

Rehabilitation Services Manual

Website Version

Michigan Rehabilitation Services

Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

MRS is funded 78.7% with USDOE-RSA Title I federal funds, and 21.3% with state and local funds.

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Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) Website Version

Background

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is designated as the State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services General Program under Title IV of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 2014 by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) Website Version contains policies, procedures and information for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for customers. MRS makes its policies available to the public via the RSM Website Version as required in Michigan Administrative Code R 395.51(r). MRS updates the RSM Website Version when MRS policies are published.

If there are any questions about the use of the RSM Website Version, contact the MRS Policy Unit at LEO-MRS-PolicyUnitSupportCenter@michigan.gov.

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Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is designated as the State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services General Program under Title IV of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as Amended in 2014 by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Note: Individuals who are legally blind are referred to the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP). The Bureau serves individuals, with or without non-visual disabilities, who are legally blind or have visual acuity of 20/100 or less with rapid deterioration. Such individuals must be referred to the Bureau. A referral can be made by calling the local Bureau of Services for Blind Persons office.

MRS is awarded a grant to operate a statewide comprehensive, coordinated, effective, efficient, and accountable vocational rehabilitation program. The VR program is:

- An integral part of a statewide workforce development system
- Designed to assess, plan, develop, and provide vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities, consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice so that they may prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency

The MRS policy manual "Manual" contains policies, procedures and information for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for customers.

There are two categories of customers of Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Reportable and Participant.

Terms are defined in the individual Policy and Procedures manual item and in a glossary.

Sections of the Policy

Each individual policy has five primary sections, Purpose, Definitions, Policy, Procedures and References. In addition to these sections MRS will maintain associated: Forms, Standard Operating Procedures, and Bulletins.

Note: Bulletins may be Informational Memorandums (IM), Policy Directives (PD) or Technical Assistance Memorandums (TAM) that are issued by the MRS director upon the issuance of a policy or informational directive. A bulletin issued by the MRS director becomes policy.

DEFINITIONS

Customer: All individuals served by MRS regardless of program involvement that may fall into either of these categories:

- **Participants:** Individuals with disabilities (youth or adult) who have an approved and signed Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and have begun services.
- **Reportable:** All individuals with disabilities who are in application, or eligible, status in the VR program including individuals with disabilities who are referred as in-school youth (ages 14-26) who may be provided Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Prior to an Application (PTA).

Case Record: Encompasses both electronic and hard copy files maintained by the agency which includes:

- The Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment (AWARE) electronic file
- The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) hard copy file
- The Pre-Employment Transition Services (PTA) hard copy file
- All secondary files maintained by internal program including, but not limited to, Vocationally Handicapped

Certification (P.A. 183), Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) and Business Network Division (BND)

Document: Indicates a requirement to record specified information in an accurate, timely and factual manner in the case record, including written detail indicating a set of reasons or logical basis for a course of action based on verifiable sources of information.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.1 (b)

CONTACT

Policyunitsupportcenter@michigan.gov

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for ethical conduct of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) staff.

POLICY

MRS counselors and managers demonstrate beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and skills to provide competent service delivery to both individuals with disabilities and business customers. This includes working collaboratively with community partners, employers, institutions, and other service delivery providers.

MRS staff demonstrate adherence to ethical standards and rules of conduct in alignment with their professional competence, integrity, and objectivity consistent with their education, experience, expertise, and assigned position.

MRS staff are required to adhere to:

- State Ethics Act
- Michigan Civil Service Commission (MCSC) – Civil Service Rules (Rule 2-8),
- Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Policy (LEO Policy LEO-OHR-002)

MRS counselors, consultants, and managers are additionally required to adhere to:

- Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors as accepted by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).

MRS managers ensure ethical standards and rules of conduct are vigorously enforced.

PROCEDURES

Principles of Ethical Behavior

MRS staff adhere to the following six ethical principles that form a basis for practitioner and organizational values, provide general directions for all actions, and collectively act as a guide to ethical conduct:

- **Autonomy:** To respect the rights of customers to be self-governing within their social and cultural framework.
- **Beneficence:** To do good to others; to promote the well-being of customers.
- **Fidelity:** To be faithful; to keep promises and honor the trust placed in rehabilitation counselors.
- **Justice:** To be fair in the treatment of all customers; to provide appropriate services to all.
- **Nonmaleficence:** To do no harm to others.
- **Veracity:** To be honest.

Professional Competence

MRS staff are required to conduct business in a professional and competent manner.

MRS staff have an ongoing responsibility to maintain professional competence through supervision, consultation, and continued education/training to fulfill their position requirements.

Applicable Ethical Standards and Rules of Conduct

1. State Ethics Act

MRS staff adhere to the standards of conduct of a public officer or employee as outlined in the [State Ethics Act \(15.342\)](#).

2. Michigan Civil Service Commission – Civil Services Rules MRS staff adhere to the ethical standards and conduct as outlined in [Rule 2-8](#) of the Michigan Civil Service Commission (MCSC) – Civil Services Rules.
3. Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Ethical Standards, Conduct, and Disclosure of Interest Policy MRS staff adhere to the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Policy ([LEO-OHR-002](#)) - Ethical Standards, Conduct, and Disclosure of Interest.
4. Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) - Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors MRS counselors, consultants and managers have the additional responsibility of adhering to practitioner principles of ethical conduct outlined in the [Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors](#) issued by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).

Conflict of Interest

MRS staff identify, submit in writing, and consult with their manager to address any appearance or actual conflict of interest.

MRS managers work with staff to resolve identified conflict of interests. If an identified conflict of interest is unable to be resolved, MRS managers consult with the MRS Division Manager and LEO Human Resources as appropriate.

Examples of conflicts of interest include but are not limited to:

- Engaging in outside business, or employment which may encroach upon their employment responsibilities.
- Engaging in private or business relationships/activities that could result in or may be perceived as a conflict of interest.
- Engaging in personal business with a vendor of MRS.
- Lending money to or borrowing money from a MRS customer.

- Accepting gifts from vendors, community partners or customers of MRS.
- Conflicting obligations resulting from required adherence to another discipline's code of ethics.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.18

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for delivery of Vocational Rehabilitation counseling and guidance services provided by Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) counselors.

POLICY

MRS counselors provide Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counseling and guidance beginning at application through case record closure.

MRS counselor-provided counseling and guidance is a required service in each Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

DEFINITION

MRS Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance

MRS counselor-delivered counseling and guidance represents an individualized, collaborative process to assist customers in exercising informed choice to address vocational, personal, and independent living objectives towards development and implementation of an IPE.

PROCEDURES

IPE Required Counseling and Guidance

Aware automatically generates a *Planned Service* template for MRS counselor-provided *Counseling and Guidance* in draft IPEs.

MRS counselor completes all required fields as follows:

- **Start Date:** Input the signature start date on the IPE.
- **Estimated End Date:** Input "Case Closure".
- **My Chosen Provider:** Input "Assigned MRS counselor".
- **Estimated planned service costs:** Input "\$0".
- **Source of comparable benefits:** Input "None".
- **Other Comments:** Indicate specific counseling and guidance activities the MRS counselor will provide to facilitate

achievement of the identified services and overall employment goal.

Aware Actual Service Entry of VR Counseling and Guidance

MRS staff document each occurrence of counseling and guidance provided as part of the application, eligibility, vocational needs assessment or an identified service in the IPE.

Documentation of a counseling and guidance activity, as an *Aware Actual Service* entry, minimally includes:

- **Date of the VR counseling and guidance activity:** Input the date counseling and guidance took place.
- **Mode of delivery:** Indicate how counseling and guidance was delivered (e.g. in person, telephone, or through electronic communications).
- **Individuals present:** Indicate if other individuals or agency representatives were present during the counseling and guidance activity (e.g. parent, family).
- **Objective:** Detail the objective of the counseling and guidance activity.
- **Summary:** Detail what took place during the counseling and guidance activity. Include how the activity assisted in progressing the case specific to the identified needs of the customer, and any next steps/actions.

EXAMPLES

VR Counseling and Guidance Activity Examples

Individualized counseling and guidance activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Increased understanding of disability and impediments to employment
- Obtainment and explanation of information necessary to make an informed choice
- Increased understanding regarding expectations of services
- Identification of strengths to achieve a vocational goal

- Identification and use of transferable skills
- Development of realistic action plans to address vocational objectives or to address identified issues/concerns
- Use of rehabilitation technology
- Increased understanding of work requirements, environment, and/or culture
- Identification and use of community resources and support services
- Addressing potential environmental barriers to employment such as transportation, child-care, or family concerns
- Development of self-advocacy skills
- Addressing employment concerns/barriers and on-the-job stressors
- Increased understanding and exploration of occupational and labor market information
- Increased understanding/use of community resources and support services

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.52

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for non-discrimination.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) complies with all federal and state non-discrimination laws in the administration of programs.

PROCEDURES

MRS staff are prohibited from engaging in behavior that brings reproach upon themselves, the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), MRS, or the State of Michigan.

Non-Discrimination Based on a Protected Status

MRS staff are prohibited from discrimination as outlined in the following legislation:

- Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which prohibits discrimination against all individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities
- Americans with Disability Act of 1990, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age

- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance

Non-Discrimination by Vendors/Contractors Including Accessibility

MRS vendors and contractors are prohibited from discrimination based on customer protected status and are required to meet accessibility needs of those served.

MRS staff report to their MRS manager suspected discrimination or accessibility concerns.

Non-Discrimination of VR Eligibility Determination

MRS staff are prohibited from discrimination during the process of eligibility determination. This includes but is not limited to:

- On the basis of or type of customer disability
- Age, sex, race, color, or national origin of the customer
- Type of expected employment outcome
- Source of referral for MRS
- Particular service needs
- Anticipated costs of required services
- Income level of an applicant or applicant's family
- Applicants' employment history or current employment status
- Applicants' educational status or current educational credential

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.18, 34 CFR 361.42

PURPOSE

In accordance with State and Federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes the guidelines for the contents and organization of the MRS customer case record, including requirements for signatures.

POLICY

Electronic and hard copy case records are maintained for individuals served by Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS).

DEFINITIONS

Case Record - Encompasses both electronic and hardcopy files maintained by the agency. This includes:

- *Aware* (electronic records management system) – formally known as Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment (AWARE)
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) hardcopy file maintained in the home office of the customer
- Pre-Employment Transition Services – Prior to Application (PTA) hardcopy file maintained in the home office of the customer
- Any other hardcopy or electronic record maintained by MRS including, but not limited to, Vocationally Handicapped Certification (P.A. 183), Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI), and the Business Network Division (BND)

Correspondence – Any communication, generally consisting of written notes, letters or emails that pertain to the case record.

OneSpan Sign (OSS) - Electronic signature software approved for use by Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS).

Signed MRS Document, Form or Letter – MRS document, form or letter signed by the designated individual via wet signature, or use of OneSpan Sign (OSS).

Signed Non-MRS Document - Non-MRS documents signed in the format as requested by the originating entity.

PROCEDURES

Signatures

When directed in the Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) to retain an original signature in the case record, the document, form, or letter is required to be the original wet-signature or OneSpan (OSS) signed document.

If RSM does not specify the need to retain the original signature of a document, form, or letter, a faxed or scanned signed document may serve as documentation of signature. MRS staff review faxed or scanned documents to assure that they are legible.

If a MRS document, letter, or form is signed via OneSpan Sign (OSS), e-signature verification documentation is required to be preserved in the case record.

If under the age of 18 and/or an adult represented by a legal guardian, a parent or legal guardian signature is required on all agency forms and documents that require a customer signature prior to acceptance of an agency form or document.

Required Case File Content

Both the VR case file and the PTA case file contain the following:

1. All non-electronic documents pertaining to authorizations
2. All non-electronic documents required per policy
3. All copies of documents that require signatures

Hard Copy Case Record Order

Upon VR case closure or discontinuation of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), files are organized within each section chronologically starting with the most recent documents on top. As applicable contents of each section will include the following documents:

Section 1. VR Case Closure or PTA Discontinuation of Pre-ETS

- MRS staff signed copy of case closure/discontinuation of services letters
- Case notes, correspondence and other documents not contained in *Aware* associated with case closure or discontinuation of services
- MRS staff signed copy of Annual Reviews of either Case Closed due to Severity of Disability, Case Closed in Extended Employment in Community Rehabilitation Program, or Case Closed with a Deviated Wage

Section 2. Referral, Application and Intake

- MRS staff and customer (parent/guardian if applicable) signed VR application or Pre-ETS referral/consent for services
- Case notes, correspondence and other documents not contained in *Aware* associated with referral, application and intake

Section 3. VR Eligibility Determination and Vocational Needs Assessment or PTA Needs Determination (Pre-ETS)

- Medical, psychological, school reports, and other diagnostic assessments
- Case notes, correspondence and other documents not contained in *Aware* associated with eligibility determination, vocational needs assessment or needs determination
- MRS staff signed copy of Notice of Plan Development Extension

- MRS staff signed copy of Notification of Eligibility and Plan Options

Section 4. VR IPE and IPE amendments or PTA Pre-ETS Service Agreement

- MRS staff and customer (parent/guardian if applicable) signed copy of IPE and/or Pre-ETS Services Agreement
- Reports acquired as a result of the IPE or Pre-ETS Services Agreement
- Case notes, correspondence and other documents not contained in *Aware* associated with IPE, IPE amendment or Pre-ETS Services Agreement
- MRS staff signed copy of Notice of Transfer to New Counselor
- MRS staff signed copy of Notice of Suspension or Termination of Services
- MRS staff signed copy of Notice of Annual Employment Plan Review

Section 5. Release of Information

- Customer signed copies of all required Information Request - Authorization to Release Personal Information forms
- Customer signed copies of all required Consent to Release Personal Information forms

Section 6. Fiscal documents

- MRS staff signed copy of open authorizations for services (including bids and quotes as appropriate)
- MRS staff and vendor signed copies of paid authorizations (including applicable receipt/invoice/proof of purchase)

Note: Vendor signature on an authorization is not required if a separate vendor billing document is submitted.

- Letters of Intent

Aware data pages are not required to be printed unless specifically cited per policy. Signature authority is noted in applicable policy.

Vocationally Handicapped Certification

Vocationally Handicapped Certification, or P.A. 183 records are stored in a separate folder as outlined in Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) 8175 - Vocationally Handicapped Certification. The P.A. 183 form is placed at the front of the customer's hard copy case folder.

RECORD MANAGEMENT

No case record material can be removed, altered, or destroyed. The Department of Technology, Management and Budget has instructions for record management and schedules that provide the only legal authority to destroy public records.

www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.47

Confidentiality, Release of Information General Policies

Policy:

All personal information about applicants and eligible individuals, including photographs and lists of names, shall be kept confidential. It shall be released only with the informed, written consent of the individual or as needed to protect the applicant from physical harm to self or others; in response to law enforcement, fraud or abuse investigations; in response to a judicial order; when required by federal statute or regulation; for audit, research or evaluation purposes; or in a suspected case of abuse, neglect, exploitation or endangerment of applicant or eligible individuals. Information obtained from another agency or organization shall be released only by, or under the conditions established by the other agency/organization.

Applicants, eligible individuals, and providers of information shall be advised of these confidentiality and release restrictions through appropriate means of communication.

Medical, psychological and other information that may be potentially harmful to the individual shall not be directly released to the client but shall be released instead to a third party chosen by the individual which may include, among others, a qualified medical or mental health professional, advocate, family member or legal guardian. Information may be released to parents of applicants or eligible individuals who are minors, or legal guardians, under the same conditions as it may be released directly to clients. Release of information to another individual or organization shall contain a statement precluding its further release.

Procedure:

Case file records are not to be altered or deleted by individuals being served or non-MRS personnel who, in selected situations, may inspect, review and receive copies of personal records. If the individual or other party believes the case record to be inaccurate or misleading, the counselor may add documentation to the case record to acknowledge that person's position.

Personal records, including correspondence, shall not be stored on walk-up computer stations. When computers containing customer records are sent to salvage, the hard drive shall be reformatted.

The State Office will notify district offices when case records can be destroyed, including the procedure that is to be followed in disposing of this material. The length of time closed case records must be kept varies depending on audit schedules.

By law, records from the following agencies may not be re-disclosed, even with the client's informed, written consent:

Section II

- Social Security Administration
- Veterans Administration

Records which contain information regarding an individual's addiction to drugs and/or alcohol, or information which identifies the individual as someone who has a severe communicable disease, such as AIDS or Hepatitis C, cannot be released without the specific informed written consent of the individual utilizing a release of information form which clearly advises the individuals that such records will be released.

Information:

A counselor engaged in job development, with the knowledge and consent of the individual, may disclose relevant information about the individual's ability to perform the job, such as work skills, educational background, capacity to learn new skills, etc. Information about an individual's disability is generally not released to employers except when job accommodation(s) or site modification will be needed, or a situation could be hazardous to the client or others and the individual gives informed, written consent to the release. (See Policy 2075, Case Record, for more information)

The informed consent of the individual means that the individual knows the name of the third party to whom information is to be provided, the purpose or the need for providing the information, and the extent or nature of the information to be released. The individual's informed consent may be recorded in a letter or on Form RA-26, Consent to Release Personal Information. Information which has been subpoenaed must be released only if the subpoena is a direct judicial order. Counselors should contact Michigan Rehabilitation Services' Ombudsperson when a subpoena for records is received.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services may charge for costs related to the release of information unless the requesting person is on public assistance or is indigent. A charge should not be made for materials sent to a designated representative.

Forms:

- RA-26 – Consent to Release Personal Information
- RA-2773 – Release Authorization Letter.

Job Aids:

For further information see Confidentiality and Release of Information Job Aid (2100a-JA) in the Job Aids Section of this manual.

Section II

Casework Notes:

For additional Information, refer to Casework Notes issue 2 in the Casework Notes Section of this manual.

Client Appeals, Mediation and Hearings General Policies

Policy:

Applicants and eligible individuals or, if appropriate, their representatives have the right to appeal decisions of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) personnel with which they are dissatisfied regarding the provision of services.

Appeals must be made within 30 days of the decision by requesting a hearing before an impartial hearing officer. Individuals who appeal also have the right to pursue mediation whenever a hearing is requested. The hearing shall be held within 60 days of receipt of the request unless both parties agree to extend the time.

Assessment, plan development, or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) related services that have been initiated shall not be suspended, reduced, or terminated pending mediation or the hearing decision unless the applicant or eligible individual or their representative so requests or there is evidence that the services have been obtained through misrepresentation, fraud, collusion or criminal conduct on the part of the applicant, eligible individual, or their representative.

Nothing shall preclude the parties to such a dispute from informal negotiation and resolution prior to mediation and/or hearing if the informal process is not used to deny or delay the right of an applicant or eligible individual to a hearing or to deny any other right outlined in MRS policy.

When informal resolution of an appeal of a case closure occurs, the closure shall be rescinded and the case returned to the previous status unless other policies or exceptional circumstances require that a new case be opened.

Procedure:

1. Hearing request comes in to MRS Hearing Coordinator. The Hearings Coordinator acknowledges receipt of the hearing request, in writing, to the individual indicating the intent to pursue informal resolution and provide the opportunity for mediation or the right to proceed directly to a Hearing.
2. The request is forwarded to the Division Director, District Manager, Site Manager and Policy Unit for coordination.
 - a. The District Manager initiates contact with the applicant or eligible individual to determine if the issue under appeal can be resolved informally. If necessary, the customer and District Manager may agree to request a specific extension of time to pursue informal resolution.

Client Appeals, Mediation and Hearings General Policies

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- b. The Policy Unit will contact the District Manager to arrange for a consultation to discuss options towards resolution or to assist with the interpretation of the hearing request.
 - i. Participants in the consultation are to consist of the Rehabilitation Counselor assigned to the case, Division Director, District Manager, Site Manager, and Policy. Additional attendees include the Agency Director, and Attorney General representative as necessary.
 3. The outcome of both the attempted resolution with the customer and initial coordination meeting with policy is reported to the Hearings Coordinator.
 4. The Hearings Coordinator requests the assignment of a qualified impartial hearing officer and schedules the hearing unless notified by the District Manager that the issue has been resolved and this is confirmed by the individual.
 - a. If resolved a written summary of the resolution agreement must be sent to the individual by the District Manager with a copy to the Hearings Coordinator and to the individual's representative if the individual was represented.
 5. If informal resolution is not reached with the district manager, the applicant or eligible individual has the right to pursue mediation or proceed with the hearing. The mediation process is voluntary, does not diminish the timeliness standard for hearings and must be conducted by qualified mediators.

Individuals appealing MRS determinations have the right to submit evidence or information and present witnesses to support their position at a mediation session or hearing and have the right to be represented at the mediation session or hearing by a person selected by the individual. The individual may be represented by a friend, relative, an attorney, or representative from the Client Assistance Program.

MRS is not responsible for any costs associated with the individual's representation at the mediation session or hearing or with any cost associated with the appearance of witnesses presented by the individual at the mediation session or hearing.

MRS shall insure that an interpreter, reader, transportation assistance or other reasonable accommodations are provided, if necessary and requested by the individual, for an individual to participate in mediation or the hearing process. The individual or the individual's representative can review or receive copies of pertinent case file information in preparation for mediation or a hearing, subject to MRS policy regarding release of confidential customer information. Copies of relevant MRS policies can also be

Client Appeals, Mediation and Hearings General Policies

provided, if requested. These materials shall be provided at no cost to the individual or the individual's representative.

Mediation

Upon receipt of a request for mediation the Hearings Coordinator assigns a qualified mediator and schedules the mediation in a timely manner and at a location convenient to the parties to the dispute. MRS bears the cost of the mediation process including any reasonable accommodations needed by the individual to participate in the mediation process. Although mediation is voluntary, District Managers and counselors are encouraged to participate in the process, when appropriate.

Discussions that occur during the mediation process are confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding.

An agreement reached by the parties to the dispute in the mediation process is set forth in a written mediation agreement provided to the parties to the dispute, with a copy to the Hearings Coordinator. The written agreement may be in the form of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), an IPE Amendment, or a set of agreements on how to move forward.

Either party may enter the written mediated agreement as evidence in a subsequent hearing or civil proceeding.

Hearing

The hearing, if convened, is held before an impartial hearing officer who is not an employee of MRS. The impartial hearing officer renders a decision based on evidence and testimony presented at the hearing. A written transcript is generated by a court reporter.

The representative from the AG office will serve as MRS' legal representative in hearings.

The AG in coordination with the District Manager is responsible for selecting MRS witnesses including the individual's counselor, and selecting or making copies of the written evidence (exhibits) needed to support MRS' decision. The individual or individual's representative is responsible for selecting claimant witnesses, paying for any costs related to the witness, and selecting and making copies of written evidence that will be provided in support of the individual's case. The individual has the right to examine all witnesses and/or materials or sources of information and evidence presented by MRS.

Client Appeals, Mediation and Hearings General Policies

A “Notice of Hearing” is issued by the Hearings Coordinator to the individual and MRS representative at least two weeks prior to the hearing specifying the date, time, mutually agreed upon location, name of the impartial hearing officer and the issue(s) being appealed. An outline of the hearing procedure and guide on how to prepare for the hearing is enclosed with the Notice of Hearing.

The impartial hearing officer may determine that an abandonment of the hearing has occurred and dismiss the case if either the individual or the individual’s authorized representative fails to notify MRS that the individual will be unable to attend at the scheduled time, or does not appear at the hearing. MRS may exercise flexibility in adherence to time frames if the appellant’s notification is a few days late for good cause.

The impartial hearing officer is to make his or her decision within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of the hearing transcript but no later than 30 calendar days from the date of the hearing. The decision must be based on the provisions of the approved State Plan; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; federal regulations to the Rehabilitation Act and MRS policies that are consistent with federal requirements. A full written report of the findings and grounds for the decision is provided to the MRS director, individual, individual’s representative if the individual was represented, and the MRS representative. The decision of the impartial hearing officer is final and the last administrative remedy available to the individual.

MRS action required as the result of a hearing decision shall be taken promptly. Either party involved in the hearing may bring a civil action in response to the hearing decision. If a party brings a civil action challenging the decision of the impartial hearing officer (IHO), the decision of the IHO must be implemented pending review by the court.

Information:

Examples of an appealed case returning to the pre-appeal status are:

- A case closed unsuccessfully from service status is returned to service status.
- A case closed unsuccessfully from eligible status is returned to eligible status.
- A case closed unsuccessfully from application status is returned to application status.

Example of exceptional circumstances that warrant opening a new case after informal resolution is:

- An appeal of the closure occurs after the official close of a fiscal year.

Client Appeals, Mediation and Hearings

General Policies

MRS service is considered “initiated” after it has been authorized and actually started, for the duration of said authorization.

Mediation is defined as a consensual process in which a neutral third person assists two or more parties to reach a voluntary agreement which resolves a dispute and/or provides options for the future. The mediator serves as a facilitator and helps the parties identify their individual needs and interests, clarify their differences and find common ground. The mediator, unlike the impartial hearing officer, does not direct or render decisions; but, rather, assists the parties in pursuing voluntary agreements.

At any point during mediation, either party or the mediator may elect to terminate the mediation process. In the event mediation is terminated, the individual may proceed to a Hearing or withdraw their Hearing request.

Administrative Rules:

Mich Admin R 395.84 Review; hearing; costs

Mich Admin R 395.85 Informal review

Mich Admin R 395.86 Continuation of services pending completion of hearing

Mich Admin R 395.87 Mediation

Mich Admin R 395.88 Hearing

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) engagement with the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

POLICY

MRS informs customers of the availability of Disability Rights Michigan, Client Assistance Program (CAP) services and engages as necessary with CAP to address advocacy needs and resolve customer concerns.

DEFINITIONS

Client Assistance Program (CAP)

A mandated program authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and administered in Michigan under Disability Rights Michigan (DRM). The purpose of CAP is to:

- Advise and inform individuals regarding available services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, including activities carried out under sections 113 and 511.
- Assist and advocate for potential applicants and customers in their relationships with projects, programs, and community rehabilitation programs providing services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Inform individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with disabilities who have traditionally been unserved or underserved by vocational rehabilitation programs, of the services and benefits available to them under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and under title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

PROCEDURES

Informing Customers of DRM/CAP

DRM/CAP is available to customers throughout the Vocational Rehabilitation process.

[Disability Rights Michigan](#) has information regarding available services including CAP on their webpage.

MRS informs customers of the availability of DRM/CAP in the following instances:

- At application for services, the customer is provided: How to Appeal Decisions Made by MRS (MRS-PUB-305).
- At implementation of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), information about CAP is contained in the customer's IPE.
- When an authorized service is reduced, suspended, or terminated, the customer is provided: How to Appeal Decisions Made by MRS (MRS-PUB-305).
- At case closure, information on CAP is provided in the customer's notification of case record closure.

Additional information in the form of printable brochures is available on the [Disability Rights Michigan](#) webpage.

Confidentiality and Release of Information

MRS staff obtain a release of information from the customer prior to initiating contact with Disability Rights Michigan/CAP or prior to responding to a CAP request. The release of information may be either:

- Customer signed Release of Client Information (ROI) provided by Disability Rights Michigan/CAP.
- MRS-26 Consent to Release Personal Information.

Case Record Documentation

MRS counselors document counseling and guidance pertaining to CAP availability in Aware Actual Service Note.

Inquiry from CAP

MRS counselors respond to CAP inquiries in a prompt manner not to exceed three working days upon verification of a Release of Client Information (ROI). Responses may include arranging an appointment to discuss the case or providing an estimated amount of time required to fulfill a specific request for information.

CAP may request specific documents or a copy of the full case record. MRS staff are encouraged to consult with the CAP representative to clarify requests to ensure information MRS provides will meet the parameters of the request.

MRS staff release records in compliance with restrictions outlined in *RSM-2100 Confidentiality and Release of Information*.

Required Case Record Documentation

MRS counselor documents:

1. Receipt of and all responses to an inquiry.
2. Attainment of consultation from MRS manager, as necessary.
3. Delivery of requested case file information within parameters of the signed MRS-26 or customer signed ROI provided by CAP.
4. Assistance with coordinating meetings with the customer and CAP representative to the extent permitted by the customer.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 370.1; 34 CFR 370.3

Administrative Rule 395.84

Informed Choice General Policies

Policy:

Applicants and eligible individuals shall be full and active participants in their vocational rehabilitation. They shall have the opportunity to obtain information about options and make informed choices throughout their rehabilitation program including: evaluation and assessment services and providers; trial work experience services and providers; their specific employment goal; the rehabilitation services required to accomplish their rehabilitation program; procurement methods; and the service providers which will be used.

Information about potential services shall include cost, accessibility, duration of services, the qualifications of the providers, the types of services offered by those providers, the degree to which the services are provided in an integrated setting, and as available, information about user satisfaction.

Applicants and eligible individuals shall be informed through appropriate means of communication, about the availability and scope of informed choice, how it may be exercised, and of the availability of support services for clients with cognitive or other disabilities who require assistance in exercising informed choice.

Procedure:

Information provided by Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) should be readily understood and in a format accessible to the individual. At a minimum it shall include the following:

- the individual's financial and other responsibilities related to his or her choices,
- MRS requirements regarding the use of comparable benefits and services,
- MRS policy regarding the purchase of goods and services at the least cost and policy regarding bids and quotations,
- service provider standards, and other state and federal requirements related to MRS' expenditure of funds.

Counselors shall describe MRS financial constraints in ways that are positive and encourage participation, as well as assist the individual in locating alternate resources where MRS cannot help.

Informed Choice General Policies

Documentation of Informed Choice

The case record shall document the individual's opportunity to make choices and the resulting service delivery decisions and actions throughout the case record.

Informed Choice Throughout the Rehabilitation Program

The applicant and/or eligible individual shall have the opportunity to exercise informed choice through all the phases of the rehabilitation program, from assessment through closure.

Orientation and Intake

The applicant shall be provided sufficient information to understand the purpose of the program, eligibility criteria, and the nature and scope of services, in order to decide whether or not to apply for services. Orientation should include an explanation of the opportunity to make informed choices at all points of the rehabilitation program, including the right to make informed decisions about rehabilitation planning, employment goal selection, rehabilitation services and service providers, as well as rights of appeal. Such information will be provided in a way that is readily understood by the individual.

Assessment of Eligibility and Rehabilitation Needs

The applicant shall be involved in providing and securing existing assessment information to the maximum extent possible. The applicant should understand the purpose and need for any additional assessments that are to be completed. When the purchase of assessment services is indicated, the applicant will be offered the opportunity to select from among appropriate types of assessment services and service providers. Before purchasing additional assessments to determine rehabilitation needs, counselors and applicant should explore the use of self-assessment tools in facilitating self-awareness and development. Once assessment information has been obtained, the counselor and applicant should fully discuss findings and their relevance to an identification of the individual's strengths, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and barriers to employment and how these may affect vocational planning decisions. See Policy 2250 for further information.

Trial Work Experiences with Supports

The applicant shall be a full partner with the counselor in choosing trial work experience options and providers as well as support services needed to complete the trial work experience (TWE). Individuals receiving TWE may require specific support services to facilitate making informed decisions. When TWE calls for medical treatment interventions to refute or confirm the ability to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services (such as addiction treatment), the individual should be provided an understanding of treatment options and the consequences of not pursuing treatment.

Informed Choice General Policies

Employment Goal Selection and IPE

Should the eligible individual choose to use the services of the MRS counselor to facilitate IPE planning, the counselor shall assist the individual (or as appropriate the individual's representative) to select a meaningful employment goal consistent with the individual's primary employment factors and informed choice. The counselor provides, or assists the individual in obtaining information about the current and projected labor market, the variety of occupations congruent with the individual's abilities, needs and preferences, and the various services and qualified providers available to the individual in achieving the employment outcome. Job matching programs such as Open Options and MOIS can help individuals explore career or employment options. Counselors may also provide the individual with information about other local, state and federal resources to assist in defining and achieving an employment goal. This includes Social Security trial work options and work incentives, local Michigan Works! Programs, and Work First programs.

Selection of IPE Services and Service Providers

In assisting the individual to obtain information about service providers, the following methods or sources of information may be used:

- state or locally developed lists of services and service providers;
- consumer satisfaction surveys and reports about providers;
- referrals to other consumers;
- local consumer groups, or other advisory councils qualified to discuss the services or service providers; and relevant accreditation, certification, licensure or other information relating to the qualifications of various agencies or individual service providers under consideration.

Where such qualifications apply to a provider or a service, the provider shall meet MRS service provider standards as provided see Policy and Procedures 9050. The counselor's professional views about the qualifications, accessibility, and the relative advantages and disadvantages of using a service provider can be a valuable source of information for the individual.

Case Closure

The individual shall be involved in the closure decision and be provided an opportunity to discuss case closure. Before a rehabilitated case closure can occur, both the individual and the counselor must agree that the employment is satisfactory and the individual is performing well on the job.

Informed Choice General Policies

Informed Choice and Comparable Benefits

Policy requires that counselors and clients explore and use comparable benefits and services available to meet the individual's rehabilitation needs. These may include medical services available through Medicaid, Medicare or the Hill Burton Act; mental health and substance abuse services available through public community health programs; and remedial educational programs available through public schools.

The individual shall be informed of the requirement to pursue and use comparable benefits and services when available. MRS may not pay for services to the extent that comparable services and benefits are available to meet the individual's rehabilitation needs.

MRS Financial Requirements and Informed Choice

If an individual chooses a service or service provider whose cost is higher than another service or service provider that will equally meet the individual's need, the counselor is not required to pay the higher cost because it is the individual's choice. Part of the choice process is ensuring that individuals are informed about the advantages and disadvantages of each choice option. While individuals have a right to choose a higher cost service or service provider, one of the disadvantages of that choice may be that MRS payment will not exceed that of the lower cost service or service provider and that the individual will have to provide for the difference. This approach applies in a wide variety of situations, including:

- Training programs that lead to the same employment outcomes;
- College programs that lead to comparable job goals;
- In-state vs. out of state colleges;
- Public vs. private colleges;
- Training programs that require greater vs. lesser transportation and maintenance costs;
- Transportation services;
- Physical restoration services including hearing aids;
- Rehabilitation technology

Informed Choice General Policies

Limitations of Choice

Informed choice is not unrestricted choice. Counselors may not always be able to support an individual's choice.

- A choice should not be supported if the counselor has substantial evidence it will not lead to an employment outcome. If a goal is incompatible with the individual's abilities, capabilities and limitations and no accommodation, rehabilitation technology or other service can bridge the gap, the counselor can say no.
- If relevant labor market information indicates that the employment goal or services will not lead to a job outcome, the counselor should not approve the IPE.
- If the individual wants MRS to pay for a service, but the service is not required to achieve the employment outcome, the counselor cannot approve the service.
- Counselors cannot support choices that may be harmful to the individual or others. It is the counselor's responsibility to ensure that the individual understands the consequences of their decisions.

When the counselor cannot support the individual's choices, he or she should clearly and respectfully explain the reasons for non-support and consider alternatives with the individual. The individual should also be provided information about appeal rights and CAP under these circumstances.

Information:

Definitions, Process and Outcome

Informed choice is the process by which individuals participating in the vocational rehabilitation program make decisions about their assessment services, vocational goals, the services, and service providers that are necessary to reach those goals, and how those services will be procured. This process starts with the individual's values, interests, characteristics, and proceeds to an evaluation of availability of resources and alternatives, including the labor market. Implementing informed choice requires that the counselor listens carefully, communicates clearly, and gathers and analyzes information without bias. The counselor works with the individual to make choices and to evaluate their impact. Finally the counselor supports the individual in setting goals, making plans and following through with decisions, with the aim of achieving meaningful employment.

Role of the Individual

The individual, or the individual's representative, as appropriate, is the primary decision-maker. Factors to consider in assessing the individual's ability to make informed decisions include:

- skill in gathering information;
- skill and experience in making independent decisions;
- knowledge of community resources;
- experience and skill in career planning;
- knowledge of the labor market;
- and knowledge of MRS services.

Based on these and other factors, some individuals will need or want little additional information regarding decision-making support. Others will need or want only information and guidance regarding training options, restoration services, or employment opportunities. Many others, however, may want extensive career exploration and counseling to choose appropriate careers.

The primary role of the counselor in implementing informed choice is to ensure that the individual has sufficient information and knowledge of options, as well as the necessary supports to make meaningful choices. The counselor facilitates the individual's self-determination through careful listening, clarification of issues, exploration of options and their implementation, and when necessary, building the individual's capacity to make informed decisions.

Building Capacity to Make Informed Choices

If an individual lacks skills, knowledge, or confidence in making informed choices, referral for decision-making skill development, or involvement with a peer resource or other individuals knowledgeable about individual self-direction, may help ensure their meaningful participation in the choice process. Family members, significant others, advocacy organizations, rehabilitation assistants, mentors, and advisors may serve as decision making supports for the individual with his or her agreement. Individuals with substantial cognitive limitations may require additional supports and services in exercising informed choice. Techniques such as repetition and visual, auditory or written media may be used, including assistive technology. Such support services may be provided directly, arranged or purchased, consistent with MRS policy. The counselor can refer to the Rehabilitation Services Administration Technical Assistance Circular 98-01, Support Services for Individuals with Disabilities and Others Who Need Assistance in Implementing Informed Choice, available from the Casework Policy Section, for more information on this subject.

Informed Choice General Policies

The Michigan Postsecondary Admissions and Financial Assistance Handbook is the comprehensive information resource about accredited or state licensed post-secondary education and training providers.

Procurement Methods and Informed Choice

MRS has flexible purchasing options, including authorizations to qualified vendors of the individual's choice, direct payment to individuals when an authorization is not possible, emergency payment to meet true emergency needs, and third party authorization when none of the other procurement methods is possible. In select cases, an eligible individual may receive direct pay to contract directly with a service provider, like a personal assistant or rehabilitation renaissance advisor. To the extent that the individual participates in the procurement of services, implementing choice may involve basic consumer skills, such as money management and negotiating in the market place.

Section II

Policy:

Applicants and eligible individuals shall be advised of their rights and responsibilities, including the availability of the Client Assistance Program (CAP), at the time they apply for services, when their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is prepared, whenever assessment or IPE services are suspended, reduced, or terminated, and at the time of case closure.

Information:

Customer rights include:

- An evaluation of eligibility;
- Notification of the eligibility decision and priority category;
- Once eligible, they have a right to obtain written information about options available to them in preparing their IPE;
- The opportunity to make informed choices about the employment goal, services and service providers throughout their rehabilitation program;
- An IPE;
- An annual review of the IPE;
- Notification of a delay or termination of services;
- Review of Information in the case record;
- Confidentiality; and information about circumstances when records may be released,
- Ability to appeal Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) actions concerning provision or denial of services; and
- Non-discrimination.

Customer responsibilities include:

- Providing information needed to determine eligibility and develop an IPE;
- Notification of change in address or telephone number;
- Keeping scheduled appointments;

Section II

- Participating financially in their rehabilitation program to the best of their ability;
- Using other available funds and community services before MRS funds are used; and
- Performing satisfactorily in training or any other activity related to their program.

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for citizenship, residency and identity verification.

POLICY

Michigan residents may be eligible for services provided by Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). No duration of residency is required for individuals present in the state.

MRS staff document residency, identity, and the ability to be legally employed prior to implementation of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Non-U.S. citizens with Employment Visas or Employment Authorization Cards are permitted to request MRS services.

Note: The process of application and eligibility assessment is not delayed while establishing an applicant's presence in the state.

Note: To protect confidentiality MRS is not to maintain a copy of personal identification in the case record.

PROCEDURES

Residency

Presence in the state of Michigan is established through case documentation and attestation by the applicant of their home address provided on either the:

- Application for Vocational and Employment Services (MRS-2910)
- Student & Parent/Guardian Referral/Consent for Pre-Employment Transition Services (MRS-2900)

MRS staff document an *Aware Administrative Note* confirming the review of one of the following if there is a question of residency:

- Valid Michigan Driver's License or State of Michigan ID
- Current rental agreement/mortgage statement
- Copy of recent utility bill
- Verification from current shelter

Proof of Identity

MRS verifies Social Security Number (SSN), legal name, and date of birth prior to IPE implementation.

MRS staff input the customer's SSN in *Aware*. The *Aware* system will automatically cross-reference the entered SSN with the Social Security Administration to verify the applicant's SSN, legal name and date of birth. Administrative notes that verify the information are automatically generated in *Aware*.

Note: If customer does not have a SSN, contact the *Aware* Support Desk for a temporary SSN while the applicant obtains a valid SSN.

If a discrepancy is indicated:

- MRS staff document an *Aware Administrative Note* regarding request for the customer to provide a correct SSN.
- MRS staff may proceed with the eligibility or service delivery process during reconciliation of the SSN.
- MRS funds may not be expended during this time.
- If discrepancies are not resolved within 90 days, the case is to be closed in alignment with *Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) 7000 – Vocational Rehabilitation Case Record Closure*.

MRS staff document an *Aware Administrative Note* confirming proof of identity prior to implementation of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

When the automated Social Security Administration verification is unable to match and validate the customer's SSN, MRS staff verify the customer's SSN through a review of the customer's Social Security card and one of the following to verify name and date of birth:

- Driver's license/ID card
- School ID card (with photograph)
- Birth certificate
- Voter registration card
- U.S. Military card/draft record, or
- Military dependents ID card

MRS staff are not to retain copies of the above forms. A list of acceptable documents may be found at: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-9>.

Note: If an individual believes that information generated by MRS staff in the case record is inaccurate or misleading, the individual may request that the information be amended.

Citizenship

Non-U.S. citizens who do not have an Employment Visa or Employment Authorization Card that legally permits employment in the United States are not eligible for services.

Non-U.S. citizen applicants, who may be legally able to work in the United States, should acquire guidance in applying for a SSN through <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10096.pdf>.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.42

Order of Selection for Services General Policies

Policy:

At any time Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) resources do not permit all eligible individuals to be served, an order of selection for services shall be implemented giving first priority to individuals with the most significant disabilities. Second priority shall be given to individuals with significant disabilities and third priority to those with non-significant disabilities. If all eligible customers within a priority category cannot be served, they shall be served in the order in which they applied.

Eligible individuals who do not meet the order of selection for services priority criteria shall, at a minimum, be referred to other federal and state programs within the statewide workforce investment system, including the Michigan Works! program. Referrals are to be made to those programs best suited to address the specific employment needs of an individual with a disability. Each referred individual shall have a notice of referral to present to the agency carrying out the program, information identifying a specific point of contact within the agency carrying out the program and, information and advice regarding the most suitable services to assist the individual to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

An order of selection for services does not affect individuals who have begun to receive services under an approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or who are in need of post employment services prior to the date a priority category or categories are closed. Eligible individuals in priority categories not able to be served are placed on a waiting list.

Individuals shall be informed in writing of their disability priority category assignment at the time they are notified of their eligibility determination. Any customer who does not agree with the disability priority category to which they are assigned may appeal this decision within 30 days. Customers may submit additional information in an effort to demonstrate assignment to a higher disability priority category.

The AWARE letters identified in job aid 2300c-JA shall be used to inform customers throughout the order of selection process.

Procedure:

The decision to provide services to fewer than all priority categories is reviewed periodically throughout the fiscal year. A full review of the need for an order of selection for services occurs as part of the annual planning process. The MRS Director is responsible for determining how many priority categories and how many eligible customers within each priority category shall receive services at any given time based on the resources available.

Order of Selection for Services General Policies

The MRS Director will notify MRS staff and major statewide agencies and organizations of the priority categories it is expected MRS will be able to serve in the new fiscal year. Any changes in the priority categories to be served during the fiscal year will also be communicated in writing by the MRS director to MRS staff and pertinent others.

Within the AWARE system, “significance of disability” and “order of selection for services” priority codes are combined in the “disability priority code” as follows: Most Significantly Disabled is Category 1; Significantly Disabled is Category 2 and Not Significantly Disabled is Category 3.

Applicants placed in trial work experience must be given a disability priority category assignment. At a minimum, individuals placed in trial work experience must be categorized as “significantly disabled”. The disability priority category assigned in trial work experience status might not be the disability priority category assigned at the time eligibility is determined.

If the MRS Director determines that vocational rehabilitation services must be provided under an order of selection for services, an information and referral system will be implemented. This will ensure that eligible individuals with disabilities who do not meet order of selection for services priority categories will be referred to federal and state programs within the statewide workforce investment system including referral to the local Michigan Works! program for assistance with core, intensive and training services, or for other services as appropriate.

Individuals are assigned to the highest priority category for which they are eligible at the time eligibility is decided.

The MRS priority categories are as follows:

Most Significantly Disabled:

- A) Individuals with a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits three or more of the seven functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome and
- B) Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require three or more services over at least six months.

Significantly Disabled:

- A) Individuals with a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits two of the seven functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome and
- B) Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require three or more services over at least six months.

Order of Selection for Services General Policies

An eligible SSDI or SSI recipient is automatically considered to be, at least, an individual with a significant disability. **An SSDI or SSI recipient may be determined most significantly disabled with additional supporting documentation.**

Not Significantly Disabled:

- A) Individuals with a physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one of the seven functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome and
B) Whose vocational rehabilitation does not require multiple services over six months.

The codes to be used for priority categories are as follows:

1. Most Significantly Disabled
2. Significantly Disabled
3. Not Significantly Disabled

Seven Functional Capacities

- Mobility
- Communication
- Self-care
- Self-direction
- Interpersonal skills
- Work tolerance
- Work skills

For the purpose of determining the disability priority, serious limitations are defined as:

- the individual's impairment imposes limitations to the degree that the individual's functioning in the area is poor or below common expectations, or
- that the individual, due to the impairment, may require accommodations* not typically made for other individuals for employability/work.

Determining the appropriate priority category for an eligible individual is based solely on identification of serious limitations in one or more of the seven functional capacity areas. Other factors may affect employability but should not be considered for purposes of defining the significance of an impairment. Such factors may include:

- geographic location,
- poor public transportation, or
- lack of training

Order of Selection for Services General Policies

Defining limitations in these functional capacity areas relies on the professional rehabilitation counselor's interpretation of the effect of the impairment on the individual as well as on medical or diagnostic/evaluative information.

Planning for services to address serious limitations is consistent with the third component of eligibility that requires services to achieve an employment outcome (see Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) Item 3100 – Eligibility Criteria). The IPE shall therefore include treatment, supports or other interventions that address substantial barriers to employment by ameliorating, reducing or removing serious limitations in one or more of the functional capacity areas.

Information:

*Accommodations are defined as special working conditions, rehabilitation technology, or substantial support and/or supervision.

The table in job aid 3200b-JA lists each of the seven functional capacity areas, identifies serious limitations in each capacity area and provides examples of interventions that may be required to address or reduce presenting serious limitations through the arrangement or authorization of services to be included in the IPE.

Not included in the table is guidance issued by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) regarding eligibility and disability priority considerations for individuals with Borderline Intellectual Functioning and Specific Learning Disabilities. The guidance provided in the Technical Assistance Circulars (TAC) below are invaluable in the assessment of eligibility and determining the disability priority category for individuals with these disabilities.

RSA-TAC-05-01 issued on January 10, 2005.

Guidelines for Assessing the Functional Capacities of an Individual with Specific Learning Disabilities to Determine Significance of Disability for Order of Selection Purposes

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/rsa/tac-05-01.doc>

RSA TAC-11-01: issued on January 21, 2011.

Determining Eligibility for Persons with Borderline Intellectual Functioning under the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/rsa/tac/2011/tac-11-01.doc>

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure outlines the process for internal transfer of a case record between districts/offices or counselors.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) customer case records may be internally transferred to another district/office or counselor as the result of change of permanent residence, request from the customer, or for administrative purposes.

PROCEDURES

MRS customers do not have a right to select their MRS counselor or the office/district in which they will be served. Customers are assigned to a MRS counselor/office based on residence identified on the application for services.

MRS customers who obtain temporary residence to receive MRS services including but not limited to assessment, training or restoration services are not considered to be changing residence.

MRS manager approval is required prior to case transfers between offices or MRS counselors.

Request for Transfer of Case Record

MRS counselor consults with immediate MRS manager for approval of case transfer and completes *Aware Administrative Note* summarizing:

- Request and rationale for transfer of case record
- Potential impact on current and planned services
- Potential actions necessary prior to case record transfer including but not limited to need for IPE amendments resulting from address change

MRS assigned counselor is responsible for continuation of services during approval or denial time-period.

MRS managers from both transferring and receiving offices review request for transfer of case record. Based on review, MRS assigned counselor may be required to complete additional case-record updates prior to case transfer. Examples may include:

- Resolving outstanding authorizations
- Update of customer contact information
- Resolving outstanding *Aware-Activity Due* items

MRS transferring and receiving managers approve or deny transfer of case record. If unable to agree on case transfer, MRS managers consult with respective MRS division directors for resolution.

MRS Manager Approval of Request for Transfer of Case Record

Upon MRS managers approval for transferring of case record:

1. Transferring counselor sends *Aware* 'Notice of Transfer to New Counselor' letter indicating newly assigned counselor.
2. MRS managers arrange for the delivery of the hard copy case file through an in-person exchange or mailing options such as UPS, USPS, or FedEx, which must include tracking and signature requirements. MRS managers coordinate electronic case transfer of the *Aware* record.
3. MRS newly assigned counselor consults with previous counselor as necessary to complete the transfer process.
4. MRS receiving manager is encouraged to request an internal review/audit of the case upon case transfer. Any associated findings on the case record will be applied to the original MRS counselor assigned to the case. Request for corrective actions will be assigned to the receiving MRS counselor.

MRS is prohibited from closing a case record and opening a new case to facilitate a transfer of case record.

MRS Manager Denial of Request for Transfer of Case Record

MRS managers may deny a customer's request for a new counselor assignment or change of office.

MRS counselor informs the customer in writing of the agency decision to deny a customer requested transfer of case record to a new office or MRS counselor and includes the *How to Appeal Decisions Made by MRS* brochure.

MRS customer reserves the right to appeal denial of request for case transfer.

REFERENCES

PURPOSE

The State of Michigan has legalized the acquisition, consumption, and distribution of marijuana through the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act (MRTMA). Federal law classifies marijuana as an illegal Schedule I drug and prohibits the acquisition, consumption, and sale under any circumstances.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is regulated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and must adhere to federal law. This policy establishes program guidance associated with the legalization of marijuana in Michigan.

POLICY

MRS is prohibited from:

- Assisting a customer in the acquisition or consumption of marijuana in any form.
- Supporting services or employment goals associated with growing, selling, producing, handling, or distributing marijuana in any form.
- Supporting training programs in fields of study associated with the marijuana industry.
- Supporting employment including self-employment or small business ventures that require licensure to engage in growing, selling, producing, handling, or distributing marijuana in any form.

DEFINITIONS

Marijuana (also referenced as Marihuana)

Consists of all parts of the plant of the genus cannabis, growing or not; the seeds of the plant; the resin extracted from any part of the plant; and every compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of the plant or its seeds or resin, including marijuana concentrate and marihuana-infused products.

This includes any form or product containing the primary active chemical tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Forms include but are not limited to:

- Dried marijuana plant/flower
- Topicals
- Concentrates (e.g., hash, oils, wax, and shatter)
- Edibles in the form of food or drink

PROCEDURES

Identified Use of Marijuana

MRS counselor writes an *Aware Actual Service - Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling & Guidance* note summarizing counseling and guidance regarding MRS service limitations if a customer indicates the use of marijuana. The summary should include, but is not limited to:

- A review of this MRS policy regarding the assistance MRS is prohibited from providing related to Marijuana.
- A review of [Michigan law](#) which does not require an employer to permit or accommodate marijuana use in any workplace or on the employer's property.

Eligibility Determination Considerations

Marijuana use alone is not necessarily indicative of a disability, a disability related barrier to employment, or an indicator of substance abuse.

A customer issued Michigan Medical Marijuana registry identification card or license from the Michigan Marijuana Regulatory Agency (MRA) should not be used to determine MRS eligibility. A determination of service is completed in accordance with *RSM 3125-Eligibility Assessment* and *RSM 3200-Determination of Eligibility and Priority Category*.

Vocational Needs Assessment and Employment Goal Considerations

Employment Goal (including self-employment) - MRS counselors at application/intake and/or during the Vocational Needs Assessment (VNA) inform the customer of MRS' inability to support employment goals or services associated with ventures that require licensure to

engage in growing, selling, producing, handling, or distributing marijuana in any form.

MRS counselor completes an *Aware Actual Service - Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling & Guidance* note summarizing:

1. The continuation of the MRS case if the customer expresses an interest in the development of a new employment goal not associated with the marijuana industry.
2. The case closure, if the customer elects to remain with their current employer whose enterprise is associated with the marijuana industry.
3. The case closure, if the customer expresses a desire to continue to pursue a vocational goal related to the marijuana industry. Case closure must occur in alignment with *RSM 7000 - Vocational Rehabilitation Case Record Closure*.

Case Closure Resulting from Employment in the Marijuana Industry

MRS counselor proceeds with case closure if a customer acquires employment within the marijuana industry. The case record is closed as *No Longer Interested in CIE After Eligibility Determination* in alignment with *RSM 7000 - Vocational Rehabilitation Case Record Closure*.

REFERENCES

[Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act \(MRTMA\)](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for prompt and equitable processing of referrals and applications for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) collects necessary information required to complete the referral and application process.

DEFINITIONS

MRS Application

MRS Application for Vocational and Employment Services form (MRS-2910) or equivalent information provided in an alternate written format of the individual's choosing.

Date of Application

Date of MRS staff signature date on the completed MRS application.

PROCEDURES

Reasonable Accommodations

MRS provides individuals reasonable accommodations in alignment with *Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) 6025 Accommodations*, when necessary to complete the referral and application process.

Outreach

MRS managers ensure that information about MRS and application forms are available throughout the state, including *Michigan Works* one-stop centers.

MRS staff assist in outreach with potential referrals by responding to questions verbally, through agency brochures, or recommending the [MRS website](#).

Initiation of the 30-Day Referral Period

MRS staff obtain required referral information consisting of:

- Full name
- Contact information: address, phone number, and/or email

Referral information is obtained in-person, by phone or mail/email.

MRS staff input referral information into the *Aware* Referral Module. This establishes the date of referral and initiates the 30-day referral period to collect a completed MRS application.

Completion of the 30-Day Referral Period

The referral period ends upon either:

1. Receipt of a completed MRS application

MRS staff, during the 30-day referral period, receive MRS application and review for completion consisting of:

- Required applicant signature/date
- Parent of a minor or legal guardian signature/date if applicable
- Application fields necessary to initiate assessment in determining eligibility for services
- Availability of applicant to complete the assessment process

MRS staff signature/date on the MRS application signifies completed review and establishes the date of application.

The MRS staff signature date is required to match the *Aware* application date which initiates the 60-day application period.

2. Non-Receipt of an MRS Application

MRS staff document effort to secure a completed MRS application including attempted contacts or appointments.

If unable to obtain a completed MRS application during the 30-day referral period, or the potential applicant indicates non-intent to submit an MRS application, the *Aware* referral is closed.

Once a referral is closed, if a potential applicant requests services again, a new referral is processed.

Social Security Numbers (SSN)

Customers are not required to provide a SSN to process an MRS application.

MRS staff obtain and verify a SSN through *Aware* prior to implementation of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Requirements to Facilitate Voter Registration

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) requires that MRS provide customers an opportunity to register to vote.

MRS staff complete an *Aware* Administrative Note entry indicating offer to assist with voter registration through either [online voter registration](#), or provision of the [Michigan voter registration form](#).

60-Day Application Period

MRS staff, complete the following during the 60-day application period:

1. Customer Intake

MRS staff and customer gather information necessary to document *Aware* Application Status requirements.

Information may be collected virtually, in-person, or through the use of optional forms including: *Intake for Vocational and Employment Services (MRS-2950)* and *Characteristics at Plan (MRS-2960)*.

2. Facilitation of Informed Choice

MRS staff document an *Aware Actual Service* entry indicating summary of customer's understanding/ability to exercise informed choice, self-advocacy and self-determination needs. Informed choice is facilitated in alignment with *RSM 2225 Informed Choice*.

An *Aware Actual Service* entry is to minimally confirm provision and review of the following brochures:

- *Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Client of MRS (MRS-PUB-310)* and explanation of:
 - Employment purpose of MRS
 - Eligibility process and criteria
 - Available services including encouraged customer contribution and required use of comparable benefits
 - Responsibilities as a customer with MRS
- *How to Appeal Decisions Made by MRS (MRS-PUB-305)* and explanation of:
 - Ability and process to appeal decisions made by MRS
 - Availability of Client Assistance Program (CAP)
- *How MRS Safeguards Your Personal Information (MRS-PUB-304)* and explanation of:
 - MRS confidentiality requirements

3. Eligibility Determination

MRS counselors facilitate eligibility determination in alignment with eligibility related policies including *RSM 3100 Eligibility Criteria*, *RSM 3125 Eligibility Assessment* and *RSM 3200 Determination of Eligibility and Priority Category*.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.37, and 34 CFR 361.41

Application of Agency Employees and Relatives Referral, Application, Intake, Eligibility, and Vocational Assessment

Policy:

Employees and members of their immediate family may apply for Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) services.

Procedure:

At the time of application, or at the point an individual is identified as a member of an employee's immediate family, the applicant should be informed of the option to be served by another district. The applicant's choice should be honored. If the applicant elects to receive services locally, the district manager shall determine which staff will be assigned to the case.

To avoid conflict of interest issues, counselors and support staff shall not provide services to members of their immediate families.

Case files of employees and/or members of their immediate family shall be stored in a manner which ensures confidentiality.

The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits MRS, as an employer, from co-mingling and/or utilizing client case record information of current or former employees during the hiring process or while employed by MRS. Employees who are (or were) clients may elect to release materials from their case record for purposes such as providing supporting documentation to an accommodation request.

Information:

Immediate family includes parents, spouse, siblings, and children. A more expansive definition of the term (e.g., in-laws, cousins, etc.) may be used if there might otherwise be a loss of privacy.

To ensure as much confidentiality as possible, Help Desk staff in the Central Office can be directed to suppress the name and Social Security number of the applicant in the AWARE system.

Section III

Policy:

Applicants shall be eligible for Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) services if they have a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment and if they require MRS services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in or regain employment consistent with their abilities and capabilities. Applicants who have been determined to have a disability under the SSDI (Title II) and/or SSI (Title XVI) program of the Social Security Act, shall be considered to have a significant disability and presumed to be eligible for MRS services, provided they intend to achieve an employment outcome consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. Once an individual has been informed of the employment nature of the program, the completion of an MRS application for services shall be considered as intent to achieve an employment outcome.

All applicants shall be presumed to be able to benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services, unless found to be ineligible for services due to the severity of the disability by clear and convincing evidence, including applicants who have been determined to have a disability under SSDI and SSI.

Eligibility requirements shall be applied without regard to the:

- a) Age, sex, race, color, or national origin of the applicant;
- b) Type of expected employment outcome;
- c) Source of referral for vocational rehabilitation services;
- d) Particular service needs or anticipated cost of services required by an applicant or the income level of an applicant or applicant's family;
- e) Applicants' employment history of current employment status; and
- f) Applicants' educational status or current educational credential.

Applicants who have a third party legally responsible for the payment of their vocational rehabilitation costs, shall be promptly referred to the MRS Business Network Division for services.

Procedure:

1. At intake, the counselor shall ask applicants whether they are eligible for, or receiving SSI and/or SSDI benefits, or for any other third party benefits. The counselor seeks verification, such as a copy of an SSA award letter or other SSA correspondence, and places it in the case record.

2. When an applicant states he or she is an SSI or SSDI beneficiary, but has no documentation of SSA status, the counselor shall promptly obtain an AWARE Social Security Benefit Report to validate the individual's Social Security status.
3. The counselor shall make an eligibility determination for SSI or SSDI recipients, no later than 60 days from the date of application. The only exception to this federal requirement is when the case record is moved to Trial Work Experiences (TWE - Application T in AWARE) within 60 days of the date of application. TWE are only done when the counselor has serious doubt about the individual's ability to benefit from MRS services to achieve an employment outcome (See Manual Item 3175, Trial Work Experience, for further instructions).
4. Eligibility Determination Extension (Application-E in AWARE) **shall not** be used for SSI or SSDI applicants. Eligibility determination shall not be delayed to secure diagnostic records for such applicants.
5. When insufficient diagnostic and assessment information is available prior to an eligibility decision, additional information needed to determine vocational rehabilitation needs shall be obtained after eligibility and prior to IPE development. The counselor uses available disability information obtained from the application process to determine the disability and uses the default disability priority rating of *significantly disabled*. The counselor updates the disability and the priority rating, as appropriate, when further information is obtained, per Manual Item 3200, Determination of Eligibility and Priority Category.
6. In the event an SSI or SSDI applicant refuses to release information, or refuses to participate in the vocational rehabilitation needs assessment, the counselor shall continue to presume eligibility by validating SSA status via the AWARE benefit report and by completing an eligibility determination, or when ability to benefit is in doubt, TWE. If the individual continues to refuse to release records or participate in assessment, the case may be considered for closure.
7. When an individual indicates he or she is receiving third party benefits such as Worker's Compensation, Auto No Fault, or Long Term Disability, the individual shall promptly be referred to the Business Network Division, using form RA-2947 – Request for Services, to determine third party liability and appropriate case management. (See Manual Item 8075, Business Network Unit for referral procedures.)

Information:

The qualification that an individual requires services to advance in employment provides additional eligibility criterion to ensure that individuals with disabilities obtain the services necessary so they can pursue and engage in high-demand jobs available in today's economy. All other eligibility criteria continue to apply to applicants seeking to advance in employment.

For further information about the criteria for legal blindness, see Manual Item 4400, Visual Impairments.

Applicants who are eligible for SSI due to their disability and/or SSDI due to their disability, are presumed to meet all criteria for eligibility; i.e.:

- Have a mental or physical impairment that creates a substantial impediment to employment, and
- Require vocational rehabilitation services to achieve an employment outcome consistent with their abilities and capabilities, and
- Are able to benefit from MRS services, unless determined unable to benefit by clear and convincing evidence, consistent with Manual Item 3175, Trial Work Experience.

It is not necessary to receive a cash benefit to be eligible for SSI or SSDI. Only SSI and SSDI applicants are accorded the presumption of eligibility.

Policy:

Once an individual has completed an application for services, an assessment of eligibility and priority for service shall be conducted and an eligibility determination made within 60 days unless exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) preclude a determination within 60 days and MRS and the individual agrees to a specific extension of time or trial work experiences with supports.

To the maximum extent possible and appropriate, the assessment shall consist of a review of existing data, be conducted in integrated settings, and be consistent with the applicant's informed choice.

Procedures:

In the event an eligibility determination cannot be made within 60 days because of exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of MRS and for which the individual agrees, an Eligibility Determination Extension shall be completed in AWARE and the Notice of Extension of Eligibility letter in AWARE shall be forwarded to the customer. The Notice of Extension of Eligibility letter shall specify the activities to be completed and the date in which the activities shall be completed before eligibility can be determined.

If, because of exceptional and unforeseen circumstances the Eligibility Determination Extension expires without determining Eligibility, manager consultation and written approval is required before a second Eligibility Determination Extension may be executed. If it is determined a second Eligibility Determination Extension is warranted, the Eligibility Determination Extension may be completed in AWARE. The Notice of Extension of Eligibility letter in AWARE shall be forwarded to the customer, documenting that the customer agreed to the extension. The Notice of Extension of Eligibility letter shall specify the activities to be completed and the date in which the activities shall be completed before eligibility can be determined.

Sources of information that may be used to substantiate a physical or mental impairment and related limitations caused by the impairment include:

- Existing records from qualified facilities or practitioners familiar with diagnosing or treating the impairment(s) in question, especially practitioners or facilities that are currently treating the applicant. This would include records from qualified medical personnel, mental health or developmental disability programs, substance abuse treatment clinics, and individually licensed practitioners operating within their legal scopes of practice;

- Special Education records, including an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) which identifies the impairment;
- Veteran's Administration disability benefits records that identify the disability;
- Counselor observation of a readily visible anatomical impairment such as amputation, deformity, or muscle wasting associated with paralysis;
- Verification of current eligibility for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI); and
- Verification of State Disability Insurance (SDA) that identifies the disability.

Medical or other evaluations may be purchased or provided if other sources of documentation are not available, the nature of the disability is not stable, observable, or clearly defined, or information needed to determine the severity of the disability is not available.

The age of diagnostic information should be appropriate to the applicant's impairment(s) and the planned use of the information. Generally, more current information will be needed if the impairment is unstable, progressive, or the diagnosis is unclear.

The existence of a substantial impediment to employment (due to a mental or physical impairment) may be substantiated by any of the information sources noted above if the record in question addresses work or training limitations. The following information may also be used to substantiate the existence of substantial barriers to employment:

- Counselor observation of behavioral or functional limitations of an impairment;
- Written or verbal reports or descriptions of vocationally relevant limitations from the applicant, their representative, family members, school staff, employers and others familiar with the individual.

The existence of behavioral or functional limitations alone is not sufficient to establish a substantial impediment to employment. The counselor must determine that these limitations result in a substantial, material and significant barrier (given the individual's training, education and employment history) to the individual in terms of preparing for, securing or retaining employment consistent with their abilities and capabilities.

Licensed counselors and/or certified rehabilitation counselors may conduct appraisals and assessments directly as allowed by their scope of practice, and should document

such findings in case notes apart from the documentation required for Eligibility Determination in AWARE.

If the applicant's informed, written consent is needed to secure information from another source, it may be obtained by a letter of authorization, the Customer Information Request, Authorization to Release Personal Information form, RA-24 or a document provided by the information source. It may be necessary to pay for the information provided.

Applicants who have been determined to have a disability under SSI and/or SSDI are presumed eligible for vocational rehabilitation services unless their ability to benefit from an employment outcome is in doubt. (See Manual Item 3175, Trial Work Experience) Verification of eligibility for SSI and/or SSDI or a copy of an SSA issued "Ticket to Work" must be on file. No further eligibility assessment is necessary. However, existing assessments from SSA and additional assessments may be obtained for a determination of vocational rehabilitation needs.

An applicant eligible for SSI/SSDI can be entered into eligibility status and certified eligible for vocational rehabilitation services immediately upon verification of eligibility for SSI/SSDI by noting under all portions of the Certificate of Eligibility the individual's eligibility for SSI or SSDI (Title XVI and Title II)

Verification of disability for SSDI, SSI, SDA, Special Education, or Veterans Administration disability may include, for example:

- Copies of award notice or letters notifying the applicant of eligibility.
- A copy of an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) indicating that the applicant has been determined eligible for Special Education.
- Written confirmation of receipt of Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income (on the basis of disability) from the local Social Security office or a Ticket to Work issued by SSA.

Evidence of eligibility for Special Education presumes only that the applicant has a physical or mental impairment and a substantial impediment to employment. The counselor must still determine whether the individual requires vocational rehabilitation services to achieve an employment outcome consistent with ability and capability.

An appraisal of current health is not required for eligibility in addition to information documenting the disability, but should be provided, for example, if there is a question regarding the applicant's overall health status and how it may impact employability.

The assessment to determine rehabilitation needs should begin concurrently with the assessment to determine eligibility.

The RA-2908 may be used to provide the applicant with a schedule of any diagnostic assessments or other appointments that may be made.

Information:

The following are definitions of terms used in the determination of eligibility:

Ability to Benefit - likely to achieve an employment outcome with the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

Disability – a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment and which is not temporary.

Mental Impairment – any mental or psychological disorder such as intellectual disability, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disorders.

Physical Impairment – any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculo-skeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine.

Requires Services - would not be able to achieve employment consistent with the individual's abilities and capabilities without vocational rehabilitation services.

Substantial Impediment to Employment - means that a physical or mental impairment (in light of attendant medical, psychological, vocational, educational, communication and other related factors) materially hinders an individual from preparing for, entering into, engaging in, or retaining employment consistent with the individual's abilities or capabilities. A substantial impediment to employment may be established if the impairment significantly limits one or more functional capacities of the individual in terms of an employment outcome.

Forms:

- RA-21 – General Medical Examination Report
- RA-24 – Information Request
- RA-2738 – Mental Health Report
- RA-2750 – Significant Disability Determination Worksheet
- RA-2908 – Diagnosis Plan

- RA-4672 – Report of Dental Examination
- RA-4683 – Physical Capacities Assessment
- RA-55 – Report of Eye Examination.

Casework Notes:

For additional information, refer to Casework Notes Issue 3 and Issue 5 in the Casework Notes Section of this manual.

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes guidelines for development and implementation of a Trial Work Experience (TWE) plan.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) presumes an applicant for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services who meet MRS eligibility requirements can benefit from services that can lead to a Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) outcome.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) implements a TWE plan to explore abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in realistic work situations. A TWE is completed prior to determining that a customer is unable to benefit from services in terms of an CIE outcome based on the severity of disability or that the customer is ineligible for VR services.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization – Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Clear and Convincing Evidence – Clear and convincing evidence means there is a high degree of certainty before a conclusion can be made that a customer is incapable of benefiting from services in terms of a CIE outcome. The clear and convincing standard constitutes the highest standard used in our civil system of law and is applied on an individual case-by-case basis.

The term ‘clear and convincing’ means unequivocal. For example, the use of one assessment such as an intelligence test would not constitute clear and convincing evidence. Clear and convincing evidence is achieved upon review of multiple sources of information including a battery of evaluations, assessments, and tests, including community-based assessments/situational assessments and supported employment assessments. Information is required to consistently indicate that there would be an inability to meet the

customer's needs to achieve a CIE outcome based on severity of disability.

The demonstration of 'clear and convincing evidence' is to include a functional assessment of skill development activities with the use of appropriate supports that accommodate the rehabilitation needs of the customer during the trial work experiences in real-life settings. Examples include but are not limited to, personal assistance services and assistive technology devices and services.

Trial Work Experience Plan – A written document that outlines services that will be delivered to assess concerns regarding a customer's ability to benefit from services leading to a CIE outcome.

Trial Work Experience Services – Evaluation services structured to assess areas of concern that bring to question a customer's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in a CIE setting. These are structured in community-based CIE settings to the maximum extent possible. Evaluation activities include analysis of ability to participate in supported employment or customized employment settings.

May be structured as a situational assessment if the evaluation includes wages for the customer.

May be structured as a Community Based Assessment (CBA) if the evaluation does not include wages for the customer.

Procedures

Initiation of a TWE Plan

MRS counselors may initiate a TWE plan in any case status if there is a question of the customer's ability to benefit from services to the extent those services can lead to a CIE outcome.

Parameters of a TWE Plan

TWE plans are developed in consultation with the customer and any selected representatives. The TWE plan is signed by the MRS customer and counselor prior to implementation. One copy of the

signed TWE plan is provided to the customer and one is maintained in the customer case record.

The following parameters exist for structuring a TWE plan:

1. Types of Assessments, Evaluations or Testing Services to Include in a TWE – MRS counselors authorize within the following authorization categories:

RSM 6255 – Trial Work Experience Services. Services are structured to evaluate disability related barriers to employment that question the ability to achieve a CIE outcome.

MRS counselor may also consider the need for supportive services and accommodation needs necessary to facilitate a TWE service. These may include but are not limited to *Aware* authorization categories:

- Disability Related Training and Support Services
- Maintenance in Support of Any Service
- Personal Assistant Services

2. Number of and Length of Time for each TWE Service – MRS counselor determines the number and length of time for each TWE service necessary to evaluate a customer's ability to achieve a CIE outcome.

MRS does not prescribe a minimum/maximum number of services or the length of time for each individual service. Length of time and number of services is determined based on each customer's identified need. TWE services are required to be of a sufficient number, variety, and time to establish either:

- There is sufficient evidence to conclude that the customer can benefit from the provision of VR services in terms of a CIE outcome; or
- There is clear and convincing evidence that due to the severity of disability, the customer is incapable of benefitting from the provision of VR services in terms of a CIE outcome.

3. **Length of time for Delivery of the TWE Plan** – An initial TWE plan is not to exceed a period of 12 months. An exception to this may be approved by the MRS manager if there is documented need for a longer period of assessment.

Exception – When a TWE Plan is Not Required

MRS counselors may conclude that there is an inability to proceed with a TWE plan if there is medical/psychological information indicating inability to engage in employment or that proceeding with evaluation services is contraindicated with current medical or psychological treatment plans.

MRS counselors are required to obtain follow-up clarification from the provider to clearly establish the medical/psychological reason the customer may not explore abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in a CIE setting.

The *Aware Follow-up Letter to Physician* is used to request additional information. The letter describes general types of services, including job accommodations and trial work experience opportunities.

If the provider further indicates/clarifies the customer's inability to participate in VR services or does not respond after several phone and written attempts by the counselor to solicit clarifying information, the case may be closed in alignment with *RSM 7000 – Vocational Rehabilitation Case Record Closure*. The closure requires manager review and approval.

Outcome of a TWE

If the customer's ability to benefit in terms of a CIE outcome has been resolved through the completion of the TWE, the MRS counselor proceeds with appropriate VR programming.

REFERENCE

CFR 361.42

Policy:

Eligibility decisions shall be made by a Michigan Rehabilitation Services counselor, dated and documented on a Determination of Eligibility. Individuals shall be assigned to an order of selection for services priority category at the time of the eligibility decision. They shall be notified in writing of the eligibility decision. If an order of selection for services is in effect at the time of eligibility determination, individuals shall also be notified of their priority category, the priority categories currently being served, and their right to appeal their priority assignment. If MRS is not servicing all priority categories at the time of the eligibility decision, the eligible individual who cannot be served shall be referred to other federal and state programs within the statewide workforce investment system, including the Michigan Works! program.

If MRS is functioning under an order of selection for services at the time the customer is determined eligible, the case is placed on a waiting list if the customer is not in a priority category currently being serviced. Otherwise, the case is moved to eligible status for development of an IPE. Individuals may appeal their priority assignment because it is a counselor determination that may result in the denial of services.

The Notice of Eligibility and Plan Options in the AWARE letters catalog should be used to notify clients of eligibility and plan options.

Job Aids:

- 3200a-JA – Disability Priority Job Aid
- 3200b-JA – Table of Serious Limitations in the Seven Functional Capacity Areas Job Aid
- 3200c-JA – Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

Policy:

Eligibility shall be continually reassessed as part of routine counseling and guidance provided to the individual. Eligibility for ongoing services is contingent upon the individual continuing to meet all agency eligibility criteria.

Procedure:

Whenever one or more of the following occurs when assessing continuing eligibility, the case shall be closed.

1. When an individual, prior to the completion of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), ceases to meet eligibility criteria identified in policy, the case shall be closed.
2. When an individual ceases to meet disability criteria after IPE services have begun, only short term and low cost or no cost job placement and/or job retention services may be provided or purchased to achieve an employment outcome. An authorized service in progress may be completed.
3. When an individual's impairment(s) are reduced through IPE services but continue to result in functional limitation(s) that substantially impede the individual's ability to prepare for, obtain or maintain suitable employment, required IPE services will continue as planned.
4. When an individual, including an SSI or SSDI beneficiary, expresses that he or she no longer intends to achieve an employment outcome after being determined eligible, the individual's eligibility ceases, and the case record shall be closed, as the individual no longer requires VR services to achieve employment.
5. When an individual is no longer able to benefit from further IPE planning or IPE services due to the severity of one or more disabilities, as demonstrated by clear and convincing evidence, the case record shall be closed.

If an individual has been found eligible and substantive questions emerge regarding the individual's ability to benefit from services, the individual must be afforded an opportunity to participate in Trial Work Experiences (see Manual Item 3175, Trial Work Experience, for requirements and procedures).

Substantive questions often arise from:

- the customer's inability to successfully complete one or more essential IPE services;
- the accumulated evidence of repeated unsuccessful efforts to benefit from services in one or more prior IPEs; or,
- evidence gained through the individual's involvement in an evaluative IPE as described above.

The standard of "clear and convincing evidence" is also defined in the RSM 3175 Trial Work Experience.

6. Individuals who continue to be beneficiaries of SSI and/or SSDI retain the presumption of eligibility as described in RSM Item 3100, unless their disabilities are determined to be too significant to benefit from MRS services to achieve an employment outcome, as demonstrated by clear and convincing evidence gathered through Trial Work Experience.
7. Individuals whose case is closed because they no longer meet eligibility criteria shall be notified that their case is closed due to appropriate closure reason outlined in RSM 7000 VR Case Record Closure.

Information:

The counselor re-assesses eligibility as part of routine guidance and counseling whenever the circumstances of the case change.

Occurrences leading to the cessation of disability include the removal of functional limitations or substantial impediments to employment through physical or mental restoration, or the elimination of an impairment altogether. Examples of such occurrences are surgery that removes functional limitation, or treatment that eliminates the substantial impediment to employment.

Continuing or Residual Barriers in Chronic Physical, Mental and Substance Disorders

The functional limitations of many chronic physical, mental or substance disorders, depending upon their presentation and history in the individual, may be mitigated or reduced through treatment but may not be totally eliminated. The resulting residual effects may continue to present substantial barriers to preparing for, obtaining or retaining suitable employment. Treatments themselves may impose affective, cognitive or physical limitations that substantially impact employment. In applying continuing

eligibility policy, counselors should take into account the individualized effects of chronic physical, mental and substance disorders and the possibility that substantial impediments to employment due to disability may continue to exist after the treatment of a disorder.

Ineligibility Determination

Referral, Application, Intake, Eligibility, and Vocational Assessment

Policy:

Ineligibility shall be determined if an applicant does not meet all of the eligibility criteria identified in Manual Item 3125, Eligibility Assessment. If it is determined, on the basis of clear and convincing evidence after trial work experiences that the customer cannot benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome, ineligibility shall be determined and the case closed.

Procedure:

Clear and convincing evidence means that there is a high degree of certainty that the customer is incapable of benefiting from services in terms of an employment outcome. A review of existing information does not provide clear and convincing evidence. For example, the use of an intelligence test result alone would not constitute clear and convincing evidence. Clear and convincing evidence includes a description of assessments, including trial work experiences and supported employment assessments, from service providers who have concluded that they would be unable to meet the customer's employment needs due to the severity of the individual's disability.

Ineligibility determinations are subject to the same timeliness criteria as eligibility determination. Applicants shall be notified of the Michigan Rehabilitation Services' (MRS) determination in writing, including their rights to appeal.

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes guidelines for completion of the Vocational Needs Assessment (VNA).

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) conducts a VNA to determine the employment goals, nature, and scope of rehabilitation services to be included in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and any subsequent amendments.

The VNA consists of a comprehensive analysis of the customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests. The VNA also includes assessment to determine if there is a need for supported employment or customized employment programming.

MRS utilizes existing information to the greatest extent possible to complete a VNA. If authorized services are conducted, they are to take place in the most integrated setting possible consistent with the informed choice of the customer.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization – *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Career Advancement – The process by which employees use their skills, experience, and education to achieve new career goals and more challenging job opportunities.

Integrated Setting – A setting typically found in the community in which individuals with disabilities interact with non-disabled individuals (excluding non-disabled individuals who are providing support services), to the fullest extent possible.

Labor Market Information – Data about labor supply/demand, earnings, employment/unemployment statistics, job outlook, and demographics of a particular field of employment.

Transferable Skills Analysis – An analysis of existing skills to determine if they can be applied/transferable to other occupations that have physical, mental, and environmental demands consistent with a person’s functional capacities.

Vocational Need Assessment (VNA) – A VNA represents comprehensive evaluations, tests, and assessments of a customer’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests, including the need for supported employment or customized employment services consistent with the informed choice of the customer. Information included in a VNA is required to be current and include information that originates from other programs and providers, collected from the customer and customer’s family, and include data from the assessment of eligibility and priority for services.

Test – Measures the level of skill or knowledge that has been reached (i.e. aptitude, achievement tests).

Evaluation – The process of making judgments based on criteria and evidence (i.e. Clinical diagnoses).

Assessment – The process of documenting knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs, usually in measurable terms (i.e. vocational needs assessment).

PROCEDURES

Initiation of VNA

MRS counselors initiate the VNA in *Aware Application* status through the collection of existing information obtained through the application and intake process, from resources provided by the customer including treatment providers or other agencies the customer is affiliated with, and vocational rehabilitation counseling activities.

MRS counselors document information that supports the VNA in applicable *Aware* data/information pages and, when appropriate, complete *Aware Actual Service* entries summarizing the analysis of collected information. VNA information collected by MRS includes but is not limited to:

- Information collected from the MRS Application.
- Information collected from the MRS Eligibility including disability/medical diagnosis, prognosis, treatment modalities, medications, restrictions, functional limitations, abilities, and capabilities.

Note: Forms to facilitate collection of information include *MRS-4683 Physical Capacities Assessment* and *MRS-2738 Mental Health Report*. This information may also be used to determine MRS Eligibility in alignment with *RSM 3125 – Eligibility Assessment*.

- MRS counselor vocational rehabilitation counseling activities summarized in *Aware - Actual Service* entries.
- Information collected from other agencies with analysis of impact summarized in *Aware - Actual Service* entries.
- MRS staff administered vocational evaluations, testing and assessments, examples include vocational aptitude, interests, personality, interpersonal skills, functional capacity evaluations, personal/social adjustment, and other industry-recognized assessment/evaluation tools used by MRS. With analysis of impact summarized in *Aware - Actual Service* entries.

Includes vocational evaluations facilitated by the Business Network Division (BND) and Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI).

- Educational history, formal and informal.
- Vocational history including work characteristics, traits, and job duties.
- Career advancement considerations indicating vocational skills, ability, values, interests, and/or preferences summarized in *Aware - Actual Service* entries.
- Counselor's observations including the need for supported employment or customized employment with analysis summarized in *Aware - Actual Service* entries.
- Transferable Skills Analysis (TSA).

Note: TSA alone cannot be used to limit the selection of an employment goal as they do not consider cultural and disability-related barriers to employment that may have influenced the selection of previous employment positions.

- Obtainment of Labor Market Information (LMI).

Note: LMI alone cannot be used to rule out an employment goal if it is otherwise consistent with the customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests, capabilities, and the customer is willing to relocate to a job market where the particular job is available.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and MRS Pre-employment Transition Services – Prior to Application (PRE-ETS)

In the process of determining an IPE employment goal and services, MRS counselors are required to review and, when appropriate, incorporate:

- Goals and objectives identified in a current IEP and supported by the customer and educational institution.
- Results of Pre-ETS services.

Informed Choice

To facilitate engagement in the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) process including involvement in determining vocational evaluation services, MRS counselors assess customer's ability to exercise informed choice in alignment with *RSM 2225 – Informed Choice*.

Determination of Need for Authorized Services

MRS counselors are prohibited from issuing authorizations to further evaluate, assess or conduct testing to complete a VNA prior to *Aware Eligibility* determination.

MRS counselors may authorize within the following authorization categories in alignment with *RSM 6010 – Assessment-Vocational Evaluation Services*.

- Driver Evaluations
- Evaluation for Rehabilitation Engineering
- Vocational Testing/Evaluations
- On-The-Job-Evaluations (OJE)
- Job Coaching During Evaluation
- Workshop/Work Sample Evaluation
- Job Shadowing Evaluations
- Evaluation - Customer Home, Training or Employment Site

RESOURCES

MRS-4683 - Physical Capacities Assessment

MRS-2738 - Mental Health Report

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.42, 361.45, 361.52

PURPOSE

In accordance with State and Federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) and Credential Attainment (CA) verification.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) document customer achievement of MSG and CA associated with training identified in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

DEFINITIONS

Credential

A) Secondary School Diploma - that is recognized by a State and included for accountability purposes under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

B) Postsecondary Degree/Certificate- recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an industry/occupation. Examples include (but not limited to):

- Associate, bachelor's master's, or doctoral degree obtained from a postsecondary institution
- General Certificates/Licensures, Registered Apprenticeship and Career and Technical Education certificates including Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI), National Institute for Metalworking Skills, Inc., Machining Level I credential and Microsoft Certified IT Professional (MCITP))
- Occupational Certification including Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), Certified Nurses Aid (CNA), American Service Excellence (ASE), and credential awarded by certification body

- Occupational Licensure including Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW)
- Other recognized certificates of industry/occupational skills completion sufficient to qualify for entry-level or advancement in employment including specified Job Corp and Veterans training programs.

Measurable Skills Gains (MSG)

Skills progression towards a recognized credential. Depending on the type of education or training program, documented progress is one of the following:

A) Educational Functioning Level (EFL) Gain -- A measurable improvement in educational attainment indicated by a pre-and post-test. An example includes passing from a 9th grade reading level to a 10th grade reading level in accordance with the school's academic policies. Tests used for this may include the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and Basic English Skills Test (BEST).

B) Secondary Transcript/Report Card -- A transcript or report card, for each school year indicating program passing (according to the school's academic policies) in high school (HS), high school equivalency diploma (HSED), or general educational development (GED) program.

The report card must not indicate the participant dropped out of school, was removed from the institution, or any other conditions that indicate removal on academic or conduct grounds.

C) Postsecondary Transcript/Report Card -- A transcript or report card demonstrating the following based upon enrollment status:

- Full Time Student -- completion of a minimum of 12 hours for one semester.

- Part Time Student -- completion of a minimum of 12 credit hours over the course of two completed semesters during a 12-month period.

D) Training Milestone -- A satisfactory or better progress towards skill advancement while participating in on-the-job training (OJT), or Registered Apprenticeship program. Documentation may include employer verification.

E) Skills Progression -- Successful passage of an exam required for an occupation or progress in attaining trade-related benchmarks. Exam examples include the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), National Counselor Exam (NCE), Commercial Driver's License (CDL), and welding certification. Documentation may include transcripts and certificates including electronic documents originating from the training entity.

Achievement Date

The date a credential attainment or measurable skills gain is indicated by the school or institution as achieved. The achievement date is the official date as indicated on the copy of the certificate/school record provided to MRS. If the achievement date is not indicated on the certificate/school record, a copy of the academic calendar, reflecting the latest date of required school activities in combination with the certificate/school record, may be used to denote the achievement date.

PROCEDURES

MRS counselors document MSG progress and/or CA attainment as follows:

1. Educational/vocational training achievements earned prior to IPE are documented on the 'Characteristics at Plan' page in Aware.

2. Educational/vocational training programs supported by MRS are documented in the IPE as individual services if determined as a part of the Vocational Needs Assessment (VNA) necessary to achieve the identified employment goal.

Note: MRS staff, when identifying High School/GED as an IPE service, select “*Achieving high school diploma or GED is a goal*” from the secondary education field dropdown menu below the Employment Goal section on the Plan page in Aware.

3. All educational/vocational training programs included in the IPE leading to a recognized credential are entered as a goal on the Aware Education page.

Note: Recognized educational/vocational training programs and potential certificates or industry/occupational skills completion are to be evaluated on a case by case basis for inclusion of MSG/CA reporting.

4. Obtain copy of school/vocational training verification of MSG/CA achievement and enter MSG/CA as achieved on the Aware Education page, using the date on the documentation.

CA may be entered for up to one year after case closure.

Example: (MSG) Obtain report card to verify successful completion of 11th grade and enter the MSG as leading toward CA of a high school diploma on the Aware Education page.

Example: (CA) Obtain a report card confirming completion of 12th grade and attainment of high school diploma. Enter both a MSG (completion of 12th grade) and a CA (high school diploma) on the Aware Education page.

REFERENCES

- The Career-one-stop website can be used as a reference to determine possible credentials:
<https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Training/find-certifications.aspx>

- MRS Federal Reporting:

MRS reports Credential Attainment as a percentage of program reportable customers enrolled in an education or training program who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program.

Note: A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) are reported as the percentage of program reportable customers who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains.

34 CFR 361.155

3400a-JA - Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) & Credential Attainment (CA) Rev 3-2020

3400b-JA- MCTI MSG and CA Rev 12-2023

3400c-JA - MCTI Industry Certification Data Rev 12-2023

Aware letter "Report Card or Transcript Reminder (Utilized to remind customers to submit documentation by June 30)

CONTACT

PolicyUnitSupportCenter@michigan.gov

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for developing Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE). These guidelines encompass determining employment goals and outcomes, IPE extensions, IPE amendments, IPE annual reviews as well as considerations for secondary students, and the resolution of disputes related to IPE development.

POLICY

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is designed to achieve an employment outcome of the individual, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of the individual. The IPE must be promptly developed by both the MRS counselor and the individual, no later than 90 days following eligibility determination. If additional time is needed, it must be mutually agreed upon by the individual and as appropriate the individual's representative and MRS counselor. Planning and approval of the IPE shall be conducted within the framework of a counseling relationship.

Upon completion of the eligibility determination, MRS must provide the individual, and as appropriate the individual's representative with written information and communication about the options available for developing the IPE. The *Notice of Eligibility w/ Plan Options Brochure* fulfills the written requirement.

DEFINITION**Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)**

Means work that –

- Is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment) and for which an individual is compensated at a rate that –

- Is not less than the higher of the rate specified in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) or the rate required under the applicable State or local minimum wage law for the place of employment;
- Is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and
- In the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and
- Is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees; and
- Is at a location –
 - Typically found in the community; and
 - Where the employee with a disability interacts for the purpose of performing the duties of the position with other employees within the particular work unit and the entire work site, and, as appropriate to the work performed, other persons (e.g., individuals and vendors), who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with these persons; and
- Presents, as appropriate, opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.

Employment Goal

Means, at a minimum, an occupational grouping found in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, or as an occupational grouping identified in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) codes used in *Aware* or as an occupational grouping in the Occupational Information Network (O-Net). This is a specific and achievable employment objective.

Employment Outcome

Means, with respect to the individual, entering, advancing in, or retaining full-time or, if appropriate, part-time competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, self-employment, telecommuting, or business ownership, or supported employment that is consistent with an individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

Is an agreed upon document developed to identify the individual's selection of the employment goal and employment outcome, specific vocational rehabilitation services necessary to achieve the employment outcome, the entities that will provide services, cost of services and the methods of service provision as well as timelines for services.

Post Employment Services (PES)

Means one or more vocational rehabilitation services that are provided subsequent to the achievement of an employment outcome and that are necessary for an individual to maintain, regain, or advance in employment, consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Student with a Disability (SWD)

Is an individual with a disability in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program who is not younger than 14 years old and not more 26 years old; is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); or is a student who is an individual with a disability, for purposes of section 504.

PROCEDURES**Development of
IPE**

IPE development must be completed promptly but no later than 90 days after eligibility determination. The MRS counselor must provide the individual, or the individual's representative, information on the individual's options for developing an IPE. MRS counselor must document an *Aware Actual Service Note* outlining the discussion and the individual's choice in proceeding with IPE development.

Options for Development of the IPE

- With assistance from a MRS vocational rehabilitation counselor to the extent determined to be appropriate by the individual.
- Without assistance from Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)
- With assistance from a qualified rehabilitation counselor not employed by MRS.
- With other representatives selected by the individual such as a disability advocacy program.

MRS counselors provide the *MRS – 2915s Individualized Plan for Employment* form to individual's choosing to develop their IPE without MRS assistance. Use of the *MRS – 2915s* form must be supplemented by recording the IPE in *Aware*.

MRS shall not pay for an agency, or a representative, to develop an IPE.

For individuals who receive SSI/SSDI, the options in developing the IPE must also include the availability of information on assistance and supports available to individuals desiring to enter the workforce, including benefit planning assistance. MRS counselor must document an *Aware Actual Service Note* outlining the discussion and the individual's choice in proceeding with benefits counseling.

Establishing an Employment Goal

MRS counselor, the individual, and individual's representative as appropriate, identify a specific employment goal, based on the assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs in alignment with *RSM 3275 – Vocational Needs Assessment* and consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, and must be in an integrated setting.

MRS counselors evaluate the employment goal, ensuring it is achievable by addressing any legal barriers and/or implementing accommodations for disability-related limitations. MRS counselors must refrain from supporting employment goals that may harm the individual or others, are unattainable due to legal or other barriers not resolved through accommodations such as rehabilitation technology, or other services aimed at overcoming such obstacles. In instances of non-support, MRS counselors will clarify and document the rationale in an *Aware Administrative Note* and explore alternative employment options.

MRS counselors document exploration of employment goals that involve preparing individuals for high demand careers. Career advancement and/or advanced training may also be considered as a part of the IPE when documentation shows that the current employment is not consistent with the individual's vocational potential based the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and

informed choice and advanced training is necessary for the achievement of an employment goal.

Advanced training in a field of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (including computer science), medicine, law, or business are to be considered along with other advanced training options identified through labor market analysis as appropriate and consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice.

MRS counselor documents local labor market information to support the identified employment goal as part of the vocational needs assessment and on the IPE. Labor market information alone cannot be used to rule out an employment goal.

Example: An individual may be willing to relocate to a job market where the particular job is available or may be entering e-commerce where the market is more open than limitations identified in the labor market information.

Before supporting an employment goal for securing an entry-level or unskilled employment position, MRS counselors document that:

- Individual is only capable of performing entry-level or unskilled employment positions based on comprehensive needs assessment; or
- Individual, through counselor facilitated informed choice, selects an entry-level or unskilled employment position.

Establishing an Employment Outcome

The individual selects the employment outcome that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. MRS counselors are responsible for determining whether the employment outcome aligns with the Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) criteria. When there is uncertainty about an employment position, MRS counselors conduct a review of the position using the *MRS-66 Competitive Integrated Employment*

Determination Form and document the results in an *Aware Administrative Note*.

MRS staff proceed with case closure in alignment with *RSM 7000 Vocational Rehabilitation Case Record Closure* if an individual elects to pursue an employment outcome inconsistent with the CIE criteria.

MRS Counselor Documentation of CIE

MRS counselors are responsible for certifying that employment meets the defined criteria of CIE at:

1. **IPE Development** - MRS counselor signature on an IPE, or IPE plan amendment, certifies that the identified employment goal is expected to result in a CIE outcome.
2. **Placement** - MRS counselor entry of attained employment position on the *Aware* Employment page certifies that the position meets the definition of CIE.
3. **Case Record Closure** - MRS counselor entry of attained employment position on the *Aware* Case Closure page when exiting- employed certifies that the position meets the definition of CIE.

Note: MRS manager confirmation of a CIE setting is required prior to the selection of an employment outcome for positions within:

- A Community Rehabilitation Organization (CRO) or other organizations that provide services or specific employment for individuals with disabilities as one of its major functions;
- Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) – Act/Ability One contracts;
- Michigan Community Rehabilitation Organization Set-Aside contracts;
- Any occupation funded or contracted specifically to serve individuals with disabilities.

Identification of IPE Services Necessary to Achieve an Employment Outcome

MRS counselor, the individual, and as appropriate the individual's representative identify specific vocational rehabilitation services needed to achieve the employment outcome, including, as appropriate, the provision of assistive technology services and personal assistance services, including training in the management of such services.

These services must be provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate for the service involved and is consistent with informed choice of the individual.

The IPE must incorporate the following details:

- Description of the specific employment outcome that is chosen by the individual and is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.
- Counseling and Guidance in alignment with *RSM 2025 Vocational Counseling and Guidance*.
- Treatment supports or other interventions necessary to address substantial barriers to employment.
- A description the service and entity chosen by the individual, or as appropriate, the individual's representative that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services and the methods used to procure such services.
- Timelines for achievement of the employment outcome, and for the initiation of services including an expected beginning date for each service, and an ending date or event for each service.
- Description of the criteria to evaluate the progress towards achievement of the employment goal.
- Post-employment services necessary to achieve stability of employment such as but not limited to:
 - Job coaching and/or training services to facilitate meeting employer expectations, learning position

requirements or if employment is jeopardized because of conflicts with supervisors or co-workers.

- Counseling and referral services for mental health or other services to assist in maintaining employment.
- Assistive technology services necessary to maintain employment.
- Placement services to potentially retain, regain or advance in employment.

Terms and Conditions of the IPE

Identified responsibilities of MRS and the individual included on the IPE are –

- The responsibility of the individual with regard to applying for and securing comparable benefits. If comparable services and benefits are available to the individual, the comparable services and benefits must be utilized to meet, in whole or part, the cost of vocational rehabilitation services in alignment with *RSM 5100 Comparable Services and Benefits*.
- Individuals must be encouraged to participate in the cost of the services listed in their IPE to the extent they are able to do so in alignment with *RSM 5125 – Financial Participation*. MRS must not encourage or mandate financial participation or apply a financial needs test for SSI/SSDI recipients for any vocational rehabilitation service.

Student with a Disability (SWD) IPE Considerations

For K-12 students eligible for services, the IPE must be developed and finalized before the student leaves the school setting. An agreed upon delay in developing an IPE is not an option for eligible transition students if the delay in development extends beyond the student's exit from school.

The only exception to this practice occurs when a student is referred to MRS later in the final semester, and there is insufficient

time to complete eligibility determination within 60-days of application before the student exits the school environment. In such cases, the counselor must adhere to the timeline standards for completing the IPE promptly but no later than 90 days of determining eligibility.

The IPE must identify specific transition services and supports needed to achieve individual employment outcome or projected post- high school employment outcome.

The IPE must identify the individual's current secondary training enrollment.

The IPE must be amended as soon as feasible once the student leaves secondary education to include a specific employment outcome to provide planned direction before additional training or placement activity proceeds.

Identification of Employment Goal and Outcome for SWD

MRS counselors identify the IPE employment goal based on the completed vocational needs assessment and other data (i.e., vocational assessments, psychological assessments, Open Options, Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), 504 Plan and the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

The description of the IPE goal and outcome may be a description of the individual's projected post- high school employment outcome. A Career Pathway may be used as an employment goal until the student completes secondary education. A Career Pathway goal cannot be considered an exit-employed outcome.

Finalizing the IPE

The IPE (and any IPE amendment) is agreed upon and signed by the MRS counselor, the individual and, as appropriate, the individual's representative before taking effect. The IPE is a statement of intent and is not legally binding.

The individual and as appropriate the individual's representative must sign the IPE before or on the same date as the MRS counselor.

The IPE *Aware* letter may be used as the cover letter to help the counselor obtain the individual's and, as appropriate, the individual's representative signatures on the IPE.

MRS counselor signature on the IPE signifies approval and verifies that the IPE is consistent with MRS policies and guidelines, is complete, and is expected to lead to an employment outcome.

The start date of the IPE is the date the counselor approves and signs the IPE. The start date must be entered on the IPE in *Aware* no more than 7 days after the IPE has been signed by the MRS counselor. Finalizing the IPE in *Aware* places the case in Service status.

MRS counselors must provide a copy of the IPE, and any amendments, to the individual and, as appropriate, the individual's representatives. The IPE must be provided in the individual's native language and in an appropriate mode of communication for the individual.

IPE Extension

The plan extension must be completed on or before the 90th day after eligibility determination if applicable. While delaying the development of the IPE is permissible when circumstances warrant, doing so should be the exception to the rule rather than a common practice. MRS counselors must complete the *Plan Development Extension* page in *Aware*. Completing the *Plan Development Extension* page places the case in Eligibility-E status.

Plan Development Extension Steps

Enter the agreed upon plan extension dates, by both MRS counselor and individual and, as appropriate, the individual's representative to reflect the time needed to engage in activities or

services planned to complete the IPE on the *Aware Plan Development Extension* page.

MRS counselors must specify when and how the individual and, as appropriate, the individual's representative agreed to the IPE extension in an *Aware Administrative Note*. Additionally, the *Aware Administrative Note* must summarize the actions taken to complete the IPE timely detailing the factors that prompted the extension.

MRS counselors must record the following information on the *Aware Plan Development Extension* page:

- Document the reason for the extension.
- Outline the actions required from both MRS and the individual. MRS counselors must clarify how the extension will facilitate the completion of necessary tasks and specify who will be responsible for each task, ensuring that all responsibilities are clearly defined.

The *Notice of Plan Development Extension* letter in *Aware* must be forwarded to the individual and, as appropriate, the individual's representative at the time the extension is completed. The *Notice of Plan Development Extension* letter must indicate the date by which the IPE will be completed, provide the rationale for the extension, and outline the actions required from both MRS and the individual to proceed with IPE completion.

Additional Extension

Additional IPE extensions must be completed before the current plan extension expires. Manager consultation and written approval through an *Aware Administrative Note* is necessary prior to completing additional extensions.

MRS counselors must specify when and how the individual and, as appropriate, the individual's representative agreed to the IPE extension in an *Aware Administrative Note*. Additionally, the *Aware Administrative Note* must summarize the actions taken to resolve

the prior IPE extension by the agreed deadline, detailing the factors that necessitated the additional extension.

MRS counselors must record the following information on the *Aware Plan Development Extension* page:

- Document the reason for the extension.
- Outline the actions required from both MRS and the individual. MRS counselors must clarify how the extension will facilitate the completion of necessary tasks and specify who will be responsible for each task, ensuring that all responsibilities are clearly defined.

The *Notice of Plan Development Extension* letter in *Aware* must be forwarded to the individual and, as appropriate, the individual's representative at the time the extension is completed. The *Notice of Plan Development Extension* letter must indicate the date by which the IPE will be completed, provide the rationale for the extension, and outline the actions required from both MRS and the individual to proceed with IPE completion.

IPE Amendment

Revisions to the IPE are made through collaboration between the individual, their representative as appropriate, and the MRS counselor. An IPE amendment will not be effective until agreed to and signed by the MRS counselor and the individual and, as appropriate, the individual's representative. Vocational rehabilitation goods and services may only be provided in accordance with the IPE.

Changes to the IPE are recorded in *Aware* or on the *MRS – 2915s Individualized Plan for Employment* form. Use of the *MRS – 2915s* form must be supplemented by recording the IPE amendment in *Aware*. Revisions to the IPE occur by either cloning the current IPE or creating a new plan.

A copy of the IPE Amendment must be provided to the individual and, as appropriate, to the individual's representative.

IPE revisions are necessary in any of the following circumstances:

- Case transfers

If a case is transferred between counselors, the receiving counselor is expected to honor the IPE unless the employment goal, services, or timeframes are unclear or no longer suitable.

- Substantive changes in the employment goal

An IPE amendment is necessary when there are changes to the employment goal including when the Job Title described in the Aware Employment record is not within the same job group as the IPE employment goal described in the IPE. MRS counselor must document the following in an Aware Actual Service Note at the time of initiating an amendment when there are changes to the employment goal. Documentation includes:

- Rationale for the new employment goal.
- Other services necessary to achieve the employment goal.
- Individual and, as appropriate, the individual's representative involvement in the vocational needs assessment/IPE development process.

- Addition of services

Vocational rehabilitation goods and services may only be provided in accordance with the IPE. Addition of services necessary to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain employment must be listed in the IPE.

- A change in the service provider or increase in cost or a longer period of time to complete a service.
- A substantial lengthening of time necessary to achieve an employment outcome.

A substantial lengthening of time is defined as a lengthening of the IPE completion date by more than six months.

IPE Annual Review

The IPE must be reviewed at least annually by the individual and, as appropriate, the individual's representative and by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor to assess the individual's progress in achieving the identified employment outcome. Progress must be documented in the *Aware* Plan Review module.

The *Aware* letter *Notice to Annual Employment Plan Review* may be sent to inform the individual and as appropriate the individual's representative of the requirement to review their IPE.

IPE Dispute Resolution

When discrepancies arise between the MRS counselor and an individual (or their representative), the counselor explores appropriate resolutions of these differences within the framework of a counseling and client partnership. This involves respectfully acknowledging the individual's ongoing substantive role in making informed choices about their IPE, while also adhering to MRS requirements.

If the situation cannot be resolved, the individual has the option to contact the Client Assistance Program. For more information, refer to *RSM 2200 - Client Assistance Program*.

Rehabilitation Service Manual (RSM) Considerations

RSM 2225- Informed Choice when facilitating IPE planning, considering financial contributions and comparable services/benefits related to IPE services.

RESOURCES

MRS-2915S – Individualized Plan for Employment in Arabic

MRS-2915S – Individualized Plan for Employment in Spanish

MRS-2915S – Individualized Plan for Employment

5050a – JA: IPE Match Functionality

5050b – JA: Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) Extension
and Tips for Engagement

REFERENCES

[R 395.67](#); [R 395.68](#); [R 395.69](#); [R 395.70](#); [R 395.71](#); [Rule 21](#); [R 395.72](#); [R 395.73](#); [R 395.74](#); [CFR 361.5](#), [CFR 361.42](#), [CFR 361.46](#),
[361.53](#), [361.45](#), [361.54](#)

Supported Employment Planning and Service Provision

Policy:

Supported Employment means competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, with extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, consistent with their unique strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice.

Individuals appropriate to receive Supported Employment services are those:

- a. For whom competitive integrated employment has not occurred or for whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a most significant disability.
- b. Who, because of the nature and severity of their disabilities, need intensive Supported Employment services and extended services to maintain their employment.
 - The source of extended services or a description of the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that those sources will become available must be obtained prior to IPE;
- c. Who may need a customized employment opportunity that matches the specific abilities of the individual with a most significant disability and meets the business needs of an employer. Flexible strategies may include customizing a job description, developing a set of job duties, work schedule or other negotiated items.
- d. Who may need temporary placement in an integrated work setting in which an individual with a most significant disability is working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment.

Procedure:

Referral and Eligibility Determination Considerations (see Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) Item 3000 - VR Referral & Application Process for more information)

1. Referrals for Supported Employment shall be generated through community partners such as local Community Mental Health Services Providers (CMHSP), school districts and other traditional referral sources, or shall be identified as Supported Employment candidates as a part of vocational services through MRS.

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2. To be considered for Supported Employment services an eligible customer must meet disability priority of most significantly disabled.

Vocational Needs Assessment Considerations (see RSM Item 3275, Vocational Needs Assessment, for more information)

1. Rationale for Supported Employment is based on a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs and an evaluation of rehabilitation, career and job needs. The rehabilitation counselor must document the rationale for Supported Employment services including but not limited to:
 - a. Information obtained during the vocational needs assessment shall be utilized to identify the rationale for Supported Employment services.
 - b. Referral information shall be utilized to assess vocational needs and identify the rationale for Supported Employment services.
 - c. A trial work experience may be provided to assess vocational needs and identify the rationale for Supported Employment services.
2. Use of customized employment services:
 - a. An assessment of vocational needs should consider the potential necessity for customized employment options when more intensive interventions are needed to identify, obtain, or maintain employment.
 - b. Supported self-employment is a customized employment strategy that may be used to assist individuals with the most significant disabilities in developing a business of their own. If an individual chooses supported self-employment as a type of employment service and the counselor agrees, the services would follow small business policy (RSM Item 5200, self-employment and small business). The rehabilitation counselor would need to identify a reasonable expectation of the availability of extended services specific to a Supported Employment business job goal.

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) Development Considerations (see RSM Item 5050, Individualized Plan for Employment, for more information)

Specific to Supported Employment, the IPE must contain:

- a. All specified Supported Employment services to be provided by MRS;
- b. The source of extended services or include a description of the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that those sources will become available;
 - The source of extended services or a description of the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that those sources will become available must be obtained prior to IPE.

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- c. Expected extended services needed, which shall be natural supports; employer supports; or other appropriate supports;
- d. Details for periodic monitoring to ensure that the individual is making satisfactory progress toward meeting the weekly work requirement established in the IPE prior to beginning extended services;
- e. Coordination of services with other agencies; i.e., local school transition plan including Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or Community Mental Health Service Provider (CMHSP) including Person Centered Plan (PCP);
- f. A Competitive Integrated Employment goal for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities; and
- g. All Supported Employment IPEs must be consistent with RSM Item 5050, Individualized Plan for Employment.

IPE Service Considerations (see RSM Item 6000, Services, for more information)

1. Use of Fund Sources
 - a. Non - Supported Employment fund sources including general, Interagency Cash Transfer Agreement (ICTA) and other specific fund sources shall be used by MRS to fund services provided prior to the establishment of employment; i.e., prior and during application, eligibility determination, vocational needs assessment/IPE planning services, and all services leading to employment.
 - b. Designated Supported Employment funds shall only be used to support and maintain an individual in employment (if there are no Supported Employment funds available then other funding sources may be utilized), from the start date of employment (this is the date of the start of employment and is not related to the stable-date) through the transfer to the extended services provider until case closure. These funds shall be directed to services such as:
 - I. The provision of job coaches or employment specialists who accompany the individual for intensive job skills training at the worksite and/or facilitate natural/employer supports at the worksite;
 - II. On-going services to reinforce or stabilize the placement; including, but not limited to regular contact with the individual, employer, family or guardian, and any other relevant professionals.

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- III. Extended-services for youth with disabilities; and
- IV. Provision of any appropriate VR service during employment.
- 2. Supported Employment services provided by MRS are not to extend beyond 24 months from the begin date of the IPE, unless, under special circumstances, the individual and counselor agree to extend the time in order to achieve the rehabilitation objectives identified in the Supported Employment IPE.
- 3. In limited circumstances, an additional 6 months may be added to a trial work experience in order to fully assess Supported Employment needs. (For more information on trial work experience, see Rehabilitation Services Manual Item 3175, Trial Work Experience.)
- 4. On-going support services shall be provided from the time of job placement until transition to extended services, and thereafter by one or more extended services provider. See the Information Section for definition of on-going support services and extended services.
- 5. At a minimum, on-going support services shall be assessed twice monthly to determine employment stability.
- 6. The scope of VR services for Supported Employment customers extends to all MRS services necessary to achieve the employment goal as identified in an approved IPE, provided the customer is in employed status.

Extended Services (these are supported employment services to maintain employment beyond the employment stability date)

- 1. Extended services are ongoing support services and other appropriate services, needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in Supported Employment, that are:
 - a. Based on the needs of an eligible individual, as specified in an individualized plan for employment;
 - b. Provided by, but are not limited to, other State agencies, private pay, community grants, private agencies, social security work incentives, natural supports, employer supports, or any other appropriate resource, to assist a customer in maintaining Supported Employment after transition of support has been made from MRS.
 - Exemption for Youth with disabilities:
 - i. If there is not an available resource for the provision of extended services, MRS shall be the provider of extended services and utilize Supported Employment funds for eligible youth with disabilities for a period not to exceed four years,

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- or at such time that a youth reaches age 25 (see definition in the Information Section).
- ii. For youth with disabilities who still require extended services after they can no longer receive them from MRS, another source of extended services shall be identified to ensure there will be no interruption of services.

Employment Considerations in Supported Employment

1. Competitive Integrated Supported Employment is considered achieved when the:
 - a. Position is performed on a full-time or part-time basis;
 - b. Position compensates the individual at or above Michigan's minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage paid for similar work;
 - c. Level of benefits offered is the same for similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled;
 - d. Level of interaction with others (customers, vendors and co-workers) is the same as non-disabled persons within that individual's entire worksite and work unit; and
 - e. Opportunities for advancement are similar to those for non-disabled individuals who have similar positions.
2. The customer is considered to have achieved stabilization when the counselor, with input from the job coach/employment specialist, employer and individual, confirms that the initial intensive services identified on the IPE have resulted in:
 - a. The individual demonstrating acceptable job performance; and
 - b. A reasonable expectation that satisfactory job performance will be maintained with the individual based on ongoing support services being provided.
3. MRS Supported Employment services commence for a period not to exceed 24 months or until stability of employment is achieved, at which time the customer is transferred to the extended service provider as identified in the IPE. If there is justification for the period of service to exceed the recommended 24 months, to achieve stability in employment, an amended IPE shall be completed.

Documentation of the achievement of employment stabilization marks the readiness for transfer to extended services. Once the case is transferred to the extended service provider (or if retained as a VR case in the case of youth), the 90-day period of employment follow along is initiated.

Stabilization may be documented in several ways including but not limited to:

1. Reports provided from job coaches/placement service providers,
2. Employer follow up, and

3. Counselor conducted follow along/observation.

Short-Term Employment

Supported Employment is defined as competitive integrated employment. Development towards an employment outcome of Supported Employment may consist of temporary placement of employment in an integrated work setting in which an individual with a most significant disability is working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment.

Short-term basis within Supported Employment is defined as:

- a. An individual with a most significant disability, whose Supported Employment in an integrated setting does not satisfy the criteria of competitive integrated employment.
- b. The customer is considered to be working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment so long as the individual can reasonably anticipate achieving competitive integrated employment:
 - i. Within six months of achieving a Supported Employment outcome; or,
 - ii. In limited circumstances, within a period not to exceed 12 months from the achievement of the Supported Employment outcome, if:
 - a longer period is necessary based on the needs of the individual, and
 - the individual has demonstrated progress toward competitive earnings based on information contained in the service record.
- c. The six-month short-term basis period, and the additional six months that may be available in limited circumstances, begins after an individual has completed up to 24 months of Supported Employment services (unless a longer period of time is necessary based upon the individual's needs). The six-month short-term period begins when the individual enters into an integrated, non-competitive position.

Extended Employment

Extended employment means work in a non-integrated or sheltered setting for a public or private nonprofit agency or organization that provides compensation in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Extended employment programs have traditionally served as a safety net for individuals with most significant disabilities who cannot perform work in an integrated setting in the community or who choose to work only among their disabled peers.

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An individual with a disability may pursue any form of employment he or she chooses. However, if the individual wishes to receive vocational rehabilitation services, he or she must intend to achieve an “employment outcome,” in competitive integrated employment or Supported Employment. If the individual chooses to pursue work that does not satisfy the definition of competitive integrated employment, such as sheltered employment, the individual must seek services from another agency or provider.

Counselors are not to use VR or Supported Employment funds to establish extended employment options for customers. For individuals who were referred to and were accepted into Extended Employment options, their case is to be closed in AWARE using the reason “Placed into Extended Employment”. The MRS counselor shall:

- Conduct semi-annual reviews and reevaluate the status of MRS customer for two years after the individual’s case is closed (and annually thereafter) to determine the interests, priorities, and needs of the individual with respect to competitive integrated employment or training for competitive integrated employment (see RSM Item 7250 – Annual Review of Case Closed in Extended Employment in Community Rehabilitation Program);
- Enable the individual or, if appropriate, the individual’s representative to provide input into the review and reevaluation and document that input in the review process;
- Make maximum efforts, including identifying and providing vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations, and other necessary support services, to assist the individual in engaging in competitive integrated employment.

Closure Considerations (see RSM 7000 – Vocational Rehabilitation Case Record Closure, for more information)

1. A counselor shall pursue a Supported Employment rehabilitated case closure upon satisfactory completion of 90 days of stabilized extended services.
 - a. Prior to a rehabilitated closure of a Supported Employment case, the individual must have completed Supported Employment services, which shall be received for up to 24 months, or longer if the counselor and the individual have determined that such services are needed to support and maintain the individual in Supported Employment.
 - b. The individual has transitioned to an extended services provider or, for a Supported Employment youth case who does not qualify for extended services with another provider, MRS will continue as the extended services provider per the youth exception described above.

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- c. The individual has maintained employment and achieved stability in the work setting for a minimum of 90 days after transitioning to extended services; and
 - d. The employment shall be individualized and customized consistent with the strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual.
- *The Information Section details specific scenarios for case closure.
- 2. The elements listed below must be in the "Justification for Closure" of AWARE closure page:
 - a. The employment placement is in a competitive integrated employment and the individual is employed on a full-time or part-time basis;
 - b. The level of interaction with others (customers, vendors and co-workers) is the same as for non-disabled persons within the individual's entire worksite and the work unit; and
 - c. The individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage; the individual's benefits are paid by the employer and are for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.
- 3. A counselor shall pursue a non-rehabilitated case closure when, during the IPE case services or employment follow along period, the customer is not able to achieve stability of employment.

Information:

Definitions:

Youth with a Disability - Age 14 through 24.

Customized employment means competitive integrated employment, for an individual with a significant disability, that is:

- Based on an individualized determination of the unique strengths, needs, and interests of the individual with a significant disability;
- Designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and the business needs of the employer; and
- Carried out through flexible strategies, such as job exploration by the individual; and working with an employer to facilitate placement, including:
 - Customizing a job description based on current employer needs or on previously unidentified and unmet employer needs;

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- Developing a set of job duties, a work schedule and job arrangement, and specifics of supervision (including performance evaluation and review), and determining a job location;
- Using a professional representative chosen by the individual, or if elected self-representation, to work with an employer to facilitate placement; and
- Providing services and supports at the job location.

On-going support services are:

- a. Needed to support and maintain an individual a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, in Supported Employment;
- b. Identified on the IPE based on the individual's need.
- c. Includes an assessment of employment stability and provision of specific services or the coordination of services at or away from the worksite that are needed to maintain stability based on:
 - i. At a minimum, twice monthly monitoring at the worksite;
 - ii. Off-site monitoring conducted twice monthly, due to specific circumstances or at the request of the individual;
- d. Consist of:
 - Any particularized assessment supplementary to the comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs;
 - The provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site;
 - Job development and training;
 - Social skills training;
 - Regular observation or supervision of the individual;
 - Follow-up services including regular contact with the employers, the individuals, the parents, family members, guardians, advocates or authorized representatives of the individuals, and other suitable professional and informed advisors, in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement;
 - Facilitation of natural supports at the worksite;
 - Any other service identified in the scope of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals;
 - Any service similar to the foregoing services.

Extended Services - Ongoing support services and other appropriate services, needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in Supported Employment, that are:

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(A) Provided singly or in combination and are organized and made available in such a way as to assist an eligible individual in maintaining Supported Employment;

(B) Based on a determination of the needs of an eligible individual, as specified in an individualized plan for employment; and

(C) Provided by a State agency, a nonprofit private organization, employer, or any other appropriate resource, after an individual has made the transition from support provided by MRS.

Extended employment means work in a non-integrated or sheltered setting for a public or private nonprofit agency or organization that provides compensation in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Supported Employment is paid work in competitive integrated employment settings that offers ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities. The employment outcome is attained by providing intensive service and is maintained through the provision of extended support services (follow-along) which is provided by another community agency (other than MRS), such as a Community Mental Health Service Provider (CMHSP). The level of employment participation shall be full- or part-time based on the needs of the individual. Job goals selected are consistent with the individual's strengths, interests, aptitudes, abilities, priorities and capabilities. The intent of this model is to make competitive integrated, community-based employment available to individuals who might otherwise be unable to achieve competitive integrated employment.

The potential to benefit from Supported Employment or customized employment should be specifically considered when assessing the employability of individuals with the most significant disabilities who have never worked before and need intensive support or have previously been unable to perform competitive integrated employment. MRS, by federal regulation, has an on-going responsibility to search for extended service providers for eligible but unserved individuals in order to maximize the numbers of individuals receiving Supported Employment and customized employment services.

Job skills training and other training shall not be needed for all individuals in Supported Employment and customized employment. If needed, it should be furnished by the most appropriate means for the individual, including training provided by skilled job coaches or employment specialists, or other qualified individuals including co-workers or through natural supports.

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Natural supports means utilizing the natural work environment for support through social integration; i.e., connecting individuals with others in the work setting in ways that will be self-sustaining for the individual. The concept requires analyzing the social interactive systems within the work setting and culture and then, seeking, supporting and facilitating methods that would assist the individual in becoming a member of that culture. The goal is for the individual to belong socially and, as a result, receive assistance naturally in completing tasks and solving problems.

Provision of job coaching as a service does not automatically denote Supported Employment, unless other elements of Supported Employment noted above are also present specifically the need for extended support services.

When purchasing job coaching services, counselors should consider the individual's qualifications to provide this service; for example, does the individual have the requisite training and skills, is the individual covered by liability insurance through either a third party or if self-employed through personal insurance and does the provider have expertise to effectively work with specific disability populations such as individuals with autism.

Job Aid 5075b-JA (Rev 5-2017), [Supported Employment Job Aid](#), provides further information and details about case recording requirements for Supported Employment.

Scenarios for Case Closure:

Scenario #1: For an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, who has achieved an employment outcome in Supported Employment in competitive integrated employment, the service record is closed at the time the individual:

1. Achieves the employment outcome;
2. Satisfies the requirements for case closure; and
3. Is not receiving extended services or any other vocational rehabilitation service provided by the VR agency with funds under title I or the Supported Employment program.

Scenario #2: For an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability who is working toward competitive integrated employment on a short-term basis and is receiving extended services from funds other than those allotted under the Supported Employment program, the service record is closed when the individual:

1. Achieves competitive integrated employment within the short-term basis period established; and
2. Satisfies the requirements for case closure; and

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3. Is no longer receiving vocational rehabilitation services provided by the VR agency.

If an individual does not achieve competitive integrated employment within the short-term basis period, the service record will be closed.

Scenario #3: For a youth with a most significant disability who is receiving extended services provided by the VR agency from funds under the Supported Employment program or the VR program, the service record will be closed when the youth:

1. Achieves an employment outcome in Supported Employment in competitive integrated employment without entering the short-term basis period; and
2. Is no longer eligible to receive extended services provided by the VR agency with funds allotted under the Supported Employment program or the VR program because the individual;
 - a. No longer meets age requirements established in the definition of a youth with a disability; or
 - b. Has received extended services for a period of four years; or
 - c. Has transitioned to extended services provided with funds other than those allotted under the Supported Employment program or the VR program prior to meeting the age or time restrictions; and
3. Satisfies the requirements for case closure; and
4. Is no longer receiving any other vocational rehabilitation service from the VR agency provided with VR program funds.

Scenario #4: For a youth with a most significant disability who is working toward competitive integrated employment on a short-term basis, the service record will be closed when the individual:

1. Achieves competitive integrated employment within the short-term basis period; and
2. Is no longer eligible to receive extended services provided by the VR agency with funds allotted under the Supported Employment program or the VR program because;
 - a. The individual no longer meets age requirements established in the definition of a youth with a disability; or
 - b. Has received extended services for a period of four years; or
 - c. Has transitioned to extended services provided with funds other than those allotted under the VR or Supported Employment programs prior to meeting the age or time restrictions; and
3. Satisfies the requirements for case closure.

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If a youth does not achieve competitive integrated employment within the short-term basis period, the service record will be closed.

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes guidelines for use of comparable services and benefits.

POLICY

Available comparable services and benefits are accessed prior to using MRS agency funds towards purchase of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.

DEFINITIONS

Comparable Services and Benefits

A service or benefit contributed by another entity that is:

- Provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other federal, state, or local public agencies, by a health insurance provider, or through employee benefits.
- Determined to be readily available.
- Equivalent to the services that the customer would otherwise receive from MRS.
- Excludes awards or scholarships based on merit.

Readily Available

Readily available means a comparable service and benefit is either approved through the provider or identified as accessible at the time of scheduled delivery of the service as identified in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

PROCEDURES

Exemption of Exploration of Comparable Service and Benefit

MRS counselors utilize readily available comparable services and benefits. However, further identification of comparable services and benefits is not required if exploration would interrupt or delay:

1. Progress towards achievement of the employment outcome as identified in the IPE.

2. Immediate job placement or retention of employment would be compromised.
3. The provision of VR services to a customer who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.

The following *Aware* service categories (and associated subcategories) are exempt from further exploration of comparable services/benefits if they are not readily available:

1. Assessment services:
 - Assessment- Diagnosis of Disability
 - Assessment- Vocational Evaluation
 - Customized Employment – Discovery
 - Trial Work Experience
2. Counseling and guidance services:
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling & Guidance
 - Benefit Counseling
3. Job-related services:
 - Customized Employment – all categories
 - Job Coaching/Follow Up
 - Job Placement Assistance
 - Extended Services (inc. Youth)
4. Rehabilitation technology services:
 - Rehabilitation Technology

MRS Services Determined the Responsibility of Another Entity

MRS does not generally pay for services determined to be the responsibility of another entity within:

- Federal law (such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, section 504 of the Act, or section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)
- State law
- MRS policy, Interagency Agreements (IA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

MRS counselor may pay for a service that is determined the responsibility of another entity if the entity fails to provide/pay for a service identified as their responsibility. MRS counselor documents

an *Aware Administrative Note* indicating MRS site manager consultation and approval to financially support the service.

Documentation Requirements to Reflect Exploration of Comparable Services/Benefits

MRS is required to explore availability of comparable benefits and services and identify available comparable benefits and services in the IPE.

MRS counselors complete *Aware Administrative Note* to document exploration of comparable services/benefits for each required service identified in the IPE. Documentation is to minimally include sources pursued and outcome.

Documentation Requirements When Delivered through MRS Vendor Authorization for Purchase (RA-Z40)

MRS staff, when issuing an authorization, document the availability, unavailability, or exemption of comparable services/benefits in the benefit section on the *Aware Authorization* page.

Documentation Requirements When Delivered In-Full Through Comparable Benefit, by MRS Staff or in Combination of Both

MRS staff, at time-of-service delivery, complete an *Aware Actual Service* entry in alignment with the appropriate category/subcategory of service.

Each *Aware Actual Service Entry* is to minimally include:

- Comparable service/benefit or MRS staff who delivered the service
- Date(s) of service delivery, and
- Summary of service including reference of report in customer case record if provided.

REFERENCES

RSM 361.46 and 361.53

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes guidelines for Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) customer financial participation in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.

POLICY

MRS encourages customers to financially participate in the delivery of VR services to the extent they are able to, but may not establish, request, suggest, or require an arbitrary amount of customer financial participation for VR services that represent the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer.

If a MRS customer selects a service that is higher than the bureau rate-of-payment or the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer, the additional cost of the service is paid for by the customer.

PROCEDURES

Development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)- Determination of Financial Participation

During development of the IPE, the MRS counselor and customer identify available vendors that agree to the established rate of payment. If no vendors agree to the established rate of payment, adhere to *RSM 9025- Fee Schedule and Rate of Payment*. If a service does not have an established rate-of-payment, the vendor who can deliver the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer is identified.

The customer may select an alternate service provider whose cost is greater than the identified vendors. The customer's agreement to financial participation is required for the additional cost and documented in the IPE for each service. Financial participation consists of either:

- Encouraged financial participation for VR services that have an established rate of payment or represent the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer.
- Required customer financial participation resulting from the portion of the cost of service that exceeds the approved rate-of-payment or the portion of a service that exceeds the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer.

Authorization-Verification of Financial Participation

MRS counselor indicates the financial amount that the customer agreed to on the comment section of the Michigan Rehabilitation Service-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form. This notifies the vendor that a portion of the bill is the responsibility of the customer.

Customer Inability to Financially Participate at Time of Authorization

MRS counselor completes an *Aware Administrative Note* to document the inability of the customer to financially contribute at the time of authorization for a service.

If the service is in alignment with the rate-of-payment or represents the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer, MRS counselor proceeds with issuing the authorization. An IPE amendment is not required.

An IPE amendment (*RSM 5050 – Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)*) is required if the IPE identified vendor cost of service exceeded the approved rate-of-payment or was not identified as the least cost service that met the vocational need of the customer. The vendor that is able to deliver the service in alignment with the bureau's rate of payment or within the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer is added.

REFERENCES

CFR 361.5, CFR 361.54

Individualized Plan for Employment Amendment Planning and Service Provision

Policy:

An Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) amendment shall be developed when, as a result of the annual review or at any other time, the IPE needs to be revised. An IPE Amendment shall not take effect until agreed to and signed by the Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) counselor and the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative. A copy of the amendment shall be provided to the individual and, as appropriate, to the individual's representative.

Procedure:

An IPE amendment (new Plan in AWARE) is required in any of the following circumstances:

1. Change in an IPE employment goal or outcome.

An IPE Amendment is required when the Job Title described in the AWARE Employment record is not within the same job group as the IPE employment goal(s) described in the IPE. When the Employment Goal(s) in the existing IPE and the Job title in the Employment record are within the same job group in AWARE, they are considered to match and an IPE amendment is not required. A job group is defined as an OES Job Title Category or as a "minor occupational group" in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System.

An IPE amendment revising the Employment Goal must be accompanied by completion of a counseling summary at the time of initiating an IPE including:

- The basis and rationale for the job goal.
- The services necessary to address serious limitations associated with disability.
- Other services necessary to achieve the employment goal.
- The customer's involvement in the Vocational Needs Assessment/Individualized Plan for Employment development process.

2. Addition or removal of a substantial service.

A service that costs MRS \$1000 or more meets the definition of a substantial service, regardless of how it is authorized. However, a service costing less than \$1000 may also be considered a substantial service based on the discretion of the counselor.

3. A substantial change in the service provider.

A change in a service provider that results in an increase in service costs to MRS, a longer period of time to complete, or a significant change in outcome is considered substantial.

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4. A substantial lengthening of time required to achieve an employment outcome.
A substantial lengthening of time is defined as a lengthening of the IPE completion date by more than six months.
 5. A substantial increase in total estimated service costs to MRS beyond those noted in the current IPE.
A substantial increase is defined as an increase of more than \$2000 beyond the previous total estimated cost.

Changes to the IPE, as agreed to by the individual and counselor, shall be recorded in AWARE or on MRS Form RA-2915s. Use of the RA-2915s must be supplemented by recording the IPE Amendment in AWARE.

Information:

- An IPE amendment may also be warranted when a substantial comparable benefit is added or removed, such as the addition or removal of mental health treatment services provided by another agency or organization.
- Amending an IPE actually requires the counselor to create a new IPE in AWARE. The counselor should refer to the AWARE training manual for more information.

Forms:

- RA-2915s – Individualized Plan for Employment
- RA-2915Span – Individualized Plan for Employment in Spanish

Policy:

Self-employment, including small business, may be considered as a vocational option for eligible individuals if:

- it reflects the individual's informed choice;
- is consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, interests, abilities and capabilities, including appropriate accommodations.

Procedure:

Self-employment plans shall be supported, at least in part, by resources beyond MRS, and make appropriate use of available community benefits and resources.

All self-employment plans that involve starting a business venture shall have a viable Business Plan prior to the approval of the Individualized Plan for Employment.

Small business enterprises may be supported by Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) as part of an IPE if they:

- comply with all relevant state, federal and local laws and regulations
- are owned and operated by the individual being served by MRS
- are organized as a "for profit", as appropriate
- do not involve speculative activities (i.e., pyramid ventures)
- are designed to become a major source of income for the individual to the greatest extent practical.

A case closed successfully in any form of self-employment shall reflect income and other criteria described in the Business Plan or the IPE.

Because business enterprise plans require extensive development activities, the period of time required to develop an IPE will often exceed the standard 90-day time frame. Closure of business enterprise and other self-employment cases must be considered on an individual basis, consistent with the criteria for successful employment established in the IPE, and is likely to exceed the minimum 90 day follow-up period required for all successful closure.

Information:

Services in support of self-employment, including small business, may include technical assistance and other consultation services to conduct market analyses and develop business plans, as well as other services necessary, including but not limited to training, restoration, occupational licenses, association fees, tools, equipment, initial stocks and supplies, and assistive technology.

Self-employment is a broad category for various options. It may include self-employed tradesmen, professionals, contractual service or technical workers, as well as various forms of small or micro business enterprise. Generally, self-employment is defined as: “The consumer owns, manages and operates the planned endeavor for profit or fee and is not considered to be an employee of another person, business, or organization.”

Business enterprise, as a type of self-employment, may be supported by MRS if it falls into one of the following sub-categories:

- Micro enterprise – a proprietorship that usually consists of only the owner, has difficulty securing loans from traditional lending sources, and generally requires a modest initial investment of funds.
- Small business – Independently owned and operated and not dominant in its field.
- Telecommuting: “commuting via electronic transmission from a geographically disperse location where an individual can work at home on a computer and transmit data and documents via telephone lines and is not employed by any other entity.” (Note: Telecommuting may also be other than self-employment.)

Assistance with business enterprise development should include coordination of all possible resources including local and statewide partners/providers, businesses, institutions of higher education, family members, banks, and micro-enterprise lenders. Technical assistance for business planning and financial support may be purchased or acquired at no cost from local providers. Judgment must be exercised in using informed choice principles to enable consumers to select provider(s) who have demonstrated performance and best meet the needs of the individual consumer at the least expense to MRS. Contributions by the individual may include non-financial resources.

A primary role of the rehabilitation counselor is to assist the individual with a plan for business enterprise to obtain support and information for assessment, planning, and implementation of the business plan. This should include the identification and acquisition of resources to support the plan. Each district office has a small business champion who is responsible for providing current

and more detailed guidance for small business development, especially identification of pertinent resources and service providers.

A step-by-step process for determining the viability, feasibility, market and financial resources for each business proposal is contained in the Michigan Rehabilitation Services Handbook for Business Enterprises.

Casework Notes:

For additional information, refer to Casework Note 4 in the Casework Notes Section of this manual.

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines regarding reducing, suspending, or terminating Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) authorized services.

POLICY

MRS may reduce, suspend, or terminate authorized services under varying circumstances. MRS notifies individuals in writing ten (10) working days before the termination, reduction, or suspension of an MRS authorized service. Individuals have the right to appeal, including mediation of the reduction, suspension, or termination.

Exception: MRS staff adhere to guidance in alignment with *ADM 0303 – Threats and Acts of Violence* as a result of any incidents related to threats or acts of violence warranting immediate suspension or termination of services

DEFINITIONS

Act of Violence

Any intentional, reckless, or grossly negligent act that would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or death to another person, or damage to property.

Change in Vocational Needs

Refers to the shifting requirements and/or adjustments that an individual might experience during vocational rehabilitation services resulting in reassessment and modification of the rehabilitation strategies (i.e., evolving interests or health challenges may lead to alterations in the services provided).

Reduce

Means to decrease the amount or extent of services (i.e., decreasing the frequency or duration of services, or extent of support).

Suspend

Means to temporarily pause services from continuing for a period of time with intention to resume at a later date (i.e., a reassessment of an accommodation to enhance an individual's ability to engage in a service).

Terminate

Means to discontinue services definitively.

Threat of Violence

Any intentional communication or other act that is perceived to threaten an act of violence and would cause a reasonable person to feel terrorized, threatened, or fear physical injury or death to oneself, another person, or property. Any threat of violence, whether verbal, written, visual or gestured, is presumed to be an expression of intent to do harm to another person or property. Threats of violence, as used in this definition, includes harassment as defined in [MCL 750.411i\(d\)](#).

Non-Compliance

Refers to the failure to adhere to established rules, standards, regulations, or guidelines (i.e., misconduct that disrupts services or failure to follow safety guidelines, etc.).

PROCEDURES

MRS staff may reduce, suspend, or terminate an MRS authorized service including but not limited to the following circumstances –

- Acts or threats of violence

- Change in vocational needs
- Non-compliance
- Safety to self or others

MRS counselors document an *Aware Actual Service* entry outlining the reasons for reducing, suspending, or terminating an authorized service. The *Actual Service Note* should include the concerns discussed with the individual and, as appropriate the individual's representative, as well as the strategies and/or accommodations explored to address any concerns that impact the individual's ability to participate in an MRS authorized service. Additionally, the note should specify the timeframe for resuming services with any necessary accommodations and/or describe the nature of the reduction applied.

MRS staff utilize the *Suspension or Termination of Services Aware* letter to notify the individual of –

- the reduction, suspension, or termination of an MRS authorized service.
- their right to appeal and the process for requesting mediation or file a hearing in alignment with *RSM 2175 – Client Appeals, Mediation, and Hearings*.
- the availability of the Client Assistance Program to assist with an appeal in alignment with *RSM 2200 – Client Assistance Program*.

Assessment, plan development, or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) services will remain in effect during the appeal process unless the individual or the individual's representative requests termination of services, or MRS has evidence that the service has been obtained through misrepresentation, fraud, collusion, or criminal conduct on the part of the individual or individual's representative.

REFERENCES

[CFR 361.57](#), [R 395.67](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure lists types of services that Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) may deliver, who may provide services and documentation requirements.

POLICY

MRS delivers services to determine program eligibility, establish vocational need and as identified in either the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Agreement.

Individualized services are delivered by MRS staff, coordinated through comparable benefits/service providers, and/or purchased from vendors.

PROCEDURES

MRS service policies in this section of the manual are based on the following approved categories:

1. Assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services.
2. Determination of vocational rehabilitation need.
3. Vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist a customer exercising informed choice.
4. Referral to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide workforce development system.
5. Physical and mental restoration services.
6. Vocational and other training services, including personal and vocational adjustment training, advanced training in, but not limited to, a field of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (including computer science), medicine, law, or business; books, tools, and other training materials.
7. Maintenance, for additional costs, in excess of normal costs, incurred while participating in an assessment for determining

- eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or while receiving services under an IPE or Pre-ETS Agreement.
8. Transportation in connection with the provision of any vocational rehabilitation service.
 9. Vocational rehabilitation services to family members of an applicant or eligible customer if necessary, to enable the customer to achieve an employment outcome.
 10. Interpreter services, including sign language and oral interpreter services.
 11. Job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services.
 12. Supported employment services.
 13. Personal assistance services.
 14. Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial supplies.
 15. Rehabilitation technology services, including vehicular modification, telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids/devices.
 16. Transition services for students and youth with disabilities, that facilitate the transition from school to postsecondary life, such as achievement of an employment outcome in competitive integrated employment, or Pre-ETS for students.
 17. Technical assistance and/or consultation services to conduct market analyses, develop business plans, and otherwise provide resources to customers who are pursuing self-employment, telecommuting, or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome.
 18. Customized employment services.
 19. Other goods and services determined necessary for a customer to achieve an employment outcome.

Aware Case Status for Service Delivery

MRS staff deliver services in alignment with the following *Aware* case status and in accordance with associated Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) policies:

Prior to Application (PTA) status:

- Services identified in a Pre-ETS Agreement

VR - Application status:

- Services to determine eligibility
- Services to complete a Trial Work Experience (TWE)
- Services identified in a Pre-ETS Agreement

VR - Eligible status:

- Services to assess vocational rehabilitation need
- Services to complete a TWE
- Services to aid customer in development of an IPE
- Services identified in a Pre-ETS Agreement

VR - Service or Employed status:

- Services identified in the IPE
- Services to complete a TWE
- Services to reassess vocational rehabilitation need

Service Delivery Documentation Requirements

MRS staff use the **Aware – Actual Service** page to document services provided by MRS staff, comparable benefits, or administrative activities.

1. Actual Service entries consists of either:

- Services provided directly by MRS staff, summarizing the activity for each occurrence.
- Services identified in the IPE and provided by a comparable benefit provider at no cost to MRS, summarizing either the completion of the service or an update and expected continuation. A summary and expected continuation must be entered minimally once per quarter.

2. Administrative Notes consist of all documentation other than an actual service as indicated above.

Amending Actual Service

The creator of the actual service note has the capability to modify the following fields: service provider, description, and end date as well as delete their own service notes for up to 30 days. MRS staff must keep the end date as close as possible to the original end date when editing an actual service note.

MRS staff must keep the original date when opening an Actual Service note for review. MRS staff must select “cancel” when opening open an Actual Service note for review and are not making any changes.

MRS staff must ask a manager to contact Aware Support if there is a need to change the end date by more than 30 days.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.48

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for obtaining assessments to evaluate disabilities and barriers to employment.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) authorizes Assessment-Diagnosis of Disability services when existing information regarding a customer's disability or disability related barriers to employment is insufficient and a medical, psychological, or neuropsychological assessment is required to determine or reassess eligibility requirements.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Service-Vendor Authorization for Purchase* (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Medical Assessment – Medical examination by a practitioner licensed to conduct a medical assessment. May include fees associated with acquisition of medical records, x-ray studies, delivery of medical assessments including laboratory studies to diagnosis, evaluate a prognosis, indicate treatment modalities, determine medication needs, vocational restrictions, and/or residual ability levels that impact the employment and rehabilitation needs of a customer.

Psychological Assessment – Assessment by a licensed psychologist. May include an assessment of disability and barriers of employment to determine eligibility, or further assess vocational rehabilitation need of the customer. Assessments may include personality, interests, interpersonal skills, intelligence and related functional capacities, educational achievements, work experience, vocational aptitudes, personal and social adjustments, and employment opportunities of the individual and the medical, psychiatric, psychological, and other pertinent vocational, educational, cultural, social, recreational, and environmental factors

that affect the employment and rehabilitation needs of the customer.

Neuropsychological Assessment - Assessment by a licensed clinical or school psychologist who has completed a two-year fellowship in neuropsychology. Assessment is a performance-based method to assess cognitive functioning. This method is used to examine the cognitive consequences of brain damage, brain disease, and severe mental illness.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

Assessment - Diagnosis of Disability services are permissible in all *Aware* case statuses.

If during Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) service delivery there is an identified need to reassess disability and/or the impact on barriers to employment, MRS counselors are not required to identify assessment needs in a new or amended IPE.

Prior to Authorization for Service Delivery

MRS counselors document rationale in an *Aware* Administrative Note. Documentation minimally indicates rationale for service – including conclusion that records are not available, are inconclusive, or there is a need to reassess provided information to evaluate disabilities or barriers to employment.

Assessment-Diagnosis of Disability, Provided In-Full Through Comparable Benefit

MRS counselors document *Aware – Actual Service* entries under the appropriate subcategory of *Assessment-Diagnosis of Disability* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit (*RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*).

Authorization for Medical Assessment

MRS counselors evaluate potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

MRS counselors, through consultation with the selected vendor, indicate specific assessments needed, reporting requirements, and number of hours/units issued to complete the assessment.

MRS counselors use the *Aware* category/subcategory *Assessment-Diagnosis of Disability – Medical Assessment (including fees)* when authorizing for services.

Authorization for Psychological and Neuropsychological Assessment

MRS counselors, through consultation with the selected vendor, indicate specific assessments needed, reporting requirements, and number of hours/units issued to complete the assessment.

MRS counselors use the *Aware* category/subcategory *Assessment-Diagnosis of Disability - Psychological and Neuropsychological Assessments* when authorizing for either a psychological or neuropsychological assessment.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

REFERENCES

CFR 34 361.42, 361.45, 361.48, 361.5

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for authorizing vocational evaluation services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) authorizes for assessment services to facilitate completion of the Vocational Needs Assessment (VNA) to determine support of an employment goal and services identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or amendment.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization – Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Driver Evaluation – Assessment of either physical or mental function, vision, perception, attention, motor function, and reaction time, in driving a vehicle.

Evaluation for Rehabilitation Engineering – Evaluation of need for individualized development, adaptation, testing, and application of a technical device utilized by the customer as an accommodation for barriers to employment including but not limited to, mobility, communication, vision, cognition, corrective postural positioning, independent living, workplace modification, and augmentative communication.

Vocational Testing/Evaluation – Services structured to evaluate and identify a customer's vocational strengths, aptitudes, abilities, capabilities, interests, and academic skill levels. This activity helps to identify a potential employment goal. Vocational testing may include interviews with the customer to gain insight into education and employment history, identification of transferable skills, standardized test batteries, various vocational and interest inventories, simulated work samples, and an analysis of the local labor market. The outcome of the service is to identify vocational skills, work characteristics, interests, personal values, skills, and

abilities/capabilities to potentially support an employment goal that the customer and the MRS counselor will discuss as part of the vocational counseling process.

Note: Vocational Testing/Evaluation services do not include diagnosis of a disability or identification of barriers to employment when assessed by a licensed practitioner (e.g. Psychologist or Psychiatrist). Diagnostic assessments performed by licensed practitioners may contain components of vocational evaluation, testing, and assessments that the clinician uses to support a diagnosis of a disability or barriers to employment. *Aware service category – Assessment-Diagnosis of Disability* is used for determining diagnosis of a disability.

Job Coaching During Evaluation – Additional intervention to facilitate completion of an evaluation through support of a customer at the evaluation site.

Workshop/Work Sample Evaluation – Structured evaluation in a controlled setting such as a Community Rehabilitation Organization (CRO) that provides a hands-on measure to determine ability to compete with entry-level workers in the marketplace as well as physical and/or mental ability to engage in work activities.

Job Shadowing – Evaluations arranged with a Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) employer for the customer to follow and closely observe an employee performing their functions in a job classification.

On-The-Job-Evaluation (OJE) – Community-based evaluation completed in a CIE setting to assess customer capabilities, or potential to acquire skills, knowledge, or experience in employment activities towards support of a potential IPE employment goal. The employer has no commitment to hire.

- May be structured as a situational assessment if the evaluation includes wages for the customer.
- May be structured as a Community Based Assessment (CBA) if the evaluation does not include wages for the customer.

Evaluation – Customer Home, Training or Employment Site – Assessment of need for equipment and/or modifications to meet the vocational need of the customer with respect to accommodation of the customer’s home, training site or employment site.

Test – Measures the level of skill or knowledge that has been reached (i.e., aptitude, achievement tests).

Evaluation – The process of making judgments based on criteria and evidence (i.e., Clinical diagnoses).

Assessment – The process of documenting knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs, usually in measurable terms (i.e., vocational needs assessment).

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements:

MRS counselors are permitted to authorize for vocational testing, evaluation, and/or assessment services after eligibility determination in *Aware Eligibility* status.

Additional vocational testing, evaluation, and/or assessment services may be authorized for in *Aware Service* or *Employed* status if determined necessary to evaluate continued support of an IPE or potential need for an *IPE Amendment*.

Note: Vocational testing, evaluation, and/or assessment services delivered in *Aware Service* or *Employed* status are not required to be identified in an IPE.

Rehabilitation Service Manual (RSM) Considerations

MRS counselor adheres to RSM policies that include but are not limited to:

- *RSM 2100 – Confidentiality and Release of Information*, towards referral for vocational evaluation services.
- *RSM 2225 – Informed Choice*, towards selection of vendors.
- *RSM 3275 – Vocational Needs Assessment*, for guidance prior to authorization of vocational evaluations.

- *RSM 5050 – Individualized Plan for Employment*, for guidance of evaluation to support an IPE employment goal and services.
- *RSM Section 9*, for guidance on authorization/billing of services.

Documentation Prior to Service Delivery

MRS counselors document rationale for delivery of a vocational test, evaluation, and/or assessment services in either an *Aware Administrative Note*, or in the documentation section of the *Aware Authorization* page. Documentation is to minimally include:

- Rationale for tests, evaluations, and/or assessments to be administered.
- Customer informed choice in selection of service and vendor.
- Justification if not using a community-based location to conduct a test, evaluation, and/or assessment (e.g., physical, or mental impairments presents a safety concern, there is a need for increased supervision, the required evaluation is not available in a community-based setting).

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors obtain services from vendors including Community Rehabilitation Organizations (CRO) or appropriately experienced individual practitioners.

Vendors are required to have the appropriate licensure or credential based on the associated requirements of the administered vocational test, evaluation, and/or assessment.

If there is a question of credential/licensure, or parameter of a vendor service, MRS counselors consult with MRS manager.

MRS Authorization for Driver Evaluation

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Assessment-Vocational Evaluation* sub-category *Driver Evaluation* when necessary to evaluate disability-related barriers to driving.

MRS counselors evaluate potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

MRS Authorization for Evaluation for Rehabilitation Engineering

MRS counselors utilize Business Network Division (BND) evaluation services to determine potential rehabilitation engineering needs. BND will recommend potential vendors if unable to fully address evaluation needs.

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Assessment-Vocational Evaluation* sub-category *Evaluation for Rehabilitation Engineering* to authorize for assessment of accommodation needs in the form of technical devices to assist in performing a function in alignment with an IPE employment goal. Services are authorized for in alignment with *RSM 3275 – Vocational Needs Assessment*.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

MRS Authorization for Vocational Testing/Evaluation

MRS counselors use the *Aware* category *Assessment-Vocational Evaluation* sub-category *Vocational Testing/Evaluation* when there is need for additional vocational testing, evaluation, or assessment in alignment with *RSM 3275 – Vocational Needs Assessment*.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

MRS counselor indicates in the authorization and referral for services the specific evaluations, tests, and assessments to be provided, reporting requirements, and number of hours/units issued to complete the assessment.

MRS counselors may refer to a college/university for a vocational evaluation through either audit or payment of a single class in the subject of a customer's chosen major. This strategy may be used to assess a customer's ability to succeed in post-secondary training.

MRS manager documented approval is required prior to utilization of this evaluation, indicating that it represents the appropriate methodology for evaluation of the customer and that the selected course is appropriate. MRS manager adheres to *RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule and Rate of Payment* to request an exemption to the fee schedule.

MRS Authorization for On-The-Job-Evaluation (OJE)

An OJE is structured to assist in evaluation of a customer and is not associated with placement services.

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Assessment-Vocational Evaluation* sub-category *On-The-Job-Evaluation* to arrange for an OJE in alignment with *RSM 3275 – Vocational Needs Assessment*.

OJE's are restricted to community-based CIE setting. For evaluations that take place in a non-community-based setting, reference *Workshop/Work Sample Evaluations*.

MRS counselor completes form *MRS 6010a On-The-Job Evaluation Agreement*, to arrange for OJE services.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

MRS counselors may authorize 5 hours/units of service towards development of the OJE, a second or amended authorization is issued based on MRS counselor approval of *MRS 6010a On The-Job-Evaluation Agreement*.

The employer may require wages for the period that the customer is performing the same job duties as other employees. This is determined on a case-by-case basis. Authorizations are issued using the *Aware* category *Maintenance in Support of Any Service*.

MRS Authorization for Job Coaching During Evaluation

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Assessment-Vocational Evaluation* sub-category *Job Coaching During Evaluation* when additional job coaching is determined necessary to conduct an evaluation, test, or assessment in alignment with *RSM 3275 – Vocational Needs Assessment*.

Job coaching during an evaluation is rare. The vendor will typically provide a vocational evaluator to conduct the evaluation. If, based on disability or barrier to employment considerations, there is a need for additional assistance in the form of job coaching hours to support a customer during an evaluation, MRS counselor documents rationale for additional job coaching.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

MRS Authorization for Workshop/Work Sample Evaluation

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Assessment-Vocational Evaluation* sub-category *Workshop/Work Sample Evaluation* when authorizing for a workshop/work sample evaluation in alignment with *RSM 3275 – Vocational Needs Assessment*.

MRS manager approval is documented prior to use of a workshop/work sample evaluation. MRS manager approval is based on verification that there is an inability to complete the indicated evaluation in a community-based setting.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*). Vendors are required to incorporate all expenses including wages into the proposed fee for the service.

MRS Authorization for Job Shadowing

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Assessment-Vocational Evaluation* sub-category *Job Shadowing* when issuing an authorization for job shadowing in alignment with *RSM 3275 – Vocational Needs Assessment*.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

MRS Authorization for Evaluation – Customer Home, Training or Employment Site

MRS counselors utilize Business Network Division (BND) evaluation services to determine potential rehabilitation engineering

needs. BND will recommend potential vendors if unable to fully address evaluation needs.

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Assessment-Vocational Evaluation* sub-category *Customer Home, Training or Employment Site* when evaluation of the home, training or employment site is needed in alignment with *RSM 3275 – Vocational Needs Assessment*.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

REFERENCES

CFR 34 361.42, 361.45, 361.48, 361.5

USDOL – Field Operations Manual, Chapter 64, section 64c08, “c.”

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for benefit counseling services when provided for customers receiving benefits through the Social Security Administration (SSA).

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) authorizes for benefit counseling services to facilitate customer informed choice regarding the potential impact of employment on benefits received through SSA.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Benefits Planning Query (BPQY) - Statement issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA) that contains detailed information about the status of a beneficiary's disability cash benefits, scheduled medical reviews, health insurance, work history, and indicates availability/access to work incentives.

Benefit Counseling Services – Represents services focused on explaining how employment will affect Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits including: SSI, SSDI, and associated healthcare benefits including Medicare and Medicaid.

Services also include provision of information regarding SSA work incentives to assist in planning for the transition to work without jeopardizing benefits and the importance of reporting wages to avoid benefit overpayments.

May also be referred to as *Benefit Planning Services*.

Work Incentives – Refers to SSA programs that allow for individuals with disabilities to work and continue to receive monthly payments and retain Medicare or Medicaid eligibility. A description

of work incentives is available at:

<https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/workincentives.htm>.

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) – SSA funded program designed to enable beneficiaries with disabilities to receive benefit counseling services to assist in a successful transition to employment.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors may authorize for benefit counseling services as necessary in all case statuses.

When delivered in Aware Service or Employed case status, benefits counseling must be identified in the IPE.

Identification of Need for Benefit Counseling Services

MRS counselors, prior to authorization for services, assess customer's current knowledge of individual benefits, associated work incentives, and the potential impact of employment.

MRS counselors document customer knowledge and need for benefit counseling services as *Aware Actual Service* entries indicating:

- Customer awareness of impact of employment on benefits
- Areas of benefit planning that require further exploration

Promotion of Self-Advocacy

MRS counselors facilitate self-advocacy regarding benefit planning by informing customers of the ability to inquire directly with federal and state programs regarding the impact of employment on benefits. As an example of self-advocacy, customers who receive SSA benefits can request a copy of their BPQY by contacting their local SSA office or calling 1-800-772-1213.

Use of Comparable Benefit/Services

MRS counselors are required to explore readily available comparable benefit/services prior to use of MRS funds (*RSM 5100 – Comparable Benefits and Services*).

MRS counselors inform customers who receive SSI/SSDI benefits that they may qualify for free WIPA services and refer customers to the [WIPA Project Coordinator](#) if there is availability to be served and interest in benefit counseling services.

The WIPA Project Coordinator will assign the customer to a local Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC), who will initiate services including assisting the customer in understanding and planning for the impact employment may have on benefits through development of a Work Incentives Plan. Examples of topics covered include:

- SSI/SSDI cash benefits
- Medicare/Medicaid
- Other health or disability insurance
- Unemployment Insurance benefits
- Veteran benefits
- Housing subsidies
- Food assistance programs

MRS counselors may proceed with exploration of an authorized benefit counseling service if there is a need for benefit counseling services beyond what was provided by WIPA, other available comparable benefit providers, or if the customer was unable to access free/available resources.

The *Aware Authorization* is required to indicate the identified areas of benefit counseling services that remain unmet.

Vendor Qualifications

Vendors who provide benefit counseling services are required to retain either *CWIC Community Partner Initial Training and Certification* (<https://vcu-tdc.org/training/initial/initial.cfm>) or *Work*

Incentives Planning and Utilization for Benefit Practitioners ([YTI Online](#)).

If there is a question regarding qualification of a vendor, MRS counselors consult with their MRS manager.

MRS Authorization for Benefit Counseling Services

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Benefit Counseling Services* to authorize for authorization of benefit counseling services. A *General Referral Form (MRS-1)* is completed to articulate necessary services.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.48, 34-CFR 361.52, 34-CFR 361.53

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for customized employment services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is piloting the use of customized employment services in the form of discovery, job development/ placement, and consultative employment training/support services when identified as necessary towards achievement of Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). This policy provides interim guidance for delivery of customized employment during the pilot study.

DEFINITION

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Service-Vendor Authorization for Purchase* (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service(s) to be delivered.

Customized Employment Services are individualized job placement or self-employment services provided when traditional job placement methods are unlikely to be successful. Services involve working with an employer to develop a job description that meets the abilities of the customer and position requirements of the employer.

Customized Employment - Discovery is a qualitative analysis that includes interview, observation and engagement with the customer to identify abilities. Required elements of discovery include:

- Comprehensive, descriptive, optimistic, non-evaluative, and non-comparative documentation that provides sufficient information to assist the customer to plan for customized employment.
- Identification of strengths, needs, interests, and demographic information to assist employment staff to understand details about the customer, family, living situation, and location in the community.

- Evaluation of life experiences including past employment, education, life activities, and skills that will have an impact on employment.
- Preparative activities focused on development of a plan for customize employment.

Customized Employment - Job Development & Placement Services are delivered based on results from customized employment discovery and minimally include:

- Customer, employer, and job developer engagement in development of CIE settings for employment.
- Negotiation with potential employers regarding development of specified job duties for an existing position or a new position description based on the unique features of the customer that will benefit the employer.

Customized Employment - Consultative Employment Training & Support Services are delivered when a customer enters a customized employment position and there is a need to facilitate development of employer/coworker ability to train, work with and foster successful employment. This includes:

- Development of employer/employee support strategies.
- Facilitation of employer/employee training on work assignment/tasks.
- Employer/employee development of management and self-management strategies.
- Fostering workplace social interactions.
- Employer/employee learning of non-work time management including break/lunch periods.
- Employer/employee acquisition of accommodations.

PROCEDURES

Pilot Study

The MRS Innovation, Data and Analytics Division is conducting a pilot study of customized employment through fiscal year 2025. The pilot study is structured to review the customized employment process and conclude with further guidance regarding staff training needs, credentialing of vendors, and training of MRS staff.

MRS staff who are engaged in providing customized employment services during this period are required to review this policy and consult with the MRS Innovation, Data and Analytics Division regarding case services.

If there is a service need or process that is not detailed in this policy the Aware Administrative Note is to reflect consultation with the MRS Innovation, Data and Analytics Division and indicate the guidance received and action taken. A copy of the AWARE Administrative Note is sent to the MRS Innovation, Data, and Analytics Division for pilot study consideration.

Aware Case Status Requirements

Customized Employment Discovery is delivered in *Aware Eligibility* status as part of the Vocational Needs Assessment (VNA) and *Aware Service* and *Employed* status when identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Customized Employment Job Development & Placement and Customized Employment Consultative Employment Training & Support Service are delivered in *Aware Service* and *Employed* status when identified in an IPE.

Determination of Need for Customized Employment Services

MRS counselor complete *Aware - Actual Service* entries in the form of *Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance* to document need for customized employment services.

Entries are to summarize collected information that demonstrate the need for customized employment services. This minimally includes customer determination of:

- Previously 'unemployable' and inability to enter or sustain CIE.
- Inability of traditional job development models to meet the needs of the customer to successfully achieve CIE.
- Need for more intensive level of pre-employment intervention and exploration of customized employment services.

Rehabilitation Service Manual (RSM) Considerations

MRS counselor adheres to RSM policies that include but are not limited to:

- *RSM 2100 - Confidentiality and Release of Information* when communicating and releasing MRS customer information to vendors and/or comparable benefit/service providers.
- *RSM 3275 - Vocational Needs Assessment* when providing customized employment discovery services during the vocational needs assessment.
- *RSM 5050 - Individualized Plan for Employment* when providing customized employment services as an IPE service.
- *RSM 5075 - Supported Employment* when providing customized employment services as part of an approved Supported Employment IPE.
- *RSM 5200 - Self-Employment and Small Business* when providing customized employment services as part of an approved Self-Employment IPE.

Vendor Qualifications

Vendor staff who deliver customized employment services are required to be credentialed/approved prior to service delivery.

MRS counselor, prior to authorization, contacts [MRS – Innovation Unit](#) to obtain verification of vendor credentials. The returned email confirming verification of vendor credentials is copied to an *Aware-Administrative Note*.

Customized Employment Services – Delivered by a Comparable Service/Benefit Provider

If customized employment services are delivered through a comparable service/benefit, MRS counselor completes an *Aware – Actual Service* entries to document delivery of services in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

MRS Authorization for Customized Employment Discovery

MRS counselor completes:

- Authorization for 40 hours/units for a duration of 12 weeks.
- *MRS Referral for Customized Employment – Discovery (MRS-6020a)*.

If customized employment discovery services are not completed within forty (40) hour/units, the MRS counselor, prior to the

authorized hours/units being exhausted, obtains a report from the vendor that summarizes the outcome of placement efforts.

MRS counselor completes an *Aware Administrative Note* indicating either a rationale for additional customized employment discovery services, or recommendation for alternative actions.

If the MRS counselor agrees that more hours for customized employment discovery are warranted an authorization is completed.

MRS Authorization for Customized Employment Job Development/Placement

MRS counselor completes:

- Authorization for 70 hours/units for a duration of 13 weeks.
- *MRS Referral for Customized Employment - Job Development/Placement (MRS-6020b)*.

If customized employment job development/placement services are not completed within seventy (70) hour/units, the MRS counselor, prior to the authorized hours/units being exhausted, obtains a report from the vendor that summarizes the outcome of efforts.

MRS counselor completes an *Aware Administrative Note* indicating either a rationale for additional customized employment job development/placement services or recommendation for alternative actions.

If the MRS counselor agrees that more hours for customized employment job development/placement services are warranted an authorization is completed.

MRS Authorization for Customized Employment Consultative Employment Training and Support Services

MRS counselor completes:

- Authorization for 80 hours/units for a duration of 24 weeks (issued by MRS manager)
- *MRS Referral for Customized Employment - Consultative Employment Training and Support (MRS-6020c)*

If customized employment consultative employment training and support services are not completed within seventy (70) hour/units, the MRS counselor, prior to the authorized hours/units being exhausted, obtains a report from the vendor which summarizes the outcome of efforts.

MRS counselor completes an *Aware Administrative Note* indicating either a rationale for additional customized employment consultative employment training and support services or recommendation for alternative actions.

If the MRS counselor agrees that more hours for customized employment consultative employment training and support services are warranted, an authorization is issued.

Responsibilities Prior to Payment of Authorization

MRS counselor approves payment of authorizations in alignment with reporting requirements in alignment with *RSM-9200 Billing - Payment for Services*.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

REFERENCES

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for disability related training and support services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) provides disability related training and support services when identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), to support achievement of an employment goal. Disability related training and support services include training in adaptive aids/equipment, driver training, work/personal adjustment, and tutoring.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Disability Related Training and Support Services – MRS *Aware* category designated for training and support services structured to promote use of disability related adaptive aids, equipment, controls, and tools for employment purposes.

Training - Adaptive Aid/Equipment - Instruction for use of disability related adaptive aids, equipment, tools, devices, appliances, or other items which enable a customer to improve their ability to perform a vocational/employment related task. Examples may include but are not limited to orientation and mobility, rehabilitation teaching, training in the use of low vision aids, speech reading, sign language, and cognitive training/retraining services.

This service definition does not include training in the form of driver training and associated use of vehicle modifications, work adjustment training, or tutoring services.

Training - Driver – Training/instruction in operating a vehicle.

Training – Work or Personal Adjustment (WAT) – An individualized and time-limited process that utilizes a realistic work setting and tasks to develop or reestablish work/personal habits, behaviors, personal/social skills, functional capacities, and to increase stamina for a customer who is entering or returning to the workforce. Components may include but are not limited to attendance, punctuality, appropriate dress/grooming, following directions, learning/performing different work tasks, staying on task, relationships with co-workers and supervisors, quantity and quality of work, job tolerance/stamina, adhering to work rules/safety procedures, reporting problems to supervisors, interaction with the public, transportation arrangements, and work-related communication.

Tutoring – Time-limited academic support, provided by individuals with a high degree of knowledge or defined expertise in a particular subject or set of subjects.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

Disability related training and support services may be delivered when identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) in *Aware Service* or *Employed* case statuses.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors obtain services from vendors who are appropriately licensed for the service provided.

Training Adaptive Aid/Equipment – Vendors are required to retain certification to train in the use of the adaptive aid/equipment in question. Examples may include an Assistive Technology Professional (ATP), which is a national certification from the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America, or appropriately credentialed Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Rehabilitation Nurses, or other rehabilitation associated practitioners with required specialized certification in the training of adaptive aids/equipment.

Training – Driver - Vendors are required to be licensed by the Michigan Department of State – Licensing Unit.

If providing driver training in the capacity of adaptive vehicles, vendors are required to have one of the following:

- Certificate of Recognition in Automobile Modification from the Association of Driver Education for the Disabled (ADED).
- Registered Occupational Therapist with credentials to perform driver training.
- Teaching degree with Driver Education Certification and have access to consultation with a registered occupational therapist.

Training – Work or Personal Adjustment (WAT) – Vendors who conduct work adjustment services are to have expertise in delivery of work or personal adjustment services. MRS does not require a specific credential or license to provide this service

Tutoring Level I – Minimum requirement of the vendor is an undergraduate student who is majoring in the academic area of requested tutoring or who has completed an Associates for Applied Science (AAS) from a technical school.

Level I tutors are typically used with customers/students who require tutoring services to complete courses in the first two years of undergraduate programs (typically associated with level 100-200 courses) or remedial coursework.

Tutoring Level II – Minimum requirements include a vendor who is a current graduate student majoring in the academic area in which they are tutoring and who does not have a teaching certificate.

Level II tutors are typically used with customers/students who require tutoring services to complete undergraduate courses during the junior or senior year of an undergraduate program (typically associated with 300-400 level courses) or higher.

Tutoring Level III - Minimum requirement of the vendor is an individual with a teaching certificate in the academic area (Math, English, Science, etc.) in which they are tutoring or individuals who

have current [Michigan special education teaching endorsement](#) associated with the customers category of disability and tutoring needs.

Level III tutors are typically used with customers/students who require disability related tutoring services to complete courses at the undergraduate program level.

Tutoring Level IV - Minimum requirement are individuals with a master's degree in the academic areas in which they are tutoring or individuals who have current [Michigan special education teaching endorsement](#) associated with the customers category of disability and tutoring needs.

Level IV tutors are typically used with customers/students who require disability related tutoring services to complete courses at the graduate level.

Disability Related Training and Support Services Provided In-Full Through Comparable Benefit, by MRS Staff or in Combination of Both

MRS counselors document *Aware – Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Disability Related Training and Support Services* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider and/or by MRS staff in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

MRS Authorization for Training in Adaptive Aid/Equipment

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Disability Related Training and Support Services* sub-category *Training in Adaptive Aid/Equipment* when authorizing for instruction in use of adaptive aid/equipment.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

MRS Authorization for Training – Driver

For individuals 18 years of age and older the State of Michigan does not require drivers training to obtain a license. If, as a result of disability and barrier to employment, the MRS counselor determines that there is a need for drivers training prior to supporting attainment of driver's license, drivers training may be authorized.

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Disability Related Training and Support Services* sub-category *Training – Driver* when authorizing for approved driver training to obtain a license to drive.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

MRS Authorization for Training-Work or Personal Adjustment

To facilitate development of an employment site to conduct the Training - Work or Personal Adjustment, MRS counselors evaluate potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

MRS counselors and/or authorized vendor, use the *Training-Work or Personal Adjustment Agreement* (MRS-6030a) to structure the work or personal adjustment training.

The MRS counselor may authorize for use of a job coach to facilitate training needs in alignment with *RSM 6080 - Job Coaching*.

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Disability Related Training and Support Services* sub-category *Training-Work or Personal Adjustment* when authorizing for work adjustment training services.

MRS Authorization for Tutoring

MRS counselors identify and document the rationale for selection of the level of tutor based on both disability and academic needs of

the customer. If there is no availability of a tutor at the level required by the customer, a higher-level tutor may be selected.

If there is a question of credential/licensure or level of tutoring needs, MRS counselors consult with MRS manager.

MRS counselor complete the MRS General Referral Form (MRS-1) and complete an authorization based on the IPE identified parameters for tutoring.

MRS counselor obtains verification from vendor of credential requirements matching the selected level of tutoring based on the needs of the customer.

MRS staff references the *MRS Fee Schedule* for current service rates.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.48, 34-CFR 361.50

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for the authorization of a job coach.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) authorizes for job coaching services in support of maintaining an employment position when identified as a necessary service in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

MRS may also utilize job coaching services when identified as a necessary component of an evaluation or training agreement.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Job Coaching – Services consisting of structured intervention to assist a customer when learning to perform job tasks to the employer's specification and/or to learn necessary interpersonal skills for the position. Services include on-site assistance with disability related accommodations and identification of natural supports.

Natural Supports – Represent personal associations and relationships in the workplace that enhance the quality and security of the position. Examples of natural supports include supervisors and coworkers who are able to provide guidance for a new employee, offer suggestions, clarify roles/expectations and assist with additional training needs.

PROCEDURES

Employer Responsibility for Supervision and Training

MRS is not responsible for replacement of employer held responsibilities for supervision and training of a new or existing employee.

Scope of Job Coaching Services

Job coaching services are limited to assisting the customer and employer in addressing accommodation needs and adjustment to employment based on identified disability related barriers to employment. General training of job duties remains the responsibility of the employer.

When job coaching is a component of an evaluation or training agreement, services are limited to what is determined necessary to achieve the stated evaluation or training objectives.

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors may provide job coaching services in *Aware Service* and *Employed* status when associated with maintaining employment as an identified service in the IPE.

MRS counselors may also incorporate job coaching services in other *Aware* case statuses when associated with an approved evaluation or training agreement.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors seek services from accredited rehabilitation organizations, practitioners with knowledge and experience in providing job coaching services, and/or appropriate licensed agencies.

If there is a question regarding use of a vendor, MRS counselors consult with MRS manager.

MRS Authorization for Job Coaching Services

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Job Coaching* to authorize for job coaching services. There are two sub-categories to select from:

- Sub-Category: *Job Coaching – Supported Employment*
Restricted for use with customers who have job coaching services identified in an approved Supported Employment IPE.

- Sub-Category: *Job Coaching – Non-Supported Employment*
Used for all job coaching authorizations that do not involve customers receiving supported employment programming.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

MRS counselor utilizes the *Request for Job Coaching Services (MRS-6080a)* form for referral of services.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.48, 34-CFR 361.52, 34-CFR 361.53

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for job placement assistance.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) provides job placement assistance, when identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), to support achievement of an employment goal.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Job Placement Assistance

Services structured to assist a MRS customer in entering and achieving Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). Services may be delivered by MRS staff, comparable benefit provider, or authorization for services by an approved MRS vendor. There are two *Aware* sub-categories associated with job placement assistance, Placement Services and Placement Follow-Up.

Placement Services

A component of Job Placement Assistance. These services include job search assistance to secure CIE, completion of applications, inquiry into positions, and consultation with employers to facilitate employment opportunities.

Placement Follow Up

A component of Job Placement Assistance. Includes meetings/contact with the customer and/or employer to evaluate progress towards maintaining employment and to identify any potential barriers to sustaining employment.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

Job placement assistance services are authorized and delivered as an IPE service in *Service* or *Employed* case statuses in *Aware*.

Rehabilitation Service Manual (RSM) Considerations

MRS counselor adheres to RSM policies that include but are not limited to:

- *RSM 2100 - Confidentiality and Release of Information* when communicating and releasing MRS customer information to employers, vendors, and/or comparable benefit/service providers.
- *RSM 5050 - Individualized Plan for Employment* to ensure service is in alignment with parameters identified in the IPE.
- *RSM 8175 – Vocationally Handicapped Certification* if Vocational Handicapped Certification is utilized for placement.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors seek services from accredited rehabilitation organizations, practitioners with knowledge and experience in providing placement services, and/or appropriate licensed agencies. However, MRS does not require specific licensure, accreditation, or certification to deliver job placement services.

Job Placement Assistance Provided In-Full Through Comparable Benefit, by MRS Staff or in Combination of Both

MRS counselor documents *Aware – Actual Service* entries under the appropriate sub-category of *Job Placement Assistance* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider and/or by MRS staff in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

MRS Authorization for Placement Services

MRS counselor completes an authorization and *MRS Referral for Placement Services (MRS-6085a)* based on the IPE identified parameters for placement services.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

Request for Additional Hours/Units of Placement Services

MRS counselor, prior to the authorized hours/units being exhausted, obtains a report from the vendor that summarizes the outcome of placement efforts. The counselor, in turn, completes an *Aware Administrative Note* indicating rationale for additional placement services, or recommendation for alternative actions.

If the MRS counselor agrees that more hours for placement are warranted an authorization is completed to extend services.

MRS counselor completes an IPE amendment if additional placement services exceed parameters established in the current IPE, or alternative action/programming is recommended (*RSM 5050 – Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)*).

MRS Authorization for Placement Follow-Up Service

MRS counselor completes an authorization and *MRS Referral for Placement Services (MRS-6085a)* based on the IPE identified parameters for Placement Follow-Up Service.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

Note: It is recommended that authorizations are issued for either six (6), eight (8) or twelve (12) hour/units of services based on need and may be authorized/billed in fifteen (15) minute increments.

Request for Additional Hours/Units of Placement Follow-Up Services

If Placement Follow-Up services are not completed based on the initial authorization, the MRS counselor obtains a report from the vendor that summarizes the outcome of placement follow-up efforts and completes an *Aware Administrative Note* indicating rationale for additional placement follow-up services, or recommendation for alternative actions.

MRS counselor completes an IPE amendment if additional placement follow-up services exceed parameters established in the current IPE, or alternative action/programming is recommended (*RSM 5050 – Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)*).

MRS Counselor Responsibilities Prior to Payment of Authorization

MRS counselor approves payment of authorizations in alignment with *RSM-9200 Billing - Payment for Services*.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.48 & 361.50

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for the provision of personal assistant services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) authorizes for personal assistant services when necessary for a customer to participate in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Personal Assistant Services (PAS) – Is comprised of a range of services provided by an agency or by one or more persons, that are designed to assist a customer to perform daily living activities on or off the job that would typically perform without assistance if the customer did not have a disability.

PAS are provided when necessary to participate in a vocational rehabilitation service and may include training in managing, supervising, and directing personal assistance services.

Examples of PAS include assistance with removing and putting on clothing, eating, using the restroom, and pushing a wheelchair or assistance with getting into or out of a vehicle at the worksite. These examples are non-exhaustive and serve to identify self-care type activities for which a PAS provider may be used.

PAS does not include, performing medical procedures (e.g., administering shots) or medical monitoring (e.g., monitoring blood pressure). PAS providers are not to help with a customer's specific job functions.

An individual delivering PAS may be referred to as a Direct Care Worker, Aid, or Care Attendant.

Employer of Record (EOR) – A third-party organization that takes responsibility for wages and associated expenses on behalf of another company.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors may provide PAS in all *Aware* case statuses when necessary to support participation in a VR service.

When delivered in *Aware-Service* case status, PAS services are required to be identified in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Identification of Need for Personal Assistant Services

When PAS is a need, the MRS counselor completes an *Aware Actual Service* entry indicating the customer's:

- Past use and knowledge of PAS resources including ability to self-advocate, manage, supervise, and direct services
- Preferences of providers
- Identification of comparable benefits that have been accessed previously or are available
- Assistive devices and alternative methods used by the customer to perform tasks without use of a personal assistant.
- Specific personal assistant needs including the type of services needed, the expected number of hours, and the location where PAS services will be required.

If the MRS customer is not able to provide a complete accounting of personal assistant needs, MRS counselor obtains an assessment of PAS needs. PAS assessment services are authorized in alignment with *RSM 6010 Assessment Vocational Evaluation Services* in the category of *Evaluation – Customer Home, Training or Employment Site*.

Customer Self-Advocacy and Informed Choice

MRS counselors may assist customers in obtaining a greater understanding and ability to self-advocate for PAS. Resources may include:

- [Independent Living Research Utilization \(ILRU\)](#) customer/consumer guides to structuring PAS
- [Office of Disability Employment Policy - U.S. Department of Labor](#) “*Making the Move to Managing Your Own Personal Assistance Services – A Toolkit for Youth with Disabilities Transitioning to Adulthood*”

Identification of Available Comparable Benefit/Services

MRS counselors are required to explore available comparable benefit/services prior to authorizing PAS (*RSM 5100 – Comparable Benefits and Services*).

Examples of potential PAS resources include:

- Insurance programs including Medicaid and Medicare
- Social Security Administration
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)
- Center For Independent Living (CIL)
- Area on Aging Association of Michigan
- Local home health agencies
- Existing family support
- Office of Disability Employment Policy when working with federal employees

Selection of a PAS Provider

The MRS counselor may assist in identifying a PAS provider. However, due to the individualized nature of the services that the PAS attendant provides, the MRS customer is responsible for deciding if the PAS provider is qualified to meet attendant needs.

The MRS customer assumes all responsibility for selection, hiring, directing, and instructing the provider of specific needs.

The MRS counselor is responsible for informing the customer to report if services are meeting their need and there are any difficulties associated with organization or administering of services.

Planning for Long Term PAS Needs

The IPE is required to account for the transfer of payment for PAS to the customer upon completion of VR services.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS does not require a specific credential to serve as a PAS provider/direct care worker.

All agencies or self-employed individuals who provide PAS are required to register as a vendor with the State of Michigan prior to authorization of services and retain professional liability insurance specific to PAS.

MRS does not engage as an Employer-of-Record (EOR) for a customer's personal assistant provider. An agency or self-employed individual works for the MRS customer, who directs all employment activities.

MRS Authorization for Personal Assistance Services

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Personal Assistant Services* to authorize services.

MRS counselor complete a *General Referral (MRS-1)* form and authorization to arrange for PAS services.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.5, 34-CFR 361.42

[Department of Labor \(DOL\)](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Counseling on Post-Secondary Training.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) provides Pre-ETS Counseling on Post-Secondary Training services for students with a disability who qualify for Pre-ETS and when identified in a Pre-ETS Service Agreement or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor detailing requested service(s) to be delivered.

Pre-ETS Counseling on Post-Secondary Training – Consists of providing students information and guidance on a variety of post-secondary education and training opportunities that include:

- Community colleges (AA/AS degrees, certificate programs and classes)
- Universities (public & private)
- Career pathways related workshops/training programs
- Trade/technical schools
- Military
- Post-secondary programs at community colleges and universities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Counseling is structured to support a smooth transition from high school to post-secondary education (PSE). This is facilitated in collaboration with the educational institution through incorporation of the student's summary of academic achievement, functional performance, and recommendations on how to assist in meeting

the student's post-secondary goal. This includes but is not limited to services that promote:

- Self-advocacy skills including attainment of academic and technology needs/accommodations
- Awareness of career pathway options and labor market analysis and projections
- Vocational assessments to identify interests, abilities, aptitudes, and individual learning style
- Increasing understanding of career & PSE options including attending college fairs and tours
- Preparation for and assistance with application and enrollment into PSE including resources regarding website navigation, financial aid options, and access to disability service programming if necessary

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

Pre-ETS Counseling on Post-Secondary Training services are made available for MRS customers who are students with a disability and qualify for Pre-ETS in alignment with *RSM-12000 Pre-ETS Outreach and Referral* and *RSM-12025 Pre-ETS Establishment of Need and Development of Service Agreement*.

Pre-ETS are delivered when identified as needed services in a Pre-ETS Service Agreement or an IPE.

Vendor Preferences

MRS counselors seek services from accredited rehabilitation organizations, educational facilities, and practitioners with knowledge and experience in providing Pre-ETS Counseling on Post-Secondary Training. MRS does not require specific licensure, accreditation, or certification to deliver services.

***Pre-ETS Counseling on Post-Secondary Training Services
When Provided In Full Through Comparable Benefit, by MRS
Staff or in Combination of Both***

MRS counselor documents *Aware – Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Pre-ETS Counseling on Post-Secondary Training* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider and/or by MRS staff in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

MRS Authorization for Counseling on Pre-ETS Post-Secondary Training Services

To initiate authorized services MRS counselors:

- Verify services are in alignment with parameters indicated in the Pre-ETS Service Agreement or IPE.
- Complete a *General Referral Form* (MRS -1).
- Complete an individual authorization for services.

At the time of referral, the MRS counselor confirms with the vendor if the service will be delivered in an individual or group format and authorizes accordingly. The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

Note for MRS Managers: Use of an *Aware Group* authorization is prohibited for Pre-ETS Counseling on Post-Secondary Training.

Service Planning

Pre-ETS Counseling on Post-Secondary Training is limited to initial exploration activities as identified in the Pre-ETS Service Agreement or IPE.

If there is a need for employment services, a student with a disability may be referred to the MRS Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

A customer, who continues to qualify for Pre-ETS, may continue to receive Pre-ETS in the VR program if further exploration activities are warranted.

Amendment of Authorizations in Alignment with Final Billing

During the course of service delivery, a customer that was referred at the group rate may be served individually if other customers do not show or complete the service. If this occurs, the vendor may submit a final invoice indicating the number of hours/units delivered in either an individual or group setting.

Example: MRS authorization was for 20 hr/units at the group rate. Final invoice provided by the vendor indicates the customer was served for 15 hours in a group and 5 hours individually.

MRS counselors are permitted to amend an authorization to reflect the final invoice provided by the vendor. This is in exception to *RSM 9000 – Authorization for Services* and will not constitute a retroactive authorization.

Non-Use of Wages for Students

Authorization for Pre-ETS Counseling on Post-Secondary Training is prohibited from including customer paid training wages or additional administrative expenses above the established hourly rate.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.5, 34-CFR 361.48, 34-CFR 361.50

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Job Exploration Counseling.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) provides Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling services for students with a disability who qualify for Pre-ETS and when identified in a Pre-ETS Service Agreement or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase* (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service(s) to be delivered.

Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling – includes counseling regarding:

- Administration and review of vocational interest inventories
- Labor market information
- In-demand industries and occupations
- Non-traditional employment options
- Identification of career pathways of interest

Services may include:

1. Career awareness activities consisting of career development planning to increase knowledge of career paths, job opportunities, and the skills and qualifications necessary to be successful in these positions.
2. Connection to career speakers who can provide an overview of a specific job or career areas through sessions that are typically informative, motivational, and provide recommendations for additional career exploration activities.

3. Referral to other comparable benefit resources such as Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) that are typically based in high schools and career technology centers. These organizations enhance student learning through contextual instruction, leadership, personal development, applied learning, and real-world application. Examples may include:

- Business Professionals of America
- Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
- Future Business Leaders of America - Phi Beta Lambda
- HOSA - Future Health Professionals
- National FFA Organization
- SkillsUSA
- Technology Student Association

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling services are made available for MRS customers who are students with a disability and qualify for Pre-ETS in alignment with *RSM-12000 Pre-ETS Outreach and Referral* and *RSM-12025 Pre-ETS Establishment of Need and Development of Service Agreement*.

Pre-ETS are delivered when identified as needed services in a Pre-ETS Service Agreement or an IPE.

Vendor Preferences

MRS counselors seek services from accredited rehabilitation organizations, educational facilities and practitioners with knowledge and experience in providing Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling services. MRS does not require specific licensure, accreditation, or certification to deliver services.

Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling Services When Provided In Full Through Comparable Benefit, by MRS Staff or in Combination of Both

MRS counselor documents *Aware – Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider and/or by MRS staff in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

MRS Authorization for Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling Services

To initiate authorized services MRS counselors:

- Verify services are in alignment with parameters indicated in the Pre-ETS Service Agreement or IPE.
- Complete a *General Referral Form* (MRS -1).
- Complete an individual authorization for services.

At the time of referral, the MRS counselor confirms with the vendor if the service will be delivered in an individual or group format and authorizes accordingly. The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

Note for MRS Managers: Use of an *Aware Group* authorization is prohibited for Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling.

Service Planning

Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling is limited to initial exploration activities as identified in the Pre-ETS Service Agreement or IPE.

If there is a need for employment services, a student with a disability may be referred to the MRS Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

A customer, who continues to qualify for Pre-ETS, may continue to receive Pre-ETS in the VR program if further exploration activities are warranted.

Amendment of Authorizations in Alignment with Final Billing

During the course of service delivery, a customer that was referred at the group rate may be served individually if other customers do not show or complete the service. If this occurs, the vendor may submit a final invoice indicating the number of hours/units delivered in either an individual or group setting.

Example: MRS authorization was for 20 hr/units at the group rate. Final invoice provided by the vendor indicates the customer was served for 15 hours in a group and 5 hours individually.

MRS counselors are permitted to amend an authorization to reflect the final invoice provided by the vendor. This is in exception to *RSM 9000 – Authorization for Services* and will not constitute a retroactive authorization.

Non-Use of Wages for Students

Authorization for Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling is prohibited from including customer paid training wages or additional administrative expenses above the established hourly rate.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.5, 34-CFR 361.48, 34-CFR 361.50

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Self-Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) provides Pre-ETS Self-Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring services for students with a disability who qualify for Pre-ETS and when identified in a Pre-ETS Service Agreement or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor detailing requested services to be delivered.

Pre-ETS Self-Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring – Consists of services structured to assist a student in effectively communicating, conveying, negotiating, and asserting personal interests and/or desires. Services may include self-advocacy training associated with:

- Self-awareness including understanding how to request and accept help
- Understanding and disclosure of disability
- Evaluating options, setting goals, problem solving, and decision making
- Monitoring progress toward goals
- Identifying, requesting, and utilizing accommodations
- Understanding personal rights and responsibilities
- Self-determination, motivation, and assertiveness

Pre-ETS Self-Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring may include use of peer mentoring services designed to facilitate self-esteem and identify realistic career and academic goals. Peer mentors are individuals who have experience within a common area of interest

or career field along with additional training in how to assist others in acquiring skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be more successful.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

Pre-ETS Self-Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring services are made available for MRS customers who are students with a disability and qualify for Pre-ETS in alignment with *RSM-12000 Pre-ETS Outreach and Referral* and *RSM-12025 Pre-ETS Establishment of Need and Development of Service Agreement*.

Pre-ETS are delivered when identified as needed services in a Pre-ETS Service Agreement or an IPE.

Vendor Preferences

MRS counselors seek services from accredited rehabilitation organizations, educational facilities, and practitioners with knowledge and experience in providing Pre-ETS Self-Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring services. MRS does not require specific licensure, accreditation, or certification to deliver services.

Pre-ETS Self-Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring Services When Provided In Full Through Comparable Benefit, by MRS Staff or in Combination of Both

MRS counselor documents *Aware – Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Pre-ETS Self-Advocacy including Peer Mentoring* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider and/or by MRS staff in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

MRS Authorization for Pre-ETS Self-Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring Services

To initiate authorized services MRS counselors:

- Verify services are in alignment with parameters indicated in the Pre-ETS Service Agreement or IPE.
- Complete a *General Referral Form* (MRS -1).

- Complete an individual authorization for services.

At the time of referral, the MRS counselor confirms with the vendor if the service will be delivered in an individual or group format and authorizes accordingly. The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

Note for MRS Managers: Use of an *Aware Group* authorization is prohibited for Pre-ETS Self-Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring.

Service Planning

Pre-ETS Self-Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring services are limited to initial exploration activities as identified in the Pre-ETS Service Agreement or IPE.

If there is a need for employment services, a student with a disability may be referred to the MRS Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

A customer, who continues to qualify for Pre-ETS, may continue to receive Pre-ETS in the VR program if further exploration activities are warranted.

Amendment of Authorizations in Alignment with Final Billing

During the course of service delivery, a customer that was referred at the group rate may be served individually if other customers do not show or complete the service. If this occurs, the vendor may submit a final invoice indicating the number of hours/units delivered in either an individual or group setting.

Example: MRS authorization was for 20 hr/units at the group rate. Final invoice provided by the vendor indicates the customer was served for 15 hours in a group and 5 hours individually.

MRS counselors are permitted to amend an authorization to reflect the final invoice provided by the vendor. This is in exception to

RSM 9000 – Authorization for Services and will not constitute a retroactive authorization.

Non-Use of Wages for Students

Authorization for Pre-ETS Self Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring is prohibited from including customer paid training wages or additional administrative expenses above the established hourly rate.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.5, 34-CFR 361.48, 34-CFR 361.50

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Work-Based Learning Experience.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) provides Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experiences for students with a disability who qualify for Pre-ETS when identified in a Pre-ETS Service Agreement or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experience – includes services that use the workplace or real work to provide students with the knowledge and skills that help connect school experiences to work activities and future career opportunities. Services may include gaining experiences through:

- Job shadowing consisting of working with an employee who can educate the student on the demands of the position through having the student attend work with the employee and 'shadow' the employee to learn about the position, organization, and expected behaviors.
- Career mentorship opportunities including linking the student with an employee who can provide guidance and advice regarding the field of employment.
- Career-related competitions consisting of work-based learning activities that require students to demonstrate mastery of career-related skills through presentations or competitions that are judged by professionals (typically associated with Career Technical Student Organization sponsors or educational institutions).

- Informational interviews with employers/employees that facilitate an informal conversation with someone working in a career area/job that interests the student.
- Volunteering opportunities that facilitate learning about a vocational area of interest.
- Workplace tours and field trips consisting of group excursions for the purpose of first-hand observation of specific work sites to learn about the business, meet employees, ask questions, and observe work in progress.
- Work experiences consisting of structured paid or unpaid temporary positions that provide an opportunity to develop specific job-related skills.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experiences are made available for MRS customers who are students with a disability and qualify for Pre-ETS in alignment with *RSM-12000 Pre-ETS Outreach and Referral* and *RSM-12025 Pre-ETS Establishment of Need and Development of Service Agreement*.

Pre-ETS are delivered when identified as needed services in a Pre-ETS Service Agreement or an IPE.

Vendor Preferences

MRS counselors seek services from accredited rehabilitation organizations, educational facilities, and practitioners with knowledge and experience in providing Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experiences. MRS does not require specific licensure, accreditation, or certification to deliver services.

Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experiences Provided in Full Through Comparable Benefit, by MRS Staff or in Combination of Both

MRS counselor documents *Aware – Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Pre-ETS Work-Place Learning Experience*

when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider and/or by MRS staff in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

MRS Authorization for Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experience

If the service is structured as a paid or unpaid temporary position the Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experience Agreement (MRS-6123a) is used to establish the program fee and wages to complete the service.

- MRS counselors authorize for paid or unpaid work experiences using *Aware Pre-ETS Category Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experience, Sub-Category: Paid/Unpaid Work Experience Fee*.

All other forms of Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experience's, excluding paid or unpaid temporary positions, use the *General Referral Form* (MRS -1) to define the parameters of the requested service. MRS counselor confirms with the vendor if the service will be delivered in an individual or group format and authorize accordingly. The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

- MRS counselors authorize for programming other than a paid or unpaid work experiences using *Aware Pre-ETS Category Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experience, Sub-Category: Individual Rate or Group Rate*.

Note for MRS Managers: Use of an *Aware Group* authorization is prohibited for Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experience.

Service Planning

Pre-ETS Work Based Learning Experience is limited to initial exploration activities as identified in the Pre-ETS Service Agreement or IPE.

If there is a need for employment services, a student with a disability may be referred to the MRS Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

A customer, who continues to qualify for Pre-ETS, may continue to receive Pre-ETS in the VR program if further exploration activities are warranted.

Amendment of Authorizations in Alignment with Final Billing

During the course of service delivery, a customer that was referred at the group rate may be served individually if other customers do not show or complete the service. If this occurs, the vendor may submit a final invoice indicating the number of hours/units delivered in either an individual or group setting.

Example: MRS authorization was for 20 hr/units at the group rate. Final invoice provided by the vendor indicates the customer was served for 15 hours in a group and 5 hours individually.

MRS counselors are permitted to amend an authorization to reflect the final invoice provided by the vendor. This is in exception to *RSM 9000 – Authorization for Services* and will not constitute a retroactive authorization.

Use of Wages for Students

Authorization for Pre-ETS Work Based Learning Experiences may include wages for the customer during the work-based learning experience. Wages are outlined in the Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning Experience Agreement (MRS-6123a).

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.5, 34-CFR 361.48, 34-CFR 361.50

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Workplace Readiness Training.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) provides Pre-ETS Workplace Readiness Training for students with a disability who qualify for Pre-ETS and when identified in a Pre-ETS Service Agreement or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Pre-ETS Workplace Readiness Training – Includes services structured to develop skills and behaviors that are necessary for any job. Work readiness skills are sometimes called soft skills, employability skills, or job readiness skills. Work readiness skills help employees to interact with supervisors and co-workers, reinforce the importance of timeliness, and build an understanding of how we are perceived by others.

Services will generally focus on developing:

- Interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, cooperation, conflict resolution, appropriate behavior, and professionalism
- Independent living skills such as time management, hygiene, money management, nutrition and meal preparation, transportation needs, appropriate dress, developing friendships, and community participation
- Other skills related to workplace readiness such as timeliness, understanding employer expectations, and financial literacy

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

Pre-ETS Workplace Readiness Training is made available for MRS customers who are students with a disability and qualify for Pre-ETS in alignment with *RSM-12000 Pre-ETS Outreach and Referral* and *RSM-12025 Pre-ETS Establishment of Need and Development of Service Agreement*.

Pre-ETS are delivered when identified as needed services in a Pre-ETS Service Agreement or an IPE.

Vendor Preferences

MRS counselors seek services from accredited rehabilitation organizations, educational facilities, and practitioners with knowledge and experience in providing Pre-ETS Workplace Readiness Training. MRS does not require specific licensure, accreditation, or certification to deliver services.

Pre-ETS Workplace Readiness Training Provided In-Full Through Comparable Benefit, by MRS Staff or in Combination of Both

MRS counselor documents *Aware – Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Pre-ETS Workplace Readiness Training* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider and/or by MRS staff in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

MRS Authorization for Pre-ETS Workplace Readiness Training

To initiate authorized services MRS counselors:

- Verify services are in alignment with parameters indicated in the Pre-ETS Service Agreement or IPE.
- Complete a *General Referral Form* (MRS -1).
- Complete an individual authorization for services.

At the time of referral, the MRS counselor confirms with the vendor if the service will be delivered in an individual or group format and authorizes accordingly. The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

Note for MRS Managers: Use of an *Aware Group* authorization is prohibited for Pre-ETS Workplace Readiness Training.

Service Planning

Pre-ETS Workplace Readiness Training is limited to initial exploration activities as identified in the Pre-ETS Service Agreement or IPE.

If there is a need for employment services, a student with a disability may be referred to the MRS Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

A customer, who continues to qualify for Pre-ETS, may continue to receive Pre-ETS in the VR program if further exploration activities are warranted.

Amendment of Authorizations in Alignment with Final Billing

During the course of service delivery, a customer that was referred at the group rate may be served individually if other customers do not show or complete the service. If this occurs, the vendor may submit a final invoice indicating the number of hours/units delivered in either an individual or group setting.

Example: MRS authorization was for 20 hr/units at the group rate. Final invoice provided by the vendor indicates the customer was served for 15 hours in a group and 5 hours individually.

MRS counselors are permitted to amend an authorization to reflect the final invoice provided by the vendor. This is in exception to *RSM 9000 – Authorization for Services* and will not constitute a retroactive authorization.

Non-Use of Wages for Students

Authorization for Pre-ETS Workplace Readiness Training is prohibited from including customer paid training wages or additional administrative expenses above the established hourly rate.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.5, 34-CFR 361.48, 34-CFR 361.50

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for authorizing physical and mental restoration services.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) coordinates service delivery through a comparable service or benefit, internal agency resources, or arrange for the service through authorization to vendor.

POLICY

Physical and mental restoration services are provided when identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to assist the individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, advancing, or retaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Restoration services are only provided if they are likely to correct or substantially modify, within a reasonable period of time, a stable or slowly progressive physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to competitive integrated employment and necessary to achieve the IPE employment outcome.

MRS prohibits authorization of the following services:

- unproven treatments/procedures
- experimental treatments/procedures
- any treatment/procedure that does not substantially affect the individual's employment outcome

Duration of Services

MRS does not provide long-term or ongoing treatment. Restoration services are authorized in up to ninety (90) day increments or less for each treatment. Extensions will only be granted after MRS manager review.

**Comparable
Benefits/Services**

Physical and mental restoration services are only provided to the extent that financial support is not available from health insurance or comparable services and benefits. MRS counselors explore comparable benefits in alignment with *Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) 5100 – Comparable Services and Benefits*.

MRS may pay the individual's financial responsibility when health insurance is applied such as, but not limited to, co-payments, coinsurance, and/or deductibles. MRS is not responsible for costs above or beyond the benefit's contracted allowed amount if health insurance is applied.

If comparable benefits or services have not been identified, counselors will proceed with service delivery and will assist with identifying arrangements or benefits for long-term medical care, if applicable, while restoration services are in progress and refer the individual.

**Vendor
Qualifications**

Services to diagnose and treat physical and mental restoration must be provided by qualified personnel in accordance with applicable state licensure, registration, or certification requirements.

Appropriate vendors for mental restoration services consist of, but are not limited to, rehabilitation facilities, a psychiatrist, psychologist, neuropsychologist, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN), Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), or a licensed professional counselor skilled in the treatment of mental illness or cognitive disabilities.

Appropriate vendors for physical restoration services, consist of, but are not limited to, hospitals, surgical centers, pharmacies, Durable Medical Equipment (DME) provider, APRN, Physician Assistant (PA), physician, or a licensed medical provider who has knowledge and expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of the specific condition (i.e., otolaryngologist (ear, nose, and throat), podiatrist, oral surgeon, dentist, ophthalmologist, or optometrist).

Note: ARPN is the only nursing level qualified to prescribe and administer prescription medication.

Home health services must be provided by a certified home health agency.

Traditional healers/practitioners such as Native American healers, Ayurvedic practitioners, or traditional Chinese medicine practitioners may be used for services as an adjunct to, not in lieu of, treatment for substance abuse, mental illness, chronic pain, and chronic physical illness.

Complementary, Alternative or Integrative Health

MRS manager approval is required prior to the use of complementary, alternative, or integrative health services.

MRS counselor will determine the appropriateness of supporting a therapy/procedure based on assessment of potential for improving impeditive to employment and/or having a history of failed traditional therapy or procedures. Complementary, alternative, or integrative health services are used as an adjunct to, not in lieu of, recommended medical treatment.

Treatment of Emergent Complications

If an emergent medical complication (either acute or chronic) occurs in result of the provision of authorized restoration services, MRS will assume responsibility and authorize for services needed for the recovery of the individual and the achievement of their employment outcome. Services for the emergent medical condition will continue only until resolved.

Hearing Aids

Restoration services for hearing aids can be found in *Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) 6141 Restoration – Hearing Aid*.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Complementary, Alternative, or Integrative Health Services

Types of services include but not limited to acupuncture, energy medicine, reflexology, hypnotherapy, reiki, chiropractic, or osteopathic manipulation.

Dental

Dentistry treatments consist of but not limited to restoring the function, integrity, and morphology of tooth structure when there is existence of serious maxillofacial problems and/or disease of the gums that may cause or aggravate specific health problems. Treatment of cosmetic problems severe enough to prevent an individual from obtaining a job, or an acute dental condition that interferes with employment and/or the provision of other vocational services.

Experimental Treatment

Described as treatment for which efficacy has not yet been proven and is still under research with experimental protocols through a university or medical institution.

Hospitalization

Necessary hospitalization (either inpatient or outpatient care) in connection with surgery or treatment of impairment.

Medical Care/Treatment

Non-surgical procedures including but not limited to medical or specialist appointments, in-office procedures, podiatry, infusions, diagnostic imaging, gastrointestinal treatment, diabetes treatment, immunology, rheumatology, nephrology, optometry, ophthalmology, pathology (blood draws), and pulmonology.

Medical Surgery

Surgery or surgical procedures necessary to correct or substantially modify a stable or slowly progressive impairment that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment. Includes but not limited to cochlear implantation, bariatric surgery, orthopedic surgery, hernia repairs, colorectal surgery, etc.

Mental Health Services

Services that include but not limited to psychotherapy, counseling, brain stimulation therapy, electroconvulsive therapy, medication management, etc.

Nursing or Home Health Services

Nursing services or convalescent care necessary to recover from an IPE supported treatment or surgery. Home health services consist of skilled nursing services and home health aide services.

Prescribed Therapy

Physician prescribed therapy services such as but not limited to:

- *Speech Therapy (ST)* Speech–language pathology is a healthcare and academic discipline concerning the evaluation, treatment, and prevention of communication disorders
- *Occupational Therapy (OT)* use of assessment and intervention to develop, recover, or maintain the meaningful activities, or occupations, of individuals, groups, or communities.
- *Physical Therapy (PT)* also known as physiotherapy, promotes, maintains, or restores health through patient education, physical intervention, disease prevention, and health promotion.
- *Recreational Therapy (RT)* systematic process that utilizes recreation and other activities as interventions to address the assessed needs of individuals with illnesses and/or disabling conditions, as a means to psychological and physical health, recovery and well-being.

- *Massage Therapy (MT)* when provided by a physical therapist or part of a physical therapy treatment plan.
- *Cardiac Rehab* is a supervised program designed to improve health in those with heart disease. It's often recommended after a heart attack or heart surgery.

Prescribed Drugs and Supplies

Medications or medical supplies that are prescribed by a qualified vendor/practitioner including but not limited to medic eyeglasses, contact lenses, microscopic lenses, telescopic lenses, visual aids, canes, continuous passive motion machines, medical devices & accessories, Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machines, crutches, medical traction equipment, wheelchairs (purchase and repair), powered-operated vehicles (scooters), oxygen equipment & accessories, blood sugar meter, etc.

Prosthetic/Orthotic Devices - Purchase

Purchase of a *Prosthetic* - a device designed to replace a missing part of the body or to make a part of the body work better, or *Orthotic Device* - an externally applied device used to influence the structural and functional characteristics of the neuromuscular and skeletal systems (shoe inserts, ankle brace, etc).

Prosthetic/Orthotic Devices – Repair

Repair of a *Prosthetic* - a device designed to replace a missing part of the body or to make a part of the body work better, or *Orthotic device* - an externally applied device used to influence the structural and functional characteristics of the neuromuscular and skeletal systems (shoe inserts, ankle brace, etc).

Special Medical Services

Treatment of individuals with end-stage renal disease, including transplantation, dialysis, and artificial kidneys.

Substance Abuse Services

In-patient and outpatient treatments for individuals who have been determined eligible for MRS services based on a substance use

disorder as defined in the DSM-5. Treatments include but not limited to detoxification, cognitive and behavioral therapies, and medication-assisted therapies.

Unproven Treatment

Treatment that has never been tested or has been tested and shown to be fallacious or ineffective.

Wheelchairs or Powered Mobility Equipment (Including Evaluation)

Wheelchairs are manually operated, or power-driven devices designed primarily for use by an individual with a mobility disability for the main purpose of locomotion. *Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs)* are other mobility devices that are not wheelchairs, powered by batteries, fuel or other engines, and are designed to operate in areas without defined pedestrian routes.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

Physical and Mental Restoration services may be delivered when identified in an IPE in *Aware Service* or *Employed* case statuses.

Vendor Verification

MRS is responsible for ensuring that vendors are properly certified or licensed. MRS staff verifies proper certification or licensure through [Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs \(LARA\)](#). Once verification is complete, it is documented in an *Administrative Note* within *Aware*.

Required Documentation

MRS counselor obtains a treatment plan typically from the vendor providing the service, or medical services coordinator, detailing total estimated cost the physical or mental restoration service(s). Itemized details must include (as applicable):

- Procedure(s)

- Vendor(s) (ie: doctors/specialists, pharmacies, hospitals, medical facilities, etc)
- Duration of treatment
- Details of the recovery needs including prescriptions, medical supplies, follow up needs, etc
- Itemized costs including the total estimated cost adjusted based on the individual's insurance coverage/plan, insurance allowable rates and individual's responsibility (copays, co-insurance, deductibles)
- Availability of any additional comparable benefits that might be accessible including hospital charity programs, indigent assistance programs, medication coupons, pro bono services, out-of-pocket/uninsured forgiveness arranged by the vendor, etc
- Prognosis of treatment

After review of the treatment plan received, MRS counselors document rationale for restoration services in an *Aware Administrative Note(s)* containing the following:

- How the service is predicted to result in a correction or substantial modification towards stabilization of impairment that impacts the vocational rehabilitation process.
- Indicate condition is medically stable or slowly progressive.
- Confirmation that selected treatment represents the least cost option that meets the vocational need of the individual.

MRS counselor may determine need for additional assessments to evaluate potential impact of the physical or mental restoration service prior to support.

Fiscal Process and Rate of Payment

MRS counselor obtains a competitive bid or price quotation, if necessitated by total estimated cost of the physical or mental health service in alignment with *RSM 9300 – Competitive Bids and Price Quotations*.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual in adherence with *RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment* for all Physical and Mental Restoration Services.

Services can be obtained from in-state or out-of-state provider. If both providers meet the individual's rehabilitation need and the individual chooses an out of state provider at a higher cost, MRS is not responsible for cost exceeding in-state providers. Individuals reserves the right to pay the difference in cost beyond least cost that meets the need of the individual. Individuals also reserve the right to pay the difference in cost for a more expensive level of service that is beyond the least cost that meets the vocational need of the individual in alignment with *RSM-5125 Financial Participation*.

Authorization Process

Multiple Authorizations

Some procedures or treatments may involve multiple vendors. Authorizations must be created for each vendor involved.

Authorizing for Emergent Complications

In the case where an individual has an emergent medical complication that occurs in result of the provision of restoration services, the MRS counselor immediately notifies their manager. The vendor is consulted and provides the additional documentation regarding the emergent treatment.

In the event the restoration service exceeds the MRS authorized amount, or an emergent procedure is performed with no time to authorize prior to performing the service, MRS counselors are permitted to amend an authorization or create a new authorization to reflect the final invoice provided by the vendor in alignment with *ADM0504 – Retro Authorizations*.

If complications or an emergency interfere with the individual achieving an employment outcome, the counselor reevaluates the individual's eligibility. If no longer eligible, the counselor will

continue treating the complications until treatment is complete then proceeds with case closure in alignment with *RSM 7000 - Case Record Closure*.

Duration of Service Extension

MRS counselor consults with management if services extend beyond a ninety (90) day duration. MRS manager documents rational within an Aware administrative note and approves extension of services for an additional ninety (90) days. Manager will review each extension occurrence.

Complementary, Alternative or Integrative Health

Manager approval is required to authorize for any complementary, alternative or integrative health services. Manager reviews the treatment plan, concludes that services are appropriate in achieving the employment outcome, and documents the approval in an *Aware Administrative Note*.

MRS counselors use *Aware category Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Complementary, Alternative or Integrative Health* when authorizing for complementary, alternative or integrative health services.

Dental Treatment

MRS counselors use *Aware category Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Dental Treatment* when authorizing for dental services.

Hospitalization

MRS counselors use *Aware category Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Hospitalization* when authorizing for hospitalization services.

Medical Care/Treatment

MRS counselors use *Aware category Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Medical Care/Treatment* when authorizing for medical care or treatment services.

Medical Surgery

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Medical Surgery* when authorizing for medical surgery.

Mental Health Services

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Mental Health Services* when authorizing for mental health services.

Nursing or Home Health Services

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Nursing or Home Health Services* when authorizing for nursing or home health services.

Prescribed Therapy

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Prescribed Therapy* when authorizing for therapy prescribed by a medical professional.

Prescribed Drugs and Supplies

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Prescribed Drugs and Supplies* when authorizing for drugs and supplies prescribed by a medical professional.

Prosthetic/Orthotic Devices - Purchase

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Prosthetic/Orthotic Devices - Purchase* when authorizing for prosthetic/orthotic devices prescribed by a medical professional.

Prosthetic/Orthotic Devices - Repair

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Prosthetic/Orthotic Devices -*

Repair when authorizing for prosthetic/orthotic devices prescribed by a medical professional.

Special Medical Services

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Special Medical Services* when authorizing for special medical services.

Substance Abuse Treatment

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Substance Abuse Treatment* when authorizing for substance abuse treatment.

Wheelchairs or Powered Mobility Equipment (Including Evaluation)

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* with subcategory *Wheelchair or Powered Mobility Equip. (Inc Eval)* when authorizing for wheelchairs or powered mobility equipment.

RESOURCES

6140a JA – Physical and Mental Restoration

REFERENCES

[34 CFR 361.5\(c\)\(39\), 34 CFR 361.48\(b\)\(5\)](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for authorizing for hearing aids as part of physical and mental restoration.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) coordinates service delivery through a comparable service or benefit, internal agency resources, or arrange for the service through authorization to vendor.

POLICY

Hearing aid(s) and hearing aid accessories services are authorized when identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to assist the individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, advancing, or retaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

DEFINITION

Hearing Aid

There are two classes of wearable sound-amplifying devices designed to compensate impaired hearing. There are five overall classifications:

- *Hearing aid* - These includes air-conduction (class I) and bone-conduction (class II) hearing aids.
- *Wireless air-conduction hearing aid* - This class I device type is a hearing aid that incorporates wireless technology in its programming or use (i.e., Bluetooth).
- *Tympanic membrane contact hearing aid* - This device type is prescription device that compensates for impaired hearing. Amplified sound is transmitted by vibrating the tympanic membrane through a transducer that is in direct contact with the tympanic membrane.

- *Self-fitting air-conduction hearing aids* - This device type is a class II hearing aid that incorporates technology, including software, that allows users to program their hearing aids. This technology integrates user input with a self-fitting strategy and enables users to independently derive and customize their hearing aid fittings and settings.
- *Transcutaneous air conduction hearing aid system* - This device type consists of an air-conduction hearing aid attached to a surgically fitted tube system, which is placed through soft tissue between the post auricular region and the outer ear canal. These devices are class II.

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Hearing Aid

Class I hearing aid devices designated for individuals with mild to moderate hearing loss that may be sold by a non-licensed seller. The device is not typically fitted by an audiologist.

Prescription Hearing Aid

Hearing aid device for individuals with any degree of hearing loss that are required to be purchased from a licensed seller.

Hearing Aid Accessories

Means accessories that are not included in the cost of the hearing aid but that are necessary to the recipient's use of the hearing aid.

Personal Sound Amplification Products (PSAP)

Wearable electronic products that are intended to amplify sounds for people without hearing loss. PSAPs are not regulated as medical devices by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and not considered a hearing aid.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

Hearing aid services may be delivered when identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) in *Aware Service* or *Employed* case statuses.

Vendor Verification

MRS is responsible for ensuring that vendors are properly certified or licensed. MRS staff verifies proper certification or licensure through [Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs \(LARA\)](#). Once verification is complete, it is documented in an administrative note within *Aware*.

MRS counselors obtain a current diagnosis of hearing loss and hearing aid recommendations from either a licensed audiologist or otolaryngologist (Ears, Nose, and Throat (ENT) physician).

Note: An audiology technician, hearing aid technician, or other qualified technician with certification to perform audiometric testing, may be used to conduct an evaluation of hearing loss. However, diagnosis and recommendations for hearing aids is required to be reviewed and approved by a licensed audiologist or otolaryngologist (Ears, Nose, and Throat (ENT) physician).

Eligibility for Hearing Aid and Hearing Aid Accessories

Individuals are required to be determined eligible for services based on a diagnosis of hearing loss in alignment the *Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) 3100 – Eligibility Criteria*.

If a hearing or other assessment is needed to determine eligibility, MRS counselors authorize for services in alignment with *RSM 6005 – Assessment – Diagnosis of Disability Services*.

A current diagnosis and recommendations for hearing aid and hearing aid accessories are required to be completed within six (6)

months of authorization for a hearing aid regardless of previous hearing aid use.

Vocational Need for Hearing Aid and Hearing Aid Accessories

MRS counselors, in alignment with *RSM 3275 - Vocational Needs Assessment*, document the vocational need for hearing aids and hearing aid accessories necessary to participate in VR services or to obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain employment.

MRS counselors determine vocational need through assessments including but not limited to:

- Communication Assessment – Identification of communication challenges and concerns that need to be addressed and resolved including both employment settings and participation in rehabilitation services. Communication assessments are best conducted prior to a hearing aid evaluation to identify issues or questions that may need to be address.
- General Medical Examination – A general appraisal of the consumer's overall health status to determine if there are secondary issues that may interfere with general functioning, or which may be affecting the hearing itself. This may identify the need for a Otologic Examination.
- Job Site Assessment – may be performed to obtain recommendations for needed modifications in furniture arrangement, lighting, workstation location, job restructuring, hearing assistive technologies (HAT), co-worker education regarding communication behaviors and use of technology, etc. Since each job site is unique, they are independently assessed based on individual needs and preferences.
- Specialty Examinations – If a secondary disability is indicated, it is important that it be explored by a professional skilled in that discipline to fully evaluate overall functioning.

The MRS Business Network Division (BND) may be contacted to assist with evaluation of vocational need including but not limited to employment evaluations and evaluation of accommodation needs.

Comparable Benefits and Financial Participation

MRS staff are required to obtain the total cost of recommended hearing aids and hearing aid accessories.

MRS staff document use of comparable benefits and services including individual medical insurance, if available (*RSM - 5100 Comparable Benefits*).

MRS staff document use of individual's financial participation in alignment with *RSM - 5125 Financial Participation*.

Note: The individual reserves the right to pay the difference in cost for a more expensive level of hearing aids that are beyond the least cost hearing aid that meets the vocational need of the individual in alignment with *RSM-5125 Financial Participation*.

Selection of Prescription versus OTC Hearing Aids

The individual may obtain a recommendation for both a prescribed or OTC purchased hearing aid based on the level of hearing loss and vocational need.

MRS counselors consult with the individual and physician that made the hearing aid recommendations to determine if a mild or moderate hearing impairment exists and if an OTC hearing aid will meet the vocational need of the individual.

Development of the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)

MRS counselor selects the *Aware Service* category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* within the *Aware Planned Services* page to detail the need and estimated cost of hearing aids and hearing aid accessories in alignment with *RSM 5050 – Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)*.

Authorization for Hearing Aid Evaluations, Hearing Aids, and Hearing Aid Accessories

MRS staff follow *RSM 9300 - Competitive Bids and Price Quotations* to obtain three competitive price quotations for services that are \$3000 and above. The hearing evaluation may be used to seek other hearing aid models and prices that will meet the vocational need of the individual.

MRS support for the following are prohibited:

- Warranty or maintenance programs beyond a provided manufacturer warranty
- Maintenance costs of the hearing aids
- Hearing aids that are classified as unproven/experimental treatment
- PSAPs for hearing loss

MRS staff use *Aware* service category *Physical and Mental Restoration Service* subcategory *Hearing Aid Device/Accessories (Including Eval)* to authorize for hearing aid and hearing aid accessories in alignment with *RSM 9000 – Authorization for Services*.

REFERENCES

[34 CFR 361.48, 361.5](#)

[Title 21 of the CFR Parts 800, 801, 808, and 874](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for authorizing rehabilitation technology services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) may authorize rehabilitation technology services to enhance an individual's ability to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment by addressing disability related barriers. This involves providing customized technological solutions to support the individual's participation in an assessment or Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services outlined in their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to support achievement of an employment outcome.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Rehabilitation Technology Accommodation

Means the systematic application of technologies, engineering methodologies, or scientific principles to meet the needs of, and address the barriers confronted by, individuals with disabilities in areas that include education, rehabilitation, employment, transportation, independent living, and recreation. The term includes rehabilitation engineering, assistive technology devices, and assistive technology services. Examples of rehabilitation technology accommodations include but not limited to the following:

- speech devices (i.e., speech to text),
- telecommunication devices (i.e., TTY),
- assistive software (i.e., Dragon naturally speaking),

PROCEDURES

- adaptive hardware (i.e., ergonomic keyboard)

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors may provide rehabilitation technology services in all *Aware* case statuses when necessary to support participation in an assessment or a VR service to support achievement of an employment outcome.

When delivered in *Aware Service* or *Employed* case status, rehabilitation technology must be identified in the IPE.

Use of Comparable Services/Benefits

MRS counselors are required to explore readily available comparable benefit/services prior to use of MRS funds (*RSM 5100 – Comparable Services and Benefits*).

MRS counselors complete an *Aware Administrative Note* to document exploration of comparable services/benefits to include sources pursued and outcome.

Delivery of a Comparable Service or Benefit by an External Agency

MRS counselor must document *Aware Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Rehabilitation Technology* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

Documentation Prior to Service Delivery for Rehabilitation Technology Accommodations

MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* regarding the provision and specifications of rehabilitation technology accommodations to initiate the authorization process.

MRS counselors utilize existing data as applicable to identify the individual's VR needs. When necessary, MRS counselors explore

assessment services in alignment with *RSM 6010 Assessment – Vocational Evaluation Services* to identify the appropriate rehabilitation technology accommodation.

MRS counselor explore training needs related to the rehabilitation technology accommodation. MRS counselors authorize for training in alignment with *RSM 6030 – Disability Related Training and Support Services* upon acquiring the rehabilitation technology accommodation as necessary.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors seek services from an approved MRS vendor to provide rehabilitation technology. If there is a question regarding use of a vendor, MRS counselors consult with MRS manager.

Authorizing for Rehabilitation Technology

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Rehabilitation Technology* subcategory *Rehab Tech – Accommodation* when authorizing for assistive equipment, software, or other assistive technology devices to support an individual's participation in an assessment or a VR service.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

REFERENCES

[34 CFR 361.48\(b\)\(17\)](#), [361.5\(c\)\(45\)](#), [361.48\(b\)](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for authorization of expenses associated with registered apprenticeship training programs.

POLICY

MRS supports training in a registered apprenticeship program when identified as a necessary towards achievement of an employment objective identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

DEFINITIONS

Authorization

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Apprenticeship

An educational model that combines classroom instruction with paid wages at a competitive integrated employment site. There are six core components to an apprenticeship:

- Direct employer involvement
- Structured
- Supervised employment training
- Related Technical Instruction (RTI) or classroom learning
- Progressive wages for skill attainment
- A national occupational credential

Registered Apprenticeship

A registered apprenticeship program is regulated and overseen by either the United States Department of Labor's (USDOL) Office of Apprenticeship (OA), or a USDOL-recognized State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA). In Michigan, registered apprenticeships are administered through the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO).

Cost of Attendance

The estimated total amount it will cost to complete a training program. This includes tuition, books, room and board, supplies, materials, tools, and fees necessary to participate in training.

Apprenticeship Training Expenses

Costs associated with apprenticeship training specific to the employment portion of training. This may include customer owned equipment, tools, and clothing necessary for employment.

Apprenticeship training expenses exclude the cost of the classroom/educational component including vocational training center, college, or university settings.

PROCEDURES***Aware Case Status Requirements***

MRS counselors support registered apprenticeship training in *Aware Service* or *Employed* status when identified as a need in the Vocational Needs Assessment (VNA) and outlined in the *Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) 5050 - Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)*.

Exploration of Registered Apprenticeships

As a component of the *RSM 3275 – Vocational Needs Assessment*, MRS counselors complete *Aware* Administrative Notes documenting assistance in exploration of potential apprenticeship opportunities if in alignment with vocational interest and aptitude.

Additional information on apprenticeship programs is available through:

- Both [Federal](#) and [Michigan](#) apprenticeship sites.
- The Michigan [Mi Apprenticeship](#) website
- Apprenticeship search engines available through both [Pure Michigan Talent Connect Apprenticeship Jobs](#) and the [USDOL Search Apprenticeships Near You](#)

- [Michigan Works Apprenticeship Success Coordinators](#) available at each Michigan Works location.

Registered apprenticeships frequently have an educational component that may include post-secondary education through a vocational training center, college, or university. Exploration is to include determining educational needs and ability to complete post-secondary education.

MRS counselors may inquire with MRS Business Network Division regarding exploration and availability of apprenticeship opportunities in alignment with *RSM – 8075 MRS Business Network Division (BND)*.

MRS counselors may inquire with MRS Michigan Career and Technical Institute regarding potential training opportunities that can prepare a customer for entry into an apprenticeship program in alignment with *RSM 8050 - Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI)*.

IPE Planning

The IPE will need to address multiple services if entry into an apprenticeship program is identified as a component to an overall employment goal. Specific services may include:

1. Job Placement Assistance

This service description indicates efforts that will take place to secure employment in a registered apprenticeship program. This may include one or more of the following activities:

- MRS counselor working with the customer to identify and apply for employment in apprenticeship programs through sponsoring employers.
- Referral to the Business Network Division (BND) to assist in locating and applying for apprenticeship opportunities in alignment with *RSM 8075 - Business Network Division (BND)*.
- Incorporation of vendor delivered Job Placement Assistance services to facilitate locating and applying for

employment with employers that offer apprenticeship training.

Reference *RSM 6080 – Job Coaching Services* for procedures for this service.

2. Training - Apprenticeship

The service description is required to indicate the projected training period for the apprenticeship program including period of class-based training and required number of hours of employment in the role of an apprentice.

Apprenticeship training expenses are typically covered by the employer or through federal sponsorship. MRS may be requested to support some expenses on a case-by-case basis. The extent of MRS support in the cost of apprenticeship training expenses is required to be identified in the IPE or IPE amendment prior to service provision.

3. Training College – College and Vocational

Post-secondary college or vocational/technical training may be a required component of the identified apprenticeship program.

Reference *RSM 6625 Training – College and Vocational* for procedures for this service.

Note: An IPE amendment may be required to add in the post-secondary educational component of the apprenticeship training if not forecasted at the time of IPE development. Apprenticeships may only be supported if the MRS customer demonstrates the aptitude and ability to complete the both the apprenticeship training and educational component of the identified apprenticeship program.

Entry into a Registered Apprenticeship

Upon application and acceptance into an apprenticeship program the MRS customer, program sponsor and employer complete a DOL apprenticeship agreement. A copy of the apprenticeship agreement is required to be provided to MRS.

The apprenticeship agreement is used to assist the MRS counselor to document:

- Duration of apprenticeship training and expected date of completion.
- Duration and source of the classroom component of training and expected date of completion.
- Determination of unmet apprenticeship expenses that are not covered by the sponsoring employer
- Determination of any necessary accommodations or assistance that might be offered by MRS to assist with entry into employment and completion of the apprenticeship training.

MRS Authorization for Services

Aware category *Training – Apprenticeship* is selected when authorizing for apprenticeship training expenses.

Aware category *Training – Voc/Tech (Licensure)* is selected when authorizing for licensure or certification fees.

Note: Support for a post-secondary educational component of the apprenticeship is completed in alignment with *RSM 6625 Training – College and Vocational*.

Establishment of Employment

Upon the start of employment in the apprenticeship program, the MRS customer may be placed in *Aware Employed* status.

When a MRS customer completes the required hours of employment as an apprentice, the post-secondary educational component of training, obtains a nationally recognized credential from the DOL, and retains employment with the sponsoring employer, the case may be processed for successful closure. MRS counselor documents attainment of credential attainment in alignment with *RSM 3400 Measurable Skills Gains and Credential Attainment*.

Upon the completion of apprenticeship training the employment position may be updated by the employer to reflect achievement of

a journeyman or trained status. The MRS employment page is required to be updated to account for changes including job title and pay. Updating the position title and pay when remaining with the same employment does not require restarting a new employment follow along requirement of 90 days.

If the customer must seek employment with a new employer after receiving a nationally recognized credential from the DOL, Aware employment status is required to be reestablished when new employment is obtained. The customer is then followed for a minimum period of 90-days to evaluate and assure stability of employment.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.5, 34-CFR 361.50, 34-CFR 361.52, 34-CFR 361.53, 34-CFR 361.54

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for the authorization of training wages when identified in an On-The-Job Training (OJT) agreement.

POLICY

MRS develops an On-The-Job Training (OJT) agreement when it is necessary to facilitate the customer's stability employment in a Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) position.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Employer of Record (EOR)

A third-party organization that takes responsibility for wages and associated expenses on behalf of another company.

Job Coaching

Services consisting of structured intervention to assist a customer when learning to perform job tasks to the employer's specification and/or to learn necessary interpersonal skills for the position. Services include on-site assistance with disability related accommodations, identification of natural supports and ensuring achievement of stability of employment.

On-The-Job-Training (OJT) Agreement

Written agreement between a customer, employer, rehabilitation service provider, and MRS to provide supplemental training wages to an employer when it is determined that there is a need for greater assistance or time to learn required job skills above and beyond what is typically provided by the employer when starting a new employee. The OJT agreement may include authorizing for a

job coach to assist in providing training to a new employee in a CIE setting.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors are permitted to develop and enter into an OJT agreement in *Aware Service* or *Employed* status. OJT agreements are required to be identified as necessary and outlined in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Note: OJT agreements are required to be individualized in nature and are not permitted to be structured as a group service.

Note: Employers are required to have hired the MRS customer prior to the start of the OJT agreement.

Parameters of OJT Agreements

The OJT agreement serves to identify specific parameters of service delivery and responsible parties. This includes:

1. **Parameters for the OJT Date** -The agreement establishes the period of time that training wages will be provided.
2. **Measurable Outcomes of the OJT** – The agreement is to specify learning objectives, how they will be evaluated, and what will indicate successful attainment of the skills necessary to perform the designated position.
3. **Who Will Provide Training** – The agreement is to specify who will be responsible for training. Training may be provided by the employer or include use of job coaching services to assist with disability related accommodation and learning needs of the customer in alignment with *RSM 6080 – Job Coaching Services*.
4. **Hiring or Retention of Employment** – The agreement specifies that the employer agrees to hire the customer at the start of the OJT and retain the customer in employment if all measurable outcomes are achieved.

5. Training Wages – The agreement establishes that MRS will provide training wages in one of the following two methods.

Method 1:

When the employer agrees to hire the customer and become a vendor, the following method is used to structure training wages:

- Training wages are negotiated with the employer on a case-by-case basis not to exceed the hourly wage of the position.
- Training period may not exceed 240 hours.
- Authorization for agreed to wages for the duration of the training period are issued to the employer.

Method 2:

When the employer agrees to hire the customer and does not want to become a vendor, an Employer of Record (EOR) is used. The following method is used to structure training wages:

- Training wages are negotiated with the employer on a case-by-case basis not to exceed the hourly wage of the position.
- EOR expenses are negotiated with the EOR.
- Training period may not exceed 240 hours.
- Authorization for agreed to wages and EOR expenses for the duration of the training period are issued to the designated EOR.

MRS manager approval is required if it is determined and agreed to by all parties that there is a need to lengthen the period of an OJT. A new OJT agreement is required to account for additional time.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS customer training is typically facilitated by the employer. The OJT agreement serves to compensate the employer for additional time to facilitate the customers meeting the employers' expectations for the position.

An EOR is required to be a vendor who has the capacity to provide wages meeting the need of the OJT.

MRS Completion of OJT Agreement and Authorization for Training Wages

MRS counselor completes form *MRS 6206a On-The-Job Training Agreement*, to arrange the OJT with the employer and EOR, if necessary.

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Training – On-the-Job-Training* to authorize for training wages based on the OJT agreement.

MRS Authorization for Associated Job Coaching Services

The MRS counselor may authorize for use of a job coach to facilitate disability related accommodations and learning needs of the customer in alignment with *RSM 6080 - Job Coaching*.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.48 34-CFR 361.5

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for the authorization of adult training in secondary education including literacy and remedial training.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) authorizes training services in adult secondary education including high school and General Education Diploma (GED) completion, literacy, and remedial education services when necessary to achieve Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE).

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Training – Adult Secondary Education (Adult Literacy or Remedial Training) Training provided to remediate basic academic skills that are needed to function in a CIE position. The following adult literacy, remedial training, and high school diploma/equivalency programs are available:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE) - Instruction for reading, language, writing and math skills below the 9th grade level for adults with or without a high school credential.
- Adult Secondary Education (ASE) - Instruction for reading, language, writing, and math skills above the 8th grade level for adults with or without a high school credential.
- English as a Second Language (ESL) - Instruction in reading, speaking, writing, and understanding the English language.
- Family Literacy - Activities with specific child and parent components that help family members to better support their children's learning needs and improve the family's economic prospects.
- Integrated Education and Training (IET) - Academic instruction, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training

delivered together for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

- Integrated English Language and Civics Education (IELCE) - This program helps individuals learn or improve English language skills and civics education in combination with integrated education and training.
- Workplace Literacy - Adult education services provided at or customized for a specific workplace.
- High School Completion (HSC)- Instruction in language arts, math, social studies, science, and writing, to earn an adult high school diploma.
- High School Equivalency (HSE) - Instruction in language arts, math, social studies, science, and writing, to enable successful completion of a high school equivalency test, such as the GED.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors can authorize *Training – Adult Sec Ed (Adult Literacy or Remedial Training)* or *Training – Adult Sec Ed (GED/High School Diploma)* services when identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) in *Aware* Service and/or Employed status.

Exploration of Comparable Services and Benefits

MRS counselors explore availability of comparable services and benefits in alignment with the Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) 5100 - *Comparable Benefits and Services* and RSM 3275 – *Vocational Needs Assessment*.

There are multiple comparable services and benefits associated with adult secondary education including but not limited to:

- Michigan Works One-Stop Service System as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Michigan’s Talent Investment Agency free program administered by [Graduation Alliance](#) for Michigan residents age 23 and older
- Community colleges

- Local community grant programs as approved through the [Michigan Department of Education](#)

MRS counselors are encouraged to access the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity [Adult Education Service Locator](#) to identify Adult Education programs and high school equivalency testing centers located throughout Michigan.

Vendor Qualifications

Vocational schools are required to be licensed with the Department of Education.

Michigan law and the Department of Education require that all educators complete an approved preparation program (e.g., math education, elementary education, English education) to become a certified teacher in Michigan.

MRS Authorization for Training in Adult Secondary Education Services

MRS counselors are not permitted to authorize adult secondary, remedial and literacy training unless documented that local resources are unavailable or unable to meet the educational needs of the customer.

MRS counselors use the Aware category *Training – Adult Sec Ed Adult Literacy* or *Training – Adult Sec Ed Remedial Training* to authorize training in the following (but not limited to) secondary, remedial or literacy programs:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- Adult Secondary Education (ASE)
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Family Literacy
- Integrated Education and Training (IET)
- Integrated English Language and Civics Education (IELCE)
- Workplace Literacy

MRS counselors use the Aware category *Training – Adult Sec Ed (GED/High School Diploma)* to authorize training in the following GED/high school programs.

- High School Completion (HSC)
- High School Equivalency (HSE)

MRS counselor utilizes MRS General Referral Form (MRS-1) for referral of services and include an authorization for services.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.23, 34-CFR 361.24, 34-CFR 361.37.

ADULT EDUCATION Act 18 of 1946 (1st Ex. Sess.)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for training in Job Readiness and Soft Skills Development.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) provides training in Job Readiness and Soft Skills Development when identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), to support achievement of an employment goal.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization – *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Training in Job Readiness and Soft Skills Development – Training structured to address characteristics and behaviors that are critical in presenting to an employer one's ability to perform and meet employment expectations. Classroom activities include guidance and development of personality traits, personal habits, and behaviors appropriate and necessary in the workplace.

Elements of job readiness and soft skills development training may include the use of technology in the job search and employment, completing applications, development of a resume, and improving interviewing skills.

Job readiness and soft skills development training may also focus on the development of communication skills to foster teamwork, problem solving skills, decision making skills, conflict resolution, professionalism, and other communication traits necessary to be successful in the workplace.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

Training in Job Readiness and Soft Skills Development is delivered when identified as a needed service in an IPE in *Aware Service* or *Employed* case statuses.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors seek services from accredited rehabilitation organizations, educational facilities and practitioners with knowledge and experience in the area of job readiness and soft-skill development. MRS does not require specific licensure, accreditation, or certification to deliver the service.

Training in Job Readiness/Soft Skills Development Provided In-Full Through Comparable Benefit, by MRS Staff or in Combination of Both

MRS counselors document *Aware – Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Training – Job Readiness/Soft Skills Development* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider and/or by MRS staff in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

MRS Authorization for Training in Job Readiness/Soft Skills Development

MRS counselors complete the *General Referral Form (MRS -1)* and authorization based on IPE identified parameters for training in job readiness and soft skills development.

At the time of referral, the MRS counselor confirms with the vendor if the service will be delivered in an individual or group (two or more customers) format and authorizes accordingly.

MRS staff references the *MRS Fee Schedule* for current service rates.

Note: Use of an Aware group authorization is prohibited for Job Readiness/Soft Skills Development.

Amendment of Authorizations in Alignment with Final Billing

During the course of service delivery, a customer that was referred at the group rate may be served individually if other customers do not show or complete the service. If this occurs, the vendor may submit a final invoice indicating the number of hours/units delivered in either individual or group setting.

Example: MRS authorization was for 20 hr/units at the group rate. Final invoice provided by the vendor indicates the customer was served for 15 hours in a group and 5 hours individually.

MRS counselors are permitted to amend an authorization to reflect the final invoice provided by the vendor. This is an exception to *RSM 9000 – Authorization for Services* and will not constitute a retroactive authorization.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.48, 34-CFR 361.50, 2-CFR 200.1, 2-CFR 200.400
2-CFR 200.403, 2-CFR 200.404, 2-CFR 200.405

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for use of Trial Work Experience (TWE) services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) authorizes for TWE services when identified in a Trial Work Experience plan.

TWE services are structured to address if there are questions that emerge as a result of the severity of an applicant/customer's disability and if there is a question regarding potential ability to benefit from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to the extent that those services can lead to a Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) outcome.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Trial Work Experience Plan - A written document that outlines services that will be delivered to assess concerns regarding a customer's ability to benefit from services leading to a CIE outcome.

Trial Work Experience Services - Evaluation services structured to assess areas of concern that bring to question a customer's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in a CIE setting. That are structured in community-based CIE settings to the maximum extent possible. Evaluation activities include analysis of ability to participate in supported employment or customized employment settings.

May be structured as a situational assessment if the evaluation includes wages for the customer.

May be structured as a Community Based Assessment (CBA) if the evaluation does not include wages for the customer.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors are limited to use of TWE services in a Trial Work Experience Plan as outlined in *RSM 3175 - Trial Work Experience Plan*.

Rehabilitation Service Manual (RSM) Considerations

MRS counselors adhere to RSM policies that include but not limited to:

- *RSM 2100 - Confidentiality and Release of Information*, towards referral for vocational evaluation services.
- *RSM 2225 - Informed Choice*, towards selection of vendors.
- *RSM 3175 - Trial Work Experience Plan*, for structuring TWE plan.
- *RSM Section 9*, for guidance on authorization/billing of services.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors utilize vendors who can arrange and provide evaluation services in community-based CIE settings to the maximum extent possible.

MRS does not require a specific license or credential to provide a trial work experience. Vendors are selected based on experience in working with individuals with disabilities who have relationships with employers to facilitate evaluation opportunities.

If there is a question regarding use of a vendor for TWE service, or parameter of a vendor service, MRS counselors consult with MRS manager.

MRS Authorization for Trial Work Experience (TWE)

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Trial Work Experience* to authorize for TWE services provided in community-based CIE settings.

MRS counselors complete form *MRS 6255a Trial Work Experience*, to arrange for TWE services.

MRS staff references the *MRS Fee Schedule* for current service rates. Authorizations may include a total of 5 hours/units provided to the vendor to structure each TWE service.

The employer may require wages for the period that the customer is performing the same job duties as other employees. This is determined on a case-by-case basis. Authorizations are issued using the *Aware* category *Maintenance in Support of Any Service*.

MRS Authorization for Job Coaching During Evaluation

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Assessment-Vocational Evaluation* sub-category *Job Coaching During Evaluation* when job coaching is determined necessary to conduct a TWE.

Job coaching during a TWE is rare. The vendor will typically provide a vocational evaluator to conduct the TWE. If, based on disability or barrier to employment considerations, there is a need for additional assistance in the form of job coaching hours to support a customer, MRS counselor authorizes accordingly.

MRS staff references the *MRS Fee Schedule* for current service rates.

MRS Authorization for Workshop/Work Sample Evaluation

TWE services are structured in community-based CIE settings to the maximum extent possible.

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Assessment-Vocational Evaluation* sub-category *Workshop/Work Sample Evaluation* when authorizing for a workshop/work sample evaluation.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer (*RSM 9025 - Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*). Vendors are required to incorporate all expenses including wages into the proposed fee for the service.

REFERENCES

CFR 34 361.42, 361.45, 361.48, 361.5

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for authorizing home modification services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) may authorize for home modification services to enable an individual to engage in a vocational rehabilitation service or to assist an individual in overcoming a disability-related barrier to employment. These modifications can involve structural changes or other adjustments that may require installation but may not result in permanent alterations to the home's structure.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Home Modification

Refers to changes or adaptations to a residential space aimed at enhancing its functionality, accessibility, and safety of individuals with disabilities. These modifications can be physical, such as installing ramps, widening doorways, or adding grab bars. The primary objective is to address specific needs and maximize independence, thereby supporting the achievement of the individual's employment outcome.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors may be authorize home modifications in *Aware Service* or *Employed* case status. When delivered in *Aware Service*

or *Employed* case status, home modifications must be identified in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Use of Comparable Services/Benefits

MRS counselors are required to explore readily available comparable benefit/services prior to use of MRS funds (*RSM 5100 – Comparable Services and Benefits*).

MRS counselors must complete an *Aware Administrative Note* to document exploration of comparable services/benefits to include sources pursued and outcome.

Delivery of a Comparable Service or Benefit by an External Agency

MRS counselor must document *Aware Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Home Modification* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

Documentation Prior to Service Delivery for Home Modifications

Home modifications may be authorized or arranged for an individual's primary residence to enable the individual to engage in vocational rehabilitation services and /or to assist an individual in overcoming a disability-related barrier to employment. When considering home modifications, a comprehensive assessment of vocational, mobility, endurance, and other related issues will contribute to functional, cost-effective planning.

Example: A change from a manual to an electric wheelchair may necessitate wider door openings and more room for turning space.

An evaluation and prescription, or written recommendation, must be obtained by a licensed professional knowledgeable to complete such assessment (i.e., rehabilitation engineer) in alignment with *RSM 6010 – Assessment – Vocational Evaluation Services* before authorizing for home modifications.

Home modifications are provided after receiving documented management approval through an *Aware Administrative Note*, and this approval must be obtained before the completion of the IPE. MRS counselor documents the following in an *Aware Administrative Note* prior to authorizing for home modification services –

- Receipt and review of the assessment report with the vendor and the individual including verification of the individual's understanding of the modifications to be made.
- Selection of the vendor to conduct the modifications including receipt of a statement that the vendor will be responsible for assuring conformity to all applicable building codes, permits, and/or zoning ordinances.
- Verification of appropriate and valid licensure for the selected vendor to conduct the modification.
- Identification of the functional limitation(s) that present an impediment to employment.
- Confirmation that the modification to the primary living residence will remove or reduce the disability impediments to employment and substantially contribute to the employment outcome and there is no other less costly and reasonable way to remove the impediments.
- Verification of home ownership by the individual or their family is required for making structural changes.

A conformance check must be completed and documented in an *Aware Administrative Note* by MRS counselor –

The conformance check includes:

- MRS counselor review of the written report/ statement from the vendor summarizing the completed modification(s) in comparison to the prescription and the evaluator's report to assure modification has been accurately completed.

- MRS counselor addressing any inaccuracies with the vendor for correction. Payment for modifications is not processed until the conformance check and any corrections have been completed.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors seek services from approved MRS vendors authorized to complete home modifications such as but not limited to a residential builder, residential maintenance and alteration contractor, or similar licensure.

Competitive Bids and Price Quotations for Home Modifications

MRS counselor obtain three competitive bids or price quotations when required in alignment with *RSM 9300 – Competitive Bids and Price Quotations*.

Authorizing for Home Modifications

MRS counselors use the *Aware* category *Home Modifications* when identified in an IPE to enable the individual to engage in vocational rehabilitation services and /or to assist an individual in overcoming a disability-related barrier to employment.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

REFERENCES

[CFR 361.48](#), [MCL - Section 339.2404b](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for authorization for Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance (VRC&G) services.

POLICY

MRS rehabilitation counselors provide VRC&G services for customers of MRS in all applicable programs. The MRS Executive Director, may issue a Policy Directive (PD) if it is determined that MRS does not have the capacity to provide vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance services for all customers.

DEFINITION

Authorization - Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance - a systematic process that assists persons with physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, and emotional disabilities to achieve their personal, career, and independent living goals in the most integrated setting possible through the application of a counseling process.

Counseling involves communication, goal setting, and beneficial growth or change through self-advocacy, psychological, vocational, social, and behavioral interventions.

PROCEDURES***Vendor Qualifications to Provide Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance Services***

Vendors who deliver VRC&G services are required to retain current State of Michigan licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).

Aware Case Status Requirements

Upon MRS executive director issuance of a PD indicating a need for authorized VRC&G services, authorizations may be issued to

work with customers who are in the *Aware Eligibility and Service* case statuses.

Authorized providers of VRC&G are limited to the role of counseling services. MRS counselors are responsible for approving Individualized Plans for Employment, authorizations for services and *Aware* case status changes.

Identification of District/Office Need for Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance Services

The MRS division directors, along with the district manager are responsible analyzing the need for authorized VRC&G at the individual district/office level. The district/office need for VRC&G will be based on staffing and caseload needs based on parameters that will be identified in the PD.

MRS Manager Authorization for Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance Services

MRS manager, based on MRS division director approval, use *Aware* category *Vocational Counseling and Guidance Services* and the *Aware* sub-category *Counseling and Guidance* to authorize for services.

MRS Manager completes an *MRS General Referral (MRS-1)* form to arrange for services.

The *MRS Fee Schedule* is referenced for current service rates.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.5

34-CFR 361.46

34-CFR 361.48

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for authorization for peer guidance and mentoring services.

POLICY

MRS rehabilitation counselors arrange for peer guidance and mentoring services when not available to be provided by MRS staff or a comparable service or benefit.

DEFINITION

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Peer Guidance and Mentoring - Peer guidance represents the process of individuals who have similar disabilities and experiences offering emotional support, shared knowledge, skills, experiences and practical assistance to customers seeking support and guidance. The relationship may include connection with resources, opportunities and providing a community of support.

A mentoring relationship is similar to peer guidance with the exception that mentoring relationships are primarily one-way helping relationships.

PROCEDURES**Identification of Need for Peer Guidance and Mentoring Services**

MRS counselors, during initial *Aware Application Eligibility* status, and as a part of the Vocational Needs Assessment (VNA), assess peer guidance and mentoring services that may benefit the MRS customer. *Aware Actual Service* entries are the primary source for documentation of need for services.

Prior to vendor authorized services, MRS counselors' access comparable services and benefits in alignment with *RSM 5100 – Comparable Services and Benefits*.

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors may authorize for peer guidance and mentoring services when identified as necessary in *Aware Service* case statuses and when outlined in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Vendor Qualifications to Provide Peer Guidance and Mentoring Services

MRS counselors seek services from accredited rehabilitation organizations, practitioners with training in peer support and knowledge and experience in delivering or facilitating peer guidance and mentoring services. However, MRS does not require specific licensure, accreditation, or certification to deliver or facilitate peer guidance and mentoring services.

MRS counselors consult with MRS manager if there is a question regarding use of a vendor.

MRS Authorization for Peer Guidance and Mentoring Services

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Vocational Counseling and Guidance Services* and the *Aware* sub-category *Peer Guidance – Mentoring* to authorize for services.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the customer (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

MRS counselor completes an *MRS General Referral (MRS-1)* form to arrange for services.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.5 34-CFR 361.46, 34-CFR 361.48

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations this policy provides guidance for delivery of post-employment services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) ensures stability of employment through delivery of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) post-employment services.

DEFINITION***Post-Employment Services***

Means services provided after the achievement of an employment outcome and prior to VR case record closure that are determined necessary to achieve stability of employment. Services are limited in scope/duration and focused on maintaining, regaining, or advancement of employment, consistent with the customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Stability of Employment

Means no further vocational rehabilitation services are required to ensure continuation of employment.

PROCEDURES***IPE Post-Employment Services***

MRS counselors include post-employment services in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) necessary to achieve stability of employment in alignment with Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) 5050 - *Individualized Plan for Employment*.

Examples of when post-employment services may include but are not limited to:

- Job coaching and/or training services to facilitate meeting employer expectations, learning position requirements or if employment is jeopardized because of conflicts with supervisors or co-workers

- Counseling and referral services for mental health or other services to assist in maintaining employment
- Assistive technology services required to maintain employment
- Placement services to potentially retain, regain or advance in employment

Achievement of Employment

Upon customer entry into *Aware Employment* status, MRS counselor confirms:

- Employment meets the expectations of the customer
- Employment is in alignment with the IPE employment goal
- IPE identified post-employment services are adequate to ensure achievement of stability of the employment

If IPE services are adequate to ensure achievement of stability of employment, MRS counselor proceeds with service delivery.

If IPE services are determined insufficient to achieve stability of employment, the MRS counselor assesses the need for an IPE amendment in alignment with *RSM 5050 – Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)*.

VR Stability of Employment

MRS counselor delivers approved IPE services necessary to achieve or maintain stability of employment.

Upon confirmation of employment for no less than 90 consecutive days and that stability of employment has been achieved, MRS counselor proceeds with case record closure in adherence with RSM 7000 – Vocational Rehabilitation Case Record Closure.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.5, 361.48 361.50, 361.56

Independent Living Services Services

Policy:

Independent living services may be provided when necessary to achieve a vocational rehabilitation goal.

Information:

Independent living services include, for example:

- Case assessment;
- Home evaluation/consultation;
- Transportation;
- Interpreter services for the deaf;
- Language interpreter services/translation;
- Independent living skills instructions (individual or group);
- Peer consultation;
- Personal care attendance screening and referral;
- Personal care attendant service; and
- Structure/site modification.

Centers for Independent Living are one source of providing these services.

A listing of web sites for Michigan's Center for Independent Living facilities is available on the Disability Resources link at the Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) public web site at www.michigan.gov/mrs

PURPOSE

In accordance with State and Federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for authorizing interpreter services to enable individuals to actively participate in the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) process.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) must provide interpreter services for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing as well as for individuals with limited English proficiency and require language interpreter services to participate in the VR process.

Interpreter services facilitate effective communication for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, ensuring the individuals needs are met in accordance with the [Deaf Persons' Interpreters Act](#).

Language interpreters are provided for individuals with limited English proficiency to enable individuals to participate in the VR process and communicate in their native language.

DEFINITION

Authorization

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Language Interpreter

Is an interpreter that converts speech from a source language into a target language.

Limited English Proficiency

Means the inability to understand or to effectively express oneself in spoken or written English as a result of one's national origin and the individual has not developed fluency in the English language such as ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

Qualified Interpreter

A person who is certified through the national registry of interpreters for the deaf or certified through the state by the division.

- *Qualified oral interpreter* – means a qualified interpreter who is able to convey information through facial and lip movement.
- *Qualified sign language interpreter* – means a qualified interpreter who uses sign language to convey information.
- *Tactile interpreter* – is a form of interpreting where the interpreter places their hands on the individual's hands or another part of their body to convey the spoken message through a series of touch cues.

Reader Services

Means services for individuals with limitations in reading print because of a visual impairment which include but not limited to reading aloud, transcription of printed information into braille, or sound recordings.

Qualified reader means a person who is able to read effectively, accurately, and impartially using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

Reader services may include but not limited to the following –

- Qualified readers to read aloud from hardcopy material or computer screens for an individual who cannot read due to visual impairments. While a reader does not interpret the information, but may need specialized knowledge, for example to pronounce technical words correctly so the individual with the visual impairment can understand the information.
- Screen Reader software that reads digital text aloud, helping users navigate websites and documents such as JAWS.

- Screen magnification software to enlarge written text.

Waiver

Means to give up the right to have a qualified interpreter.

- A “limited waiver” means to agree to accept an under-qualified interpreter for a particular proceeding.

PROCEDURES***Aware Case Status Requirements***

MRS counselors may authorize for interpreter services in all *Aware* case statuses when necessary to support participation in an assessment or a VR service outlined in the IPE.

When delivered in *Aware Service* or *Employed* case status, interpreter services must be identified in the IPE.

Use of Comparable Services/Benefits

MRS counselors are required to explore readily available comparable benefit/services prior to use of MRS funds (*RSM 5100 – Comparable Services and Benefits*).

MRS counselors completes an *Aware Administrative Note* to document exploration of comparable services/benefits to include sources pursued and outcome.

Delivery of a Comparable Service or Benefit by an External Agency

MRS counselor documents *Aware Actual Service* entries under the appropriate category of *Interpreter Services* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

Interpreter Services

Fiscal Process and Rate of Payment

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual (RSM 9025 – *Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

Planning for Interpreter Services

MRS counselors may arrange or authorize interpreter services when necessary for an applicant or eligible individual to participate in the VR process. MRS counselors discuss with the individual their right to have a qualified interpreter present at all meetings throughout the VR process and determine the individual's preferred mode of communication. MRS staff who possess sign language skills does not qualify as providing qualified interpreter services.

MRS counselors make reasonable and timely efforts to secure a qualified interpreter when needed. When arranging for interpreter services, the referral source must be provided details about the assignment, including the nature of the assignment, date, timeframe, address, and the communication mode preferred by the individual (i.e., sign language, oral, tactile). Assignments of two hours or more require more than one interpreter.

MRS counselors must document an *Aware Administrative Note* detailing efforts to secure a qualified interpreter, including the steps taken, the outcome, and any reasons for their inability to secure a qualified interpreter. MRS counselor must obtain a [Limited Waiver](#) if the individual is offered an underqualified interpreter, or nonqualified interpreter or an alternative accommodation, and the individual agrees to this variance. This waiver must be retained in the individual's file.

The right of a deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing individual to a qualified interpreter must not be waived except by a request for waiver in writing by the deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing person. If

the individual waives their right to a qualified interpreter after being offered an interpreter by MRS, a [Full Waiver](#) is completed. This may include the individual's choice of a relative, friend, or associate to provide interpreter services. This waiver must be retained in the individual's file.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselor identifies a qualified interpreter from the [Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing directory](#) ("For Interpreters" section, [Michigan Online Interpreter System](#)).

For MRS purposes, a Standard Level 2 is the minimum credential required, [Michigan Standard Levels](#). An additional endorsement is required for legal, medical and mental health settings.

MRS Authorization for Interpreter Services

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Interpreter/Reader Services* subcategory *Interpreter- Sign Language* to enable an individual to participate in the VR process.

Language Interpreters

Planning for Language Interpreter Services

MRS counselors may arrange or authorize language interpreter services when necessary for an applicant or eligible individual with limited English proficiency to participate in the VR process.

MRS counselors make reasonable and timely efforts to secure a language interpreter when needed. When arranging for language interpreter services, the referral source must be provided details about the assignment, including the nature of the assignment, date, time, address, and the communication mode preferred (i.e., dialect if known).

MRS counselors must document an *Aware Administrative Note* detailing efforts to secure a language interpreter with demonstrated competency in the appropriate language including the steps taken, the outcome, and any reasons for their inability to secure an appropriate language interpreter. Oral language services provided by a relative or a friend do not meet the requirements of the [Meaningful Language Access to State Services Act](#). However, the individual with limited English proficiency may choose to use an interpreter of the individual's choice. MRS counselors document this choice in an *Aware Administrative Note*.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors seek an MRS approved vendor with demonstrated competency in the appropriate language. The [Translation Resource List](#) may be used to identify a language interpreter.

MRS Authorization for Language Interpreter Services

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Interpreter/Reader Services* subcategory *Interpreter-All Other* to enable an individual to participate in the VR process.

Reader Services

Planning for Reader Services

MRS counselors may arrange or authorize reader services when necessary to enable an applicant or eligible individual to participate in the VR process.

MRS counselors utilize existing data as applicable to identify the individual's vocational rehabilitation needs. When necessary, MRS counselors explore assessment services in alignment with *RSM 6010 Assessment – Vocational Evaluation Services* to identify the appropriate reader services. MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* detailing the reader services to be authorized. MRS counselors explore training needs related to reader services

in alignment with *RSM 6030 – Disability Related Training and Support Services*.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors seek services from vendors knowledgeable and experienced in providing qualified reader services. MRS counselor secure assistive reader services from MRS approved vendors.

MRS Authorization for Reader Services

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Interpreter/Reader Services* subcategory *Reader Services* to enable an individual to participate in the VR process.

REFERENCES

[34 CFR 361.54\(b\)\(3\)\(i\)\(G\), R 393.5003 \(qq\), R 393.502 \(f\)\(g\)\(h\), CFR 35.104, R 393.5058 \(1\), R 37.21\(b\), R 393.5058 \(1\), Act 241 of 2023](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for authorization of maintenance services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) may arrange or authorize maintenance services only for additional costs, over and above normal living expenses, which individuals incur because of their participation in an assessment or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) services.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Maintenance

Means monetary support provided to an individual for expenses, such as food, shelter, and clothing, that are in excess of the normal expenses of the individual and that are necessitated by the individual's participation in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or the individual's receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under an IPE.

The following examples serve as illustrations and do not cover all potential situations and not intended to substitute for individual counselor judgment:

- The cost of a uniform or other suitable clothing that is required for job placement or job seeking activities.
- The cost of short-term shelter (i.e., hotel or lodging) required to participate in assessment activities or vocational training at a site that is not within commuting distance of an individual's home.

- The amount reimbursed to state employees for traveling on MRS business, as published in the Standardized Travel Regulations or its annual update, is used as the basis for determining maximum maintenance amounts for the authorization. The meal and lodging rates are identified in the [Schedule of Travel Rates](#). A per diem rate is used, if computed on a whole-day basis.

Exception: A policy exception may be granted upon request if the travel standard rate does not meet the individual's vocational rehabilitation needs. MRS counselor must email the [policy mailbox](#) with a detailed explanation. Upon approval, MRS counselor must place the policy exception in the individual's case file.

- The initial one-time costs, such as a security deposit or charges for the initiation of utilities, that are required in order for an individual to relocate for a job placement.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors may provide maintenance in all *Aware* case statuses when necessary to support participation in an assessment or Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) service outlined in the IPE.

When delivered in *Aware* Service or Employed case statuses, maintenance must be identified in the IPE for service-delivery.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors seek services from an approved MRS vendor to provide maintenance. If there is a question regarding use of a vendor, MRS counselors consult with MRS manager.

Use of Comparable Benefit/Services

MRS counselors are required to explore readily available comparable benefit/services prior to use of MRS funds (*RSM 5100 – Comparable Benefits and Services*).

MRS counselors completes an *Aware Administrative Note* to document exploration of comparable services/benefits to include sources pursued and outcome.

Delivery of a Comparable Service or Benefit by an External Agency

MRS counselors document *Aware Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Maintenance* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

Documentation Prior to Service Delivery

MRS counselors may provide maintenance only for expenses that the individual incurs as a result of their participation in receiving vocational rehabilitation services. MRS counselors may utilize *6350a-JA Maintenance* to assist in decision-making for providing Maintenance services. MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* regarding the provision of maintenance to initiate the authorization process.

Considerations Prior to Authorizing Maintenance

Maintenance excludes standard living expenses for individuals living in their residence such as food, mortgage/rent, utilities, etc.

Counselors must ensure that the provision of maintenance services does not jeopardize assistance the individual receive from other sources, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or other income-based benefits.

MRS Authorization for Maintenance

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Maintenance in Support of Any Service* when authorizing services required due to individual's participation in an assessment to establish eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or during the implementation of VR services under an IPE.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

RESOURCES

6350a – JA: Maintenance Process Map

REFERENCES

[CFR 361.5](#), [CFR 361.48](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for authorizing other goods and services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) may arrange or authorize other goods and services in support of an individual preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in, or regaining an employment outcome. The *Other Goods and Services* category is designated specifically for vocational rehabilitation services not covered elsewhere, such as funding for occupational licenses, tools, and equipment.

DEFINITIONS***Authorization***

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

**Other Goods and
Services*****Employment Identification***

Relates to documentation an employer requires to verify an individual's identity and authorization to work such as an ID card issued by a state, federal or local government.

Equipment/Tools

Are defined as tangible assets. Equipment/tools encompass devices utilized in professional environments to support learning and skill enhancement such as equipment required on the job (i.e., a toolbox, mechanical devices, etc.).

Initiation Fees

Refer to any costs or fees associated with beginning employment or training. These fees might include expenses such as background check fees or other initial expenses required as part of the onboarding process to which the employee is responsible for the cost.

Legal Fees

Encompass the expenses related to legal services aimed at overcoming barriers to employment.

Occupational Licensure

Refers to any license, permit, or official documentation mandated by a state, city, or governmental body, permitting individuals to engage in a particular occupation.

Other Goods and Services Not Elsewhere Classified (NEC)

Refers to services that are not elsewhere classified and are required to achieve an employment outcome.

PROCEDURES***Use of Comparable Service/Benefit***

MRS counselors are required to explore readily available comparable benefit/services prior to use of MRS funds (*RSM 5100 – Comparable Services and Benefits*).

MRS counselors completes an *Aware Administrative Note* to document exploration of comparable services/benefits to include sources pursued and outcome.

Delivery of a Comparable Service or Benefit by an External Agency

MRS counselors document *Aware – Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Other Goods and Services* when delivered

through a comparable service/benefit provider in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors seek services from approved MRS vendors authorized to provide other goods and services as applicable for the service being authorized such as certified testing center (i.e., Prometric, Pearson Vue, or other state/nationally approved testing vendor) when authorizing for occupational licensure.

If there is a question regarding use of a vendor, MRS counselors consult with the MRS Site Manager.

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors may authorize for other goods and services in *Service* or *Employed* case statuses when necessary to achieve an IPE employment outcome.

Fiscal Process and Rate of Payment

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

Equipment/Tools

Documentation for Service Delivery of Equipment/Tools

MRS may arrange or authorize for equipment or tools when necessary for employment. MRS counselors document an *Aware Actual Service* note regarding the provision and specifications of equipment/ tools to initiate the authorization process. Prior to authorizing for equipment and tools, the MRS counselor confirms with the employer or other job placement assistance provider, such as a vendor or other MRS staff (i.e., BND) the necessity of the equipment/tools. MRS counselor assess whether it is the responsibility of the employer to supply the requested equipment or tools.

The responsibility for the provision of equipment or tools rests with the employer if routinely provided to other employees. Equipment/tools procured by MRS must meet the specifications of the employer.

Example: Equipment/tools include, but are not limited to hardware/software, machinery, welding equipment, medical instruments, etc.

Additional Factors to Consider for Equipment/Tools

If an individual reports lost, broken, or stolen tools and equipment, MRS counselor will assess the circumstances surrounding the lost, broken, or stolen item(s) before proceeding with authorizing for a replacement. Each situation will be evaluated individually, and manager approval is required prior to replacement of the item(s).

MRS counselor document an *Aware Actual Service* entry detailing the rationale for the replacement and strategies agreed upon by the individual to prevent recurrence. MRS manager documents approval of the replacement through an *Aware Administrative Note*.

Most services and goods are covered by a manufacturer's warranty. Therefore, MRS will not support warranty or maintenance programs beyond a provided manufacturer warranty.

MRS Authorization for Other Goods and Services/ Equipment and Tools

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Other Goods and Services* subcategory *Tools/Equip for Employ* when authorizing for necessary equipment or tool to achieve an employment outcome as indicated in the IPE.

**Occupational
Licensure**

Documentation for Service Delivery of Occupational Licensure

MRS may arrange or authorize for occupational licensure fees when necessary to achieve the employment outcome as identified

in the IPE. MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* verifying the individual possesses the appropriate qualifications for the license/certification that supports the IPE goal including any state required supplemental training and costs.

MRS counselors may utilize the below resources to verify industry recognized certifications/ licensure and cost:

- [Michigan's Occupational Licensing Requirements – Mackinac Center](#)
- [Professional Licensing](#)
- [Certification Finder | CareerOneStop](#)
- [License Renewal Fees](#)

MRS Authorization for Other Goods and Services/ Occupational License

MRS counselors use Aware category *Other Goods and Services* subcategory *Occupational License* when authorizing for examination or recertification fees associated with occupational licensure.

Initiation Fees

Documentation for Service Delivery of Initiation Fees

Union Dues

MRS may authorize for initial union dues when necessary for employment prior to the individual's first paycheck and the absence of such support would pose a barrier to employment. MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* verifying that the individual is part of a bargaining unit that requires employees to share the financial responsibility of the labor organization as well as associated cost. The individual will be responsible for continued expenses associated with the bargaining unit, usually deducted from the individual's weekly or bi-weekly pay.

Occupational Liability Insurance

MRS may arrange or authorize occupational liability insurance prior to the start of employment and if the expense of such insurance is required to achieve an employment outcome identified in the IPE. MRS counselor document an *Aware Administrative Note* detailing the exploration of the nature of the individual's work, industry regulations, or contractual obligations confirming the individual's profession requires liability insurance and the individual is responsible for securing such insurance. MRS counselors verify the minimal liability insurance requirements in the State of Michigan. MRS counselors address the affordability of insurance options and emphasize individuals' responsibility to maintain such insurance as well as associated monthly premiums.

Example: Professions requiring liability insurance include but not limited to cosmetology, esthetician, construction, and other trade professions.

Background Checks/Physical Exams/ Academic Credentials

MRS may arrange or authorize for background checks, physical exams, and/or academic credential fees when necessary to achieve an employment outcome identified in the IPE. MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* verifying that the background check, physical exam, and/or academic credential (i.e., degree, transcript, etc.) is a prerequisite for employment, post-secondary training, and/or requirement for occupational licensure and no other entity or comparable benefit covers the associated costs.

MRS Authorization for Other Goods and Services Initiation Fees

MRS counselors use Aware category *Other Goods and Services* subcategory *Initiation Fees* when authorizing for initial fees required to achieve an employment outcome as indicated in the IPE.

**Employment
Identification*****Documentation for Service Delivery of Employment
Identification***

MRS may arrange or authorize for fees associated with obtaining employment identification to achieve an employment outcome and identified in the IPE. MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* regarding the requirement to assist the individual in obtaining State of Michigan identification card to verify the individual's identity and authorization to work when the individual does not qualify for the Secretary of [State No Fee Id](#) program. Michigan driver's licenses must be authorized in alignment with *RSM 6700 – Transportation Services*.

***MRS Authorization for Other Goods and Services Employment
Identification***

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Other Goods and Services* subcategory *Employment Identification* when authorizing for identification to achieve an employment outcome as indicated in the IPE.

Legal Fees***Documentation for Service Delivery of Legal Fees***

MRS counselors may arrange authorize legal fees related to addressing legal barriers to achieve an employment outcome as identified in the IPE. MRS may authorize for the following fees associated with expungement and/or fidelity bonding: application fee and/ or obtaining certified court records. MRS counselors document *Aware – Actual Service* entries confirming there is reasonable assurance that the intended IPE goal can be achieved by addressing any existing legal obstacles, and the authorized legal fees will eliminate these obstacles to enable the achievement of the employment outcome.

MRS will refrain from authorizing legal fees if the individual's needs can be adequately addressed using alternative methods (i.e., MI Clean Slate Program or other Legal Aid).

Expungement

MRS counselors document *Aware – Actual Service* entries detailing the exploration of [Michigan Clean Slate](#) program to determine an individual's eligibility for expungement and understand its procedures.

Fidelity Bonding

MRS counselors document *Aware – Actual Service* entries detailing the exploration of the fidelity bonding program [LEO - Fidelity Bonding Program](#) to assist an individual considered high-risk and qualified to secure employment. A high-risk individual may include individuals with justice involvement, individuals with substance abuse history, or other backgrounds of concern. The Fidelity Bonding Program is free of charge for the initial six months and safeguards employers from potential losses due to dishonest acts such as theft, larceny, forgery, and embezzlement committed by a bonded employee.

Legal Resources:

- [Legal Services of Michigan \(lsem-mi.org\)](https://lsem-mi.org)
- [Welcome to Legal Services of South Central Michigan | Legal Services of South Central Michigan \(lsscm.org\)](#)
- [Home | Legal Aid of Western Michigan | Law Firm | Legal Advice \(lawestmi.org\)](#)
- [Project Clean Slate | City of Detroit \(detroitmi.gov\)](#)
- [Free Civil Legal Services For Low Income & Seniors | Lakeshore Legal Aid](#)
- [State Bar of Michigan Legal Resource & Referral Center \(michbar.org\)](#)

MRS Authorization for Other Goods and Services/Legal Fees

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Other Goods and Services* subcategory *Legal Fees* when authorizing for fees associated with an expungement to cover the cost of an application fee and/or obtaining certified court records related to overcoming an obstacle to employment.

MRS abstains from authorizing for expenses associated with tickets, fines, debits, lawyer fees, and other bail-related expenses.

Other Goods and Services (NEC)***Documentation for Service Delivery of Other Goods and Services (NEC)***

MRS may arrange or authorize for other goods and services not elsewhere identified to achieve an employment outcome as identified in the IPE. MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* outlining the exploration of service categories prior to selecting *Other Goods and Services NEC* category. MRS counselor describes the necessity of the particular service and how the service is necessary to achieving an employment outcome. MRS manager approves the use of the Other Goods and Services – NEC category through a documented *Aware Administrative Note*.

MRS Authorization for Other Goods and Services NEC

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Other Goods and Services* subcategory *Other Goods and Services NEC* only if no other category is suitable for service-delivery to achieve an employment outcome as indicated in the IPE.

RESOURCES

6400a – JA Other Goods and Services

REFERENCES

[CFR 361.48](#), [CFR 361.49](#), [Public Act 176 of 1939 and amendments](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes guidelines for authorizing services to family members.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) may arrange or authorize services to family members when necessary for the achievement of an employment outcome of the eligible individual.

DEFINITION***Authorization***

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Family Member

A person who is either a relative or guardian of an applicant or eligible individual, or lives in the same household as the applicant or eligible individual who has substantial interest in the wellbeing of that person and whose receipt of vocational rehabilitation services are necessary to enable them to achieve an employment outcome.

Services to Family Member

Services provided may include but not limited to –

- Childcare to enable an individual to participate in an assessment or a vocational rehabilitation service.
- Workshop/training to help a family member gain knowledge to support an individual in finding and maintaining employment and understanding disability-related needs.
- Transportation related expenses to aide an individual to participate in an assessment or a vocational rehabilitation service.

Note: Transportation services for Services to Family Members are authorized in alignment with *RSM 6700 – Transportation Services* subcategory *Private Transportation*.

- Individual and/or group counseling to understand and support the individual's employment outcome.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors authorize for services to family members in the following case statuses: *Trial Work Experience*, *Service*, and *Employed*.

When delivered in *Aware Service* or *Employed* case status, services to family members must be identified in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Use of Comparable Services/Benefits

MRS counselors are required to explore readily available comparable benefit/services prior to use of MRS funds (*RSM 5100 – Comparable Services and Benefits*).

MRS counselors complete an *Aware Administrative Note* to document exploration of comparable services/benefits to include sources pursued and outcome.

Delivery of a Comparable Service or Benefit by an External Agency, MRS Staff, or in Combination

MRS counselor documents *Aware – Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Services to Family Members* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider and/or by MRS staff in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

Documentation Prior to Service Delivery

MRS counselors may authorize or arrange services to family members if necessary to enable the individual to achieve an employment outcome. Services are provided without restriction to

age of family member and is consistent with informed choice. The duration of services depends on individual needs.

MRS counselor document an *Aware Administrative Note* illustrating the service need, its relationship to the individual's ability to achieve an employment outcome, duration of services, and how the service provider was chosen.

Vendor Qualifications

MRS counselors seek services from accredited rehabilitation organizations, practitioners with knowledge and experience in providing a specific service identified and/or appropriate licensed agencies.

MRS Authorization for Services to Family Members

MRS counselors use *Aware* category *Services to Family Members* when necessary to enable the applicant or eligible individual achieve an employment outcome.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

REFERENCES

[34 CFR 361.48\(b\)\(9\)](#), [34 CFR 361.5\(c\)\(7\)\(i\)\(P\)](#)

Task Analysis Services

Policy:

Task analysis services may be provided, purchased or arranged.

Procedure:

Task analysis services shall be purchased from occupational or physical therapists, job coaches, rehabilitation engineers, or other rehabilitation professionals trained in the process.

When task analysis services are purchased or arranged, the counselor shall ensure that the individual completing the task analysis has been provided with information on the client's capabilities and limitations and any description of the activities or job to be analyzed.

The counselor, client, and vendor shall ensure that the task analysis and accommodation process has been described to the employer, teacher, or others who will be involved; and that any health or safety requirements imposed by the site (e.g., requirements of a union contract) have been identified.

Information:

Task analysis is a systematic method of identifying and evaluating job or task requirements and comparing these to human capabilities. The process can be applied in home, training, and work settings. Cognitive and affective, as well as physical requirements can be evaluated. The task analysis process may vary in complexity from a gross assessment based on a written job description to a detailed time and motion study. A more detailed task analysis may be necessary if the client is severely disabled or the task is complex.

Counselor participation in an initial site visit is an important pre-requisite to being able to evaluate the completed task analysis, and coordinate and implement task analysis results. Medical records, specialty examinations and information contained on the Physical Capacities Assessment form may not be adequate for comparison with a completed task analysis. More specific information is often needed to determine whether the client has capacities congruent with task demands. A work capacity evaluation, using simulated or real work, may be necessary. Michigan Rehabilitation Services' (MRS) task analysis forms may be used to report the findings of the task analysis.

Forms:

Forms related to this manual item are the RA-2435 A, B, and C - Task Analysis and the RA-4683 – Physical Capacities Assessment.

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for authorization expenses associated with college training.

POLICY

College or vocational training may be provided as an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) related service when an eligible individual requires new knowledge and skills to achieve an employment goal consistent with the individual's abilities, capabilities, and informed choice.

Eligible individuals shall make maximum effort to secure grant assistance in whole or in part from other sources to pay for post-secondary training. Counselors shall inform individuals considering post-secondary education that they must make timely annual application for post-secondary financial aid.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) shall not provide financial assistance for any item covered in the cost of attendance if the individual (or individual's family as applicable) fails to apply for or refuses to accept federal, state, institutional and other grants; need based scholarships; or tuition waivers for which they may be eligible.

Financial support for college or vocational training shall be consistent with MRS' policy of purchasing the service that meets the individual's vocational rehabilitation needs at least cost to MRS.

MRS shall impose an economic needs test for the student's cost of attendance (COA) of training at a post-secondary educational institution. The economic needs test utilized shall be the federally established needs test using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or its equivalent, as required by the post-secondary institution, to determine student eligibility for state and federal financial aid.

MRS shall not replace the expected family contribution, as determined by the post- secondary institution, using the federal Student Aid Report, in contributing toward the individual's cost of attendance at a post-secondary institution.

Individuals who are eligible for Social Security benefits under Title II (SSDI) and Title XVI (SSI) of the Social Security Act shall be exempted from financial need test requirements consistent with Federal regulations.

MRS assistance with the cost of attendance, combined with other financial resources, shall not exceed the individual's unmet financial need based on the cost of attending the least costly training institution that meets the individual's vocational rehabilitation need.

Maximum financial support that may be provided by MRS toward the cost of college or vocational training during the academic year shall be \$5,000 and \$1,700 for the summer semester. An exception to the maximum may be considered only when other forms of student aid are ruled out due to disability related factors but not to exceed the rate of program that is least costly to MRS while meeting the individual's vocational rehabilitation need.

MRS customers attending Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) are exempt from needs testing for the cost of attendance.

DEFINITIONS

The Cost of Attendance - The total amount it will cost a student to go to school in a year. This may include tuition and fees; on campus room and board, required books, supplies, materials, tools and equipment; transportation; loan fees and some miscellaneous expenses. Four-year schools will generally include all items in student budgets; two-year and vocational schools may not. Most schools also have different budgets for differing individual situations. Budgets are revised yearly. The amount of the student budget and the items covered are reported by financial aid officers on *MRS-6627*.

Note: MRS may only assist with costs to the student that represent added costs of the vocational rehabilitation program. When student budgets include costs that are not “added costs of training,” such as housing for students who commute, the counselor should subtract that amount from the institution’s COA. Items included in institutional budgets are sometimes described as “direct educational costs”. Items that are not included in the institutional budget may be authorized or arranged according to the policies and procedures stated in appropriate Rehabilitation Services Manual Items.

Independent Students - are those students who:

- are at least 24 years old by January 1 of the award year;
- are Veterans, regardless of age;
- are orphans or wards of the court;
- have legal dependents that receive more than half of their support from the student;
- are married; or
- are enrolled in a master’s or doctoral program.

Students may also be considered self-supporting if they are determined to be so by financial aid administrators exercising professional judgment based on unusual circumstances not covered by any of the statutory criteria.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) - the portion families will be expected to contribute toward the expenses of a student if the financial need analysis indicates that they are able. The amount of the family contribution expected will be based on current income and assets according to congressional methodology. Dependent students may also be expected to contribute based on their income and assets, including expected savings from summer earnings. For the independent student, the amount of contribution expected is based on the student’s (and spouse, if any) taxed and untaxed income and assets, including expected savings from summer earnings.

Student Financial Need - the figure that represents the difference between the COA and the expected student/parent contribution. School financial aid is packaged against this figure.

Remaining Unmet Need - the figure that represents the difference between the student's financial need and all resources provided by the school.

Academic Year - as defined by the U.S. Department of Education, is the equivalent of 2 semesters, 2 trimesters, or 3 quarters (terms) at an institution which uses credit hours; 900 clock hours at an institution which uses clock hours; or 18 months for a correspondence program.

“Meets the individual’s vocational rehabilitation need” means, in terms of a post- secondary training program or institution, that the program has a curriculum that leads to, or is consistent with the student’s employment goal, and is accessible to the student under Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“Disability related factors” (as relates to receipt of financial aid above MRS maximums) means that the individual will have exceptionally high personal attendant or medical expenses due to disability after graduation which will make loan repayment difficult, or that work study and other work to support college expenses is precluded due to disability or social security disability status.

PROCEDURES

Accredited Institutions

MRS financial support for college, vocational business or technical training shall be limited to participation in nationally or regionally accredited, or state licensed institutions. The counselor shall have reasonable assurance that a diploma, certificate or degree received from a training program is readily accepted by employers in the

field of the individual's employment goal before approving an IPE that includes such post-secondary training.

Ability to Benefit

The individual's ability to benefit from post-secondary training in terms of an employment outcome shall be determined as part of the individual's vocational rehabilitation needs assessment. MRS shall not support attendance in a post-secondary program for which the individual does not meet the published entrance requirements.

Developmental Academic or Remedial Study

MRS may provide financial support for one semester of non-credit developmental or remedial study. MRS may not pay for developmental or remedial study if available at no cost through post-secondary institutions or other public resources.

Academic Progress

Continued MRS financial participation in post-secondary training services is contingent on the individual meeting evaluation criteria noted in the IPE. This includes a) maintaining a "C" Average, (2.0 on a 4.0-point scale) or higher as required by the school or specific program the individual is attending, or a comparable passing grade, and b) the submission of the individual's grade reports to the counselor upon completion of each semester or term.

Full Time Enrollment

The expectation is that students will attend training on a full-time basis, as defined by the institution. Exceptions to full time study may be made based on documented medical or family care circumstances. Because most state and federal financial aid programs are based on a minimum of half-time enrollment, MRS will generally not support training at a less than half-time enrollment status.

Duration of Training Support

MRS financial support for post-secondary training is usually limited to one year beyond the normal period for full time matriculation identified by the institution. An extension beyond that period may be granted by the counselor due to an individual's disability or special circumstances and requires an IPE amendment. MRS financial support generally shall not exceed 64 credit hours for an Associate of Arts degree, or 128 credit hours for a bachelor's degree.

Payment for Electives

The counselor should be familiar with the student's curriculum or have a copy of curriculum requirements in the case record. MRS shall not pay for electives beyond those needed to complete an individual's curriculum. When there is a question as to whether a class is required to complete a curriculum that is needed to achieve the IPE outcome, the counselor may require written verification from the post-secondary institution.

Licensed Occupations

The counselor shall discuss occupational licensing barriers, such as a criminal record, with the individual as part of IPE planning, and when possible, assist the individual in overcoming such barriers. The counselor shall not support training in a field that requires licensing unless there is reasonable assurance that licensing can be secured.

Graduate, Professional, or Second-Degree Training

Such training may be authorized or arranged if the individual cannot achieve employment consistent with the individual's abilities and capabilities without such training, and transferable job skills are not available due to substantial limitations imposed by a disability for which reasonable accommodation is not possible.

Summer School

Summer school support is limited to circumstances in which the student is unable to work due to disability, has SSA disability status or requires a particular class that is only offered in the summer or is needed for timely program completion.

Transferability of Classes

Counselors of students who elect to attend community college during the freshman and sophomore year should pay special attention to the transferability of classes to four-year institutions to avoid needless duplication of classes.

Orientation and Vestibule Programs

A financial needs analysis is not required to cover the cost of short-term programs, summer orientation or vestibule programs, which are required but do not provide academic credit and do not qualify for financial aid.

Student Loans

Student loans may be encouraged as a part of the student's contribution to their own training. However, students may not be compelled to take student loans for the student's unmet need at the rate of the least costly post-secondary program up to MRS' maximum contribution, whichever is less.

Workers' Disability Compensation Settlements

MRS shall not replace insurance benefits received, in whole or in part, as a settlement of liability for vocational rehabilitation services, in contributing toward the cost of attendance at a post-secondary institution. This means that such targeted settlement dollars must be used before MRS dollars are used, unless it can be demonstrated that such settlement dollars are no longer available.

Late Applications

The counselor may not authorize for any COA before the results of the application for financial aid are known. The counselor may approve an authorization for the first term to allow the individual's enrollment if the case record documents that the individual applied for aid no later than 60 days prior to the beginning date of the school term and if an IPE that includes college training has been completed. The counselor must subsequently adjust the total amount authorized for the academic year, so it does not result in an over-award or exceed the maximum MRS allowable contribution. Adjustments may be made to the current term authorization or authorizations for subsequent terms as appropriate.

Financial Support Basis

The extent of MRS' financial support for training, whether in- state or out-of-state, public, or private, shall be conditioned on MRS' least-cost purchasing requirements, in alignment with *RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule and Rate of Payment* in combination with the college financial aid needs analysis. This means that, if a training program is available that meets the individual's vocational rehabilitation needs at a lesser cost to MRS than the program selected by the individual, MRS' support shall not exceed the less costly training program to MRS after application of the financial needs test.

In general, for the first two years of college through an associate degree or equivalent, MRS' post-secondary financial support will be based on financial support needed for attendance at a Michigan community college near to the student's home. For the Junior year and beyond, support for additional training will be based on the cost of attendance at the nearest public college or university program in Michigan, after a consideration of the financial needs test to such cost of attendance.

MRS support of unmet financial need shall not exceed \$5,000 per academic year and \$1,700 for the summer semester, except for SSI or SSDI beneficiaries or as noted in the Procedure on Loan

Replacement. This amount is to be divided equally among the number of terms or semesters comprising the academic year.

Coordination of Financial Aid

Financial aid available through the school, student/family contribution, and MRS assistance shall be coordinated as follows:

- A. A Statement of Financial Needs, Resources and Authorization (*MRS-6627*) shall be sent to the financial aid office of the schools the individual will be considering, including the least costly alternative, when possible, to obtain reports of the student's EFC, the financial aid awarded, and any remaining financial need.
- B. The expected student/family contribution (EFC) and financial grant aid must be used as the primary sources to meet the student's COA.
- C. If financial aid and student/family contributions are inadequate to meet the individual's COA at the least costly educational program that meets the individual's vocational rehabilitation need, and the individual cannot attend school without additional assistance, MRS may assist with the remaining unmet financial need up to \$5,000, or up to \$1,700 for the summer semester. This unmet need figure is the maximum of MRS' support, but not to exceed \$5,000 and/or \$1,700 for the summer semester, regardless of the educational institution selected. Counselors should consider special institutional financial aid awards provided by the student's preferred school, which may result in the lower unmet need for the student and make it the least costly training alternative to MRS.
- D. The counselor may assist with all or part of the remaining unmet need up to \$5,000 per academic year for college or university training, \$5,000 per academic year for private vocational school training and up to \$1,700 for the summer

semester or term, or up to \$556 per month for vocational schools which operate monthly.

- E. Assistance to individuals who begin school after the first term or semester shall be pro-rated. Individuals attending one-third, one half, or two-thirds, of the academic year shall be provided a prorated percent of the maximum academic year assistance. (Example: A student attends only one half of the academic year. The maximum MRS contribution is. $\frac{1}{2}$ of \$5,000 = \$2500, or $\frac{1}{2}$ of unmet need, whichever is less.)
- F. Individuals who meet the criteria for MRS support of summer programs (as defined by the educational institution) must apply for financial aid for the summer term 60 days in advance of the term. They may be provided up to \$1,700 for full time attendance during the summer session if there is any unmet need, prorated at a proportional amount for part time attendance. (Example: if 10 credit hours constitutes a full-time summer school load, and the student takes 4 credit hours, the maximum amount of MRS support would be \$680 or less depending on unmet need).

Substitution Of Student Loan and Work-Study Awards

In addition to assistance with unmet financial need up to \$5,000, MRS funds may be substituted for the following financial aid awards if the case record documents that:

- A. College Work-Study
- the individual cannot work while attending school full-time due to limitations imposed by his/her disability, or the time required for medical treatment;
 - student jobs are not available as verified by an appropriate school official;
 - the individual is receiving SSI or SSDI benefits (work would jeopardize benefits or would be counted toward the trial work period for SSDI recipients);

- childcare responsibilities or the need to travel long distances to school leave the individual inadequate time to attend school full-time and work.

If the counselor intends to replace work study for any of the reasons noted above, the counselor should check the appropriate box on *MRS-6627*.

B. Loans

The individual will have exceptionally high personal attendant or medical expenses due to disability after graduation which will make loan repayment difficult. Under these circumstances loan substitution may be made up to \$2500 per year or up to the amount required to attend the least cost comparable program in the state, whichever is less. If the counselor intends to substitute for a loan for the above reason, the counselor should check the appropriate box in Part II of the *MRS-6627*.

Ineligibility For Financial Aid Under the Higher Education Act

MRS may not authorize for training support for individuals who are ineligible to receive or apply for post- secondary federal financial aid. Reasons for ineligibility for federal financial aid include: a) the individual owes a grant refund and has no documentation of having made satisfactory arrangements for repayment; b) the individual is in default of a federal or state student loan, and has no documentation of having made good faith repayment arrangements from the lender or school, or of no longer being in default status; c) the individual is convicted of a state and federal offense involving possession or sale of illegal drugs, and has not re- established eligibility as required by federal financial aid regulations (34 CFR 668.40); d) or the individual has not registered for the selective service system. Such individuals are considered to not have made a maximum effort to secure post-secondary federal or state grants or tuition waivers and may not receive training funds from MRS. Counselors should assist such individuals, as appropriate, to help them regain financial aid eligibility.

Disability Related Expenses

Personal disability-related services may be authorized or arranged without regard for financial need. Such services include personal assistance services needed for classroom attendance, individually prescribed equipment like hearing aids, and non-routine medical expenses.

Personal disability-related services do not include classroom and learning accommodations, auxiliary aids and services that are the responsibility of the post-secondary institution.

Notification of MRS Assistance

Individuals and the post-secondary institution shall be notified in writing of the type and amount of assistance MRS will provide for institutional budget expenses, or that MRS will not be assisting with such expenses and the reason. The *MRS-5 - Notice of MRS Post-secondary Training Assistance*, may be used for this purpose.

Out-of-State or Private Facilities

Out-of-state or in-state private training facilities may be used, but financial aid may not exceed that which would be required for the least cost public in-state facility, unless there is compelling evidence that the out-of-state facility is the only option that meets the individual's vocational rehabilitation need. If financial aid staff of out-of-state training facilities are not able or willing to complete *MRS-6627*, they must be asked to prepare a letter stating:

- The applicable academic-related costs (tuition, fees, books, room and board, etc.) for the individual,
- Expected family contribution,
- Amount of Pell grant and other financial aid awards, and
- Balance of financial need, if any.

Training Outside of the United States

Training at an institution outside of the United States will not be funded unless it is part of an approved course of study for an in-state institution. If the home educational institution requires out-of-country instruction as part of the individual's program, MRS may support it at the same rate as if the program were provided at the student's home educational institution.

Gallaudet University and Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)/National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)

MRS support may be provided to these out-of-state facilities if required to meet the unique VR needs of certain deaf or hard of hearing students.

To determine MRS assistance for individuals attending RIT/NTID the *MRS-6627* shall be sent to the financial aid office, as described in Procedure 19. To determine MRS assistance for individuals attending Gallaudet College:

1. The Gallaudet student will be required to complete two applications every year to determine eligibility for federal and institutional aid programs: (a) the FAFSA and (b) the Institutional Financial Aid Application (IFAA). After financial aid has received both FAFSA and IFAA, a determination of eligibility for grants and scholarships will be made.
2. MRS counselor contact information must be provided on the IFAA. The student's eligibility for grants and scholarships will be sent via e-mail.
3. FAFSA and IFAA forms must be completed by the Gallaudet student:
 - No later than July 1st if enrolling in Fall semester
 - No later than January 16th if enrolling in Spring semester

4. The counselor must advise the individual not to apply for student loans until after it has been determined whether s/he qualifies for institutional aid programs from the school.

Processing Payment

Payment may be made for courses dropped by an individual for a good cause. The school should be paid in accordance with its published policy.

The case record shall document the action to be taken by the individual to make up the dropped course. If the individual fails to follow through with the agreed upon action, the counselor may, if providing tuition assistance:

- reduce financial participation for the following term in the amount of the non-refundable balance for the dropped class(es), or
- refuse to pay for the dropped class if the individual takes it again later.

Refunds

When MRS funds are not needed by an educational institution due to subsequent replacement by college grants, need based scholarships, or dropped classes, the counselor shall notify the institution that these funds are to be returned to MRS, not to the individual or to offset the student's loan balance. If MRS funds are reimbursed to the individual or credited to a loan balance, an equal amount will be counted against the student's financial support from MRS for the following semester.

INFORMATION

Post-Secondary Financial Aid and Public Assistance

- A. Educational Income-All Department of Human Services (DHS) Programs. * Educational income such as grants, loans, work-

study, scholarships, assistantships and fellowships for education is excluded as income and as an asset by DHS. (Note: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients are required to be employed to remain eligible for their TANF benefit. Only 12 months of training is available at this time as a qualifying work activity.)

- B. Rehabilitation Services Payments-All Programs. * Payments from Michigan Rehabilitation Services are excluded. They are reimbursements.
- C. SSDI and SSI Benefits. Grants, regardless of the amount, have no effect on SSDI. Grant funds, which exceed tuition, fees, and books, are considered unearned income for SSI recipients, so SSI benefits are reduced by that amount. Loans do not affect SSDI or SSI benefits. College work-study awards are considered employment, so they may affect both SSDI and SSI benefits. To determine how college work-study is treated in each situation, the student should contact the local Social Security Office.
- D. Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS). Food Assistance Program (FAP) only: Income being diverted to a PASS is excluded as income and as an asset. PASS set aside is considered earnings or unearned income.

* All Programs includes Family Independence Program (FIP); State Disability Assistance (SDA); Child Development and Care (CDC); Food Assistance Program (FAP); Medical Assistance (MA) also known as Medicaid (i.e., Medicaid for individuals receiving FIP or Supplemental Security Income, Adult Medical Program (AMP), Transitional Medical Assistance Plus (TMA-Plus))

Federal Student Aid

Federal student aid is financial help for students enrolled in eligible programs at participating schools to cover school expenses, including tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. A "school" could be a two-year or four-year public or

private educational institution, a career school, or a trade school. Most federal aid is need-based. The three most common types of aid are grants, loans, and work-study.

Grants: Grants are financial aid that does not have to be repaid. Generally, grants are for undergraduate students, and the grant amount is based on need, cost of attendance, and enrollment status. Federal Pell Grants range from approximately \$577 to \$5,700. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG) range from \$100 to \$4,000.

Loans: Loans are borrowed money that must be repaid with interest. Both undergraduate and graduate students may borrow money. Parents may also borrow to pay education expenses for dependent undergraduate students. Maximum loan amounts depend on the student's year in school.

Federal Stafford Loans are made to students, and Federal PLUS Loans are made to parents through two loan programs.

William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program: eligible students and parents borrow directly from the federal government at participating schools. Direct Loans include Direct Stafford Loans, Direct PLUS Loans, and Direct Consolidation Loans.

Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program: private lenders provide federally guaranteed funds. FFELs include FFEL Stafford Loans, FFEL PLUS Loans, and FFEL Consolidation Loans.

Federal Perkins Loans are offered by participating schools to provide low-interest loans to students that demonstrate the most need.

Work Study: Work Study enables students to earn money for education expenses while enrolled in school.

Not all schools participate in all the Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs. Students should ask the school's financial aid administrator which programs are available.

Who gets federal student aid?

Some of the requirements to receive aid from the U.S. Department of Education's FSA programs are that students must:

- Be studying to earn the first graduate degree.
- Be a citizen of the United States or an eligible non-citizen with a valid Social Security Number.
- Not have a criminal record including drug related offenses.
- Must have graduated from the high school level, completed a GED, or completed a home school program approved by the State of Michigan.
- Academic progress must satisfy the norms of the school.
- A male in the age range of 18 to 25, must be registered with the Selective Service.
- Pell Grant eligibility will not be granted if an individual has ever defaulted on any federal grant or received a Pell Grant in the past or any other full scholarship for the current course.

How do students apply for federal student aid?

The first step is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA lists deadlines for federal and state aid. Schools and states may have different deadlines for aid. Students may apply [online](#). If Internet access is not available, students can get a paper FAFSA from a high school guidance office, a college financial aid office, a local public library, or the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1- 800-4-FED- AID (1- 800-433- 3243). Review the Student Aid Report (SAR). One to four weeks after students submit their FAFSA, they will be sent a SAR, either by an e-mailed link or on paper.

The SAR confirms the information reported on the FAFSA and will tell the student their Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The financial aid administrator will use the EFC to determine the amount of federal student aid for which the student may qualify.

The student should contact the school(s) he/she might attend and talk with the financial aid administrator(s). They will review the SAR and prepare a letter outlining the amount of aid (from all sources) that their school will offer.

The U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid website contains additional detailed information on Federal Financial Aid.

State of Michigan Student Aid

Scholarships: A scholarship is money for college, and it does not have to be paid back. Scholarships are usually based on "merit", meaning they are given because of a student's particular skill or ability. For some of the state programs, financial need is also a factor in determining award eligibility. The Michigan Competitive Scholarship is based on both financial need and merit and is available for use at Michigan public and private post-secondary colleges.

Work Study: Work-study programs give students a source of money for college; however, the student has to work to earn the money. Most often work-study jobs allow students to work on their college or university campus. The Michigan Work-Study Undergraduate and Graduate Programs provide work opportunities to help needy students pay educational expenses.

Loans: Money can be borrowed to pay for college expenses and there are low-interest loans available for students and parents. Funds borrowed must be paid back. The MI-LOAN Program assists with the financing of a post-secondary education. Two loan programs include the Creditworthy Loan Program and the Credit Ready Loan Program.

Grants: Grants do not have to be repaid and are referred to as "gift" aid. Generally, grants are given to students based on their financial situation and need for the funds. The Michigan Educational Opportunity Grant is available for needy undergraduate students who enroll on at least a half-time basis at a Michigan public community college or university. The Michigan Tuition Grant is

based on financial need for use at independent, non-profit degree-granting colleges and universities in Michigan. Awards are restricted to tuition and fees. Application for the Michigan Tuition Grant is made by filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Rewards and Incentives: Sometimes students can receive money for college by staying in school, getting good grades, or for good performance on certain types of tests. These programs reward students for good performance or staying in school. These include the Michigan Merit.

Award and the Tuition Incentive Program. The Michigan Merit Award is a merit-based program to reward student achievement as measured by the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests. The Tuition Incentive Program is a high school completion program that offers to pay for the first two years of college and beyond for identified students who graduate from high school or complete their GED before age 20.

Additional information regarding State of Michigan student aid may be found at [MI Student Aid \(michigan.gov\)](https://michigan.gov/studentaid).

Miscellaneous

A. All schools in Michigan must be licensed to operate. Licensure of schools may be determined by using the [LEO - Postsecondary Education License Search Tool](#). To determine the licensure of out-of-state schools, counselors should contact the central administrative office of the state vocational rehabilitation agency of that state.

B. High school students should consult their high school for assistance in completing financial aid applications.

C. *MRS-4640 - Monthly Training Progress Report*, may be used to obtain progress reports from vocational schools that do not provide transcripts.

D. Transportation allowances computed by financial aid offices are based on "averages." Financial aid offices should be contacted if actual costs exceed the estimates so adjustments may be made.

REFERENCES

34-CFR 361.45, 34-CFR 361.46

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for transportation services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) may arrange or authorize transportation services for an applicant or eligible individual. Transportation services pertain to travel and related expenses that are necessary to enable an applicant or eligible individual to participate in a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) service, including expenses for training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems. Transportation services including relocation expenses, may be authorized or arranged only in connection with a VR service required as part of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or for an assessment.

Duration of Services

MRS does not provide long-term or ongoing transportation services. Therefore, it is recommended to explore comparable benefits that may provide long-term transportation support.

DEFINITIONS

Vendor Authorization

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Direct Authorization

A single payment for goods or service issued directly to an individual.

Recurring Authorization

Multiple payments, generated from a single authorization, issued over a designated period of time directly to an individual.

Private Transportation

Refers to any mode of transport that is personally owned and operated by an individual or entity, as opposed to being available for public use. This service includes but not limited to:

- Purchase of gas
- Car rental
- Driver's license fee
- Personal vehicle registration fee
- Purchase of an Uber (or similar service, Taxi)
- Purchase of an Airplane ticket
- Train – private company (Amtrack)
- Bus – private company (Greyhound)

Public Transportation

Refers to shared transportation services that are available for use by the general public, typically operated by governmental or private organizations including training in the use of public transportation vehicles/ systems. This service includes but not limited to:

- Purchase of Bus pass/ticket
- Purchase of a Train ticket (municipal/subway)
- Training

Relocation Expense

Refers to the costs incurred by an eligible individual in connection with a job placement that is a significant distance from the eligible individual's current residence. These expenses can include but not limited to:

- Moving Service(s) including movers
- Vehicle Rental (i.e., U-Haul or similar company)

- One time fuel per mileage unless included in the rental service agreement

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors may provide transportation services in all *Aware* case statuses when necessary to support participation in an assessment or a VR service except relocation expenses. Relocation expenses may be delivered in *Aware Service* or *Employed* cases statuses.

Transportation services are required to be identified in the IPE when delivered in *Aware Service* or *Employed* case status.

Public Transportation

Documentation Prior to Service Delivery of Public Transportation

MRS counselors may authorize or arrange public transportation services when necessary to support an individual's participation in VR service. MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* regarding the provision of public transportation. MRS counselor records the disbursement of tickets or tokens on the district office bus ticket log and document an *Aware Administrative Note* to create a record of the service provided.

MRS counselors may arrange or authorize public transportation training when necessary to equip an individual with the skills needed to navigate and utilize public transit effectively. This includes understanding routes, schedules, ticketing systems, and safety protocols, as well as developing practical strategies for planning and executing trips. MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* regarding the provision of public transportation training.

Private Transportation

Documentation Prior to Service Delivery of Private Transportation

MRS counselors may authorize or arrange private transportation services when required to support an individual's participation in a VR service and public transportation is not available and/or does not meet the individual's vocational rehabilitation needs. MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* regarding exploration of public transportation and outcome before initiating the authorization process.

Private transportation services for those driving a personal vehicle are authorized based on the [Standardized Travel Regulations](#) (travel rate schedule) or its annual update, utilizing the standard rate to calculate mileage for gas. The authorization total is based on the number of miles to be traveled per trip and the number of trips to be covered.

Exception: A policy exception may be granted upon request if the travel standard rate does not meet the individual's vocational rehabilitation needs. MRS counselor must email the policy mailbox with a detailed explanation. Upon approval, MRS counselor must place the policy exception in the individual's case file.

Relocation Expenses

Documentation Prior to Service Delivery of Relocation Expenses

MRS counselors may authorize for relocation expenses when costs will be incurred by an eligible individual in connection with a job placement that is a significant distance from the eligible individual's current residence. MRS counselor document an *Aware Actual Service Note* detailing exploration of relocation options with the individual to determine the most appropriate method for relocating.

MRS counselors document an *Aware Administrative Note* regarding the provision of relocation expenses.

Comparable Benefits

Use of Comparable Services/Benefits

MRS counselors are required to explore readily available comparable benefit/services prior to use of MRS funds (*RSM 5100 – Comparable Services and Benefits*).

MRS counselors completes an *Aware Administrative Note* to document exploration of comparable services/benefits to include sources pursued and outcome.

Delivery of a Comparable Service or Benefit by an External Agency

MRS counselors document *Aware Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Transportation Services* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

Note: Under no circumstances should MRS staff transport an individual on their caseload.

Authorization Process

Authorization Type

Transportation services may be authorized using vendor, direct, or recurring authorization types in alignment with *RSM 9000 – Authorization for Services*.

Authorizing For Transportation Services

MRS counselors use *Aware* service category *Transportation* when authorizing services to support an individual's participation in a VR

service required as part of an IPE or for an assessment. MRS counselor use the appropriate subcategories as follows: *Private, Public, or Relocation Expenses*.

MRS counselor authorize services in alignment with *RSM 9300 – Competitive Bids/Quotations* as appropriate.

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

Documentation Post Service Delivery

MRS counselor verifies the purchase of vendor, direct, or recurring services in alignment with *RSM 9200 – Billing*.

REFERENCES

[34 CFR 361.48\(b\)](#), [34 CFR 361.5\(c\)\(56\)](#), [34 CFR 361.5\(c\)\(56\)\(i\)](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for provision of vehicle related services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) may arrange or authorize for vehicle service(s) in the form of inspection, repair, purchase, insurance, rental, and modification may be provided when identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), as necessary to support achievement of an employment outcome.

Duration of Services

MRS does not provide long-term or ongoing vehicle service(s). MRS support for vehicle service(s) will not exceed the timeframe of an estimated IPE service that is supported by the vehicle service(s).

DEFINITIONS***Vendor Authorization***

Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x) form provided to a vendor detailing requested service to be delivered.

Direct Authorization

A single payment for goods or service issued directly to the individual.

Recurring Authorization

Multiple payments, generated from a single authorization, issued over a designated period of time directly to the individual.

Vehicle

A vehicle refers to a mode of transportation used to move people or goods from one location to another. This term usually includes

vehicles such as cars, trucks, bicycles, and similar modes of transportation.

Vehicle Inspection

An examination of a vehicle to assess its condition, safety, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations for on road operation.

Vehicle Repair

The process of restoring a damaged or malfunctioning vehicle to a functional and safe condition.

Vehicle Purchase

The acquisition of a vehicle from an automotive dealership.

Vehicle Insurance

A financial arrangement where a premium is paid for a company (insurer) to take over liability for unforeseen events and in turn compensate for a covered loss. A loss can be due to an accident or other unforeseen events.

Vehicle Rental

The use of a vehicle for a specific limited term that is defined in a legal agreement.

Vehicle Modification

A customized change to a vehicle to accommodate specific accessibility needs or enhance mobility. This can include alterations such as installing wheelchair ramps, hand controls, modified seats, or specialized driving equipment to enable individuals with disabilities to operate or ride in the vehicle comfortably and safely.

PROCEDURES

Aware Case Status Requirements

MRS counselors may provide Vehicle Services in *Aware Service* or *Employed* case statuses when necessary to achieve an IPE employment outcome.

Use of Comparable Services/Benefits

MRS counselors are required to explore readily available comparable benefit/services prior to use of MRS funds in alignment with *Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) 5100 – Comparable Services and Benefits*.

MRS counselors complete an *Aware Administrative Note* to document exploration of comparable services/benefits to include sources pursued and outcome.

Delivery of a Comparable Service or Benefit by an External Agency

MRS counselors document *Aware Actual Service* entries under the *Aware* category of *Vehicle Services* when delivered through a comparable service/benefit provider in alignment with *RSM 5100 - Comparable Service/Benefit*.

Service entry includes:

- Comparable service/benefit provider
- Date(s) of the service delivery
- Summary of service

Documentation Prior to Service Delivery

Public transportation is used when it is available and meets the vocational rehabilitation need of an individual. Prior to service delivery for vehicle services, MRS counselor documents an *Aware Administrative Note* detailing the following:

- Exploration of public transportation options and their effectiveness in meeting the vocational rehabilitation needs of the individual, including availability and outcomes. Describe

why public transportation fails to meet the needs of the individual.

- Verification that the vehicle service to be authorized are provided by a licensed mechanic, licensed repair facility, dealership or other applicable company registered with the [Bureau Licensing and Regulatory Affairs](#) (LARA).
- Confirmation that the vehicle operator has a valid driver's license, the vehicle is owned by the individual or family member, the vehicle has valid registration and insurance coverage.

Vehicle services are provided only after receiving documented management approval through an *Aware Administrative Note*, and this approval must be obtained before the completion of the IPE.

Service Planning Requirements

Vehicle Inspection

A vehicle inspection is used to determine the viability of a vehicle for repair. The viability of a vehicle is based on the safety, reliability, and cost effectiveness for providing vehicle inspection services.

MRS counselor use *MRS-6800a - Vehicle Inspection Report* form to document a vehicle inspection.

Vehicle Repair

A written repair estimate for proposed repairs is obtained from a repair facility registered with LARA. A second estimate is obtained when estimated repairs are \$750.00 or more. A second estimate is not required if the vehicle is inoperable.

MRS counselor determines that the vehicle's condition or value justifies the cost of repairs prior to authorizing vehicle repair services. The information considered for making a determination may include:

- Statement from the mechanic or repair facility who completed the initial repair estimate.
- Vehicle inspection from a licensed mechanic or repair facility.
- Evidence that the repair costs do not exceed the average retail value of the vehicle.

Vehicle Repairs are not recommended when the repair cost exceeds the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) [Consumer Vehicle Values | NADA](#) 'clean condition' – Trade In to Dealer value of the vehicle being considered for repair. On the NADA website, MRS counselor select "Get A Value", select "Choose a Make" to start the calculation. Vehicle year, make, model/trim and milage must be entered.

Vehicle Purchase

Prior to purchasing a vehicle, MRS counselor documents the exploration of transportation options in alignment with *RSM 6700 – Transportation* in an *Aware Administrative Note*. A vehicle purchase must be established as the least cost option to meet the transportation need of the individual to achieve an employment outcome.

Vehicle purchases may consist of –

- A used vehicle in good condition. Used vehicles are required to have at least a 90-day warranty.
- Assistance with the down payment of a vehicle may be adequate if the individual will have the funds to make subsequent payments.
- A new vehicle may be purchased to meet the individual's need for adaptive equipment or specialized modifications not otherwise available on an existing used vehicle.

MRS counselor documents an *Aware Actual Service Note* thoroughly detailing the discussion with the individual about ensuring the vehicle is adequately covered by car insurance and the individual's responsibility for routine vehicle maintenance.

MRS staff utilize form *MRS-6800b - Vehicle Purchase Checklist* to complete a vehicle purchase.

Note: Sales tax must be paid either by MRS or the individual when MRS funds are expended toward vehicle purchase.

Vehicle Insurance

The period of insurance coverage supported by MRS is to cover the duration necessary for the IPE service to be completed. The individual must be able to cover insurance premium costs beyond the IPE service end date.

MRS counselor records an *Aware Administrative Note* detailing the negotiated deductible amount that the individual is able to afford in the event of an insurance claim, as well as the associated monthly premiums.

Vehicle Rental

MRS counselor explore rental options when identified in an IPE, as necessary to support achievement of an employment outcome. MRS counselor adheres to the rules and guidelines of the rental agency. MRS counselor documents an *Aware Administrative Note* detailing the following:

- Why the rental option is the most cost-effective solution that meets the individual's vocational rehabilitation needs.
- Discussion with the individual that all vehicle rental agreements are established in the individual's name.
- Discussion with the individual to confirm their understanding of their responsibility for the rental agreement and their acceptance of full liability as outlined in the agreement.

Vehicle Modification

MRS counselor may authorize vehicle modification services, when necessary to accommodate specific accessibility needs or enhance mobility of an individual as part of an IPE service to achieve an employment outcome.

MRS counselor arranges for the individual to complete an evaluation in alignment with *RSM 6010 – Assessment – Vocational Evaluation Services* and driver training in alignment *RSM 6030 – Disability Related Training & Support Services* before a prescription is written when the client is a new driver, will be driving a vehicle with unfamiliar modifications, or has not driven recently. MRS counselor consults with driver evaluator to determine when additional driver training is needed. Additional driver training is authorized in alignment with *RSM 6030 – Disability Related Training & Support Services*.

MRS counselor must document the following in an *Aware Administrative Note* prior to authorizing for vehicle modification services –

- Review and completion of the Fit Factors Job Aid (6800a-JA).
- Exploration and outcome of the Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) and/or Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE) if the individual is a SSDI or SSI recipient.
- Verification of a valid driver's license of the vehicle's operator.
- Verification of vehicle insurance and registration for modifying a vehicle not purchased by MRS.
- Verification that the vehicle modification services are provided by a vendor listed as a member of the [National Mobility Equipment Dealer's Association \(NMEDA\)](#).
- Receipt and review of a driver evaluation and prescription that is completed by a qualified driver evaluator except when purchasing or arranging the transfer of existing equipment or the provision of replacement equipment which involves comparable equipment, a comparable vehicle, and no changes in the individual's functional capacities. MRS counselor outlines the reason why a driver evaluation and prescription were not obtained when applicable. An evaluator is considered qualified to assess an individual's need for a modified vehicle if they possess:

- A Certificate of Recognition in Automobile Modification from the Association of Driver Education for the Disabled (ADED), or
 - A registered occupational therapist, or
 - Hold a secondary teaching degree with Driver Education Certification; and
 - Collaborate with a licensed Occupational Therapist for a functional capacity evaluation.
- Review of the vendor's price quotation with the individual comparing the price quotation report with the evaluator's prescription to ensure consistency prior to authorization.
- Individual financial participation in alignment with *RSM 5125 – Financial Participation* except SSI and SSDI recipients.

A conformance check must be completed before final delivery to the individual and documented in an *Aware Administrative Note* by MRS counselor. The conformance check includes:

- The evaluator's final overview of the modified vehicle to assure the prescription has been accurately completed.
- MRS counselor review of the written report/ statement from the vendor summarizing the completed modification(s) in comparison to the prescription and evaluator's report to assure modification has been accurately completed.
- MRS counselor addressing any inaccuracies with vendor for correction. Payment for modifications is not processed until the conformance check and any corrections have been completed.

Authorization for Vehicle Services

Competitive Bids and Price Quotations for Vehicle Services

MRS counselor obtain three competitive bids or price quotations as applicable for the following vehicle services: vehicle purchase, vehicle repair, vehicle rental, vehicle insurance and vehicle modification in alignment with *RSM 9300 – Competitive Bids and Price Quotations*.

MRS counselors may use the following forms to obtain competitive bids or price quotations:

- *MRS-4587 - Request for Bid/Quotation* (Purchase, Modification and Rental)
 - [The National Automobile Dealers Association's \(NADA\)](#) may be used to estimate a vehicle's value (on the website select "Get A Value", select "Choose a Make" to get started)
- *MRS-6800a - Vehicle Inspection Report* (Repair cases only)
- *MRS-6800c – Request for Vehicle Insurance Quotation* (Insurance cases only)

Authorization Type

Vehicle Services (except vehicle modification) may be authorized using vendor, direct, or recurring authorization types in alignment with *RSM 9000 – Authorization for Services*.

Vehicle Modification services are authorized using a vendor authorization type. MRS counselor include the following on the *Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)*: the make, year, and vehicle identification number as well as note that payment is subject to successful completion of a conformance check.

Authorizing for Vehicle Services

MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual (*RSM 9025 – Fee Schedule & Rate of Payment*).

MRS counselors select the appropriate *Aware* service category and subcategory when authorizing vehicle services when identified in an IPE, as necessary to support achievement of an employment outcome:

Aware category for service:

- Vehicles

Aware subcategories:

- Vehicle Inspection
- Vehicle Insurance
- Vehicle Purchase
- Vehicle Rental
- Vehicle Repairs

Aware category for service:

- Rehabilitation Technology

Aware subcategory:

- Vehicle Modifications

Documentation of Vehicle Service completion

MRS counselor verifies the purchase of vendor, direct, or recurring authorization types in alignment with *RSM 9200 – Billing*.

RESOURCES

MRS-6800a - Vehicle Inspection Report

MRS-6800b - Vehicle Purchase Checklist

MRS-6800c - Request for Vehicle Insurance Quotation

6800a – JA: Fit Factors Job Aid

MRS-4587 - Request for Bid Quotation

REFERENCES

[34 CFR 361.48\(b\)](#), [34 CFR 361.5\(c\)\(56\)](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure outlines processes for case record closure from the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) VR case record is closed when the customer:

- Achieves Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)
- Does not achieve CIE
- Determined ineligible for services

PROCEDURES

Final Billing of Authorizations

MRS staff are required to final bill or cancel all authorizations prior to case record closure in accordance with Section 9 of the Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM).

Categories of Case Record Closure and Documentation Requirements

MRS counselors select from the following 18 program case record closure categories and assure all listed documentation requirements are met prior to case record closure:

1. Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)

Aware Administrative Note summarizing a minimum of 90 days of employment, achievement of stability of employment, and verification of retention of employment consisting of one of the following:

- Most recent pay stub/electronic deposit statement
- Employer written verification of employment/wages
- Electronic employment verification including Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage match, federal employment records, Equifax, or military employment records.

- Written employment/wage verification from a vendor who provided job development or follow along services.
- For customers who are self-employed as independent contractors or other forms of business ownership the following may also be used to verify employment:
 - a. Current bank statement or other forms of verifiable receipts reflecting business earnings for a minimum of 90 days.
 - b. A current business profit and loss statement, validated by a certified accountant or lending institution.
 - c. Current year business tax return or individual tax return that includes a Schedule C (form 1040) Profit or Loss from Business.

2. No Impairment/Impediment to Employment

Aware Administrative Note summarizing and supporting medical/psychological documentation confirming the applicant was determined to have no disabling condition, no impediment to employment, or did not require VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain CIE.

3. No Longer Interested in Receiving Services Prior to Eligibility

Aware Administrative Note summarizing customer no longer desired to pursue CIE prior to eligibility determination.

4. No Longer Interested in CIE After Eligibility Determination

Aware Administrative Note summarizing customer no longer desired to pursue CIE after eligibility determination.

5. Disability Prevents Continuation of Services After Eligibility Determination

Aware Administrative Note summarizing and supporting medical/psychological documentation indicating customer disability prevented pursuit of CIE after eligibility determination.

6. *Disability Too Severe/Unable to Benefit After Trial Work Experience(s) (TWE)*

Aware Administrative Note summarizing Trial Work Experience(s), concluding customer is too severe/unable to benefit from services in alignment with RSM 3175 Trial Work Experience.

7. *Unable to Participate in a TWE Prior to Eligibility Determination*

Aware Administrative Note summarizing and supporting medical/psychological documentation of customer's inability to participate in a TWE prior to eligibility determination in alignment with RSM 3175 Trial Work Experience.

8. *Health/Medical*

Aware Administrative Note summarizing customer is hospitalized or receiving medical treatment that is expected to last longer than 90 days and precludes entry into CIE or continued participation in the program. Documentation may consist of medical records, self-report, or determination from family/other agency contact.

9. *Death*

Aware Administrative Note summarizing customer is deceased and source of information that may include, but is not limited to, notification from family, other agency contacts, or verification from internet search of obituaries.

10. *Reserve Forces - Called to Active Duty*

Aware Administrative Note summarizing customer is a member of a branch of the United States military or reserve forces called to active duty for at least 90 days. Source information may include but is not limited to notification from customer/family or copy of military orders.

11. Entered Correctional Institution

Aware Administrative Note summarizing customer entered a correctional institution (e.g., prison, jail, reformatory, prison farm, detention center) or other institution designed for confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders. Source of information may include internet searches including Michigan-Offender Tracking Information System (OTIS), report from family or another agency.

12. Transferred to Another Agency or Working with Another Employment Network

Aware Administrative Note summarizing customer requires services more efficiently obtained elsewhere including transfer to other employment network (Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Ticket to Work) or to other VR agencies (e.g. Bureau of Services for Blind Persons).

13. Unable to Contact

Aware Administrative Note summarizing unsuccessful effort to locate customer. Examples may include attempted contact through emergency contact number/address, email, phone and provided address and other agencies if a release of information was provided.

14. Failure to Participate

Aware Administrative Note summarizing customer actions result in inability to continue MRS services. Examples may include repeated failure to keep appointments, participate in assessment, engage in counseling, or other MRS counselor services identified as necessary to develop or support the IPE employment goal.

15. Non-CIE Outcome After Extended Employment

Aware Administrative Note summarizing customer received IPE services and was placed in a non-integrated or sheltered setting and did not subsequently achieve CIE.

16. Extended Services Unavailable (Supported Employment)

Aware Administrative Note summarizing customer received IPE services, but requires long term extended services (Supported Employment) for which no long-term source of funding is available.

17. Supported Employment Earning Sub-Minimum Wage

Aware Administrative Note summarizing customer achieved supported employment in integrated employment but did not earn a competitive wage after exhausting the short-term basis period.

18. Continued Employment at Sub-Minimum Wage

Aware Administrative Note summarizing at the time of referral customer was employed at sub-minimum rate of pay, applied for VR services and then a determination made that the customer did not desire to pursue CIE.

Notification of VR Case Record Closure

MRS provides customer written notice of case record closure based on the reason selected within the categories listed above. Notifications are to include:

- Effective date of case record closure
- Narrative description of the reason for case record closure
- Right to appeal case record closure decision
- Availability of Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Exception: Case record closure notification is not required when the reason is either #9 Death or #13 Unable to Contact listed within the *Categories of Case Record Closure and Documentation Requirements* section of this policy.

Referral Services at Case Record Closure

MRS staff input an *Aware* Actual Service entry indicating type of referral if determined necessary at case record closure, the purpose for the referral and a specific point of contact.

Referrals may consist of other appropriate federal and state programs or other components of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), based on specific rehabilitation needs such as, but not limited to, independent living and employment services.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.43, 361.44, 361.45, 361.48, 361.55 and 361.56

Policy:

Individuals whose cases were closed ineligible due to the severity of their disability and based on a finding that the individual was incapable of benefiting from Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) services in terms of an employment outcome shall be provided an opportunity for a review of that determination one year after case closure to assess whether their condition may have changed and they may now be capable of benefiting from services. A review shall not be conducted when the individual has refused it, is no longer present in the state, whereabouts are unknown, or when the individual's medical condition is rapidly progressive or terminal.

Procedure:

The AWARE Caseload Browse, Activity Due feature notifies districts of former clients whose cases were closed ineligible one year previously because their disability was too severe. The printout shall be reviewed against the closed case file to identify those individuals who do not require an annual review. For example, an annual review may not be required if:

- The review process was explained to the client at case closure, the client did not desire the review, and this fact was summarized in the closure letter;
- The individual is no longer in the state or cannot be located; or
- The individual's medical condition is rapidly progressive or terminal.

The Annual Review Case Closed Too Severe letter located in the Letters Catalog of AWARE shall be used to notify all individuals identified in AWARE of the opportunity for an annual review of their case closure. If an individual responds and indicates an interest in having a review of present circumstances, it shall be determined whether the individual's condition has changed so that MRS services would now be beneficial. If it appears the individual can now benefit from MRS services and is interested in reapplying, a new application shall be processed.

If the review indicates that the individual is not able to benefit further from MRS services, the individual shall be notified in writing of the decision and the rationale for it. The letter shall also advise the individual that subsequent reviews shall be self-initiated.

The outcome of the annual review shall be recorded in AWARE.

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Policy:

A review shall be conducted semi-annually for the first two years and each year thereafter, if requested by the individual or their representative, after a case has been closed on the basis of extended employment (sheltered employment) in a community rehabilitation program. The purpose of this review is to determine whether the individual may be ready to benefit from services leading to competitive integrated employment.

Procedure:

This review or re-evaluation shall include information from the individual or, in an appropriate case, the individual's representative to determine the interests, priorities, and needs of the individual for employment in, or training for, competitive integrated employment.

This review shall include signed acknowledgement by the individual, or as appropriate, their representative, that the review or re-evaluation has been conducted, and that maximum efforts in the identification and provision of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) services, reasonable accommodations and other necessary support services have been provided in an effort to engage the individual in competitive integrated employment.

The AWARE Caseload Browse, Activity due feature notifies districts of individuals whose cases were closed in Extended Employment six months previously. The printout shall be reviewed against the closed case file to identify those individuals who do not require a semi-annual review. For example, a semi-annual review may not be required if:

- The review process was explained to the individual at case closure, the individual did not desire the review, and this fact was summarized in the closure letter;
- The individual is no longer in the state or cannot be located; or
- The individual's medical condition is rapidly progressive or terminal.

The Semi-Annual Review Case Closed in Extended Employment from the Letters Catalog in AWARE shall be used to notify all other individuals on the listing of the opportunity for a semi-annual review of their case closure. If an individual responds and indicates an interest in having a review of present circumstances, it shall be determined whether the individual's condition has changed so that MRS services would now be

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beneficial. If it appears the individual can now benefit from MRS services and is interested in reapplying, a new application should be processed.

If the review indicates that the individual is not able to benefit further from MRS services, the individual shall be notified in writing of the decision and the rationale for it. After four semi-annual reviews have been completed, the letter shall also advise the individual that subsequent reviews should be self-initiated.

The outcome of the semi-annual review shall be recorded in AWARE in the Follow-up Browse page.

Information:

Extended Employment means work in a non-integrated or sheltered setting for a public or private nonprofit agency or organization that provides compensation in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Extended Employment does not satisfy the definition of competitive integrated employment and, therefore, is not considered a “successful” employment outcome under the Rehabilitation Act.

Annual Review of Case Closed with a Deviated Wage Case Closure

Policy:

An annual review shall be conducted yearly for the first two years and each year thereafter if requested by the individual or their representative after a case has been closed with a deviated wage; that is an hourly wage less than minimum wage. The purpose of this review is to determine whether the individual may be ready to benefit from services leading to competitive employment in an integrated setting.

Procedure:

This review or re-evaluation shall include information from the individual or, in an appropriate case, the individual's representative to determine the interests, priorities, and needs of the individual for employment in, or training for, competitive employment in an integrated setting in the labor market.

This review shall include signed acknowledgement by the individual, or as appropriate, their representative, that the review or re-evaluation has been conducted, and that maximum efforts in the identification and provision of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) services, reasonable accommodations and other necessary support services have been provided in an effort to engage the individual in competitive employment.

The AWARE Caseload Browse, Activity due feature notifies districts of individuals whose cases were closed with a deviated wage one year previously. The printout shall be reviewed against the closed case file to identify those individuals who do not require an annual review. For example, an annual review may not be required if:

- The review process was explained to the individual at case closure, the individual did not desire the review, and this fact was summarized in the closure letter;
- The individual is no longer in the state or cannot be located; or
- The individual's medical condition is rapidly progressive or terminal.

The letter, Annual Review Case Closed Deviated Wage, from the Letters Catalog in AWARE shall be used to notify all other individuals on the listing of the opportunity for an annual review of their case closure. If an individual responds and indicates an interest in having a review of present circumstances, it shall be determined whether the individual's condition has changed so that MRS services would now be beneficial. If it appears the individual can now benefit from MRS services and is interested in reapplying, a new application should be processed.

If the review indicates that the individual is not able to benefit further from MRS services, the individual shall be notified in writing of the decision and the rationale for it. The letter shall also advise the individual that subsequent reviews should be self-initiated.

The outcome of the annual review shall be recorded in AWARE in the Follow-up Browse page.

Federal Civil Service Placement Options Other Programs

Procedure:

The federal government has a special “Schedule A” appointing authority for persons with intellectual disabilities, severe physical disabilities, or psychiatric disabilities. Eligibility for appointment under this authority requires completion of a “proof of disability”. The proof of disability may be obtained from:

- Licensed vocational rehabilitation specialists (state or private)
- Licensed medical professionals (e.g. a physician or other medical professional certified by a State, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory, to practice medicine)
- Any federal agency, state agency, agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory, who issues or provides disability benefits.

Proof of Disability

In order to be hired under a Schedule A appointing authority, an individual must provide proof that he or she is an individual with intellectual disabilities, severe physical disabilities, or psychiatric disabilities. The proof of disability may be provided by appropriate documentation such as records, statements, or other appropriate information. The proof of disability must be provided to the hiring agency before an individual can be hired.

Information:

Federal agencies hire individuals two ways, competitively and non-competitively (i.e., Schedule A). Persons with disabilities may apply for jobs either competitively or non-competitively. Individuals who are selected for employment must meet the requirements for the position and be able to perform the essential job duties with or without reasonable accommodations.

Most federal agencies have a Selective Placement Program Coordinator (SPPC), Special Emphasis Manager (SEM), or an equivalent position that assists the agency to recruit, hire, and accommodate persons with disabilities. Information regarding the role of the SPPC-SEM, as well as information regarding additional programs for persons with disabilities, can be found at the following web sites:

- <http://www.opm.gov/disability>
- <http://www.usajobs.gov>

Counselors are encouraged to visit these sites to obtain additional information regarding federal employment and programs for persons with disabilities.

Bureau counselors may complete a proof of disability for individuals who are not customers of MRS.

Business Owned by a Person With a Disability Other Programs

Policy:

PA-112 requires that three percent of discretionary state procurement contracts be awarded to "businesses owned by a person with a disability".

Procedure:

A "business owned by a person with a disability" is defined as:

"a business of which more than 50% of the voting shares or interest in the business is owned, controlled, and operated by persons with a disability; with respect to which more than 50% of the net profit or loss attributable to the business accrues to shareholders with a disability; and in which more than 50% of the employees are residents of this state."

Individuals who, within the past five years, meet any of the following criteria are automatically considered to have a significant disability for purposes of PA-112: (1) eligible for services from Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), (2) eligible for services from the Commission for the Blind, (3) determined to have a 30% or greater disability rating by the Veterans Administration, or (4) received SSI or SSDI benefits.

There are three steps to the process of bidding on State contracts as a "business owned by a person with a disability":

- Verification that the individual has a current significant disability;
- Certification as a "business owned by a person with a disability" by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights using form CR507 (forms available through the Civil Rights Commission (313) 456-3823)
- Completion of a Vendor Application with the Michigan Department of Management and Budget which may be completed at any time during the process (forms available through the offices of the Department of Management and Budget, (517) 373-4111).

The Department of Civil Rights will accept a copy of an award letter or a check as verification of a person with a disability who have received SSI or SSDI during the past five years.

All other individuals, and MRS clients served within the past five years, may have their disability verified by MRS. Clients of the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, or the Veterans Administration within the past five years should be referred to those agencies for verification of disability.

**Business Owned by a Person With a Disability
Other Programs****Forms:**

The form related to this manual item is the RA-112, PA-112 Handicapper Verification.

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures for referral and authorization for services received through Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI).

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) supports MCTI vocational assessment and training services when identified in alignment with the vocational needs assessment and educational needs of a customer.

DEFINITIONS

Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI)

Accredited residential post-secondary vocational training center for adults with disabilities in Michigan supported by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). MCTI includes the following:

- Career Assessment Services (CAS) – A vocational evaluation program offered virtually or in-person on MCTI's campus to gather information about academic abilities, vocational aptitudes, and vocational interests through various tests and assessments. A MCTI Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor works with the student to interpret test results and make a recommendation about next steps for MCTI training.
- MCTI offers the following vocational training programs:
 - Automotive Technology
 - Cabinetmaking/Millwork
 - Certified Nursing Assistant
 - Construction
 - Commercial Printing
 - Culinary Arts
 - Custodial
 - Grounds Maintenance and Landscaping
 - Industrial Electronics
 - Information Technology
 - Machine Technology

- Pharmacy Technician
- Retail Marketing

PROCEDURES

Providing Information Regarding Services at MCTI

MRS counselor reviews MCTI programming options with the customer if there is a vocational interest that might be met through available MCTI programming.

As a part of the informed choice process, MRS customers should be encouraged to review the student resource section of the MCTI website for program information and updates.

MRS counselor may consult with MCTI regarding questions a customer has, the referral process, or for additional information on assessment and training options for customers, by emailing leo-mrs-mctiadmissions@michigan.gov or calling 269-664-4461.

Admission Requirements

MRS counselor accesses the MCTI webpage, email leo-mrs-mctiadmissions@michigan.gov or call 269-664-4461 to obtain assistance in the in the evaluation of a customer's capacity to meet the admission requirements to attend MCTI training programs.

Admission Requirements Specific to CAS:

MRS customers participating in virtual CAS are required to have access to a computer with a microphone and camera, as well as a reliable internet connection. MRS counselors may be requested to assist in these services in support of attendance at MCTI.

MRS counselors may be requested to assist with arrangement of transportation services to and from MCTI.

MCTI Referral Process

MRS counselors reference the MCTI cover memo, for required referral information for either CAS or MCTI training programs including:

- Guardian waiver (if applicable).
- Information that supports ability to benefit from programming.
- Potential accommodation needs to attend MCTI.
- Confirmation that customers have a picture identification (e.g. State issued, school issued, or passport).
- MRS Aware Service Authorization is issued for MCTI access and administrative purposes.

MRS staff forward MCTI referral packets the attention of the MCTI admissions coordinator, for processing. The MRS counselor will be notified of acceptance into the program.

Referral Requirements Specific to CAS:

If CAS is delivered in *Aware Service* status the service is required to be identified in the IPE.

If CAS is delivered as an assessment in *Aware Eligibility* status, an IPE plan development extension may need to be completed if the service is not completed prior to the 90-day required timeline.

**Upon Acceptance
to MCTI**

1. Coordination of Aware Case Management

Upon acceptance into a program MRS counselors will receive an email from MCTI requesting *Aware Guest Access- Update Full* to a designated MCTI counselor(s).

Note: The MRS counselor is required to establish an end date for the *Aware Guest Access* based on the projected length of programming. Upon completion of MCTI programming the MRS counselor is required to discontinue *Aware-Guest Access*.

When the MRS counselor provides *Aware-Guest Access-Update Full*, the assigned MCTI counselor(s) will have permission to do the following:

- Complete *Aware Actual Service* entries documenting customer activities and service delivery.

- Update Aware records,
- Draft of IPE or IPE Amendments (the assigned MRS counselor is required to approve all IPE's)
- Draft and issue authorizations for approved MCTI services in alignment with the IPE and RSM procedural requirements.

MCTI counselors are required to coordinate with and notify the MRS counselor in advance of all actions taken with respect to both drafting an IPE amendment or drafting/issuing an authorization for services. If the MCTI budget is not utilized, the MRS counselor will need to identify for MCTI staff the appropriate budget that will be used for the authorization.

2. Acceptance to CAS

MRS customer and counselor are notified of acceptance into CAS. MRS counselor assists with any coordination requirements regarding attending MCTI or for virtual sessions. There are no further documentation requirements of the MRS counselor necessary during service delivery.

3. Acceptance into a MCTI Training Program

Upon acceptance into an MCTI training program the MRS counselor will typically need to develop or amend an IPE to include attendance at MCTI.

The IPE is required to be in accordance with policy and is to contain the following considerations specific to MCTI:

- Employment Goal.
The employment goal is required to be aligned with the educational goal on the *Aware* Education page and with the MCTI training program that the customer is accepted into.
- IPE Service Category: *Training - MCTI Services*.
Detailing the training program the customer has been accepted into and projected dates of service. Estimated planned service costs include estimated FASFA funding, there are no MRS, or customer expected costs.

- IPE Service Category: *Training Support Services*.
To be included if training support services are necessary to succeed at MCTI. This may include housing support services such as disability related and family housing.
- IPE Service Category: *Adult Literacy or Remedial Training Services*.
To be included if remedial academic support services are necessary.
- IPE Service Category: *Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling & Guidance Services* sub-category *Peer Guidance-Mentoring*.
To be included if there is a need for short-term counseling services to address adjustment to living independently, or social coaching to assist with development of interpersonal communication skills.
- IPE Service Category: *Training Job Readiness*.
To be included if there is a need for job readiness training.
- IPE Service Category: *Transportation Services*.
To be included if there is a need for transportation to or from MCTI.

REFERENCES

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes guidelines for coordination with the Business Network Division (BND) to verify, deliver services, and bill for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) cases that involve third-party liability insurance.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Service (MRS) counselors' coordinate with BND when a VR case is identified to have a potential of third-party liability coverage.

DEFINITIONS

Third-Party Liability – A client customer has third-party liability when there is a third-party legally responsible for the costs of their vocational rehabilitation services, such as an insurance carrier when the client customer has a Workers' Compensation, Auto No-Fault, or Long-Term Disability claim, or is an eligible employee for reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended (ADAAA).

Notice of Service Letter – MRS letter sent to the identified third-party if the claim is open and billable, or if the insurance carrier is unresponsive to attempts to contact/complete an Insurance Screening. This letter details MRS' responsibility, per MCL 395.84(2)-(4), to collect fees where another entity is primarily responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services in an amount equal to the full cost of the services provided.

Lien - A legal right or claim that can be used to ensure cost recovery of monies spent by the agency for services rendered.

Lien Letter – MRS letter sent to the identified third-party if the claim is in litigation. This letter details MRS' responsibility, per MCL 395.84(2)-(4), to collect fees where another entity is primarily responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services in an amount equal to the full cost of the services provided.

PROCEDURES***Establishment of Third-Party Liability***

At intake the MRS counselor documents in the case record if the client customer indicated on the application, the Insurance Screening Questionnaire, or reports they have a third-party liability claim.

Referral to BND

MRS counselors complete a referral to BND if the client customer indicates a third-party liability claim. A referral includes:

1. *Aware form Completed Consultation Referral for BND Services* (MRS-8076a).
2. *Information Request* (MRS-24) and *Consent to Release Personal Information* (MRS-26) forms for the following:
 - Insurance Company
 - Attorney (if identified)
 - Pine Lake Fund
 - Workers' Disability Compensation Agency (if identified as a workers' compensation claim)
3. *Insurance Benefit Recipients Screening Questionnaire* (MRS-8075).
4. Supporting medical documentation necessary to facilitate service delivery. Examples of supporting documentation may include but are not limited to the following:
 - Psychological or neuropsychological evaluation
 - Audiograms
 - Medical restrictions
 - Functional capacity evaluation
 - Physical capacity assessment
 - Individual Education Plan (IEP) for student

Referrals are submitted the BND mailbox (LEO-BND-Referral@michigan.gov).

MRS counselor will receive an e-mail auto-reply confirming submission.

MRS counselor proceeds with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services. Services are not to be delayed or denied if there is involvement of third-party liability.

Coordination of Third-Party Liability Cases

BND staff contact the third-party liability provider to verify status of claim.

Open and Billable Claims

- BND staff document in the case record completion of a Notice of Service Letter to the third-party liability provider and coordinate with MRS counselor for service delivery.
- BND staff document in the case record invoicing for services rendered to the third-party liability provider.

Claims in Litigation

- BND staff document in the case record completion of lien letter to third-party liability provider and client customer's attorney.
- MRS counselor delivers VR services in coordination with BND staff.
- BND staff generate an invoice for vocational rehabilitation services rendered to seek cost recovery upon settlement.

Inability to Verify Claim

- BND staff document in the case record inability to verify claim status.
- MRS counselor continues with case services.

Claim is Settled

- BND staff document in the case record settlement of third-party liability.
- If there remains a need for VR, MRS counselor proceeds with case services.

No VR Services Available Under Claim

- BND staff document in the case record there is no comparable benefit for VR services available under claim.
- BND staff notify MRS counselor.
- BND case closed.
- MRS counselor continues with case services.

Unresponsive Insurance Carrier

- BND staff request MRS counselor obtain Information Request (MRS-24) and Consent to Release Personal Information (MRS-26) for the Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS) from the MRS client customer.
- BND staff document in the case record submission of a complaint to DIFS.
- BND staff document in the case record results of DIFS complaint in the case record and communicate next steps to MRS counselor.
- MRS counselor continues with case services throughout DIFS complaint process.

Tracking Time Spent on Third-Party Liability Cases in SIGMA

MRS staff must track their time spent working on third-party liability cases in SIGMA timesheets using the Labor Distribution Profile (LDPR) code of MRSRF. For more information and guidance on tracking in SIGMA time spent on third-party liability cases, refer to [ADM 0411 – Third-Party Liability Cases Timekeeping in SIGMA](#).

REFERENCES

[MCL 395.84\(2-4\)](#)

[ADM 0411 – Third-Party Liability Cases Timekeeping in SIGMA](#)

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes procedures to refer Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) customers to the Business Network Division (BND) for services.

POLICY

MRS counselors' access internal programming available through BND when appropriate to meet the needs of a MRS customer.

PROCEDURES***Referral Process***

MRS counselors may refer a customer to BND for assistance in meeting service needs. There are two types of referrals that can be made to BND, customer consultation and intra-department peer assistance services .

1. MRS Customers Consultation Services

MRS counselors reference – *Business Network Division Consultation Services* (listed in the INFORMATION section below) for consulting services offered by BND.

If a service for a MRS customer is identified, the MRS counselor completes a consultation referral and sends it to: LEO-BND-Referral@michigan.gov. Referrals are to include:

- *Aware letter - Consultation Referral for Business Network Division Services* (MRS-8076a).
- *Information Request* (MRS-24) and *Consent to Release Personal Information* (MRS-26) forms for Pine Lake Fund employees to engage in service delivery.
- If employed, *information Request* (MRS-24) and *Consent to Release Personal Information* (MRS-26) forms for customers employer.

- Supporting medical documentation necessary to facilitate service delivery. Examples of supporting documentation may include but are not limited to the following:

Psychological or neuropsychological evaluation
Audiograms
Medical restrictions
Functional capacity evaluation
Physical capacity assessment
Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students

MRS counselor will receive an e-mail auto-reply confirming submission.

Upon acceptance of the referral packet, BND staff will coordinate service delivery with the MRS counselor.

Note: If referring for a third-party liability screening, please refer to the Third-Party Liability Policy (RSM 8075) for procedures.

2. Intra-Department Peer Assistance Services for both MRS Individual and Business Customers

MRS counselors reference - *Business Network Division Intra-Department Peer Assistance Services* (listed in the INFORMATION section below) for intra-department services provided by BND.

If a service for a MRS individual or business customer is identified, the MRS counselor completes a consultation referral sent to: LEO-BND-Referral@michigan.gov and is to include:

- *Business Network Division Intra-Department Peer Assistance Request Form* (MRS-8076b).
- Supporting documentation necessary to facilitate service delivery. Examples of supporting documentation may include but are not limited to the following:
 - Event flyer
 - Location of service delivery
 - Time/date of event
 - Staff involved in the service

INFORMATION**Business Network Division Consultation Services**

BND Service	How it Benefits Your Customer/Business	Product/Deliverables
Accommodation Consult	Consultant assists an employer and/or employee in determining general or worker-specific reasonable accommodations consistent with ADA regulations.	The consultation includes a customized report for the business to assist in meeting ADA obligations, as well as identifying accessibility and/or reasonable accommodations for a specific employee. This consultation may also include a review of current policies and procedures to enhance accessibility and conformance with evidence-based best practices to enhance inclusion.
Assistive Technology (AT) Consultation	Consultant examines AT options specific to functional limitations as it relates to performance of essential functions of a job or educational/training program. This may include software, hardware, alternative peripheral devices and processes.	The Counselor or business is provided with a report that juxtaposes job tasks and requirements with specific recommendations, working with the existing technology systems on the site. Generally completed in 1-2 visits to the site. Equipment demos may be provided. Training also may be provided to assist with AT usage.
Complex Case Consultation	The consultant will provide diverse expertise in problem-solving complex issues with the counselor. Examples include reviewing vehicle modification bids, facilitating provision of medical DME (durable medical equipment), interpretation of FCE reports, vocational assessment, transferable skills analysis and other services, provided by the BND OT or Specialist, as appropriate.	Consultation can involve face- to-face meetings, document review, and communications by telephone and e-mail with the counselor as well as other stakeholders. Documentation will be via formal report and AWARE case notes.
Insurance Screenings	Assist counselors and customers in determining third-party liability for the client customer. Includes: Workers' Compensation, Auto Insurance, and Long-Term Disability.	Provide a written response as to whether the customer has a responsible third party and instruction on how to proceed with case and coordinate services.

Job Retention Services	The consultant will provide specialized expertise to assist in stabilizing employment in job-in-jeopardy situations. Recommendation may include identifying technology or other accommodations to allow the employee to perform essential functions of the job. Individual, short-term counseling with the customer/employee on use and integration of accommodations may be provided. Training and consultation also are available to supervisors regarding accommodation process and recommendations.	The Counselor/business partner will be provided with a report that includes essential job functions, worker task analysis, barriers to productivity, and specific recommendations that include service/equipment provider/supplier and estimated or market value for the service or item. Duration of services varies based on the needs of the business and employee/customer.
Small Business Consultation	The consultant will work with the counselor and customer to evaluate a customer's business readiness.	Counselor will be provided with a report including specific recommendations. Duration of services varies based on the needs of the customer.
State of Michigan Applicant Review	Assists the customer in preparing for participating in the State of Michigan recruitment, application, interviewing, and hiring process. Following this procedure does not guarantee employment with the State of Michigan. Note: The consultative advice can be used toward all employment.	Provide a State of Michigan Applicant Review report, which includes an overview of the discussion with customer and recommendations, which may help the customer obtain employment.
Task Chair Evaluation	The consultant will perform a seating evaluation for reasonable accommodations, return to work or job retention. Does not include wheelchairs or other medical equipment.	A report will be provided, including specific recommendations for chair and purchasing information. Generally completed in 1-2 visits to the work site.
Transferable Skills Analysis	The customer receives a formal analysis of current skills and occupations to which their current skills may transfer.	A written Transferable Skills Analysis report will be provided, including recommendations, which will assist the counselor in moving the case through the vocational process.
Voc Assessment - VMAP	Vocational Multi-factored Assessment Profile (VMAP) testing, using a series of administered and self-scored inventories, measuring intelligence, achievement levels, dexterity, interests,	A vocational report will be provided, including recommendations, which will assist the counselor in moving the case through the vocational process.

values, strengths, possible barriers to employment, personality and other factors pertinent to the customer's situation and goals. A non-reading test battery is also available.

Work Site Evaluation

Assess/identify strategies and/or equipment allowing a person to effectively perform their essential job functions. These cases include work stations with emphasis on accessibility and ergonomics.

A report will be provided identifying strengths and barriers to successful completion of essential functions of the job. Will include recommendations for modifications to the process or equipment. Generally completed in 1-2 visits to the work site. Part or all of the service may be provided virtually, as determined by the consultant.

**Workplace Assessment for
Hard of Hearing/Deaf**

Provide assistance in identifying technology or other accommodations to allow the employee to perform essential functions of the job, or to prepare for training or job seeking. Recommendations are based on the customer's completion of the Workplace Assessment for Persons with Hearing Loss, accompanied by a worksite visit and/or additional consultation.

A report will be provided that includes specific recommendations. Generally completed in 1-2 worksite sessions. Assisting with the implementation of recommendations may require additional time.

Business Network Division Intra-Department Peer Assistance Services
BND Service
**How it Benefits Your
Customer/Business**
Product/Deliverables

1-on-1 Training for staff

Individualized training in business service topics such as TAP, MiBRS, use of LMI, development of a TSA, etc.

Increased staff understanding and competence in processes related to business service delivery.

Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) Evaluation and Recommendations

Enhances access to a broader customer base and employees by facility and service accessibility. (Physical layout, measures, and universal design)

Assess accessibility of facility using ADAAG. Provide a comprehensive report with recommendations, and sources/service providers, as well as verification of items that meet the ADAAG standards.

BRC Consult	DO Staff consult with the BRC on business service process issues, such as Return to Work, Workers Comp., or the Reasonable Accommodation Process.	Individualized or small group consult with BRC provides increased understanding of business service process generally, so that they can apply this information to their own cases.
Complex Case Consult /Retention	Provide diverse expertise in problem-solving complex issues with the employee, business and/or counselor. Examples: review vehicle mod bids, facilitate provision of medical DME, interpret FCE, Voc Assessment, TSA and other service reports.	Consultation can involve face- to-face meetings, document review, and communications by telephone and e-mail with the counselor as well as other stakeholders. Documentation will be via formal report of AWARE case notes.
Facility Tour	Tour facility to gain a greater understanding of the functions of the business, and the potential barriers present.	Provide verbal feedback at the time of the tour and a brief report of observations and suggested actions in writing.
Job Analysis	Provide worksite job analysis to objectively determine the physical and/or cognitive demands of the job classification, including the measure and mean duration of a task.	Provide a Physical Demand Analysis report that identifies the physical demands of the job as typically performed.
Lunch-and-Learn	Assist businesses with ergonomics, body mechanics, and risk/injury reduction by providing training and consultation to the employees.	Provide guidance and/or intervention strategies and recommendations to the business and/or its employees.
Needs Analysis	Aid in identifying service needs for a business through interview and research.	Work with primary BRC to develop and provide a service proposal to the business.
OT Consult	Consult with OT regarding issues of the business.	Report of service provided.
Presentation – Primary	Assist businesses with needs (Disability Awareness, Disability Etiquette, etc.) by being the primary presenter for training to the employees.	Provide guidance and or intervention strategies and recommendations to the business and/or its employees. Results of pre/post eval provided to business.
Presentation - Support	Assist primary presenter in delivering training.	Results of pre/post eval provided to business.

Rehab Specialist Consult	Assist client or business customer by providing assessment service (TSA, Testing, LMI) and recommendations.	Provide written report with assessment outcomes, analysis, and recommendations for future actions.
Virtual Evaluation	BND staff work together to provide assessment of an individual or a workspace/chair using real-time connection (Skype, Teams, etc.) from two different locations.	Allows clients and businesses in distant locations to receive timely assessment services. Also allows client or business to benefit from expertise of team members who are unable to be physically present.
WorkSmart Office Eval	Provide ergonomic review of the set-up of workstations for all employees of a work unit, and correct use of existing equipment and task chair.	One report with general recommendations for the unit and individualized process and minor equipment or process changes for each individual.

Ticket to Work/Social Security Reimbursement Other Programs

Rev. 8/2021

Policy:

The Ticket to Work program is available to individuals who are eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) based on disability. Please refer to Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM) Item 3100 - Eligibility Criteria for policy regarding presumption of eligibility and Eligibility Determination requirements.

When a Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) customer is eligible for a Ticket under the Ticket to Work program, vocational rehabilitation services will be provided based on the customer's agreement to place the Ticket with MRS at the time the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is signed. If the Ticket has already been assigned to a provider other than MRS, the counselor will be notified, and the customer must decide whether to remain with the Employment Network (EN) to whom they have assigned their Ticket or place their Ticket with MRS. Note: there are exceptions in those instances where the Ticket is held by another state VR agency; please contact the Policy Unit for assistance.

If a customer receives social security benefits after the development of an IPE, the plan must be amended to show that the customer has made an informed choice and agrees that the ticket will be placed with MRS.

All applicants shall participate in an intake process explaining choices under the Ticket program including information regarding resources for benefits counseling and SSA work incentives.

Procedures:

The MRS counselor shall obtain verification of Social Security status for applicants eligible for SSI and/or SSDI benefits based on disability. This information shall be retained in the MRS case record.

Examples of acceptable verification:

- A copy of the SSA award notice;
- A letter from SSA notifying the applicant of eligibility;
- SSA query or other written confirmation of receipt of SSDI or SSI from the local Social Security office; or
- Ticket award notice – this is an actual Ticket or verification from Maximus that the individual is eligible for a Ticket.

Ticket to Work/Social Security Reimbursement Other Programs

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Intake Procedures

All SSA case records shall contain documentation that the following information was provided during intake.

- Customers may participate in the ticket program by working with MRS or an EN as the provider of VR services
- The customer's signature on an IPE signifies that customer agrees to work with MRS as the provider of choice.
- If MRS is notified by Maximus that a Ticket is currently assigned or in use with another provider and this occurs after the MRS counselor and customer have approved an IPE, the customer must decide to remain with the current provider or work with MRS. A Ticket may not be simultaneously assigned to MRS and an EN.

Ticket Procedures for MRS Staff

If IPE services have been initiated and MRS subsequently is informed that the Ticket has been assigned elsewhere, the MRS counselor must:

1. Notify their manager a customer on their caseload has assigned their Ticket to an EN;
2. Immediately stop all services and cancel all outstanding authorizations;
3. Notify the customer that services have been stopped using the "Stop Authorization" letter in AWARE;
4. Explain to the customer that a Ticket cannot be simultaneously assigned to MRS and an EN;
5. Based on the customer's decision to remain with MRS or to work with the EN, document the customer's decision in the case record. (a) If the customer chooses to work with the EN, the case must be closed. (b) If the customer chooses to work with MRS, the customer must send written notice to Maximus requesting ticket removal. Note: Services may resume upon counselor notification that the ticket has been placed with MRS.

Ticket Procedures for Customers

When a Ticket has been assigned to an Employment Network (EN), either the EN or the customer must send written notice to Maximus requesting removal of their ticket before MRS can provide services (by fax or mail: Maximus TTW at (703) 893-4149, or Maximus TTWP, PO Box 1433, Alexandria, VA 22313).

Ticket to Work/Social Security Reimbursement Other Programs

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Resources

As MRS works with individuals eligible for SSI and/or SSDI based on disability, it is important to make use of the employment supports and options available to them in pursuing an employment outcome.

Information:

The “purpose of Social Security’s Ticket to Work program is to expand the universe of providers. . . ” Any entity contracting with SSA under the program “assumes responsibility for the coordination and delivery of employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services to beneficiaries assigning tickets to it.” [Code of Federal Regulations 411](#)

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA) of 1999, is a program offered by the Social Security Administration for persons receiving SSDI, SSI or concurrent benefits based on disability. Its purpose is to increase the financial independence and self-sufficiency of SSI recipients and Social Security Disability beneficiaries through an expanded choice of providers for the provision of employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services.

Amended in 2008, the program offers a new service delivery model, Partnership Plus. Under this model, both a State VR agency and/or another service provider known as an Employment Network, may sequentially serve the same beneficiary and receive reimbursement from SSA, provided SSA payment criteria are met, as a ticket can only be designated to one service provider at a time. Beneficiaries achieving yearly progress goals, as established by SSA, will be exempt from a Continuing Disability Review per federal requirements.

Service Providers of the Ticket Program

A State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency can participate in the Ticket to Work program in one of two ways: Cost reimbursement or as an Employment Network (EN). MRS has chosen the cost reimbursement option. A State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agency is the only program authorized by law and automatically approved to provide services to beneficiaries without becoming an EN.

Ticket to Work/Social Security Reimbursement Other Programs

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Employment Networks (ENs) contract with SSA to provide services with beneficiaries. The payment system is different, as ENs are reimbursed by either the Outcome Payment System or the Outcome-Milestone payment system.

As a current participant under the Cost Reimbursement Payment System, MRS receives notification of ticket status through a secure electronic data exchange with Maximus.

Refer to Job Aid 8100a Rev. 7-2015 – Understanding Ticket to Work Concepts, for additional information.

View the document [Social Security's Vocational Rehabilitation Reimbursement Program](#) for information regarding the Cost Reimbursement method.

Benefits Planning Information/Resources


E-Learn's [Social Security Ticket to Work program](#) includes forms, job aids, and resources, and information about Social Security Work Incentives. You can also find valuable material on the Ticket at [Maximus](#) and in the [Social Security Red Book](#) that can be found in most offices or on-line.

For Social Security ticket assignment issues, contact the Social Security Claims Analyst, [Anita Barkley-Smith](#) at (517) 373-4469.

Job Aids

- Refer to Job Aid 8100a-JA Rev 7-2015, Understanding Ticket Concepts
- Refer to Job Aid 8100b-JA Rev 7-2015, Ticket Held by an Employment Network

Forms

 Ticket Assignment Form (OBSOLETE) - SSA-1365

 Ticket to Work Inactivation - TTW-Inactive

State Civil Service Placement Other Programs

Information:

There are special procedures available for persons with disabilities to access employment with the Michigan Department of Civil Service if they are not able to compete through the standard examination process. These consist of:

- The 12-Month Trial Appointment Program. The 12-Month Trial Process for Persons with Disabilities can be found at: http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs/0,4614,7-147-6877_8154-20157--,00.html. The Application for Persons with Disabilities and Request for Reasonable Accommodation in the Written Examination Process, CS-944 Revised 5/2011, can be found at: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/CS-944_HandicapDesignApp_14472_7.pdf. Contact person: Vivian Tansel 517-373-3062
- The Return to Work of Injured Employees Programs*

*The Return to Work Program is administered by the Office of State Employer, Employee Health Management. Additional information is contained in the Michigan Department of Civil Service Advisory (MDCS) Bulletin No. 3.12-1 located at the MDCS website at http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs/0,1607,7-147-6877_8151_9855-108453--,00.html or call (517) 241-9090.

The 12-month trial appointment process through the Michigan Department of Civil Service allows individuals with disabilities in applicant pools, under certain conditions, without participating in the appraisal process administered by the department for classification. This process is designed for persons, whose disabilities prevent them from competing, even when reasonable accommodations are provided, with other candidates in a standard written, electronic, or other appraisal process.

Applicants for the 12-month Trial Appointment must be referred and certified by Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Michigan Commission for the Blind, or VA. Individuals submitting applications directly to the Dept of Civil Services, or individuals referred by other rehabilitation agencies, are referred to authorized certifying agencies, who can certify them for the process after verification of the necessary supporting documentation.

The applicant must be self-designated as a person with a disability, as defined by applicable state and federal laws, by completing the Civil Service Form CS-944, Application for Persons with Disabilities and Request for Reasonable Accommodation in the Appraisal Process.

State Civil Service Placement Other Programs

Applications are reviewed to determine if reasonable accommodation can assist the applicant in the written, electronic, or other appraisal process.

Applicants certified for the process must possess the required education and experience for the requested classifications listed on the Classified Civil Service Application (CS-102) and Application for Twelve-month Trial Appointment Program for Persons with Disabilities (CS-630) forms.

Applicants must be able to perform the essential functions of the classification for which they are certified, with or without reasonable accommodations. Requests for reasonable accommodations on the job may be necessary and provided by the employer.

Applicants approved for this process are included in applicant pools in accordance with the time period established by the Department of Civil Service.

Once an applicant is appointed from the applicant pool, the 12-month probation period will serve in lieu of the written, electronic, or other appraisal process to evaluate candidates for positions in state service. Upon satisfactory completion of the probation period, permanent status may be granted. The same probationary rating methods and time periods are observed as in regular appointments. Persons with a disability who receive less than satisfactory ratings are subject to the same conditions as other employees, including separation from employment.

Appraisal methods that consist of an assessment of an applicant's education and experience are exempted from this process.

To enable successful job performance, whenever possible, sponsoring rehabilitation agencies may provide supportive services to persons with disabilities appointed under this process and to employing departments and agencies.

The Agency must submit Form CS-944, Application for Persons with Disabilities and Request for Reasonable Accommodation in the Written, Electronic, and Other Appraisal Process; Form CS-630, Application for Twelve-month Trial Appointment Program for Persons with Disabilities; and the Examination Application Form.

The forms must include the classification and appraisal method, identification of the disability and the rationale for the certification, and signature of the counselor. When completing the forms, it is very important to include a description of how the disability places the applicant at a competitive disadvantage in the written testing situation. Where possible, describe specific functional loss; e.g., actual visual acuity; decibels of hearing loss; type of functional loss of specific limbs, etc. Submission of medical documentation is not necessary.

State Civil Service Placement Other Programs

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The Michigan Department of Civil Service will review the application to determine if the applicant is eligible for the program.

If the applicant is eligible for the program, the Michigan Department of Civil Service will include the applicant in applicant pools for which they are qualified, send notification letter to the applicant, and send a copy of the approved Form CS-630 application to the authorized certifying Agency counselor.

If the applicant is not eligible for the program, the Michigan Department of Civil Service will indicate rejection and the rationale for the rejection of the CS-630 application and send a copy of the disapproved CS-630 application to the authorized certifying Agency counselor.

Questions regarding this regulation should be directed to the Department of Civil Service, P.O. Box 30002, 400 South Pine Street, Lansing, Michigan 48909, (517) 373-3048 or 1-800-788-1766, or MDCS-BHRS@Michigan.gov.

Vocationally Handicapped Certification Other Programs

Policy:

Individuals may be certified by Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) for Vocationally Handicapped Certification if they meet the following criteria:

- Have a medically certifiable heart, back, epilepsy, or diabetes disability;
- Are unemployed at the time the Worker's Certificate is issued;
- Have no pending job offer; and
- Are able to establish that they have been rejected for employment because of the disability.

Procedure:

Medical Records to Determine Eligibility

Although there are no specific recency requirements for medical records used to determine eligibility for Vocationally Handicapped Worker Certification, rehabilitation counselors shall determine whether available medical records are adequate to assess the applicant's current condition. Some conditions improve over time; for example, medical records which are several years old may not be adequate to diagnose a current back condition when the applicant's previous diagnosis was acute back sprain, from which s/he has recovered and become asymptomatic. Eligibility may not be based on history of a condition which no longer exists.

Based on federal regulations, medical evaluations may not be purchased for individuals who request only Vocationally Handicapped Worker Certification. It is not necessary to open a case for these individuals. Instead, a file folder, labeled "Vocationally Handicapped Only," shall be established for each P.A.183 applicant. Certification records for individuals who are not clients are stored and shipped in accordance with the **Case Storage and Shipping Instructions** outlined in this document.

Documenting Impairment is a "Substantial Obstacle to Employment"

Applicants for P.A. 183 certification must provide documentation they have been turned down for employment because of their disability, in order to demonstrate their impairment is a "substantial obstacle to employment," as required by P.A. 183. Individuals who already have an offer of hire will not be certified as they are not considered to have a substantial obstacle to employment. Employer rejection may not be assumed for an individual who has not been in the labor market. An individual cannot be certified until there has actually been a denial of employment for disability related reasons.

Vocationally Handicapped Certification Other Programs

Individuals who are eligible for extended assessment or for vocational rehabilitation services and have not had a job offer are not required to provide documentation of employer rejection.

On-the-Job Training or On-the-Job Evaluation

A Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certification should be completed prior to placing an individual in on-the-job training or on-the-job evaluation. If the worker certification is not completed prior to the initiation of evaluation or training, a community rehabilitation program or employer would not meet eligibility requirements and, therefore, would not qualify for employer certification.

Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certificate (RA-4476A) Procedure

The Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certificate also known as a Wallet Card (RA-4476A) may not be issued after employment has begun. *Only counselors and managers may sign certificates.* Other staff may gather data, complete case recording and conduct follow-up.

To document eligibility, the counselor must:

1. Obtain medical information to confirm the individual's disability.
2. Complete Part I of the Application for Vocationally Handicapped Certification Form (RA-70).
3. Obtain the Applicant's signature or, as applicable, the signature of the legal guardian or parent and date of signature. The Applicant's signature affirms that he/she is unemployed and allows Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) to forward records from his/her closed case record to the Vocationally Handicapped Provision of the Second Injury Fund for storage at the time the case record is scheduled to be destroyed. These records will be used to document that a disability was certified, if a claim is filed at a later date.
4. Obtain the employer's signature, position and date of signature in Part II as confirmation the Applicant was not hired due to inability to perform the job because of the disability checked in Part I.
5. Submit the RA-70 with the case record to the designated District Certificate Authorizer; i.e., either the counselor or the manager.

Part III.A. of the Application for Vocationally Handicapped Certification (RA-70) should be completed by the Authorizer on the same date that Part I is completed. If it is completed later, the counselor must obtain an updated, written verification of unemployment from the Applicant. The Authorizer must review the case record to ensure eligibility before completing and signing Part III.A.

Vocationally Handicapped Certification Other Programs

After Parts I-III of Form RA-70 have been completed, a Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certificate (RA-4476A) may be issued to the Applicant. The Certificate must be completed and signed by the Authorizer before it is issued to the certified individual.

The Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certificate expires two years after the issuance date. It must be renewed to continue certification. If a new certificate is requested, the same procedures must be followed as for original certificate, including completion of an RA-70.

Once you have completed the Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certificate, log the activity using the RA-76 – Vocationally Handicapped Certificate Log.

Vocationally Handicapped Employer's Certificate (RA-4476) Procedures

Any individual, firm, facility, or organization who is potentially liable for a claim under the Michigan Workers' Disability Compensation Act can request an employer certification.

Employers not potentially liable under the Michigan Worker's Disability Compensation Act are not eligible for certification. For example, federal government employers are covered by federal laws; interstate railroads are covered by the Federal Employers Liability Act; seamen on navigable waters are covered by the Merchant Marine Act of 1920; and people loading and unloading vessels are covered by the Longshoremen's and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act. Only those employers found eligible under Michigan's jurisdiction are afforded the protection of Chapter 9.

Only counselors and managers (Authorizers) may sign Vocationally Handicapped Employer's Certificates (RA-4476). Other staff may gather data and complete case recording and follow-up.

Note: Individuals who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services or Extended Assessment and have not had a job offer are not required to provide documentation of employer rejection. Therefore, Part II of RA-70 would not need to be completed for those individuals.

1. The issuing counselor must complete Part I and II of the Employer's Certificate Form (RA-4476). The date must be the same on the RA-70, Part III.B. and RA-4476, Part II. Note: Three copies of the RA-4476 should be sent to the employer. Two of the copies should be stamped "Copy".
2. The Authorizer must review the certification documents to ensure their accuracy and completeness before signing and dating Part II of the Vocationally Handicapped Employer's Certificate (RA-4476).
3. Issuance of the Employer's Certificate must be recorded on the Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certification Log (RA-76).
4. The counselor must ensure delivery of the RA-4476 to the employer as indicated in PART III.B. of the RA-70. It may be necessary to follow up with the employer to ensure timely

Vocationally Handicapped Certification Other Programs

return of the completed RA-4476 form. One certified follow-up letter is required to notify an employer to return the certificate within 60 days of hire and the consequences of not doing so; Form RA-4478 may be used. Follow-up attempts must be documented in the case record or Vocationally Handicapped Fund file and on the RA-70, Part III.B.

5. Once the completed certificate has been received, the counselor must review it for accuracy and completeness. The date it was received and judged accurate and “complete” must be recorded on the bottom of the RA-4476 using a date stamp.
6. The employer must be notified in writing the certificate has been received (unless it was returned by certified mail). Written notification to the employer must be recorded in Part III.B. of the RA-70.
7. Make two copies of the employer certificate, stamped “copy”. The District Office retains one copy in the master file, one copy must also be sent to the Second Injury Fund, Vocationally Handicapped Provision, 7150 Harris Drive, P.O. Box 30182, Lansing, Michigan 48909. *(If you are using pre-printed, 3-part forms ordered from the DMB Materials and Management Warehouse, the white copy goes to the employer, the canary copy goes to the Second Injury Fund Vocationally Handicapped Provision and the pink copy is placed in the master file.)*

Vocationally Handicapped Certificate Log – RA-76

The Vocationally Handicapped Certificate Logs must be kept **permanently** by each district office, which provides the district office the ability to communicate the date of transfer of an inactive file to the Second Injury Fund. Additionally, once a year when requested, the Vocationally Handicapped Certificate Log will be forwarded to Central Office for tabulation of Vocationally Handicapped Employer and Worker Certificate numbers.

Case Storage and Shipping Instructions

A separate manila file folder must be set up for each **“Vocationally Handicapped Only”** non-customer and customer record. (A non-customer record is a case that is not opened in AWARE.) When a case is opened in AWARE, the manila file folder is maintained with the regular case record until the case is closed in AWARE. Then, the folder for the Vocationally Handicapped Provision (VHP) is pulled from the regular case record and stored with the other VHP folders. Folders are necessary to ensure ease of handling and prevent loss of materials during the time the VHP cases must be stored by the Vocationally Handicapped Provision (VHP files are retained for 30 years after the file becomes inactive).

The tab of the folder must be prepared as follows:

LAST NAME, FIRST NAME DOB: 00-00-0000
SS # 0000 APPLICATION FOR
HANDICAPPED CERTIFICATION

Vocationally Handicapped Certification Other Programs

Minimally, the folder must contain:

- ✓ The RA-70, "Application for Vocationally Handicapped Certification".
- ✓ Applicant's complete address
- ✓ Applicant's birthdate
- ✓ Applicant's Social Security Number (*last 4 digits only*)
- ✓ Medical evidence used to certify the disability(ies).

If Applicable:

- ✓ The district copy of the RA-4476, "Vocationally Handicapped Employer's Certificate".
- ✓ A copy of the letter acknowledging receipt of the RA-4476 from the employer, or a certified mail receipt.
- ✓ Other relevant correspondence and documents.

Voided Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certificate or Employer's Certificate

If a Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certificate or Employer's Certificate is voided at any point in the process, the guidelines in the Case Storage and Shipping Instructions section apply.

Transferring VHP Files to the Second Injury Fund

Vocationally Handicapped Provision files are retained in the district office for three years following the fiscal year in which final action was taken. In February through April, all customer VHP records eligible for transfer are boxed and shipped to:

Assistant Administrator
Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
Second Injury Fund, Vocationally Handicapped Provision
7150 Harris Drive
P.O. Box 30182
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Districts can order record retention boxes from the current state-contracted office products vendor. VHP records must be boxed in alphabetical order. Each box must contain an alphabetized list of the records enclosed in that box. (Note: If you don't have enough files to fill a record retention box, you may use a large envelope.) A copy of the list must be kept in your office as well. The list should identify the date you are sending the files, your district office and then each client's last name (in alphabetical order), first name, last 4 digits of social security number and date of birth.

Vocationally Handicapped Certification Other Programs

VHP records should be mailed to the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Second Injury Fund, Vocationally Handicapped Provision by interdepartmental mail or certified mail.

Retrieval of VHP Records

When it is necessary to retrieve a VHP file from the Fund, a written request must be sent to the assistant administrator at the Second Injury Fund at the address above or an e-mail can be sent to funds@michigan.gov requesting the VHP file. The assistant administrator will need the name, date of birth, last 4 digits of social security number, date of transfer to the fund, and your office name and address for forwarding of the file. The entire file will be sent to your office and must be returned to the Fund within 5 working days using certified mail. Files may be the basis for legal proceedings; it is essential all materials are returned.

Information:

Vocationally Handicapped Certification (also known as PA 183 since 1972) limits an employer's liability for Workers' Compensation payments to 52 weeks per injury for any employee appropriately certified as having a heart, back, epileptic, or diabetic disability prior to hire. The Second Injury Fund pays all costs associated with the vocational rehabilitation of certified employees, from the date of injury. This legislation does not limit an employee's entitlement to benefits, but limits the number of weeks the employer is responsible for workers' compensation benefits, and eliminates the employer's responsibility for the cost of vocational rehabilitation under Section 319. If the employee is in need of vocational rehabilitation services and/or is entitled to compensation coverage beyond the number of weeks for which the employer is liable, the benefits are provided from the Vocationally Handicapped Provision of the Second Injury Fund established by the State Legislature. The Fund is maintained through an annual assessment against all insurance companies that write workers' compensation policies in the State of Michigan, and all employers who self-insure their workers' compensation liability in Michigan.

MRS is designated in the legislation as the certifying agency for the Vocationally Handicapped Worker Program.

There are two types of certificates in the Vocationally Handicapped certification process.

- A Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certificate, RA-4476-A, issued to the individual is a wallet size card that certifies that the applicant met certification criteria. It may be used to inform an employer of potential coverage once Employer Certification is completed.
- A Vocationally Handicapped Employer's Certificate, RA 4476, issued to the employer, is necessary to complete the certification process. This completed document initiates employer coverage by the Vocationally Handicapped Provisions of the Second Injury Fund.

Vocationally Handicapped Certification Other Programs

Vocationally Handicapped Certification is authorized under Section 915 of Chapter 9 of the Worker's Disability Compensation Act.

Forms:

Forms related to this manual item are the:

- ✓ RA-70 – Application for Vocationally Handicapped Certification
- ✓ RA-4476 – Vocationally Handicapped Employer's Certificate
- ✓ RA-4476a – Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certificate
- ✓ RA-4478 – Vocationally Handicapped Worker's Certification Letter, and
- ✓ RA-76 – Vocationally Handicapped Certificate Log

Wage Deviation Other Programs

Policy:

Individuals shall be placed in suitable jobs at prevailing wages as allowed by their capability and consistent with their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE); however, wages below the legal minimum may be appropriate if they are commensurate with the individual's production rate and conform to governmental wage and hour regulations. The employer must obtain wage deviation certification.

Procedure:

The Federal Government issues special sub-minimum wage certificates and the State of Michigan issues wage deviation certificates. Federal and State procedures are outlined below.

Federal Certification

Federal certification is required for establishments to pay sub-minimum wages to workers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938, as amended and who have a disability for the work to be performed.

Federal certificates are issued to establishments, which pay sub minimum wages rather than issued to individual workers, and are valid for either a 12 or 24 month period on an annually renewable basis. Employers apply for certificates by submitting Forms WH-226 "Application for Authority to Employ Workers with Disabilities at Special Minimum Wages" and WH-226A "Supplemental Data Sheet for Application for Authority to Employ Workers with Disabilities at Special Minimum Wages" to the Wage and Hour Division of the United States Department of Labor at the following address:

U.S. Department of Labor
Wage and Hour Division
230 South Dearborn St. Room 530
Chicago, Illinois 60604-1757
Telephone: (312) 596-7195

Web Address for Informational Guides and Fact Sheets:

http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-11407_59886---,00.html

Approval of an application takes approximately 30-45 days. Employers applying for the first time or who have not submitted a timely renewal application must pay wages consistent with the state minimum wage, the federal minimum wage or, if there is a government contract, the Service Contract Act (SCA) wage determination rate (whichever is the higher applicable rate) for any work performed until the certificate is issued. Certificates are valid for either a 12 or 24 month period from the approval date. As a courtesy, the U.S.D.O.L. Wage and Hour Division

Wage Deviation Other Programs

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sends renewal applications to employers approximately 60 days prior to the expiration of certificates. Certificate holders are responsible for submitting renewal applications in a timely manner, and failure to receive a renewal application from the Wage and Hour Division is not a valid reason for failure to submit the application. Unless employers renew their certificate or obtain an extension, sub-minimum wages may not be paid beyond the expiration date.

Counselors may assist employers in completing applications for certification. Assistance can include the gathering of prevailing wage rate information in the local area, or assessing employee productivity.

On the form WH-226, a state agency or the U.S. Veterans Administration may authorize Temporary authority for the vocational rehabilitation programs they administer. This temporary authority for an employer to pay sub-minimum wages will exist for 90 days and cannot be extended or renewed by the issuing agency. This may assist counselors in arranging on-the-job evaluation or training programs, schoolwork experiences, and transitional or temporary employment for individuals who perform at non-competitive rates. Employers must apply for a regular certificate if they agree to hire an individual permanently. Applications should be submitted as soon as the decision to hire has been made rather than after the Temporary Certificate has expired, if one has been authorized.

State of Michigan Certification

A Michigan Individual Wage Deviation Certification is required before an employer may pay a sub-minimum wage to a worker covered by the Michigan Minimum Wage Law of 1964. The state law applies to establishments with gross annual receipts under \$500,000.00 unless engaged in interstate commerce, and must employ at least two individuals sixteen (16) years or older.

Michigan wage deviation certificates are issued for individual workers rather than for all employees of the certified establishment, and are renewed annually. An employer requests certification for a specified employee and wage rate on an "Application for Individual Wage Deviation Certification". The application is signed by both the employer and employee, and mailed to:

Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)
Wage & Hour Division
PO Box 30476
Lansing, MI 48909-7976
Telephone: (517) 322-1825

Web Address for Informational Guides and Fact Sheets:
<http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,1607,7-154-27673---,00.html>

Wage Deviation Other Programs

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Applications for deviated wage certification are forwarded to the Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Policy unit, along with a "Wage Deviation Appraisal Report" by the LARA Wage and Hour Division. The "Wage Deviation Appraisal Report" form is forwarded to the local MRS district office to be completed by a counselor within two weeks. The counselor may open a case file to purchase diagnostic services if needed to appraise the work capacity of a non-client.

Prior to completing the "Wage Deviation Appraisal Report", the counselor is required to conduct an on-site appraisal of the worker's productivity, and determine the resulting commensurate wage rate. The counselor then recommends whether the employer's proposed wage rate should be approved, modified, or denied. The signed "Wage Deviation Appraisal Report" is forwarded to the MRS Policy Unit for review and returned to the LARA Wage and Hour Division. The Wage & Hour Division determines approval of a wage deviation application.

Information

A "commensurate" wage is that which reflects the productivity of the worker with a disability proportionate to both the productivity and prevailing wages of non-disabled workers performing similar work. If, for example, a housekeeper with a disability cleans only half as many rooms per shift as non-disabled housekeepers who receive \$9.00 per hour, the commensurate wage would be 50% of the prevailing wage, or \$4.50 per hour.

Both federal and state certifications require the employer to document worker productivity and prevailing wages for the types of work being performed at sub-minimum rates. Employers must also periodically adjust deviated wages to reflect changes in performance, or in the wages being paid to local non-disabled workers performing similar work. If such adjustments result in a wage that meets or exceeds the minimum wage, certification is no longer necessary.

Establishments may use the prevailing wages paid to their own non-disabled employees when computing a commensurate wage rate. Employers who hire disabled workers only, must use a prevailing wage, which is representative of the local economy. In either case, the sources from which prevailing wage information is obtained must be documented.

Forms:

- ✓ WH-226 – Application for Authority to Employ workers with Disabilities at Special Minimum Wage
- ✓ WH-226A – Supplemental Data Sheet for Application for Authority to Employ Workers with Disabilities at Special Minimum Wages
- ✓ RA-8200a – Application for Individual Wage Deviation Certification
- ✓ RA-8200b-temp – Wage Deviation Appraisal Report

Workers Disability Compensation Other Programs

1 of 2
Section VIII

Rev. 1/2000

Policy:

Applicants for services with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) who are receiving Workers' Compensation benefits should be referred to MRS' Disability Management Program. A case shall also be referred to the Disability Management Program if an insurance carrier elects to pay for rehabilitation costs during litigation.

Procedure:

Individuals with Workers' Compensation claims may be served in MRS' General Program if:

- The claim is in litigation,
- The claim has been redeemed, or
- They are receiving Workers' Compensation, but it has been determined by the Disability Management Program that they require rehabilitation services that are not the responsibility of the insurance carrier or self-insured employer.

Form RA-140, Workers' Disability Compensation Case Information Report is required to be sent to the Bureau of Worker's Disability Compensation when a case is opened in the General Program, if the case is in litigation or the case will be served concurrently in the Disability Management Program.

The client's written permission should be obtained to exchange any information, other than the RA-140, with the Bureau of Workers' Disability Compensation.

Information:

Under the Michigan's Workers' Compensation Act, injured workers are entitled to weekly benefits and medical and vocational services if the employer is legally responsible for the injury.

For consultation and assistance, the Vocational Rehabilitation Division, Bureau of Workers' Disability Compensation can be contacted at:

Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
Workers' Disability Compensation Bureau
P.O. Box 30016
Lansing, MI 48909
1-(888) 396-5041

Workers Disability Compensation Other Programs

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Staff of the MRS Disability Management Program can also be consulted.

A litigated case is one that is involved in some type of legal proceeding. If a dispute occurs, the claimant (client) or the carrier may petition for a hearing before a magistrate. This dispute might revolve around the injury itself, the payment of weekly benefits, the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, or other issues.

Carriers cannot be required to provide vocational rehabilitation in those cases where they have filed for a hearing to determine their responsibility to provide Workers' Compensation benefits.

Neither is a carrier obligated to provide vocational rehabilitation in those cases where an order to pay Workers' Compensation is appealed and awaiting a decision.

Counselors can call the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Bureau of Worker's Disability Compensation to determine the status of an individual's claim.

Individuals whose cases are redeemed receive a complete and final cash settlement. The carrier is not responsible for further costs. The client and counselor should determine the client's ability to contribute to rehabilitation costs from the settlement.

Under the Workers' Disability Compensation Act (Section 418.319) employers and insurance carriers are responsible only for services needed to address the work-related injury. They are not responsible for services needed to address other disabilities or for services to family members. They may not be responsible for training programs of more than 52 weeks.

Forms:

The forms related to this manual item is the RA-140 – Workers' Disability Compensation Case Information.

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes guidelines for the authorization of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) purchased services.

POLICY

MRS authorizes for the delivery of services when services are not provided in full by MRS staff or a comparable benefit/service.

DEFINITIONS

Authorization - *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase* (Ra-Z40-x) form is provided to a vendor to detail requested goods to be obtained or service(s) to be delivered.

Aware 4-Step Authorization Process – Aware procedure to draft authorization, issue authorization, draft payment, and release payment.

Retroactive Authorizations - An authorization issued after a service has been initiated or completed.

Direct Authorization - A single payment for goods or service issued directly to an MRS customer.

Recurring Authorization - Multiple payments, generated from a single authorization, issued over a designated period of time directly to an MRS customer.

PROCEDURES

Fiscal Accountability

MRS staff draft and issue authorizations in alignment with the *Aware 4-Step Authorization Process* and corresponding policies and procedures in the Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM).

MRS staff are assigned financial permissions to authorize services based on *Aware Security Guidelines*. MRS staff are not permitted to exceed or circumvent their assigned financial permissions.

Example: MRS staff are prohibited from issuing multiple authorizations to avoid financial limits or policy restrictions.

Failure to comply with *Aware* internal controls or policies contained within the RSM will result in *Aware* authorization access being restricted. Prior to authorization privileges being reinstated, the staff member will need to successfully complete fiscal training.

Use of MRS Vendors

MRS staff utilize MRS vendors to purchase required services.

If a vendor is unable to be identified for the purposes of providing a service, the counselor enters an *Aware – Administrative Note*. This note describes the effort made to explore other vendors to deliver the services and, if appropriate, the counselor's inability to locate a vendor. This *Administrative Note* is provided to the MRS manager for consultation and guidance.

MRS Signature When Issuing an Authorization

When MRS staff sign an authorization, they are verifying that the authorization for services is in alignment with relevant policies and procedures contained in the RSM, the *Aware 4 – Step Authorization Process* was appropriately followed, and the authorization coding requirements are accurate.

Drafting and Issuing Individual Authorizations (Vendor)

The following information is necessary to generate a vendor an authorization:

- Begin/end date of each itemized service
- Fund Source
- Vendor (including address)

- Service category/sub-category and description of goods and/or service(s) to be provided
- Cost including units/hours per service
- MRS staff signature

MRS counselor provides the MRS signed authorization to the vendor and retains a copy of the signed authorization in the customer's case record.

Amendment of an Individual Authorization (Vendor)

MRS staff may amend an authorization during the same fiscal year as the original authorization. Documentation in either the *Aware – Administrative Note* or in the *Aware* authorization page is required to indicate the rationale for the amendment. The following information is amendable:

- **End date** - when more time is necessary to complete a service.
- **Unit/hours** - decrease or increase of units/hours when amended prior to service delivery and in alignment with service parameters.
- **Addition or removal of a service** - services may be added or removed prior to the service starting.
- **Fund source** – may be changed when it's determined another budget/funding source is more appropriate for the delivery of the service.

To avoid a retroactive authorization when changing unit/hours or adding a service, the amended authorization is required to be issued prior to delivery of the amended portion of the service.

When an amended authorization is issued, the vendor is provided the MRS signed amended authorization and a copy is retained in the customer's case record.

Drafting and Issuing Group Authorizations (Vendor)

Group authorizations are limited to the following *Aware* service categories:

- Customized Employment – Discovery
- Customized Employment - Job Development/Placement
- Job Placement Assistance
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Public Transportation
- Private Transportation

MRS counselors consult with their MRS manager prior to issuing a group authorization.

MRS manager reviews the request for a group authorization and, if appropriate, assumes responsibility for the group authorization. A MRS signed copy is provided to the vendor, and a copy is retained in a separate folder within the district office for audit purposes.

Amendment of a Group Authorization (Vendor)

MRS manager may remove a customer from a group authorization. A customer may only be added to an existing group authorization if one was first removed.

MRS manager may cancel a group authorization. If canceled, then each customer record is to reflect the reason for the cancellation.

Drafting and Issuing a Direct/Recurring Authorization

If unable to identify a vendor to deliver a service, MRS counselors complete an *Aware – Administrative Note* detailing their efforts to secure a vendor. Then and only then, should a request to the MRS manager for a direct or recurring authorization to the customer be made.

Direct and recurring authorizations are only issued by an MRS management and within these constraints:

- MRS site managers are permitted to issue amounts up to \$1,000
- MRS district managers are permitted to issue amounts up to \$3,000
- MRS division directors may issue amounts over \$3,000

MRS managers ensure that direct/recurring authorizations are aligned with the appropriate *Aware* service categories.

The following information is necessary to generate a direct/recurring authorization:

- Begin date of authorization
- Fund Source
- Address of MRS customer, MRS office, or Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) if customer is located at MCTI
- Service category/sub-category and description of goods and/or service(s) to be purchased
- Frequency of payments for recurring authorizations
- MRS staff signature

The MRS counselor is required to send to the customer receiving a direct or recurring payment a *Notice of Payment to Participant* letter generated by *Aware*. This letter is required to be generated at the time of authorization and sent prior to the customer receiving the first direct or recurring payment.

MRS counselor retains the issued/signed direct/recurring authorization in the MRS customer's case record.

Letter of Intent

MRS Bureau Director may issue a policy directive to managers granting the use of a *Letter of Intent* when there is an inability to issue authorizations for services.

MRS managers are responsible for issuing a *Letter of Intent* to vendors on an interim basis and as appropriate. When authorization access has been restored, managers and counselors

should follow the normal process for issuing authorizations to vendors.

Retroactive Authorizations

Retroactive authorizations are prohibited.

If it is determined that a retroactive authorization was issued in error, or a service was initiated or completed without an authorization in place, the MRS manager is notified.

REFERENCES

34 CFR - 361.50, 361.51, 361.52.52

2-CFR 200.1, 200.400, 200.403 - .405

AWARE 4-Step Vendor Authorization Process

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy establishes guidelines for Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) rate of payment for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.

POLICY

MRS authorizes for services necessary to determine eligibility, establish need for services, and to develop and implement an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or PTA Service Agreement.

MRS maintains a Fee Schedule for select VR services. VR services not listed within the Fee Schedule are authorized based on the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual.

MRS is prohibited from supporting:

- Reimbursement for service delivery initiated or completed prior to MRS authorization.
- Establishment of arbitrary limits on the nature, scope, and timeframe for delivery of VR services.
- Cost of a service that exceeds the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual.
- Out-of-state services beyond the cost of an equivalent in-state service.
- Services beyond the defined scope of the MRS Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM).
- Vendor Expenses incurred as a cost of conducting business.

DEFINITION

Fee Schedule

MRS document that contains a complete list of established rates of payment used to authorize and pay for specified services.

Rate of Payment

The agency approved monetary fee by unit/hour established to pay for a specified service. The unit hour fee is permitted to be billed on a quarter hour/unit as follows:

Service Minutes	Round to Nearest Quarter Hour/Unit
:01 - :14	.25
:16 - :29	.50
:31 - :44	.75
:46 - :60	1

Vendor Expenses

Costs of conducting business not directly associated with delivery of the requested service. These include but are not limited to:

- Employee training and supervision activities
- Employee equipment
- ADA compliance
- Administrative activities including general staff meetings
- Meetings established for referral or review of services
- No-shows or missed appointment fees
- Report writing partially or entirely associated with a purpose other than the service(s) that MRS has authorized to be provided to the MRS applicant or eligible individual, such as reports for financial purposes or internal staff performance reports.
- Activities otherwise not directly allocable to services provided to an MRS applicant or eligible individual and authorized by MRS.
- Travel time

Note: While travel time is not billable time, travel time was included in the rate setting methodology and vendors are indirectly paid for travel. For more information about how vendors are paid for travel, see the [2020 Rate Recommendation Report](#) and the [2024 Rate Refresh Memo](#).

PROCEDURES

Identification of Rate of Payment for a Service

MRS counselor references the Fee Schedule and/or individual service policies to identify if there is rate of payment for the service to be delivered.

Identification of Allowable Service Payment Hours

MRS is only permitted to pay a vendor for hours of services that:

1. Are provided and directly allocable to an MRS applicant or eligible individual,
2. Have been authorized by MRS, and
3. Are not Vendor Expenses.

Services can be billable with or without the MRS applicant or eligible individual present if all three conditions above are met.

Allowable and billable vendor services include but are not limited to:

Example: A vendor authorized to provide Psychological and Neuropsychological Evaluation services to an MRS applicant or eligible individual completes a report following an in-person evaluation session that summarizes the evaluation's findings to be provided to MRS and possibly the individual. Because this type of report is directly allocable to an MRS applicant or eligible individual, is for a service authorized by MRS, and is not a Vendor Expense, time spent writing the report is allowable to be billed for.

Example: A vendor authorized to provide Benefits Counseling services to an MRS applicant or eligible individual prepares for a counseling session by researching how the benefits situation unique to the MRS applicant or eligible individual could impact possible employment.

Unallowable and unbillable vendor expenses include but are not limited to:

Example: A vendor authorized to provide Psychological and Neuropsychological Evaluation services to an MRS applicant or

eligible individual completes a Monthly Progress Report to provide to the individual's MRS counselor and to receive payment.

Example: A vendor authorized to provide Benefits Counseling services to an MRS applicant or eligible individual prepares for sessions by creating a frequently asked questions document to be provided to every individual they provide benefits counseling to.

Determining Rate of Payment for a Service Not Identified in the Fee Schedule

If a rate of payment is not identified in the Fee Schedule, the MRS counselor evaluates potential vendors to determine the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual. An *Aware Administrative Note* minimally documents:

- Resources used to identify available vendors
- List of available vendors including service and cost (excluding vendor expenses)
- Selection of vendor who will provide the least cost service that meets the vocational need of the individual

Exception To Fee Schedule

If an individual's barrier to employment results in a need for a specialized service or service delivery mechanism not in alignment within the parameters of established RSM service policies and associated Fee Schedule, the MRS counselor may pursue an exception.

MRS counselor documents request for Fee Schedule exception in an *Aware Administrative Note* and forwards the request to their manager. A request for exception includes:

- Summary of the individual's need, based on disability and barriers to employment, not met by the corresponding RSM service policy
- List of available vendors who confirm an inability to meet the vocational need of the individual in alignment with the Fee Schedule

- Identification (if known) of alternate programming options able to meet the specific vocational need of the individual and cost of service

MRS manager reviews request and documents in an *Aware Administrative Note* a confirmation of service providers inability to meet the individual's need based on the Fee Schedule and submits collected information to MRS division director for review.

MRS division director determines whether to approve or deny the exception. Decision is forwarded to MRS manager and MRS Program Enhancement Division (PED) mailbox.

MRS manager, if approved, submits request to *Aware* Support Desk for temporary override protocol and follows the *Aware* 4-step authorization process for vendor authorizations based on an exception to the Fee Schedule.

MRS PED maintains a list of all decisions for data tracking purposes.

REFERENCES

[CFR 200.1](#); [200.302](#); [200.303](#); [200.317](#); [200.318](#); [200.320](#); [361.50](#), [MCL Sections 18.1261](#) and [18.1268](#)

Independent Contractors Fiscal Processes

Policy

Independent Contractors are persons who are employed and paid directly by the applicant or the eligible individual for whom they provide a service. Such arrangements may be needed for legal or tax reasons and/or to advance self-direction for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Examples are life skills coach, personal care attendant, job coach, mentor, and advisor.

Procedures

These providers and services have arisen due to the intensive nature and scope of services which may be necessary for persons with the most significant disabilities to take their place in the competitive work environment. Such services generally do not have a national or state credentialing standard. If no provider standards exist for these service providers, they shall meet minimum education and training requirements for their practice. Training for such services is often offered by community service organizations, such as United Cerebral Palsy and community mental health providers, or may be available through a university or community college. Any assistants whom the independent contractor hires shall be qualified to perform the duties assigned.

The independent contractor assumes all fiscal obligations and must maintain liability insurance. When the individual and counselor decide on a service and provider requiring independent contracting, the individual and the independent contractor are to agree on services to be provided and payment for the service. The counselor may assist in reaching an agreement with the independent contractor, if called upon by the eligible individual. If Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) assists in making payment to the individual to support the services of an independent contractor, a copy of a signed purchase agreement must be in the case record. If the service is being provided as part of the employment goal, the service must be included in the IPE.

Each service shall be separately documented with a Purchase of Service Agreement, RA-4589 for a specific service, over a specified period of time at a pre-determined cost. The counselor shall maintain a copy of any such Agreement in the individual's service record.

Information:

Independent contractors, by definition, are not employed by, or under contract to an accredited rehabilitation facility or other private or public entity which assumes liability for its employees and/or persons under contract. They perform work or provide a service for which there is no national or state approved or recognized standard, and the services they provide do not fall within the scope of practice of other occupations for which a service or national standard exists.

Independent Contractors
Fiscal Processes

Forms:

The form related to this manual item is the RA-4589 – Purchase of Service Agreement.

PURPOSE

In accordance with state and federal regulations, this policy and procedure establish guidelines for billing and payment for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), prior to payment of an authorization, verify goods or service were delivered and met all obligations outlined in the authorization and referral for services.

DEFINITION

Authorization – *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form provided to a vendor to detail requested goods to be obtained or service to be delivered.

Aware 4-Step Authorization Process – Aware procedure to draft authorization, issue authorization, draft payment, and release payment.

Invoice – The *Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Vendor Authorization for Purchase (Ra-Z40-x)* form or vendor-generated form that details the service or goods that was delivered in alignment with the MRS authorization, including the date(s) of service, billing amount, and if partial or final billed.

Receipt – A written or printed statement from a place of business that confirms a specific service or good(s) was delivered, cost, and date of service in alignment with the MRS authorization.

Report – A written document that summarizes service delivery in alignment with the MRS authorization.

PROCEDURES

Payment of Vendor Purchased Goods or Service

MRS counselor, manager, or director prior to signature on an authorization, verifies:

- Vendor section of authorization is completed including checked *Partial Billing/Final Billing* box
- MRS customer signature is on the authorization if indicated as required to verify receipt of service or good(s)
- Obtainment of all required vendor reports, invoices, and/or receipts that reflect delivery of service or good(s)
- Dates of service are in alignment with the authorization

MRS staff signature for approval of payment indicates verification of delivery of service or good(s) and obtainment of required report(s), invoice(s), and/or receipt(s).

Payment of Direct/Recurring Purchased Goods or Service

Payment of a direct/recurring authorization is completed when the authorization is issued. The payment is provided to the MRS customer for the indicated service or good(s).

MRS counselor is required to obtain verification of purchased service or good(s) within 60 days of issuing the authorization. If receipt is not obtained within 60 days, MRS counselor documents an *Aware Administrative Note* indicating rationale for an extension and new expected due date to obtain the receipt.

Note: Verification of receipt of service for direct/recurring authorization is required prior to authorization of additional direct/recurring services. MRS manager may approve an exception to avoid a delay in service(s).

Payment of Group Purchased Service or Good(s)

Prior to approving payment of a group authorization, MRS manager:

- Confirms invoice/receipt reflects completion of the specified service or good(s) authorized for everyone listed in the group authorization
- Maintains a unique report for each customer listed on the group authorization within the customer file

MRS manager maintains two office files for audit purposes. One file contains all approved/active group authorizations. The second file retains completed group authorizations/invoices.

Michigan Sales or Use Tax

The State of Michigan tax-exempt number is printed on the authorization.

MRS is exempt from paying Michigan Sales or Use Tax in alignment with MCL 205.93a.

Exception: When MRS financially supports a customer's purchase of a vehicle, the sales tax must be paid either by MRS or the customer.

Missing/Incomplete/Inaccurate Invoice, Receipt, or Report

An *Aware Administrative Note* is required if an invoice, receipt, or report is missing, incomplete, or inaccurate. Documentation includes attempts to obtain an invoice, receipt, or report of service or good(s), examples of include but are not limited to:

- Follow up with vendor or customer to obtain invoice, receipt, or report
- Request the customer obtain a copy of a receipt from service provider

If after review of vendor submitted documentation, it is determined that the service or good(s) provided does not meet expectations as outlined in the authorization/referral for services, the MRS counselor has the authority to reject the invoice, receipt, or report and request corrective actions necessary prior to payment.

If unable to obtain verification of an invoice, receipt, or report, MRS manager is notified to assist with resolving the issue. MRS manager may consult with the vendor to resolve the issue or approve the use of an *Alternate Receipt of VR Goods or Services* form (RA-2920) if the missing invoice, receipt, or report of service or good(s) resulted from a direct payment to the customer.

If resolution of an incomplete, inaccurate, or missing invoice, receipt, or report is unable to be reconciled, vendor is notified in writing that payment is withheld, and the issue is forwarded to the MRS division manager for consultation regarding future use of the vendor.

Canceling Authorization

MRS counselor completes an *Aware Administrative Note* and provides rationale if there is a need to terminate an authorization.

REFERENCES

34 CFR - 361.50, 361.51, 361.52

AWARE 4-Step Vendor Authorization Process

Competitive Bids and Price Quotations

Fiscal Processes

2/2019

Procedures:

Competitive Bid/Quotation

Three identical written, competitive bids are required for the purchase of all goods and services that cost \$3,000 up to \$150,000.

All specially constructed, or prescriptive devices, requires three price quotations.

Note: Goods/services over \$150,000 require a sealed bid process and are arranged through the Division Director.

MRS staff maintain documentation of all competitive bids/price quotations and associated materials.

Request for Competitive Bid/Quotation

The MRS-4587, Request for Bid/Quotation, is the preferred form to be used to request a bid or quotation. However, the vendor may provide the bid in their preferred format, including copies of current published lists or catalogs in place of bids.

When obtaining competitive bid/quotations, it is required that:

- Vendors are provided with identical written specifications.
- Warranties are to be included if stated in the specifications.

Note: A competitive bid is not required if it is documented that there are not three vendors who can provide the item(s) as specified. MRS staff are to document the effort to obtain three bids.

Note: A competitive bid/quotation is not required for services delivered under a MRS contracted agreement. MRS staff document compliance with contract specifications.

Price Quotation

Specially constructed or prescriptive devices require a price quotation.

MRS staff provide vendors with copies of prescriptions and/or specifications and request a written price quotation.

Competitive Bids and Price Quotations

Fiscal Processes

Information:

Competitive Bid:

A competitive bid is a vendor's written offer to provide an item at a stated price according to specifications.

Price quotation:

A price quotation is a vendor's statement of the current price of an item. Price quotations may be based on general descriptions of items and are not typically legally binding.

Competitive Bids and Price Quotations

Fiscal Processes

2/2019

Price Quotation:

A price quotation is a vendor's statement of the current price of an item. Price quotations may be based on general descriptions of items and are not typically legally binding.

Forms:

The form related to this manual item is the RA-4587, Request for Bid/Quotation.

Approval Authority Fiscal Processes

Policy:

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) staff may not exceed their maximum delegated financial approval authority in authorizing for goods or services.

Procedure:

The district manager is responsible for delegating approval authority for authorizations to counselors on an individual basis, within the maximum limits set by AWARE staff security guidelines. Maximum delegated authority is documented through the “AWARE Access Request” forms submitted to and maintained at MRS Central Office.

Staff Security Guidelines for AWARE may be referenced on the MRS shared “s” drive. Exception may be requested via an “AWARE Staff Access Request” form and must be approved by authorized MRS personnel.

The use of separate authorizations to purchase the same goods or services in order to avoid approval authority limits is prohibited.

Services to Groups of Clients Fiscal Processes

Policy:

Services to groups of clients (SGC) may be authorized for services that will substantially contribute to vocational rehabilitation outcomes, but are not directly related to individual client rehabilitation programs.

Procedure:

A group of clients is defined as two or more. Individuals who are not Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) clients may also benefit from the services, but the primary beneficiaries shall be clients. Services that may be authorized for groups of clients are the same as that which may be provided to individual clients, as well as those specifically designated in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, for groups of individuals with disabilities.

The SGC authorization is to be issued when rehabilitation needs cannot be addressed in any other way. This process does not replace the community rehabilitation organization construction and establishment grants, nor innovation and expansion grants. Neither does it replace requirements for the use of comparable benefits and services before MRS funds are used.

Services may not be provided for groups of clients that are the legal responsibility of other parties under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

An authorization for a service for a group of clients may be for a one-time occurrence, or for a time-limited service but not for continuing activities such as salary and wages or utilities.

Funds for services to groups of clients are assigned solely to the district manager. The manager is responsible for all decisions relative to purchasing services for groups of clients, the authorization process and for maintaining adequate records to support case service expenditures.

If another agency or organization is involved in the purchase of a service for a group of clients by MRS, there must be a written agreement which:

- Describes the service(s) to be provided and how they will help achieve employment outcomes for clients;
- Estimates the number of clients to be served and the percentage this represents of the total number to be served;
- Estimates the cost to be incurred; and
- Prescribes the methods for disposal of equipment purchased by MRS, or describes the financial adjustment when equipment is to be jointly purchased, in the event the service

Services to Groups of Clients
Fiscal Processes**Section IX**

ceases to be available to clients. Principles which govern the disposal of equipment purchased under this authority are the same as those governing the disposal of equipment by public or nonprofit agencies or organizations under the community rehabilitation organization establishment grant authority.

A file must be maintained for each purchase of a service for a group of clients that contains all fiscal documents, agreements and related correspondence and reports for audit purposes. Files should be organized by fiscal year.

Bulk Authorizations Fiscal Processes

Policy:

Bulk authorizations may only be used to purchase bus tickets/tokens/passes, orientation services, orientation interpreter services, MCTI Caps and Gowns and MCTI Drug Screenings.

Procedure:

- Procedures for authorization to vendor identified in RSM 9000 - Authorization for Services.
- A record of individuals who receive services under bulk authorizations and the quantity received shall be kept in the district to provide an audit trail.
- Special Supported Employment funds may not be used as a budget source.
- Total amount of the authorization may not exceed \$10,000.
- The Site Manager or District Manager shall sign the “Authorized Signature” field and the “Payment Approved By” field of the Authorization and Billing document. The signature also verifies the accuracy of the authorization.

PURPOSE

In accordance with State and Federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes the guidelines for referral, outreach and student verification for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) delivered for students served either in the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or Prior to Application (PTA) program.

Students are to be provided Pre-ETS when potentially eligible as part of Prior to Application (PTA) program, or when students have applied for or been determined eligible for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) will engage in outreach to students, parents/guardians, schools and community partners to obtain referrals. Processing a referral consists of verification of the student's current educational status, disability status, consent for services and determination of PTA or Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) case type. The referral period is 30 days from the documented date of referral.

DEFINITIONS

Pre-ETS Student with a Disability (SWD):

An individual who meets the following criteria:

1. Is not younger than 14 years of age and not more than 25 years of age as of September 1 of the school year of enrollment and who has not graduated or exited a recognized education program.

Note: A student who turns 26 years old after September 1 of the school year is a "student with a disability" for the duration of the recognized school year.

Example: If a student turns 26 after the start of the school year such as on December 14th or February 2nd of the school year, they

would continue to be eligible for services until the end of that school year.

Example: If a student turns 26 prior to the start of the school year (prior to September 1st) such as August 18th, they would not be considered a student with a disability at the start of the school year and would not qualify for Pre-ETS from that point forward.

2. Has a disability defined as either:

- Eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- An individual with a disability as defined by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, indicating a determination of:
 - Having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
 - Having a record of such an impairment
 - Being regarded as having such an impairment

3. Has documentation confirming enrollment in secondary, post-secondary or other recognized education program.

Referral Period:

30 days from the referral date

Referral Date:

Date MRS receives information that informs MRS of a potential Pre-ETS candidate. This may be submitted in person, by phone, or e-mail and is to include:

- Full name
- Current telephone number, email address, or emergency contact number
- Address

Complete Pre-ETS Referral:

Within the referral period, the date all necessary documentation is received to establish a PTA or VR case type.

In a PTA case, documentation includes a completed *Student and Parental/Guardian Referral/Consent for Pre-Employment Transition Services* (MRS-2900), verification of student enrollment and disability status prior to delivery of Pre-ETS.

In a VR case, documentation includes a completed *Application for Vocational and Employment Services* (MRS-2910), verification of student enrollment and disability status prior to delivery of Pre-ETS.

PTA Case Type:

A SWD receiving Pre-ETS services who has not applied for or been determined eligible for VR services.

VR Case Type (Pre-ETS):

A SWD with an open VR case who can receive Pre-ETS.

**PROCEDURES
Outreach**

MRS staff develop and maintain cooperative working relationships with state and local secondary education programs (including alternative school programs), post-secondary education programs, state operated programs, and workforce development partners to align services. This is achieved through local agreements and individual community partnerships.

Processing a Referral

MRS staff document in the Aware Referral Module:

- Full name
- Current telephone number, email address, or emergency contact number
- Address

This establishes the referral date in Aware and initiates the referral period.

Note: MRS staff document potential barriers to completing the referral/intake process and coordinate accommodations, if needed.

Informational Brochures

MRS staff document the review and provision of informational brochures including:

- Pre-ETS service brochures (MRS-Pub-350 and MRS-Pub-351)
- Client Assistance Program (CAP)
- How to Appeal Decisions Made by MRS (MRS-PUB-305)

Verification Requirements

MRS staff verify (1) consent for programming, (2) student status and (3) disability status, for VR/PTA case types during the referral period and prior to delivery of Pre-ETS.

1. Consent for Programming:

- PTA case - *Student and Parental/Guardian Referral/Consent for Pre-Employment Transition Services* (MRS-2900)
- VR case – *Application for Vocational and Employment Services* (MRS-2910)

2. **Student Status** as of the referral date for both PTA and VR case type:

- *School Verification of Student with a Disability; Pre-Employment Transition Services (MRS-2905); or*
- *Active Individualized Educational Plan (IEP); or*
- *Active 504 Plan; or*
- *Post-secondary enrollment verification*

MRS staff verify post-secondary enrollment at the time of referral or when a current Pre-ETS customer transitions from secondary to post-secondary education. Documentation of post-secondary education is to be verified on an annual basis.

3. **Disability Status** for both PTA and VR case type, using one of the following:

- Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- 504 Plan
- School documentation confirming disability status
- Documentation from other sources confirming disability (Examples: medical records/reports or SSA beneficiary information)

MRS staff initial and date the *Student and Parental/Guardian Referral/Consent for Pre-Employment Transition Services* (MRS-2900) and document receipt of current enrollment and disability verification.

MRS staff are not permitted to contact schools regarding specific students until a release of information is in place.

Establishment of Case Type

MRS staff proceed with completing the referral process by establishing a case type or closing the referral.

PTA Case Type

Upon verification of school status, disability and student/parent/guardian consent for programming, the case moves from the Referral module to the Participant module in AWARE.

MRS staff inputs information in the Participant module which automatically closes the Aware Referral module.

VR Case Type (Pre-ETS)

If MRS staff document a need for individualized VR services beyond the scope of Pre-ETS, the referral is to be processed as a VR case type.

Closure of Referral due to Non-Receipt or Incomplete Referral Information

MRS staff close the referral within the Aware Referral Module when required information is not collected during the referral period.

Note: A referral is not to be reopened once closed in the Aware Referral Module. If a new request for service is made, it becomes a new referral.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.5 (42) and (51)

34 CFR 361.48

CONTACT

Policyunitsupportcenter@michigan.gov

PURPOSE

In accordance with State and Federal regulations, this policy and procedure identifies the guidelines for establishing need and development of service agreement for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). This policy pertains to Pre-ETS delivered for students served either in the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or Prior to Application (PTA) program.

POLICY

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is mandated to reserve 15% of its annual federal allotment for the provision of Pre-ETS.

MRS counselors are responsible for establishing need for Pre-ETS and the delivery of services based on a Service Agreement in a PTA case type or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) in a VR case type.

Statewide Availability

Pre-ETS must be available Statewide to all students with disabilities in need of such services.

Reasonable Accommodations

MRS may assist with reasonable accommodations when other resources are unavailable.

DEFINITIONS

Pre-ETS Student with a Disability (SWD):

An individual who meets the following criteria:

1. Is not younger than 14 years of age and not more than 25 years of age as of September 1 of the school year of enrollment and who has not graduated or exited a recognized education program.

Note: A student who turns 26 years old after September 1 of the school year is a "student with a disability" for the duration of the recognized school year.

2. Has a disability defined as either:

- Eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- An individual with a disability as defined by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, indicating a determination of:
 - Having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
 - Having a record of such an impairment
 - Being regarded as having such an impairment

3. Has documentation confirming enrollment in secondary, post-secondary or other recognized education program.

PTA Case Type:

A SWD receiving Pre-ETS services who has not applied for or been determined eligible for VR services.

VR Case Type (Pre-ETS):

A SWD with an open VR case who is able to receive Pre-ETS services.

Pre-ETS Services:

Pre-ETS are delivered in coordination with the student's school services and include:

- MRS staff delivered services
- MRS authorized services

Pre-ETS Coordinated Service Delivery:

MRS documents coordination of service delivery with the Local Education Agency (LEA) and/or Intermediate School Districts (ISD), including but not limited to state and local agreements.

PROCEDURES

In addition to the Pre-ETS policies and procedures, MRS staff follow all associated agency policies connected with the delivery of services. This includes all General Policies (Section II), Policy 5100, all Service Policies (Section VI) that are in alignment with permissible Pre-ETS service delivery, and all Fiscal Policies (Section IX).

**Establishment of
Need**

MRS staff establish need for Pre-ETS prior to service delivery for PTA and VR case types.

MRS staff document need based on any of the following resources:

- School records/consultations and/or student/family input
- District/State agreements verifying need for services
- District/student mapping
- Other available resources

All identified services must be in alignment with federally required categories consisting of:

1. Instruction in self-advocacy including in person-centered planning, peer mentoring, and peer mentoring from individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment
2. Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible

3. Job exploration counseling
4. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education
5. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living

Nonuse of Assessment

Interest inventories are permissible as a means to explore potential Pre-ETS. However, MRS staff are not permitted to authorize for the assessment of disability towards the establishment of a PTA case type or as a part of service delivery.

Note: A student receiving Pre-ETS as a part of a VR case type may have assessment of disability as a part of the VR process using VR funds.

**Identification of
Services**

MRS staff document the determination of services necessary to meet the identified needs of the student and coordinate potential service delivery.

Note: MRS policy manual **Section IX - Fiscal** policies are applicable for all services delivered.

**Reasonable
Accommodations**

MRS staff document need for accommodations necessary for the SWD to actively participate in Pre-ETS.

Allowable accommodation services for Pre-ETS include accessible informational materials, qualified interpreters, readers and auxiliary aids.

Note: MRS staff provide the SWD referral information for the VR program if the SWD requires accommodations beyond the examples listed.

**Financial
Contribution**

A SWD is not required to financially participate in Pre-ETS.

**Memorandum of
Understanding**

MRS has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Michigan Department of Education with respect to delivery of the Pre-ETS.

MRS may not approve services that would reduce an Intermediate School District (ISD) or Local Education Agency's (LEA) obligation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or the obligation for Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as referenced in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and IDEA.

MRS staff coordinate services with ISD and LEA partners accordingly.

**Development of
Pre-ETS Service
Agreement**

MRS rehabilitation counselors complete a Pre-ETS Service Agreement (MRS-2930) after establishment of need for services, reasonable accommodations and identification of services.

A Pre-ETS Service Agreement is required for a SWD under:

- PTA Case Type
- VR Case Type - Application status in AWARE
- VR Case Type - Eligibility status in AWARE

Exception: Customers in VR Case Type – Service status does not require a Pre-ETS Service Agreement (MRS-2930). All planned Pre-ETS are to be identified in the IPE along with the VR related services.

The Pre-ETS Service Agreement (MRS-2930) or IPE documents:

- All services and/or reasonable accommodations to be delivered
- Service providers, including coordinated services delivered by MRS staff or authorized to a vendor
- Estimated dates of service delivery
- Consent for services
- Counselor approval of services in alignment with Pre-ETS categories and consistent with MRS policies/guidelines

Note: MRS staff obtain a release of information for all identified vendors prior to service delivery.

MRS staff may only provide Pre-ETS if those services are identified within either a Pre-ETS Service Agreement or IPE as follows:

- Pre-ETS Service Agreement in a PTA case type
- Pre-ETS Service Agreement in a VR case type, if in Application or Eligibility status
- IPE in a VR case type, in Service status

A new Pre-ETS Service Agreement (MRS-2930) or IPE may be initiated if additional need for Pre-ETS is identified.

Service Delivery

MRS staff document delivery of all services in alignment with MRS policy manual **Section IX - Fiscal**.

MRS staff document if services are expected to continue when there is a break in service delivery.

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.5 (42) and (51)

34 CFR 361.48

CONTACT

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PURPOSE

In accordance with State and Federal regulations, this policy and procedure establishes the guidelines for discontinuation of service delivery for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). This policy pertains to Pre-ETS delivered for students served either in the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or Prior to Application (PTA) program.

POLICY

Pre-ETS are discontinued if any of the following are true:

- The Pre-ETS Service Agreement (MRS-2930) is fulfilled and no further services are needed
- The student applies for VR services (Pre-ETS may be provided in the VR case)
- The service needs are beyond Pre-ETS scope of services
- The services have not been provided over six months and no further services are needed
- The student chooses not to participate
- The student is no longer available for services
- The student no longer qualifies as a student with a disability

Note: In a VR case type, when Pre-ETS are discontinued the case remains open based on need for VR services.

PROCEDURES

MRS staff proceed with discontinuation of Pre-ETS as follows:

- Document rationale for case closure (PTA) or discontinuation of Pre-ETS (VR)
- Pay or cancel all open Pre-ETS authorizations
- If applying for VR services, link PTA case type with VR case type (make request to Aware help desk)
- Notify student in writing of discontinuation of Pre-ETS, case closure, and rights to appeal (PTA)

REFERENCES

34 CFR 361.48

CONTACT

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