Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-1200: Supported Employment Services

Revised February 2023

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# C-1204: Purchasing Requirements

Supported Employment Services are purchased through contracted providers only.

For more information on general purchasing policies and procedures, refer to [D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200).

To ensure accountability and high-quality services to VR customers, VR staff must apply the contracting requirements as published in the Standards for Providers. For information about required outcomes for Supported Employment Services and the fee schedule, refer to [VR Standards for Providers, Chapter 18: Supported Employment Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-18).

Any request to change to 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://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) form, before the change is implemented. Examples of when a VR3472 is necessary include when:

* requesting a change in providers in cases where the benchmarks previously achieved are not being paid;
* extending SE services beyond 24 months; and
* purchasing Supported Employment services after the purchase of a Bundled Job Placement Benchmark A-C.

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# C-1206: Benchmarks

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## C-1206-1: Supported Employment Plan

The SE Plan provides the framework for how the SE specialist will help the customer achieve competitive integrated employment. The SE Plan is completed during the SE Plan meeting by the VR counselor, using person-centered approaches, in collaboration with the customer, the customer’s circle of support, and the SE specialist. The SE Plan must align with the customer’s interests, preferences, potential job tasks, and identified employment conditions. The SE Plan also identifies the customer’s resources, support needs, extended services (both available and needed), potential employers, and any available premiums. VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report, must be reviewed and agreed upon by the customer, the SE specialist, and the VR counselor.

When developing or amending the SE Plan, a meeting is conducted in person or remotely. The VR counselor, SE specialist, customer and, as appropriate, the customer’s representative and circle of support, must attend the SE plan meeting.

When developing the SE plan, the VR counselor must:

* review VR1630, Career Planning Assessment with the group, ensuring that the information recorded in the VR1632 represents the information in the CPA and/or EWA and the customer's best interests;
* complete VR1632 with the customer, SE specialist, and circle of support, recording the customer's identified:
	+ interests, preferences, and potential job tasks;
	+ employment conditions in measurable terms; and
	+ extended services (funded, paid, and/or natural supports).
* maintain a signed version of VR1632 in the VR case file;
* provide a signed copy of VR1632 to the customer and SE specialist;
* provide an electronically fillable copy of VR1632 to the SE specialist; and
* request that VR staff issue SAs to the SE specialist for:
	+ supported employment job development and placement benchmark;
	+ two job retention benchmarks; and
	+ any relevant premiums.

The SE Plan is amended when supported by the VR counselor and based on the customer’s informed choice and decision to change the preferences, interests, potential job tasks, and employment conditions listed on VR1632, Supported Employment Plan and Employment Report.

To amend the SE Plan, the VR counselor must:

* contact the customer to determine whether an update to the SE Plan is needed;
* request that VR staff issue an SA to the SE specialist for the SE Plan Update Meeting;
* schedule the meeting to update the SE Plan;
* revise VR1632 with the customer, SE specialist, and circle of support;
* obtain new signatures;
* file the updated, signed copy of VR1632 in the customer’s VR case file;
* provide an updated, signed copy of VR1632 to the customer and SE specialist;
* provide the updated, electronically fillable copy of VR1632 to the SE specialist; and
* ensure all required SAs are up to date.

## C-1206-2: Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark

The job development and placement benchmark should be authorized and paid once during the life of the case. On a case-by-case basis, it may be necessary to purchase the Job Development and Placement benchmark more than once. When the VR counselor determines the customer needs the supports of a supported employment specialist for an additional Job Development and Placement benchmark, the VR counselor must obtain VR supervisor approval. Before obtaining VR supervisor approval, the VR counselor must document in a case note why the customer requires another placement and what interventions and/or services have been provided to the customer to address needs, circumstances, behaviors, and/or other employment barriers since the first purchase of the benchmark.

During the job development and placement benchmark, the VR counselor:

* reviews all documentation submitted by the provider for accuracy and completion;
* communicates with the provider and the customer regarding the job search and placement;
* reviews the employment placement to see if it meets the definition of competitive integrated employment (CIE) and requests that a CIE checklist be completed, when applicable;
* monitors the customer's employment to ensure that nonnegotiable employment conditions are met throughout the delivery of SE services;
* verifies that the extended services (funded, paid, and/or natural supports) have been identified and that the provider has arranged to train the long-term-support provider;
* verifies that the customer has received ongoing supports as necessary for the customer to learn the job and meet the employer's expectations;
* checks the SAs for premiums that are still open; and
* when requested by the SE specialist, schedules a job stability review meeting with the SE specialist, customer, and circle of support.

For information on how a CIE checklist is completed, refer to the Competitive Integrated Employment intranet page.

For more information, refer to SFP 18.5: Supported Employment Job Development and Placement Benchmark.

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**C-1206-4: Supported Employment Job Stability Review**

A job stability review is completed when the customer:

* appears he or she will be job stable at the completion of the current job retention benchmark; or
* appears to need additional job retention services after two 28-day job retention benchmark periods.

The customer must complete at least one 28-day job retention benchmark to be eligible for job stability. To establish job stability, the provider must be prepared to transition any remaining support needs to a funded, paid, and/or natural support extended service provider and notify the VR counselor.

The VR counselor and customer make the final determination about job stability and the purchase of any job retention benchmarks. The VR counselor must consult with the VR supervisor for six or more job retention benchmarks.

Refer to [C-1202-3: Extended Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1200#c1202-3) for information about extended services and for information about when a VR counselor can purchase extended services through job skills training for VR customers who are youth with disabilities.

The job stability meeting may be conducted remotely. During the job stability review meeting, the VR counselor, SE specialist, customer, and circle of support discuss and review the customer’s employment and whether the customer meets the service definition of “job stability” or needs one additional job retention benchmark.

During the job stability review meeting, the VR counselor:

* evaluates the customer’s job stability status, as defined in the service definition section in 18.7.1;
* reviews all documentation submitted by the provider;
* communicates with the provider and customer regarding the need for an additional job retention benchmark;
* provides counseling and guidance, per VRSM C-1206-4;
* documents:
	+ one additional job retention benchmark, if approved; or
	+ job stability status; and
* requests that VR staff issue SAs to the SE specialist for:
	+ either one job retention benchmark before the next job retention benchmark begins or the SE closure benchmark; and
	+ any relevant premiums.

When the VR counselor determines the customer needs the supports of a supported employment specialist for an additional Job Development and Placement benchmark, the VR counselor must obtain VR supervisor approval. Before obtaining VR supervisor approval, the VR counselor must document in a case note why the customer requires another placement and what interventions and/or services have been provided to the customer to address needs, circumstances, behaviors, and/or other employment barriers since the first purchase of the benchmark.

To reestablish job stability, the VR counselor:

* requests an SA for the provider to participate in another job stability review meeting;
* schedules a job stability review meeting; and
* follows the procedures for a job stability review meeting.

For more information on job stability, refer to [SFP 18.7: Supported Employment Job Stability Review](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-18).

Counseling and Guidance for Job Stability

The VR counselor conducts counseling and guidance (C&G) with the customer during the job stability review meeting. After the job stability review meeting, a C&G case note must be entered documenting the customer’s job stability status. In addition to the C&G case note requirements in [E-300: Case Note Requirements](https://twc.texas.gov/files/partners/vrsm-e-300-case-note-requirements-twc.docx), the VR counselor must document in the C&G case note whether the customer:

* is satisfied with the employment;
* continues to work in a job that meets the definition of competitive integrated employment;
* is meeting the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions on VR1632;
* has reliable transportation to and from the jobsite with a backup plan;
* is meeting the employer’s expectations regarding job performance;
* is meeting the physical and environmental demands of the job;
* has all necessary accommodations in place and working;
* has extended services (funded by other local or state agencies or Social Security, private pay, and/or natural supports) in place to ensure continued employment with this support; and
* has achieved all training goals, unless a goal has been determined to be “no longer applicable” or is scheduled to be transferred to extended services, on VR1634.

The job stability date is the day after the current job retention benchmark is completed.

Note: It is a best practice to schedule the SE closure meeting at the job stability review meeting when the job stability date is set.

For more information on job stability, refer to [SFP 18.7: Supported Employment Job Stability Review](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-18).