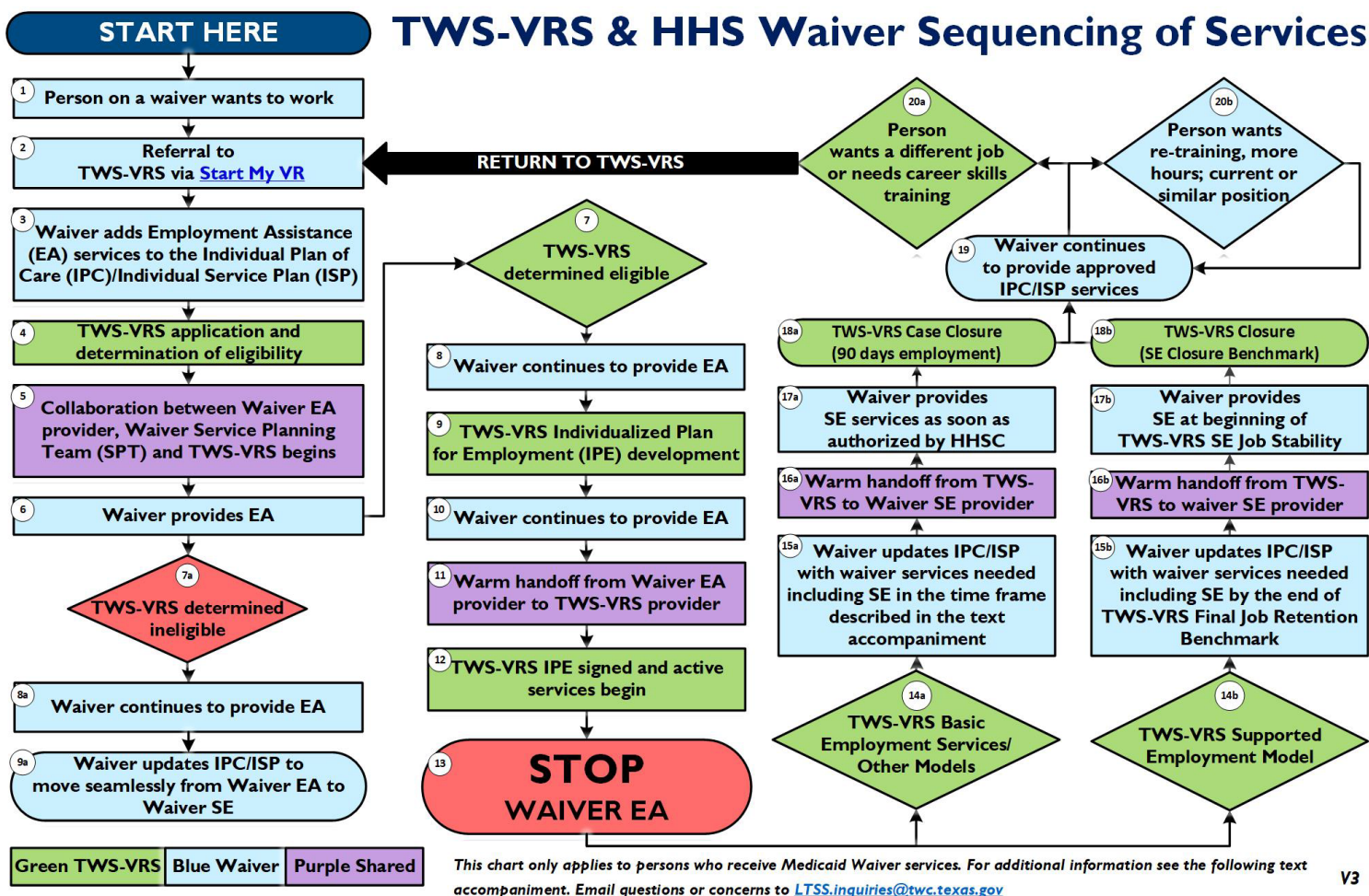


TWS-VRS and HHS Sequencing of Services Chart and Text Accompaniment



START HERE- A person on a Medicaid Waiver’s steps to employment.

- 1. Person on a waiver wants to work-** At initial enrollment and for annual renewals during development of the waiver person-centered service plan it must be determined if the person wants to work. If so, the waiver service coordinator (SC)/case manager (CM) must document the person’s desire to work on their person-centered service plan (PCP); and complete [Form 8401, Employment First Discovery Tool](#) available on the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) website.
- 2. Referral to TWS-VRS via Start My VR-** If the person wants to work, they must be referred to TWS-VRS before receiving any employment services through HHSC programs. The preferred method of referral is via the [Start My VR](#) website. Retain the confirmation email received after submission of “Start My VR” to provide to HHSC for verification of TWS-VRS referral when adding employment assistance to the waiver plan of care. *Best practice: The waiver SC/CM completes the referral with or on behalf of the person during or directly following completion of the Employment First Discovery Tool so that employment services can be added to the IPC/ISP during the same service planning team (SPT) meeting.*
- 3. Waiver adds employment assistance (EA) services to the Individual Plan of Care (IPC)/Individual Service Plan (ISP)-** Once the referral has been made to TWS-VRS, the waiver SC/CM should immediately add EA to the waiver IPC/ISP and list competitive Integrated Employment as a goal on the PCP. The waiver EA service should continue until employment is found or the TWS-VRS Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is signed (up to 180 days unless an extension is approved). Waiver EA helps people find competitive, integrated employment. Waiver plan revisions can take anywhere from 10 days to a few months depending on the quality of the submission and if required justifications and supporting documentation are included.

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- 4. TWS-VRS application and determination of eligibility-**The application must be completed within 30 days of the initial contact. Once the application is submitted the determination of eligibility for TWS-VRS begins. Releases of information should be secured by both the TWS-VRS vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC) and the waiver SC/CM so that the Employment First Discovery Tool as well as other related waiver documents (see the waiver forms list for more helpful documents) can be shared between the VRC during application and throughout the case. If determined ineligible for TWS-VRS the waiver will become the exclusive provider of employment services.
- 5. Collaboration between waiver EA provider, Waiver Service Planning Team (SPT) and TWS-VRS begins-** The waiver EA provider, the person's SPT, the VRC and any TWS-VRS service providers should all be in frequent contact throughout the employment process. It is best practice to invite the VRC to service planning meetings where employment will be discussed, or employment services will be modified. The VRC should ensure the SPT is aware of the progress of the case, as well as when and how supports outside of TWS-VRS may be needed. The SPT should inform the VRC if EA has begun and what progress has been achieved as well as sharing waiver documents upon request.
- 6. Waiver provides EA-** The same provider should be used for waiver EA and TWS-VRS job skills services whenever possible.
Waiver EA means assistance provided to a person to help the person locate paid employment in the community. EA includes:
 - identifying a person's employment preferences, job skills, and requirements for a work setting and work conditions;
 - locating prospective employers offering employment compatible with a person's identified preferences, skills, and requirements; and
 - contacting a prospective employer on behalf of a person and negotiating the person's employment.
- 7a. TWS-VRS determined ineligible-** If determined ineligible for TWS-VRS then the person can continue to pursue competitive integrated employment (CIE) through waiver EA and progress to waiver supported employment (SE) once they have found a job. TWS-VRS will not provide any further services at this time, but the person can always come back and apply again if their situation has changed. The VRC should provide the customer with documentation verifying TWS-VRS services have ended and waiver services can continue.
- 8a. Waiver continues to provide EA-** The waiver should continue to provide EA after an eligibility determination is made with TWS-VRS, if the person still wants to pursue employment.
- 9a. Waiver updates IPC/ISP to move seamlessly from Waiver EA to waiver SE-** If extended supports will be needed then as soon as possible, but no later than when a person has found a job, the SPT should meet to begin the process to add waiver SE to the plan. Waiver SE provides the long-term services and supports needed to maintain the job.
- 7. TWS-VRS determined eligible-** It can take up to 60 days to determine eligibility for TWS-VRS. Once determined eligible the person enters the assessing and planning stage. Persons receiving cash assistance from the Social Security Administration (SSA) based on disability are presumptively eligible. Many people on waivers will be presumptively eligible, this does not mean they will always be determined eligible.
- 8. Waiver continues to provide EA-** The waiver should continue to provide EA after an eligibility determination is made with TWS-VRS. Waiver EA should continue through the TWS-VRS assessing and planning process.
- 9. TWS-VRS Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) development-** The assessing and planning stage can take up to 90 days to complete. The assessment and planning done up to this point guides the development of the IPE. With the permission of the individual, the waiver SC/CM should be sharing information and assessments that can help guide the development of the IPE during this phase.
- 10. Waiver continues to provide EA-** The waiver should continue to provide EA during this stage.
- 11. Warm handoff from the Waiver EA provider to TWS-VRS provider (if not the same person)-** Whenever possible it is preferred to have the same person provide waiver employment services and TWS-VRS employment services. This provides better continuity for the person. When not possible the two providers should meet to discuss completed tasks, progress and goals to ensure a smooth transition.
- 12. TWS-VRS IPE signed and active services begin-** Once the IPE is complete, it is signed, and this marks the official beginning of TWS-VRS active employment services to the person.

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13. STOP WAIVER EA- In most waivers all billing for EA must end as soon as active services begin with TWS-VRS, but in some waivers including Home and Community-based Services (HCS) and Texas Home Living (TxHmL) the waiver can and continue to provide transportation as part of EA even after the IPE is signed. If transportation is needed in other waivers, it may be more appropriate to use the designated transportation service or utilize adaptive aid funding.

14a. BASIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES/ANY MODEL OTHER THAN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT)

Employment Services at TWS-VRS can be delivered through a variety of models based on the person's needs and preference. They may be bundled, where services are grouped together and paid for as a bundle, or non-bundled where individual services can be selected, provided and paid for separately. Some models target a specific population or need, such as project search, which is a model that supports partnerships among businesses, school districts, VR and other agencies. Upon development of the IPE the VRC with the person determines which model is the best fit for that person's employment goals. The sequencing of services varies slightly based on the model of services that is selected.

15a. Waiver updates IPC/ISP with waiver services needed including supported employment (SE) so that Waiver SE can begin in each model as follows:

- **TWS-VRS Bundled Job Placement Services-** prior to the completion of Benchmark B (days 45 in a job placement). This allows Benchmark C (days 46-90) for monitoring to ensure the arrangement is working prior to closure of the case with TWS-VRS.
- **Project Search-** in the first 45 days of the 90-day successful closure benchmark. This allows days 46-90 in that placement for monitoring to ensure the arrangement is working prior to closure of the case with TWS-VRS.
- **Counselor Directed Services-** 30 days prior to the last planned delivery of a substantial service.
- **Job Skills Training not provided as part of Supported Employment-** no later than 30 days prior to the last planned delivery of Job Skills Services.

As soon as it becomes clear that the person has found a stable job placement **and it is determined they will need ongoing support to maintain that placement**, the process should begin to add ongoing SE (or other needed services) through their waiver program. The revision to add the service to the waiver should be coordinated so that services can begin as described above. Keep in mind it typically takes a minimum of 30 days to add a service in a waiver program. The addition of a service in the waiver is initiated through contact with their SC/CM. The SC/CM will meet with the SPT and begin the process to add the services to the IPC/ISP. Justification and supporting documentation from TWS-VRS may be needed to help support the number of units/hours requested including information on the individual's performance on the job and the supports needed to maintain employment long-term. Units/hours should be requested for the remainder of the person's IPC/ISP year whenever possible to avoid the need for additional revisions. Keep in mind that ***TWS-VRS is a time limited service and does not provide long-term or ongoing supports to maintain employment, therefore services (if needed to maintain employment) must transition to the waiver provider or other ongoing supports once an individual is stable at their employment.***

16a. Warm hand-off from TWS-VRS to Waiver SE provider- When possible, the same provider should be used for job skills training and waiver SE, but if it is not possible the TWS-VRS VRC and the TWS-VRS job skills trainer should ensure the waiver SE provider has the information needed to continue to support the person long term. TWS-VRS SE specialists and employment services providers should train the waiver SE provider in how to best support the individual in their job going forward.

An TWS-VRS job skills trainer is responsible for the following when transitioning services from TWS-VRS to extended or ongoing supports:

- Introduce the customer to the waiver SE provider,
- Introduce the waiver SE provider to the employer,
- Train the waiver SE provider how to do the individual's job (if necessary),
- Bring the waiver SE provider up to speed on current concerns, training needs, work environment and tips, and
- Let the VRC know in writing if there are any issues and what date #1- 4 were completed.

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17a. Waiver provides SE services as soon as authorized by HHSC- As soon as authorized by HHSC the waiver should begin providing SE services. Some overlap may occur during transition from the TWS-VRS provider to the Waiver SE provider.

18a. TWS-VRS Case Closure (90 days of employment)- After 90 days of continuous employment the TWS-VRS case is closed. This marks the end of TWS-VRS services. At this point, the waiver or any other supports must take over completely.

14b. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SE) MODEL (A MORE INTENSIVE MODEL)- The supported employment model is for customers who need more support in the VR process. This is a bundled model which encompasses the widest and most intensive array of supports VR can offer. While not all people on a waiver will require SE, it will be the most appropriate model for most of them. A key feature of SE is a requirement to ensure ongoing long-term job supports are in place before the closure of the case.

15b. Waiver updates IPC/ISP with waiver services needed including SE by the end of TWS-VRS Final Job Retention Benchmark- The job retention benchmark is the 28-day period that follows job development and job placement. There may be up to 5 of these periods approved. As soon as it becomes clear that the person has found a job placement that is a good fit and it is expected they will need ongoing support to maintain that job, work should begin to add ongoing SE to their waiver IPC/ISP (this typically will not be prior to the job retention benchmark but it should be no later than the final 28-day period). IPC/ISP revisions are initiated through contact with the service coordinator (SC)/ case manager (CM). The SC/CM will meet with the SPT and begin the process to add the services to the IPC/ISP. Justification and supporting documentation from TWS-VRS should be shared to support the number of units/hours requested. Units/hours should be requested for the remainder of the person's IPC/ISP year whenever possible to avoid the need for revisions.

16b. Warm handoff from TWS-VRS to Waiver SE provider- When possible, the same provider should be used for job skills training and waiver SE, but if it is not possible the TWS-VRS VRC and the job skills provider should ensure the waiver SE provider has the information needed to continue to support the person long term.

An ESP is responsible for the following when transitioning services from TWS-VRS to extended or ongoing supports:

- Introduce the customer to the new waiver SE provider,
- Introduce the waiver SE provider to the employer,
- Train the new waiver SE provider how to do the individual's job (if necessary),
- Bring the waiver SE provider up to speed on current concerns, training needs, work environment and tips, and
- Let the VRC know in writing if there are any issues and what date #1- 4 were completed.

17b. Waiver provides SE at beginning of TWS-VRS SE Job Stability- In the job stability benchmark (90 days of continuous employment without a TWS-VRS substantial service), TWS-VRS is no longer providing job skills training. This is a period where TWS-VRS is only monitoring the case and thus ongoing waiver services should be the source of employment support. The provision of supports during the job must transition to the waiver provider for job stability to begin and continue. IF TWS-VRS must provide any ongoing support services such as job skills training job stability must be re-established, and the 90-day period begins again.

18b. TWS-VRS Closure (SE Closure Benchmark)- The SE closure benchmark is completed when the person has maintained job stability for 90 cumulative calendar days and the SE closure meeting has been completed. It is best practice to invite the waiver SE provider and the waiver SC/CM to the closure meeting to ensure all services are in place and that everyone is clear on what that person needs to continue to succeed in their employment.

19. Waiver continues to provide approved IPC/ISP services – The transition from TWS-VRS short-term employment services to the person's long-term services and supports is complete. Supported employment services can be provided through the waiver as long as needed and authorized by HHSC.

Waiver Supported Employment means assistance provided, to sustain competitive employment, to a person who, because of a disability, requires intensive, ongoing support to be self-employed, work from home, or perform in a work setting at which persons without disabilities are employed. It includes employment adaptations, supervision, and training related to a person's assessed needs.

A provider of supported employment may bill for such services as (not an all inclusive list):

- transporting the person to and from the worksite

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- assisting the individual with career advancement
- assisting the individual to develop a method for ongoing income reporting and for staying informed about the impact of the individual's earnings on cash, Medicaid and other benefits
- monitoring job performance
- communicating with managers and supervisors to gather input and plan training
- communicating with company personnel or support systems to ensure job retention
- training in work-related tasks or behaviors to ensure job retention (for example, grooming or behavior management)
- activities related to supporting the person to be self-employed, work from home, or perform in a work setting

20a. Person wants re-training; more hours; current or similar position - If the person wants or needs re-training to maintain their employment, needs support to obtain more hours or a similar/lateral or other non-skilled position, waiver SE should be utilized to support the person in these tasks. It is not appropriate to refer back to TWS-VRS for this type of support.

20b. Person wants a different job or needs career skills training – For assistance to find a different job within a new industry, especially if it requires skills training or more intensive services the cycle begins again with a referral to TWS-VRS and the addition of waiver EA services to the waiver IPC/ISP.