

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-200: Technology Services

Revised TBA

C-204: Vehicle Modification Services

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C-204-2: Purchasing a Vehicle for Modification or a Modified Vehicle

Assisting with the purchase of a vehicle for modification or a vehicle that has already been modified is considered only after all of the following conditions are met:

- every other transportation option has been explored;
- the provision of an accessible vehicle is the most cost-efficient and appropriate approach for the customer; and
- when it is necessary for the customer to participate in other planned services, such as vocational training and job-related services, or for employment.

The primary objective of vehicle purchasing assistance is to defray initial costs that the customer must pay to take possession of the vehicle to be modified, such as:

- down payment;
- registration fees; and
- initial insurance.

VR does not purchase vehicles outright for customers.

Criteria for Assistance

Consider assisting with a vehicle purchase only when all the following conditions are met:

- Because of the disability, the customer requires a modified vehicle, and accessible transportation is not otherwise available within the same time frame under which the modification would be available.
- No comparable services or benefits are available to meet the customer's transportation needs.
- Relocation to an area with accessible transportation is not feasible.
- The customer has enough income, or the planned employment goal will result in enough income, to cover future payments, insurance premiums, gasoline, and routine maintenance costs.

The justification for the purchase of any vehicle purchase assistance or modifications must be documented in a case note. All vehicle modifications must be included as a planned service in the customer's IPE.

[When considering a vehicle modification for a student with a disability, specific stipulations must be met. Staff must forward relevant case information to the state office transition team for review via the Pre-ETS mailbox \(VR.Pre-ETS@twc.state.tx.us\) before including the vehicle modification on the IPE. More information can be found in VRSM C-1305-6.](#)

Vehicle modifications can range from under \$1,000 for simple hand controls to many thousands of dollars for van conversions with complex driving systems. Deciding that vehicle modification is reasonable and necessary requires the VR counselor to carefully consider numerous factors, including at least the following, and document all considerations in the customer's case notes:

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services

Revised TBD

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D-203: Purchasing Decisions

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D-203-4: Customer Participation

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Services exempt from the customer's cost participation include the costs for:

- the assessment for determining the customer's eligibility;
- the assessment for determining the customer's VR needs, including associated maintenance and transportation;
- VR counseling and guidance and referral for other services;
- in-house services provided directly by VR staff;
- job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
- personal attendant services;
- any auxiliary aid or service (for example, interpreter services) that a customer with a disability requires to participate in the VR program;
- diabetes education services;
- orientation and mobility services; ~~and~~
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS); and
- Other VR services that directly support Pre-ETS, like transportation, maintenance, and personal assistant services (applicable for VR eligible students only).

This policy must be applied uniformly to all customers in similar circumstances.

SSI and/or SSDI Recipients

Customers eligible for SSI or SSDI because of a disability are exempt from the cost participation requirement. Limitations on payments (for example, on payment of tuition and fees) are also not applied; however, VR policy on the use of best value and comparable services and benefits must be followed for all VR customers.

Potentially Eligible Customers

BLR does not apply to services that are provided directly to potentially eligible VR customers; however, policy on the use of best value and comparable services and benefits must be followed for all VR customers.

Students or Youth with Disabilities

The BLR does not apply to:

- the cost of participation in training seminars and GSTs for students or youth with disabilities (see [C-1307-1: Student Participation in the Cost of Training Seminars and GSTs](#)); or
- the cost of parents or legal guardians to participate in the training seminars and GSTs for students or youth with disabilities (see [C-1307-2: Family Participation in Training Seminars and GSTs](#)).

~~The BLR is applied to the following expenses associated with participation in training seminars and GSTs for students or youth with disabilities:~~

- ~~• incidental expenses and transportation costs for the student to participate in the services; and~~
- ~~• transportation costs for family members, unless a parent or representative is required to participate in the activity for the student to attend.~~

VR policy on the use of best value and comparable services and benefits must be followed for all VR customers.

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D-213: Other Types of Payments and Purchases

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D-213-6: Food Purchased for Customer Training

The purchase of food for customer training must be necessary and reasonable.

Prior to purchasing food, VR staff must take the following into account:

- Food may not be purchased to feed customers unless the training is scheduled to exceed five hours, not including the meal hour. Customer training should not be planned over a meal period with the intent of purchasing food. Meals should be purchased only when doing so will allow customers to continue their training activities during the meal or will support completion of the training in less time.

- Food purchases must be only for customers, must not be an excessive quantity or variety, and must be a reasonable cost. The cost per meal should be as economical as possible and must not exceed \$15 per customer. When a training spans a full day or multiple days, the daily cost per customer for food must not exceed \$51. Any exceptions to these limits must be approved in advance by the VR director.
- Food may not be purchased to feed VR staff, individuals from partner organizations, or family members. The only exception is when a family member's participation meets the requirements established in C-1306-2 Family Participation in Training Seminars and GSTs, and when the purchase of food for the family member is approved in advance by the VR director.
- Food expenditures may be paid with Pre-ETS funds for eligible VR customers with an approved IPE. Food is not an allowable expense, in any situation, for potentially eligible customers.
- ~~Per Federal regulations, food is not an allowable Pre-ETS expenditure. Food expenditures must be paid with Basic VR Support funds and can only be paid on behalf of eligible VR customers. Food is not an allowable expense for potentially eligible customers.~~
- Food that is provided in conjunction with other customer activities, such as seminars and workshops and activities in the community, is not categorized as bulk food orders and should be purchased through RHW.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-1300: Transition Services for Students and Youth with Disabilities

Revised TBA

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C-1303: Transition Services and the IEP Process

C-1303-1: Required for Planning and IPE Development

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IPE services must:

- be vocational in nature; and
- support and lead to achievement of the employment goal identified in the IPE.

IPE services:

- must not be the responsibility of the school district under IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; and
- must not be readily available from the school district.

Students who receive transition services are usually in a career exploration stage of development while they are still in secondary school. Counseling and guidance, along with specific exploration activities and other Pre-ETS activities, is expected as part of the IPE. Multiple IPE amendments may be necessary as the student's rehabilitation needs [and vocational goals](#) change.

Depending on the complexity of the student's circumstances and need for services, TVRCs can begin working with students who are enrolled in secondary school at any time to help them move successfully from school to competitive integrated employment.

According to special education law, transition services must be included in the IEP of a student at age 16; although, in Texas, transition services may begin at age 14, or even earlier, if the IEP or the results of the ARD meeting indicates that the services are necessary.

Transition services promote or facilitate the development of the student's IPE while he or she is still in secondary school.

The IPE for transition services can include:

- [Pre-ETS](#);
- postsecondary education;
- employment [services](#);
- housing;
- daily living skills;
- long-term issues (such as attendant care, guardianship, assistive technology, and therapies);
- activities that promote confidence, team building, and effective communication; and
- transportation [and/or maintenance to support other services](#).

The IPE must also:

- be based on current information regarding the student's knowledge, skills, interests, and preferences;
- set timelines with projected beginning and ending dates for all activities leading toward achieving the student's goals; and
- identify a network of support, such as family, friends, agencies, and community resources, that can help the student achieve the desired goals.

To prepare [VR eligible](#) students for success in postsecondary school [and competitive, integrated employment](#), Pre-ETS, [along with other VR services](#), can be provided to enhance [or complement](#) services that the school is already providing. ~~Or~~ [theyse services](#) may be provided in partnership with the school, with consideration [that the services are not duplicative](#)~~for what the school must provide~~.

Services exempt from the customer's cost participation include the costs for:

- the assessment for determining the customer's eligibility;
- the assessment for determining the customer's VR needs, including associated maintenance and transportation;
- VR counseling and guidance and referral for other services;
- in-house services provided directly by VR staff;
- job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
- personal attendant services;
- any auxiliary aid or service (for example, interpreter services) that a customer with a disability requires to participate in the VR program;
- diabetes education services;
- orientation and mobility services; ~~and~~
- [Pre-Employment Transition Services \(Pre-ETS\); and](#)
- [Other VR services that directly support Pre-ETS, like transportation, maintenance, and personal assistant services \(applicable for VR eligible students only\). See the Pre-ETS Desk Reference Part 2 for a complete list.](#)

This policy must be applied uniformly to all customers in similar circumstances.

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C-1305-5: Assistive Technology

The LEA must provide assistive technology and assistive devices to meet the educational needs of secondary school students. The student may use the equipment at home to complete homework assignments and school projects.

In accordance with IDEA requirements, if the student's ARD committee determines that a student with a disability needs home access to telecommunications, sensory devices, or other technological aids to meet the requirements of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), the LEA must provide the devices for home use in order to implement the student's IEP.

Technology Evaluation

Students who may need assistive technology to achieve their postsecondary goals can be sent for an assistive technology evaluation during their senior year of secondary school.

Necessity Requirement

The TVRC may purchase the assistive devices and assistive technology ~~only~~ if the items are needed for the student's postsecondary education or long-term employment.

Note: In general, assistive technology ~~must~~should be purchased with basic VR funds, not Pre-ETS funds. [However, in some circumstances when assistive devices are necessary and reasonable for participation in a Pre-ETS, like a work-based learning opportunity, the counselor may be able to purchase the assistive technology using Pre-ETS funds for VR eligible students with an approved IPE.](#)

Auxiliary aids [and services](#) may be purchased with Pre-ETS funds for students with [sensory or communication](#) disabilities who are participating in a Pre-ETS activity and need an auxiliary aid to participate. For questions about purchasing auxiliary aids with Pre-ETS funds, contact the [Pre-ETS team by email](#). Examples of auxiliary aids include qualified interpreters, readers, material written in braille, screen readers, and auditory programs. See 28 CFR 35.104. [These auxiliary aids and services can be purchased for both eligible and potentially eligible students.](#)

Student Informed Choice

Assistive technology is changing rapidly. When appropriate, the VR counselor discusses the options with the student of having equipment purchased while the student is still in secondary school or waiting until after the student graduates.

If a student and TVRC agree to have equipment purchased while the student is still in secondary school and the assistive technology continues to meet the student's future employment needs, TWC may not be able to pay for more advanced technology at a later date.

Prior Approval

Assistive technology purchases for the purpose of postsecondary education or employment that are made before the completion of the student's senior year of secondary school must be approved by the ~~TVRC's~~ counselor's supervisor.

Purchase Procedures

To purchase telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices, follow the procedures in RHW.

The justification for purchase in the case notes must clearly state that the assistive technology is being purchased for postsecondary education, ~~or~~ long-term employment, or for participation in a Pre-ETS.

C-1305-6: Providing Pre-ETS

Funding

Purchases for customers and students are made with either Basic VR or Pre-ETS funding, depending on the type of purchase. The Pre-ETS Desk Aid provides additional explanation and guidance on what is funded by Basic VR and what may be funded by Pre-ETS, tracking Pre-ETS time, and capturing Pre-ETS provided directly by counselors (at no cost). For eligible students receiving VR, it is also important to note that it may be necessary to access both Pre-ETS funding and Basic VR funding. Staff members are encouraged to ~~"braid" different~~ use both types of funding to help the student achieve his or her vocational goal. For example, an eligible VR student is participating in a workplace readiness activity but needs hearing aids to ensure effective communication. Pre-ETS funds may be used to pay for the workplace readiness activity but not the hearing aids, because Pre-ETS cannot fund personal assistive devices. Basic VR would pay for the hearing aids. In February 2020, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) published a policy clarification that provided additional flexibility to states to allow the use of Pre-ETS funds for certain support good and services for students with disabilities who have been determined eligible for VR services. The same support services may not be purchased with Pre-ETS funds for potentially eligible students. For more information, please see the Pre-ETS Desk Aid, referenced above, or email the Pre-ETS mailbox: VR.Pre-ETS@twc.state.tx.us.

Examples of these services include:

- transportation

- [maintenance](#)
- [assistive technology](#)
- [job skills training](#)
- [personal attendant services, and](#)
- [assessments](#)
- [food and lodging when it supports participation in a residential Pre-ETS program](#)

[This flexibility to use Pre-ETS funding for supporting goods and services is not applicable for potentially eligible students.](#)

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Working with Potentially Eligible Students

To receive Pre-ETS and be considered potentially eligible for VR services, an individual must meet only the definition of a student with a disability. The individual does not have to apply for VR services, unless the individual chooses to do so. The purpose of the potentially eligible designation is to give more students with disabilities the opportunity to participate in Pre-ETS. VR requirements are only applied for services provided to VR-eligible customers. The only VR requirements that are applied to potentially eligible individuals are informed choice, confidentiality, and access to the client assistance program (34 CFR §361.38, §361.52, and §361.56). Potentially eligible students are not subject to Basic Living Requirements or other cost sharing requirements.

Students who are potentially eligible may receive a single Pre-ETS or multiple Pre-ETS according to their need and desire to participate. Providing or purchasing Pre-ETS for potentially eligible students is not intended to be an avenue to circumvent the VR process, and at some point, a potentially eligible individual may need VR services that Pre-ETS may not fund, such as ~~psychological assessments, durable medical equipment, transportation, and-or~~ tuition. Generally, and as a best practice after the provision or purchase of a Pre-ETS, the TVRC or VR counselor assigned to a potentially eligible case as the point of contact should counsel and provide the student with appropriate information related to the following options:

- The individual may continue as a student who is potentially eligible and able to access additional Pre-ETS;
- The student may apply for the full array of VR services, which include additional Pre-ETS [and Transition Services](#), as needed; or
- The VR counselor may close the case if the student does not wish to access additional Pre-ETS or to apply for additional VR services.

To access VR services, a potentially eligible individual must apply for VR, be determined eligible, and have an IPE for provision of the additional VR services.

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C-1305-8: Group Skills Training

Note: When purchasing Work Experience Services through an ESP, transition educator, or a nontraditional provider for a student participating in a GST, the Work Experience Plan does not have to be completed.

To the greatest extent possible, each GST must be designed to maximize use of Pre-ETS funds and minimize the need for Basic VR funds. For example, a day program that is focused primarily on delivery of Pre-ETS activities and that uses facilities that VR can obtain at no or minimal cost maximizes use of Pre-ETS funding, ~~while an event that requires lodging and paid meeting space requires significant expenditures of Basic VR funds.~~ It is acceptable for a combination of eligible and potentially eligible students to participate in GSTs. However, when potentially eligible students are participating, purchases for those students are limited to those allowed under the required Pre-ETS listed above. For VR eligible students, some additional VR services, like transportation, lodging, and maintenance services, associated with the GST are allowable for Pre-ETS funding.

~~Note: Long-standing GSTs that are residential programs conducted during the summer months may still be considered for approval.~~

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Eligible students who attend a GST must have goals in their IPE that make participation in the specific GST necessary for their vocational development. If goods and services other than the required Pre-ETS activities must be purchased for the eligible student to participate in the GST, those purchases must be:

- documented in the student's IPE;
- necessary to perform the actual activity or task, or to achieve the goal of the GST; and
- reasonable, meaning that the cost does not exceed fair or market cost for purchases made under the same or similar circumstances.

In short, ~~t~~he purchase of food, transportation, lodging, clothing, or backpacks (or similar types of purchases) for any GST must be necessary and reasonable.

~~Clothing, backpacks, and equipment~~ These supporting goods and services are ~~not~~ allowable Pre-ETS expenditures for VR eligible students only. ~~since they are supporting goods. The need for purchase of any equipment must be individualized, necessary for GST participation, and documented in the student's IPE. Backpacks should be purchased only if they are necessary for the GST activities.~~

If it is advisable for students to wear a T-shirt that identifies them with a VR group when students participating in a GST are in a public setting, the T-shirts must be reasonably priced and must be plain, as the additional cost of printing on the shirts is not permitted.

The purchase of T-shirts must follow all applicable procurement and purchasing requirements, and documentation must be retained to justify the purchase.

For information on purchasing food, refer to [D-213-6: Food Purchased for Customer Training](#).

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Budget

The VR Manager must consider the anticipated costs associated with a GST and develop a proposed budget. Most of the proposed costs would be attributed to Pre-ETS. When necessary, the budget may contain supporting costs attributed to [either Pre-ETS or Basic VR](#). The proposed budget [on the GST template](#) identifies which costs are attributed to Pre-ETS and Basic VR.

GST Site

Facility and room rentals, [as stand-alone purchases](#), are typically not allowable Pre-ETS expenditures. All GST sites must be accessible, according to the standards established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). When a contract or written agreement is required to rent a room or facility, all approval and procurement processes must be followed.

Contracts

Contracts that are necessary for one or more GST activities must:

- be developed with and approved by TWC Procurement and Contract Services; and
- comply with TWC policy and state and federal law.

The VR Manager must ensure that at least four months are allowed for the contract development and execution process.

Lodging

Lodging costs are ~~not only~~ an allowable Pre-ETS expenditure [for VR eligible students](#), so GST activities should be planned [only when it is reasonable and necessary for participation](#). ~~to limit the need for lodging, when possible.~~

When lodging is necessary for the GST, and family member participation is also proposed, the VR Manager must carefully consider whether it is necessary for more than one family member to participate.

The VR Manager must also consider that it is generally easier to supervise students in camp or dormitory settings rather than at a hotel. If more than 10 hotel rooms are needed, the VR Manager must first obtain approval from the VR Division Director and then coordinate with TWC Conference Planning at ConferencePlanning.Media@twc.state.tx.us.

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C-1305-11: Camps

Camps can increase a student's self-confidence by providing opportunities for the student to participate in challenging activities. Camps generally focus on career exploration activities or increasing the student's vocational and work readiness skills to prepare the student for [other VR services in the future](#). Each camp must have clear vocational goals with associated objectives to demonstrate how the activity will meet the goals. A camp must not be a solely or predominantly social or recreational event.

Camp-related expenses can include costs that are considered Pre-ETS (such as career exploration) as well as related costs that are ~~not~~ [also](#) considered Pre-ETS (such as ~~customer~~ travel, room, and board) [for VR eligible students](#).

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C-1306-1: Summer Earn and Learn

If a participant in SEAL needs services to access the program or support successful participation, such as sign language interpreting or Work Experience Training, these support services can be purchased with Pre-ETS funding.

When purchasing Work Experience Services through an ESP, transition educator, or a nontraditional provider for a student participating in SEAL or a GST, the Work Experience Plan does not have to be completed.

Other support services, such as transportation or maintenance, may ~~only~~ be purchased with ~~Basic VR~~ [Pre-ETS](#) funding and may only be provided for eligible participants, not for potentially eligible participants.

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C-1307-1: Student Participation in the Cost of Training Seminars and GSTs

GSTs, seminars, workshops, camps, and work experiences are training activities related to Pre-ETS. The student is not required to contribute to the cost of these services, regardless of whether or not the customer's net income or liquid assets exceed the basic living requirements (BLR).

Students are expected to provide their own money for incidental expenses while participating in a GST or similar training or activity, ~~and but they will not~~ be asked to participate in the cost of transportation, ~~maintenance, or other supporting goods or services~~ associated with the Pre-ETS training, ~~if they exceed BLR amount. Refer to D-203-4: Customer Contribution to the Cost of Services for additional information about participation in cost of services and BLR.~~

The TVRC may use any TWC-approved method for providing transportation to students; ~~however, transportation is not an allowable Pre-ETS cost.~~ When available, transportation that is of no cost to TWC is used. If this is not available, the most cost-effective and reasonable method of transportation must be used.

C-1307-2: Family Participation in Training Seminars and GSTs

When parents (or legal guardians) of eligible VR students participate in a training activity, including Pre-ETS, with the student to further the student's vocational adjustment or rehabilitation, the cost of the training is not subject to customer contribution requirements or BLR. However, these requirements must be applied for all incidental expenses and transportation costs for family members unless a parent or representative is required to participate in the activity for the student to attend.

If a parent and or representative is providing supervision or attendant care for their child in conjunction with a TWC-VR sponsored activity, any applicable transportation and food costs for one parent will be included in the training costs regardless of economic resources. These must be reasonable and the same costs that any participant in the GST would incur.

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~~C-1308: Case Note Documentation~~

~~Case notes for students who receive transition services must also include the following components unique to decisions made about transition services:~~

- ~~• Documentation of career exploration activities~~
- ~~• Family involvement in making informed choices~~
- ~~• Collaboration with school partners~~
- ~~• Use of comparable benefits provided by the school or other partners~~

~~When documenting Pre-ETS in a RHW case note, select the appropriate topic (such as counseling and guidance or service justification) and use "Pre-ETS" as the first text in the Add to Topic field.~~

~~Refer to D-303-2: Case Note Requirements for additional information about required documentation.~~

VR Services Manual E-400: Applying Basic Living Requirements (BLR) to VR Services

Revised: TBD

VR Service	BLR Applies	Notes
Adult Basic Education	Yes	
Apprenticeship Costs	Yes	
Apprenticeship Opportunities	Yes	
Assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs	No	
Auxiliary Aids and Services	No	
Bundled Job Placement Services	No	
Child Care Services	Yes	
College, University, and Technical Training (tuition and fees)	Yes	
Counseling and Guidance	No	
Diabetes Education Services	No	
Employment Assistance Specialist Services	No	
Home and Jobsite Modifications (evaluations and actual service)	Yes	
In-house Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive Technology Unit Services • CCRC • Deafblind Field Training Services • Employment Assistance Services • Vocational Diagnostic Unit • Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher Services 	No	
Intensive Work Preparation and Life Skills Training	Yes	
Interpreter Services	No	
Job Skills Training	No	
Maintenance	Yes	BLR does not apply when directly associated with a required assessment; BLR does apply in all other conditions.
Medical Services	Yes	
Neurodevelopmental and Psychological Services	Yes	

Non-Bundled Job Placement Services	No	
Occupational Licenses	Yes	
On-the-Job Training	No	
Orientation and Mobility Services	No	
Paid Work Experience Services	No	
Personal Assistant Services	No	
Pre-ETS Services and other VR services needed to directly support Pre-ETS such as transportation, maintenance, and personal assistant services. (Applicable for VR eligible students only).	No	
Print Braille Materials (in-house service)	No	
Project Search	No	
Reader Services	No	
Rehabilitation Technology Devices and Services (including Hearing Aids)	Yes	Comparable benefits are not required, but should be used if readily available to meet best value requirements.
Room and Board	Yes	
Self-Employment Services	Yes	
Services to the Customer's Family Members	Yes	
Services for SSI/SSDI Recipients	No	
Supported Employment Services	No	
Textbooks and Supplies	Yes	
Tools and Equipment	Yes	
Training by Paid Instructor	Yes	
Translator Services	No	
Transportation Services	Yes	BLR does not apply when directly associated with a required assessment; BLR does apply in all other conditions.
Tutoring	Yes	
Vehicle Modifications	Yes	
Vehicle rental	Yes	
Vehicle repairs	Yes	
Work Experience Services	No	
Work Readiness Services (PSAT and WAT and	No	

VAT and Job Tips)		
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