# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-1400: Supportive Goods and Services

Revised February 1, 2023

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## **C-1408: Wage Services for Work Experience through WorkQuest**

WorkQuest is a private, nonprofit corporation that links Texans with disabilities to meaningful employment opportunities, improving quality of life for thousands of individuals across the state. TWC has entered into a contract with WorkQuest to provide Wage Services for VR customers. Wage Services allow VR to pay a customer's wages when he or she is participating in a Work Experience Service. Wage Services includes gross earnings, worker compensation and associated costs including payroll processing, payroll reporting, and other payroll processing functions.

Work Experience Services are intended to be short-term (12 weeks or less) and part-time. For additional information, refer to [VRSM C-421: Work Experience Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c421).

WorkQuest CRPs define part-time as not exceeding an average of 30 hours per week over the course of the entire work experience assignment (training period). A customer may work up to 40 hours per week for one or more weeks during the training period, if such a schedule is necessary for completion of training or demonstration of readiness for full-time employment, so long as the average of 30 hours per week over the training period is not exceeded.  For services described and purchased through [VR-SFP Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-13) the customer's hours cannot be greater than part-time.

WorkQuest through one of their Community Rehabilitation Providers (not a TWC-VR provider) will:

* be the employer of record for the customer;
* be responsible for onboarding the customer and completing tasks such as I-9 verification;
* coordinate and collect payroll documentation from the VR customer's work experience worksite entity;
* accurately process a bimonthly paycheck, unless a different frequency is agreed to in writing by VR and WorkQuest;
* make direct deposits or deposits to a pay card, that include a pay stub on the pay date;
* provide W-2 forms in accordance with Internal Revenue Service requirements;
* prepare supplemental payroll to correct errors in pay when necessary and applicable;
* notify the VR counselor of any worker's compensation claims made by or on behalf of VR customers; and
* notify the VR counselor of worksite incidents involving injury, property damage, or behavioral issues that result in termination of a customer's placement at the worksite, as soon as possible, but not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the incident.

Wage Services provided through WorkQuest are intended to support VR customers and "students and youth with disabilities," including those who are potentially eligible when participating in Work Experience Services as defined in the [VR-SFP Chapter 14: Work Experience Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-14).

Students with disabilities, including students who are potentially eligible, may also receive Wage Services through WorkQuest when a Workforce Development Board (WDB) does not provide Wage Services. If Wage Services are available through the WDB, VR Supervisor approval is required when using WorkQuest for students and youth with disabilities instead of a WDB’s Wage Service. If Wage Services are not available through the WDB, VR Supervisor approval is not required to use WorkQuest. For additional information on WDBs that provide Wage Services, refer to the [Year-Round Paid Work Experience](https://intra.twc.texas.gov/intranet/vrs/html/paid-work-experience.html) intranet page.

Pre-ETS funds may be used in cases where the customer meets the Student with a disability criterion established in [VRSM C-1302-1: Student or Transition Services Customer](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1300#c1302-1). When a "student with a disability" is potentially eligible, the VR counselor must follow policy found in [VRSM C-1305-6: Providing Pre-Employment Transition Services, Working with Potentially Eligible Students](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1300#c1305-6).

Wage Services can be purchased for multiple work experiences for the same customer when necessary to meet the customer's goals. Wage Services should not be purchased for a customer to be placed in the same type of position at the same work experience site. Refer to [VRSM C-421: Work Experience Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c421) and [VR-SFP Chapter 14: Work Experience Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-14) for additional information.

Wage Services can be purchased when a customer obtains a work experience placement through various ways or avenues such as:

* VR-SFP Chapter 14: Work Experience Services;
* On an exception basis to support students in work experience opportunities, when a Workforce Development Board (WDB) is not contracted to perform wage services, or the wage services is otherwise unavailable from the WDB; and
* When VR staff work directly with a business to develop a training model designed around their business structure that includes paid work experience. In these models, the goal is for VR customers to gain training that leads to employment with the business partner. These models are to be coordinated with the Business Relations Coordinator and approved by the Deputy Regional Director or Regional Director.

When VR customers are placed at the job site TWS-VRS staff are responsible for monitoring each worksite.

Prior to making a referral for Wage Services, the customer must obtain a work experience placement, that matches the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE) or the trial work plan (TWP).

For a Work Experience Placement obtained via VR-SFP Chapter 14: Work Experience Services, a [VR3142, Worksite Agreement for Wage Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vocational-rehabilitation-service-forms) must be signed by the representative from the work experience site. Either the VR counselor or Work Experience Specialist can obtain the required signatures on the VR3142, Worksite Agreement for Wage Services. The VR3142, Worksite Agreement for Wage Services must be in place prior to making a referral to WorkQuest for Wage Services and before issuing a service authorization for wage services. For additional information refer to [Chapter 14: Work Experience Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-14).

Work Experience via Summer Earn and Learn and work experience placements arranged by VR staff may require a work site agreement or other related agreement.

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