

Vocational Adjustment Training—Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training Discussion Paper

Background

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) regulations in 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §361.50 require states to develop and maintain written policies covering the nature and scope of each VR service specified in §361.48. Per §361.48(b), as appropriate to the VR needs of each individual and consistent with each individual’s individualized plan for employment, states must ensure that certain VR services are available to assist the individual in preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in, or regaining an employment outcome consistent with the individual’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. Under §361.48(b)(6), required VR services include personal and vocational adjustment training, referred to in this discussion paper as Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT).

VAT prepares customers to find work and stay employed. The goal is to help customers develop the competencies and strategies needed to succeed in a competitive and integrated workplace. VAT benefits customers who have never worked, have been unemployed for an extended period of time, or have a sporadic work history.

VAT services are designed to:

- meet the unique needs of each customer;
- help resolve or manage vocational impediments; and
- increase the customer’s self-sufficiency.

VAT may be provided to adult customers as well as students with disabilities. VAT is designed to help customers develop the competencies and essential skills necessary to function successfully on the job, in postsecondary education and training, and in the community. Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR) offers multiple VAT courses, which cover a variety of topics including career exploration, budgeting, soft skills for employment, disability disclosure, and navigating public transportation.

Issue

More individuals with and without disabilities enroll in college than they did 20 years ago. According to 2016 data from the National Center for Education Statistics there was a 42 percent increase in college enrollment in the United States from 1998 to 2012, with an anticipated increase of 15 percent from 2012 to 2023. Currently, TWC-VR customers lack options within existing VAT courses to adequately prepare for postsecondary education and training.

Decision Point

Staff seeks direction on expanding the VAT options to include a course called Exploring Postsecondary Education and Training. The VAT course will help customers to understand postsecondary education, financial aid, and the services that are available to support students in postsecondary education and training. The VAT class will consist of 10 hours of instruction and will highlight postsecondary programs, disability support services in postsecondary education, skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education, and applying and paying for college. The maximum fee that TWC-VR will pay to providers offering this course is \$342.50 per customer, which is an identical fee to other VAT courses entitled “Entering the World of Work” and

- 1 “Explore the You in Work”. No more than six customers would be allowed in a training group,
- 2 and TWC-VR will not pay providers for excused, unexcused, or holiday absences.
- 3 **Rehabilitation Council of Texas**
- 4 The Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT) received and reviewed the proposed policy revisions.