to the proposed text and the adopted rule text will be published.

33
34 **PART I. PURPOSE, BACKGROUND, AND AUTHORITY**

35 Senate Bill (SB) 208, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2015), added Texas Labor Code,
36 §351.002, which transferred the administration of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services from
37 the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to TWC effective
38 September 1, 2016. The administrative rules relating to the VR Services Program were
39 transferred from DARS to TWC and codified under 40 TAC Chapter 850. On May 13, 2019,
40 TWC amended Chapter 850 to align the chapter with TWC's operation of the VR Services
41 Program.

42
43 The amendments to Chapter 850 are adopted to address stakeholder comments, clarify existing
44 rules, and improve program service delivery, consistency, and efficiency.

1 Texas Government Code, §2001.039 requires that every four years each state agency review and
2 consider for re adoption, revision, or repeal each rule adopted by that agency. TWC reviewed the
3 rules in Chapter 850 and determined that the rules are needed, reflect current legal and policy
4 considerations, and reflect current TWC procedures. The reasons for initially adopting the rules
5 continue to exist and any changes to the rules are described in Part II of this preamble.
6

7 **PART II. EXPLANATION OF INDIVIDUAL PROVISIONS**

8 (Note: Minor editorial changes are made that do not change the meaning of the rules and,
9 therefore, are not discussed in the Explanation of Individual Provisions.)
10

11 **SUBCHAPTER A. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION GENERAL RULES**

12 TWC adopts the following amendments to Subchapter A:
13

14 **§850.3. Definitions**

15 Section 850.3 is amended to add the definition for "Agency" and to revise the term from
16 "counselor" to "vocational rehabilitation counselor" for clarification. Throughout Chapter 850,
17 the term "counselor" has been updated to "vocational rehabilitation counselor" or "VR
18 counselor."
19

20 **§850.4. Opportunities for Citizen Participation**

21 Section 850.4 is amended to clarify information regarding open meetings and add a reference to
22 40 TAC Chapter 800, Subchapter G, relating to Petition for Adoption of Rules.
23

24 **§850.5. Complaints**

25 Section 850.5 is amended to expand the methods for filing complaints.
26

27 **§850.7. Monitoring and Oversight of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Performance** 28 **and Decision Making.**

29 New §850.7 is added to establish an administrative rule for the monitoring and oversight of VR
30 counselor performance and decision making in accordance with Texas Labor Code, §352.104,
31 Training and Supervision of Counselors.
32

33 **§850.11. Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor**

34 Section 850.11 is amended to include Vocational Rehabilitation Division acronym "VRD" in the
35 references to "management" and in place of "division" for clarity.
36

37 Section 850.11(f) is amended to clarify that reimbursement is allowed for one GRE exam.
38

39 **SUBCHAPTER C. COUNCILS, BOARD, AND COMMITTEES**

40 TWC adopts the following amendments to Subchapter C:
41

42 **§850.32. Definitions**

43 Section 850.32 is repealed because the section is no longer needed. The definition for "Agency"
44 and acronym "RCT" are defined elsewhere in Chapter 850.
45

1 **SUBCHAPTER E. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES APPEALS AND**
2 **HEARING PROCEDURES**

3 TWC adopts the following amendments to Subchapter E:

4
5 **§850.60. Scope**

6 Section 850.60 is amended to remove references to the Business Enterprises of Texas (BET)
7 program because the program is addressed in 40 TAC Chapter 854; remove Comprehensive
8 Rehabilitative Services (CRS) from the scope of services because CRS falls under Texas Health
9 and Human Services Commission oversight; and add a reference to the Client Assistance
10 Program (CAP).

11
12 **§850.61. Definitions**

13 Section 850.61 is amended to remove the definitions of "counselor" and "State Plan" because the
14 terms are defined in §850.3.

15
16 **§850.62. Filing a Request for Review**

17 Section 850.62 is amended to state that the request for a review shall be filed within 180 calendar
18 days from the date of the determination and that the CAP can assist and advocate for customers
19 during an appeal and informal dispute resolution.

20
21 **§850.69. Reasonable Accommodations**

22 Section 850.69 is amended to clarify that TWC shall bear the costs related to providing
23 reasonable accommodations for hearings or proceedings conducted.

24
25 **§850.82. Documentary Evidence and Official Notice**

26 Section 850.82 is amended to remove the reference to 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
27 Part 395 as BET appeals are addressed in 40 TAC Chapter 854.

28
29 **§850.84. Impartial Hearing Officer Decision**

30 Section 850.84(b) is not amended as proposed. At adoption, §850.84(b) is removed to avoid
31 confusion with federal criteria relating to a timely hearing decision. Subsequent subsections are
32 relettered accordingly.

33
34 Relettered §850.84(c) is amended to remove the references to Texas Labor Code, Chapter 355
35 and 34 CFR Part 395 as BET appeals are addressed in 40 TAC Chapter 854.

36
37 **PART III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

38 The public comment period closed on October 3, 2022. TWC received comments from Disability Rights
39 Texas (DRTx) and one individual.

40
41 **General Comment**

42
43 **COMMENT:** An individual commented in support of the proposed rule amendments.

44
45 **RESPONSE:** The Commission appreciates the support.

1 **§850.84. Impartial Hearing Officer Decision**
2

3 **COMMENT:** DRTx recommended that §850.84(b) be revised to align with the federal
4 criteria for a timely hearing decision.
5

6 **RESPONSE:** At adoption, the Commission removed §850.84(b) to avoid confusion with
7 the federal criteria for a timely hearing decision.
8

9 **PART IV. STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

10 The rules are adopted under Texas Labor Code, Chapter 352 and Texas Human Resources Code,
11 Chapter 111, which provide TWC with the authority to adopt, amend, or repeal such rules as it
12 deems necessary for the effective administration of vocational rehabilitation services.
13

14 The adopted rules affect Texas Human Resources Code, Chapter 111 and Texas Labor Code,
15 Chapter 352.
16

1
2 (A) ~~All petitions proposing the adoption of Agency rules shall be submitted~~
3 ~~in writing to the Commission. The petition must contain the following:~~

4
5 ~~(i) the text of the proposed rule prepared in a manner to indicate the~~
6 ~~words to be added or deleted from the current text, if any;~~

7
8 ~~(ii) a statement of the statutory or other authority under which the rule~~
9 ~~is to be promulgated; and~~

10
11 ~~(iii) the public benefits anticipated as a result of adopting the rule or the~~
12 ~~anticipated implications that could result from the failure to adopt~~
13 ~~the proposed rule.~~

14
15 (B) ~~Agency staff reviews the requests and present recommendations to the~~
16 ~~Commission for action.~~

17
18 **§850.5. Complaints.**
19

- 20 (a) Complaints may be filed with the Agency either ~~in writing~~ through mail, [email](#)
21 ~~mail~~, [phone](#), ~~or~~ [facsimile](#), or by videotape for individuals who use sign language to
22 communicate. Complaints should be directed to the customer's local [vocational](#)
23 [rehabilitation](#) ~~VR~~ office or may be submitted [to the Agency's Customer Relations](#)
24 [staff as indicated on the Agency's website](#) ~~via email to customers@twc.state.tx.us.~~
25
26 (b) For the purpose of directing complaints to the Agency, the Agency may notify
27 customers and service recipients of its name, mailing address, and telephone number
28 by including the information:
29
30 (1) on each registration form, application, or written contract relating to
31 participation in a program that is funded in any part by money derived from or
32 through the Agency;
33
34 (2) on a sign that is prominently displayed in the place of business of each
35 individual or entity engaging in a program that is funded in any part by money
36 derived from or through the Agency;
37
38 (3) in a bill for service provided by an individual or entity engaging in a program
39 that is funded in any part by money derived from or through the Agency; or
40
41 (4) in other media for dissemination of information as determined by the Agency.
42
43 (c) Ordinarily, the Agency resolves complaints within 60 days.
44

1 **§850.7. Monitoring and Oversight of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Performance**
2 **and Decision Making.**

3
4 (a) The Vocational Rehabilitation Division will provide specific guidance to vocational
5 rehabilitation (VR) counselors as required by Texas Labor Code, §352.104.

6
7 (b) VR counselor supervisors shall ensure that VR counselors complete all required and
8 necessary training.

9
10 (c) VR counselor supervisors shall monitor VR counselor performance through case
11 reviews, offer required training, and use other tools, as appropriate, to provide
12 guidance and enhance VR counselor performance and decision making.

13
14 **§850.11. Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.**

15
16 (a) The Vocational Rehabilitation Division (VRD) helps vocational rehabilitation (VR)
17 counselors to meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD)
18 standard, as set forth in 34 Code of Federal Regulations §361.18, by making funds
19 available through the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (QVRC)
20 program for the required graduate education except when:

21
22 (1) unforeseen circumstances occur that may restrict or prohibit the funding; or

23
24 (2) VRD management discontinues a VR counselor's participation in the program
25 in the best interests of VRD~~the division~~.

26
27 (b) The VRD director or designee must approve QVRC financial assistance. This
28 financial assistance is contingent on:

29
30 (1) funding;

31
32 (2) VRD management approval; and

33
34 (3) compliance with qualifications for participation.

35
36 (c) Qualifications for participation in the QVRC program require that VR~~vocational~~
37 ~~rehabilitation~~ counselors and transition VR~~vocational rehabilitation~~ counselors
38 applying for assistance must:

39
40 (1) have completed the initial training year;

41
42 (2) be meeting or exceeding job performance expectations;

43
44 (3) obtain the appropriate approvals to pursue a graduate degree or prescribed
45 coursework;

1 (4) apply for Rehabilitation Services Administration ~~(RSA)~~ scholarship and
2 university stipend funding, [if applicable](#); and

3
4 (5) be accepted by the appropriate institution of higher education.

5
6 (d) A [VR](#) counselor who meets the CSPD standard is considered a [QVRC Qualified](#)
7 ~~Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor~~.

8
9 (e) A [VR](#) counselor is expected to meet the CSPD standard within seven years from
10 completion of the initial training year. ~~VRD Divisions~~ must conduct transcript
11 reviews and/or confirm certifications to determine compliance with standards or to
12 outline coursework to be completed by the [VR](#) counselor.

13
14 (f) A [VR](#) counselor is expected to pay all costs or expenses:

15
16 (1) associated with the college application, ~~and~~ admission, ~~and except one~~ GRE
17 [exam \(reimbursement of one GRE exam is allowed\)](#) ~~fee~~;

18
19 (2) related to tuition, fees, and books for any coursework that must be repeated
20 because of failure to successfully complete; and

21
22 (3) related to completing work necessary to remove any grade of "I" (Incomplete)
23 within three months, unless there are valid reasons (for example, serious
24 illness, or university regulations to the contrary).

25
26 **SUBCHAPTER C. COUNCILS, BOARD, AND COMMITTEES**

27
28 **~~§850.32. Definitions.~~**

29
30 ~~The following words and terms, when used in this division, have the following meanings,~~
31 ~~unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:~~

32
33 ~~(1) Agency—The Texas Workforce Commission.~~

34
35 ~~(2) RCT—The Rehabilitation Council of Texas.~~

36
37 **§850.33. Tasks.**

38
39 ~~Tasks.~~ The [Rehabilitation Council of Texas \(RCT\)](#) shall:

40
41 (1) review, analyze, and advise the [Vocational Rehabilitation Division \(VRD\)](#)
42 about ~~its~~~~their~~ performance of responsibilities, particularly those relating to:

43
44 (A) eligibility determination (including order of selection);

45
46 (B) the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and

1
2 (C) functions performed by VRD that potentially affect the ability of
3 individuals with disabilities to achieve rehabilitation goals and
4 objectives;
5

6 (2) advise ~~the Vocational Rehabilitation Division (VRD)~~ and, at its discretion, help
7 prepare the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services; amendments to
8 the plan; and applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations
9 required;
10

11 (3) to the extent feasible, review and analyze the effectiveness of, and customer
12 satisfaction with:
13

14 (A) the functions performed by state agencies and other public and private
15 entities responsible for performing functions for individuals with
16 disabilities; and
17

18 (B) vocational rehabilitation services:
19

20 (i) provided, or paid for from funds made available, under 29 [United](#)
21 [States Code](#) (USC) §725, or through other public or private sources;
22 and
23

24 (ii) provided by state agencies and other public and private entities
25 responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to
26 individuals with disabilities; and
27

28 (C) the employment outcomes achieved by individuals who receive services
29 under 29 USC §725, including the availability of health and other
30 employment benefits in connection with those employment outcomes;
31

32 (4) coordinate with other councils in the state, including the State Independent
33 Living Council established under 29 USC §796d; the advisory panel
34 established under ~~§612(a)(20)~~ of the Individuals with Disabilities Education
35 Act, 20 USC §1412(a)(21); the State Council on Developmental Disabilities
36 described in 42 USC §15025; the State Mental Health Planning Council
37 established under 42 USC §300x-3(a); and the state workforce investment
38 board;
39

40 (5) advise VRD and coordinate working relationships between ~~VRD~~ ~~the divisions~~
41 and the State Independent Living Council and centers for independent living
42 within the state; and
43

44 (6) perform other comparable functions consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of
45 1973, as amended, that the RCT determines to be appropriate.
46

1 **§850.34. Reports.**

2
3 The [Rehabilitation Council of Texas](#)~~RCT~~ shall:

- 4
- 5 (1) prepare and submit an annual report to the governor or appropriate state entity
- 6 and the Commission on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs
- 7 operated within the state, and make the report available to the public; and
- 8
- 9 (2) submit to the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration,
- 10 United States Department of Education, periodic reports that the commissioner
- 11 may reasonably request, and keep records that the commissioner finds
- 12 necessary to verify those reports.
- 13

14 **§850.35. Funding.**

15
16 The Rehabilitation Council of Texas (~~RCT~~) is funded primarily by federal funds, and its

17 existence is required in order for the Agency to receive and expend federal funds.

18

19 **SUBCHAPTER E. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES APPEALS AND**

20 **HEARING PROCEDURES**

21

22 **§850.60. Scope.**

23

24 (a) The following statutes and regulations authorize the procedures established by this

25 [subchapter](#)~~chapter~~:

- 26
- 27 (1) The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 [United States Code](#)~~USC~~ §701
- 28 et seq. and regulations of the [United States](#)~~U.S.~~ Department of Education,
- 29 Rehabilitation Services Administration, 34 [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#)
- 30 Part 361, as amended, relating to [the](#) State Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- 31 [Program](#);
- 32

33 ~~(2) 34 CFR Part 395, as amended, relating to Vending Facility Program for the~~

34 ~~Blind on Federal and Other Property; and~~

35

36 ~~(2)(3)~~ 34 CFR Part 367, as amended, relating to [the](#) Independent Living Services

37 for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (ILS-OIB); ~~and~~.

38

39 ~~(3)~~ [34 CFR Part 370, as amended, relating to the Client Assistance Program.](#)

40

41 (b) The procedures in this subchapter apply to those determinations made by Agency

42 personnel that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services [and](#)

43 ~~ILS-OIB, independent living services for older individuals who are blind, and the~~

44 ~~Business Enterprises of Texas program.~~

- 45
- 46 (1) Unless the determination concerns the denial, reduction, suspension, or

1 termination of VR services or ILS-OIB, ~~independent living services for older~~
2 ~~individuals who are blind, or comprehensive rehabilitation services by the~~
3 ~~Agency~~; it is not subject to review under the procedures of this subchapter.
4

5 (2) The following decisions or determinations are not subject to review under this
6 subchapter:
7

8 (A) Administrative~~administrative~~ decisions that are made by Agency
9 supervisors or managers without reference to any specific applicant or
10 customer and that apply generally to the provision of VR services to
11 applicants or customers, including to decisions concerning the
12 assignment of personnel;
13

14 (B) Decisions~~decisions~~, diagnoses, judgments, actions, or omissions of third-
15 party vendors or service providers;
16

17 (C) Decisions~~decisions~~ concerning the content of an applicant's or customer's
18 record of service for which remedies are provided under 34 CFR
19 §361.38(c)(4) and §361.47(a)(12); and
20

21 (D) Decisions~~decisions~~ allegedly violating any state or federal
22 antidiscrimination or civil rights statute (as amended), including the
23 provisions of Texas Labor Code, Chapter 21; the Rehabilitation Act of
24 1973, as amended; the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504, ~~the~~
25 ~~Americans with Disabilities Act~~; or the Age Discrimination in
26 Employment Act.
27

28 (c) Ineligibility. The following may challenge a determination of ineligibility through
29 the procedures of this subchapter~~division~~:
30

31 (1) Applicants~~applicants~~ who are found not to be eligible for VR services; and
32

33 (2) Previously~~previously~~ eligible individuals who have been determined no longer
34 eligible for VR services under 34 CFR §361.43.
35

36 (d) An individual's decision to seek an informal resolution of matters about which the
37 individual is dissatisfied shall not prevent, compromise, or delay the individual's
38 access to formal resolution procedures in this subchapter~~division~~.
39

40 (e) The Agency shall not suspend, reduce, or terminate VR services being provided to an
41 applicant or customer, including evaluation and assessment services and the
42 development of an Individualized Plan for Employment, pending a resolution of the
43 applicant's or customer's appeal by mediation or hearing, unless:
44

45 (1) the applicant or customer requests a suspension, reduction, or termination of
46 services; or

- 1
2 (2) the Agency has evidence that the applicant or customer obtained the services
3 through misrepresentation, fraud, collusion, or criminal conduct.
4

5 **§850.61. Definitions.**
6

7 The following words and terms, when used in this subchapter, have the following
8 meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. The use of the singular or plural
9 case is not meant to be limiting unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.
10

- 11 (1) Act--The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, 29 [United States Code](#)~~USC~~
12 §701, et seq.
13
- 14 (2) Appellant--An applicant, eligible individual, authorized representative, or
15 parent who has initiated formal procedures under this subchapter.
16
- 17 (3) Applicant--An individual who submits an application for [vocational](#)
18 [rehabilitation](#)~~VR~~ services in accordance with 34 [Code of Federal Regulations](#)
19 ~~CFR~~ Part 361.
20
- 21 (4) Authorized representative--An attorney authorized to practice law in the State
22 of Texas, or an individual designated by a party to represent the party in
23 hearing procedures. The term includes a parent or an individual made legally
24 responsible for a child by a court of competent jurisdiction.
25
- 26 ~~(5) Counselor--An Agency employee who is trained to provide vocational~~
27 ~~guidance and counseling and meets the minimum qualifications designated in a~~
28 ~~functional job description.~~
29
- 30 ~~(5)(6)~~ Customer--An applicant or an individual with a disability who is receiving
31 [vocational rehabilitation](#)~~VR~~ services.
32
- 33 ~~(6)(7)~~ Discovery--The process by which a party, before any final hearing on the
34 merits, may obtain evidence and other information that is relevant to a claim or
35 defense in the appeal.
36
- 37 ~~(7)(8)~~ Eligible individual--Any individual with a disability determined to be
38 eligible to receive [vocational rehabilitation](#)~~VR~~ services.
39
- 40 ~~(8)(9)~~ Hearing--A formal review conducted under this [subchapter](#)~~chapter~~. This
41 term includes prehearing conferences.
42
- 43 ~~(9)(10)~~ Impartial hearing officer (IHO)--An individual who is appointed to conduct
44 a hearing under this [subchapter](#)~~chapter~~.
45
- 46 ~~(10)(11)~~ Individualized Plan for Employment--A plan developed for each

1 individual determined to be eligible for [vocational rehabilitation](#)~~VR~~ services,
2 in accordance with 34 [Code of Federal Regulations](#)~~CFR~~ Part 361.

3
4 ~~(11)(12)~~ Parent--The term "parent," whether singular or plural, means a minor
5 child's natural or adoptive parent, the spouse of the minor child's natural or
6 adoptive parent, the minor child's surrogate or foster parent, the spouse of the
7 surrogate or foster parent, or other individual made legally responsible for the
8 minor child by a court.

9
10 ~~(12)(13)~~ Party--An individual or agency named or admitted to participate in a
11 formal hearing.

12
13 ~~(13)(14)~~ Record--The official record of a hearing, including all arguments, briefs,
14 pleadings, motions, intermediate rulings, orders, evidence received or
15 considered, statements of matters officially noticed, questions and offers of
16 proof, objections and rulings on objections, proposed findings of fact,
17 conclusions of law, and ~~IHO~~~~hearing officer~~ decision; any other decision,
18 opinion, or report by the ~~IHO~~~~hearing officer~~ or Commission; and all
19 memoranda or data, including customer and applicant files, submitted to or
20 considered by the ~~IHO~~~~impartial hearing officer~~.

21
22 ~~(15) State Plan--The plan for VR services submitted by the Agency's Vocational~~
23 ~~Rehabilitation Division in compliance with the Act.~~

24 **§850.62. Filing a Request for Review.**

25
26
27 (a) Any applicant or eligible individual who is dissatisfied with a determination made by
28 the Agency, as described in §850.60 of this subchapter (relating to Scope), may
29 request, or, if appropriate, may request through the individual's authorized
30 representative, a review of the determination. Although no prescribed form is
31 required to file a request, preprinted forms for this purpose are available on request
32 [within the Agency's Office of General Counsel or](#) at any Agency [vocational](#)
33 [rehabilitation](#)~~VR~~ office.

34
35 (b) The request for a review shall be filed [within 180 calendar days from the date of the](#)
36 [determination and shall be filed](#) in writing with the hearings coordinator within the
37 Agency's Office of General Counsel. [A request shall be considered filed on the day](#)
38 [that it is received by the hearings coordinator within the Agency's Office of General](#)
39 [Counsel.](#)

40
41 ~~(1) A request shall be considered filed on the day that it is received by the hearings~~
42 ~~coordinator within the Agency's Office of General Counsel.~~

43
44 ~~(2) Preprinted forms for this purpose are available on request from the hearings~~
45 ~~coordinator within the Agency's Office of General Counsel or any Agency VR~~
46 ~~office.~~

- 1
2 (c) On receiving a request for review, the hearings coordinator within the Agency's
3 Office of General Counsel shall, within five working days, mail the appellant:
4
5 (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the Client Assistance Program
6 established under federal law [that can, among other things, assist and advocate](#)
7 [for customers during an appeal and informal dispute resolution](#);
8
9 (2) the name of the IHO appointed to hear the appeal, and the date, time, and place
10 of any prehearing;
11
12 (3) a copy of applicable hearing procedures; and
13
14 (4) notice that the appellant has the right to request mediation procedures.
15

16 **§850.69. Reasonable Accommodations.**
17

- 18 (a) Any hearing or proceedings conducted under this subchapter shall be held, whenever
19 feasible, by telephone (directly or by relay), at a time and place reasonably accessible
20 to the appellant and any witnesses, and convenient for parties. In considering the
21 physical location of a hearing or proceeding, the IHO shall consider, among other
22 factors:
23
24 (1) the suitability of any proposed facilities for a hearing, including the ability of
25 the appellant and any witnesses to gain physical access to the proceedings and
26 facilities; and
27
28 (2) the comparative distances and times required to travel from places of work or
29 residence to a proposed hearing location by parties and witnesses.
30
31 (b) The Agency shall, upon reasonable notice, provide the appellant with readers or
32 interpreters. Reasonable notice shall be considered to be no fewer than five working
33 days prior to the proceeding, unless good cause for a shorter period exists in the
34 judgment of the IHO.
35
36 (c) A copy of a transcript prepared during hearing proceedings and all notices and
37 documents shall be provided to the appellant in an accessible format on request.
38
39 [\(d\) The Agency shall bear the costs related to providing reasonable accommodations for](#)
40 [hearings or proceedings conducted under this subchapter.](#)
41

42 **§850.82. Documentary Evidence and Official Notice.**
43

- 44 (a) Documentary evidence may be received in the form of copies or excerpts if the
45 original is not readily available. On request, parties shall be given an opportunity to
46 compare the original and the copy or excerpt.

1
2 (b) When numerous similar documents that are otherwise admissible are offered into
3 evidence, the IHO may limit the documents received to those that are typical and
4 representative. The IHO may also require that an abstract of relevant data from the
5 documents be presented in the form of an exhibit, provided that all parties are given
6 the right to examine the documents from which such abstracts were made.
7

8 (c) The following laws, rules, regulations, and policies are officially noticed:
9

10 (1) The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 [United States Code](#) ~~USC~~ §701,
11 et seq.;

12
13 (2) [United States](#) ~~U.S.~~ Department of Education regulations, 34 [Code of Federal](#)
14 [Regulations](#) ~~CFR~~ Parts 361 ~~and~~, 367, ~~and 395~~;

15
16 (3) The Agency's State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services;

17
18 (4) The Agency's Vocational Rehabilitation ~~and~~; Independent Living for Older
19 Individuals Who Are Blind, ~~and Rehabilitation~~ policy manuals; and

20
21 (5) Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Part 20, Texas Workforce Commission.
22

23 (d) Official notice also may be taken of:

24
25 (1) all facts that are judicially cognizable; and

26
27 (2) generally recognized facts within the area of the Agency's specialized
28 knowledge.
29

30 **§850.84. Impartial Hearing Officer Decision.** 31

32 (a) Within 30 days of the hearing completion date, the IHO shall issue a decision that is
33 based on the evidence and consistent with the provisions of the approved [State](#)
34 [Plan](#) ~~state plan~~; the Act, as amended; federal vocational rehabilitation regulations,
35 state regulations, and policies that are consistent with federal requirements, and shall
36 provide to the appellant or, if appropriate, the appellant's authorized representative,
37 and the Agency's authorized representative or the Agency's Office of General
38 Counsel, as appropriate, a full written report of the findings of fact, conclusions of
39 law, and any other grounds for the decision.
40

41 ~~(b) The hearing completion date is the date upon which the IHO receives the transcript~~
42 ~~of the oral hearing, if any was prepared, of the oral hearing, or, if no transcript was~~
43 ~~prepared, the date of the adjournment of the [hearing's adjournment date hearing](#).~~
44

45 ~~(b)(e)~~ The decision shall address each issue considered by the IHO.

46
47 ~~(c)(d)~~ The IHO may prescribe such remedies as are appropriate within the scope of, and

1 permitted by, as applicable, Texas Labor Code, [Chapter 352](#)~~Chapters 352 and 355~~;
2 the Act, as amended; the regulations of the Rehabilitation Services Administration of
3 the [United States](#)~~U.S.~~ Department of Education, 34 [Code of Federal Regulations](#)~~CFR~~
4 Parts 361 ~~and~~, 365, ~~and 395~~; and the Agency's policies and rules.

5
6 (1) The IHO shall not award restitutionary, compensatory, or monetary relief,
7 including monetary damages, to any party.

8
9 (2) The IHO shall not prescribe an action affecting the employment of an Agency
10 employee.