Monthly Progress Report (MPR)
The MPR must include dates and details of all activities performed to support delivery of the services required on the Referral Form. VR Counselors depend on timely submission of MPRs to better serve our Customers. The information contained in the MPR is critical, but value is quickly lost if too much time has passed, as the window of opportunity to address identified issues may be closed.

Here are some suggestions VR Counselors have made:
1. Avoid putting only a single entry into the MPR. Each MPR should contain multiple, typically 4-5, entries per month and should reflect the activities that have occurred, such as phone calls, advocacy, job development, interviews, and emails.
2. Every MPR should reflect at least 1-2 face-to-face interactions with the Customer, particularly for Supported Employment Customers who require hands-on job coaching.
3. Always document Employers that have been contacted or that applications have been submitted to.
4. MPRs must reflect progress from month-to-month and show continuity of service.
5. Services specifically mentioned in the Individual Career Plan (ICP) should be well documented in the MPR.
6. Entries should be clear and concise.
7. MPR should support that multiple types of contacts and interaction strategies have been used, such as phone calls, face-to-face meetings, and customer advocacy.
8. Including the names of specific managers approached will help expedite the NOA approval when Employer verifications are done.
9. Keep in mind that ES and SE MPRs should look very different regarding frequency and types of interaction, as these services are different in nature and demand different levels of engagement.
10. If you are unable to reach the Customer after two attempts, contact the VR Counselor for assistance. If attempts continue to be unsuccessful, please document the lack of participation before submitting a Referral closure MPR.

VR Counselors vary and may request specific information, depending on the Customer of key populations. When in doubt, contact the Counselor prior to submitting the MPR to avoid unnecessary rejections in REBA.
Request to Hire a VR Customer

A request to place a Customer in a position within your own organization or with an Employer in which you have ownership interest must be approved prior to Placement. The request must be signed by the VR Counselor and the VR Area Supervisor or VR Counselor Analyst.

Here are some suggestions to help ensure a smooth process:

1. Be sure the VR Counselor is aware early in the process that you will be seeking approval to place a Customer with your own organization or an Employer in which there is ownership interest.

2. Remember, as with all Placements, the job the Customer obtains must match the job goal stated on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), must be in an integrated setting, and must be compensated at minimum wage or higher.

3. The Placement should result in an Employer/Employee relationship. (Additional prior approval is required to place a Customer as an Independent Contractor.)

4. Request for approval should be sought using the "Request to Hire Form" provided to you when you received your Manual.

5. The fully approved "Request to Hire Form" must be attached to the Notification of Approval (NOA) from, along with all required Monthly Progress Reports (MPRs), when payment is requested.

6. The Counselor, Supervisor and Area Supervisor must sign and approve the "Request to Hire Form" prior to the Customer being placed or payment will be rejected.

VR Counselors vary and may request specific information, depending on the Customer or other relevant factors. When in doubt, contact the Counselor prior to submitting the "Request to Hire Form" for approval.
Staffing Agencies and Temporary Employment

Customarily, employment and staffing agencies contract with employers to meet short-term employment goals. The Customer is an employee of the agency, not the employer, and is sent on various work assignments until that assignment is completed. They then return to the agency for a new assignment. These assignments may or may not lead to permanent employment with the employer.

Employment agencies also match potential employees to employers. Employers may contract with an agency to recruit employees for them. Potential employees will meet with the agency and, based on their skills and knowledge, be matched with potential employers looking for individuals with those skills.

Employment/staffing agencies may also be used to provide Human Relations functions for a company. This may include screening applications, conduct interview and reference checks and providing payroll services.

**Before using an employment agency, consider the following:**

1. Temporary employment lasting six (6) months or less would not be considered a valid placement. An example of this situation is short term employment during the Christmas holidays. If, however; a Customer is placed in one of these positions, and the job later becomes permanent, that would be considered a valid placement and the Provider could bill from the date the employment became permanent.

2. A Provider cannot refer a Customer to an employment agency for them to find a job and place the Customer. It is acceptable for a Provider to have an agreement with an employment agency to access their job bank to find available positions in the area.

3. Some Customers are content working for employment agencies long term and like the flexibility of multiple job sites. In such cases, working with an employment agency could be considered a valid placement depending on the duration of the employment.

These are basic guidelines. Each placement should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. VR Counselors vary and may request specific information, depending on the Customer or other relevant factors. When in doubt, contact the Counselor prior to working with an employment agency to place a VR Customer.
Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)

Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), such as NISH, RESPECT, or Ability One, provide employment opportunities for persons with significant disabilities by contracting with the Federal government to provide goods and services.

The main concern with CRPs is ensuring the placement is integrated employment. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Administration, Technical Assistance Circular, RSA-TAC-06-01, the definition of integrated setting is:

“With respect to an employment outcome, means a setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non-disabled individuals, other than non-disabled individuals who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals, to the same extent that non-disabled individuals in comparable positions interact with other persons.”

Vocational Rehabilitation generally recognizes placements within these settings as valid Supported Employment placements. However, caution should be taken to ensure the placement meets the definition of integrated setting.

Before placing a Customer with a CRP, consider the following:

1. What is the level of the Customer’s interaction with non-disabled co-workers, customers, or vendors?

2. Will the Customer be paid at or above minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage for non-disabled co-workers performing same or similar work?

3. Can the Customer keep the job as long as they want it (dependent on the customer’s performance or federal contract guidelines)?

Additional things to consider are ensuring the placement aligns with the Customer’s IPE goal and verifying the Customer is in agreement with the placement arrangements. The VR counselor is ultimately responsible for making this decision and may choose to conduct a site visit before approving the placement.

Some Providers also act as the Employer under one of the above programs. It is not considered a conflict for a Provider to place a Customer with an Employer with whom they have a contract. However, the Provider must receive prior approval using the “Request to Hire Form” to place a Customer with an Employer in which they have ownership interest.

VR Counselors vary and may request specific information, depending on the Customer or other relevant factors. When in doubt, contact the Counselor prior to placing a VR Customer with a CRP.
Employment Specialist (ES) Qualifications

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) includes changes in qualifications of rehabilitation professionals. ES qualifications have updated to be in line with these updates. New qualifications are listed below:

- Four years’ experience or employment in a public vocational rehabilitation program; experience in job placement, job coaching, or counseling; or other related experience working with persons with disabilities. OR

- A Bachelor’s Degree in a related field such as rehabilitation, counseling, social work, psychology, education, human resources, business administration, or economics, from an accredited college or university and one year’s experience as described above. OR

- A Master’s Degree in a related field such as rehabilitation, counseling, social work, psychology, education, human resources, business administration, or economics, from an accredited college or university and six month’s experience as described above. OR

- An Associate’s Degree from an accredited college or university, or a Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree in an unrelated field, and two years’ experience as described above. OR

- The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in the area of Community Employment Services: Employment Supports or Community Employment Services: Job Development. OR

- The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO) in the area of Behavioral Health.

NOTE: All employees who will provide Supported Employment Services must also have a training certificate in Supported Employment from a state or nationally recognized Supported Employment Program. This applies to all Providers, including those accredited by CARF or JHACO.

When submitting an Employee Contact Form to add an ES, the following must be included:

1. Resume’ reflecting the educational and/or experiential requirements outlined above;
2. Copy(s) of Diploma(s) (if applicable); and
3. Copy(s) of training certificate(s), if applicable.
Obtaining the Placement benchmark

Job Placement is defined as services organized to assist persons to choose, obtain and maintain employment commensurate with their vocational interest and abilities, as well as their social, psychological, communication, environmental, and medical needs.

But what happens if the Customer finds a job themselves? Should the Provider still be paid for the Placement benchmark? The short answer is that the level of Provider involvement in assisting the Customer dictates whether or not payment is warranted.

Here are examples of differing scenarios:

1. Customer is referred to a Provider for placement and has found his/her own job. Submitted Monthly Progress Reports (MPRs) indicate the Customer did not engage with Provider staff for more than a few hours and received minimal assistance, such as being given cold job leads or directed to complete applications. In this case, the Counselor will likely deny Placement benchmark payment and ask the Provider to complete the follow up support.

2. Customer is referred to a Provider for placement and has found his/her own job. Submitted MPRs indicate the Customer participated in numerous activities with Provider staff, such as pre-placement training; job readiness; application assistance; resume development; and/or arranging interviews or accompanying Customer to interviews. In this case the Counselor should approve Placement benchmark payment and ask the Provider to continue serving the Customer.

And here’s some general guidance:

1. There is no minimum number of activities or set time parameters associated with benchmark approval determination.

2. Use the MPR to document what has been done to prepare and/or support the Customer. The more details captured in the MPR, the better the Counselor is able to determine whether or not the benchmark should be approved. (*Refer to Helpful Tip #1 – Monthly Progress Reports.*)

3. When in doubt, contact the Counselor to discuss the details of the case prior to submitting the Notification of Approval (NOA).
Adding a new Employment Specialist

An Employment Specialist (ES) can be either an employee or sub-contractor of the Provider. Their primary function is to assist VR Customers seeking employment to choose, obtain, and retain competitive employment in an integrated setting. All Employment Specialists must be deemed "qualified" to provide services. They must also undergo a level two background screening before providing services to VR Customers.

Steps for getting a new ES qualified:

1. Once you are comfortable the ES or ES subcontractor meets VR’s registration requirements (see Helpful Tip Number 5 for more info), complete a VR Employment Services Employee Contact Form.

2. The ES needs to complete and sign an Employment Specialist Application. There is a section on the Application for you to include any information on how the ES’s education and experience qualifies them to provide employment services. This information will be helpful to your Provider Manager when making their determination.

3. Any ES hired as a subcontractor also requires the approval of your Provider Manager (see page 10 of your Manual).

4. Submit the VR Employment Services Employee Contact Form, Employment Specialist Application, and any supporting documentation; such as transcripts, training certificates, copies of degrees, and subcontractor agreement (if applicable) to your Provider Manager.

5. If the ES will be transporting VR Customers they must also submit; a valid and current Driver’s License, a valid and current vehicle registration, and proof of valid and current automobile insurance with minimum coverage of 50,000/100,000 unless your organization’s insurance coverage includes automobile liability which covers any automobile.

6. The Provider Manager will review the form and supporting documentation within five (5) business days. You will be contacted, via email or phone, if additional information is needed.

7. If the ES is deemed qualified, the package will be forwarded to VR’s Background Screening Specialist. ESs without the proper education and/or experience may be determined ineligible to provide employment services. Those individuals shall not provide direct services to VR Customers.
8. The Background Screening Specialist will send instructions to the Provider’s Clearinghouse Administrator, via e-mail, on registering the ES for fingerprinting through the ACHA Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse.

9. Once the ES is screened through the Clearinghouse, their information will be entered into VR’s internal database. Within no more than 24 hours, the ES’s information will be transferred to REBA and they can begin accepting referrals.

10. You will receive notification, via email, the ES has been registered and is cleared to provide employment services.
Pre-Placement Training
Pre-Placement training consists of lecture and hands-on activity. Training should include specific topics based on the individual’s need(s) which have been identified through discussions with the Customer, VR Counselor, and other support systems identified by the Customer on the Referral form.

Other Requirements of Pre-Placement Training Include:

1. Training must last a minimum of twenty (20) hours. The Counselor may authorize an additional twenty (20) hours training on a case by case basis, for a maximum duration of forty (40) hours total.
2. You can only bill for twenty (20) hours of training per referral. If the Customer requires more than twenty (20) hours, the current referral must be closed and a new referral opened. Your Provider Manager, Liaison, or Counselor can help you through this process.
3. Training lasting more than four (4) hours, per day, must include at least a thirty (30) minute lunch break. It cannot be a working lunch.
4. Topics to be covered under the training include instruction on resume writing; interviewing skills; how to search for and apply for jobs online; how to find and complete job applications; how to manage Employer initial contacts; how to handle conflicts; and how to navigate public transportation.
5. The Pre-Placement Training Report must include a description of the training topics, not just titles.
6. The Customer must sign both the Pre-Placement Training Report and Pre-Placement Training Survey.
7. Training cannot be conducted via webinars. It must be completed in a formal classroom setting.

Your training curriculum, including a syllabus and training materials, is subject to Provider Manager review as part of routine monitoring. Additionally, we will review your curriculum and, if applicable, provide you with curriculum development guidance upon request.
If you haven’t already, at some point you may experience a rejected invoice because the Customer no longer qualifies for Pre-ETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services). When this happens, your Provider Manager will notify you that the current referral must be closed and a new referral opened. Under WIOA requirements, VR is mandated to report the amount of funds spent and the number of services provided to Transition Students. Once a Customer turns 22 they are no longer considered a Transition Student, and the coding must be changed for reporting purposes.

Under our reporting structure, we have no other alternative than to close the referral with the Pre-ETS (Y codes) and open a new referral with non-Pre-ETS (G codes). While we can’t fix the system, below are suggestions that may make getting your invoice processed a little easier:

1. When the Provider Manager receives an alert, the Pre-ETS referral must be rejected. You will receive an e-mail from your Provider Manager notifying you the Customer is no longer eligible for Pre-ETS and instructions to reach out to your Counselor. If you haven’t received notification the referral has been closed and a new referral issued within five (5) to seven (7) business days, please contact the Counselor to remind them to do so.

2. Once you receive a new referral and accept it in REBA, contact the Counselor indicating that you accepted the referral. The Counselor must then backdate the new referral to coincide with the date of the original referral so you can bill for services. If you submit an invoice with a benchmark date prior to the referral acceptance date, your invoice will be rejected. **DO NOT** use a different benchmark date after the new referral acceptance date in order to get your invoice processed. This is falsifying documentation and skews the data reporting.

3. If the referral date hasn’t been updated within five (5) to seven (7) business days after referral acceptance, contact the Provider Manager. They can follow up with the Counselor to get this step completed.

4. REBA does not allow you to shift Monthly Progress Reports from the closed referral to the open referral. A good practice would be to save your log entries in another location and copy and paste them into REBA or attach a Monthly Progress Report document. It’s a little more work on the front end, but once the referral is closed you will not be able to access that information again.

5. If you are having trouble getting new referrals generated or backdated, please contact your Provider Manager. We can work with the Field offices to provide technical assistance and training. Letting us know helps everyone. If we don’t know there are problems, we can’t help to solve them.

Thank you for helping Customers find and maintain employment, and enhance their independence. We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we work through these process changes.
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) FOR TRANSITION YOUTH

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. (United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration)

WIOA requires VR to set-aside 15% of the federal allocation for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to in-school youth aged 15-21.

Services which meet WIOA Requirements for Pre-Employment Transition Services are:

- Pre-Placement Training (PPT)
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Supported Employment (SE) Individual Career Plan (ICP)

Pre-Placement Training (PPT)

- Takes place when school is not in session.
- May be done prior to or in conjunction with OJT (work experience)
- Support services will be provided when needed to participate in Pre-Placement Trainings
  - Transportation
  - Assistive Services or devices
- Minimum of twenty (20) hours with an additional twenty (20) hours, if needed and approved.
- Required documentation includes a survey and report.
- Referral may be made independent of other placement services.
- Providers should work closely with the local VR offices to identify the number of:
  - Students who will need training
  - Providers delivering training (options for customers)
  - Customers availability during specific time periods
- Providers may wish to consider:
  - Separate morning and afternoon courses
  - Partnering with local Community Colleges when additional facilities are needed
  - Delivering multiple Pre-Placement Training courses over the summer months.
- PPT Minimum Required Curriculum includes:
  - Resume writing
  - Interviewing skills
  - Searching and applying for jobs online
  - Finding and completing job applications
  - Managing employer initial contacts
  - Handling conflict
  - Navigating public transportation
  - Review of customer benefits, if needed

PPT Providers

- Employment Service Providers may provide training to Youth with a Regular IPE.
- Supported Employment Providers may provide training to Youth with an SE IPE.
- Referral and authorization will be generated in REBA in the same manner currently used.
PPT Training Examples:
- Creating a resume during the course for use in a job search
- Conducting mock interviews to practice interview skills
- Demonstrating how to navigate online when searching and applying for jobs
- Instruction on the Dos and Don’ts when searching and applying for jobs
- Instruction on organizing and managing Employer initial contacts
- Instruction on handling conflicts on the job and conducting role-play activities to practice skills
- Securing dependable transportation and demonstrating public transportation navigation to increase independence
- Reviewing and understanding the value of Employer benefits
- Instruction on other job readiness skills; such as grooming, punctuality, and attendance
- Instruction on putting forth your best effort and first impressions during an interview and at work
- Instruction on employment related responsibilities; such as payroll deduction, insurance, retirement, other benefits and workplace safety

On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Does not have to align with the vocational goal listed on the IPE
- May be done in conjunction with Pre-Placement Training
- Support services will be provided when needed to participate in OJT
  - Transportation
  - Assistive services or devices
- Takes place when school is not in session
- Is used to develop needed work behaviors
- Is not used as training for a specific job
- OJT may be paid or unpaid work experiences
- May be used to explore specific work settings and obtain exposure to various career fields
- For customers with a Regular or SE IPE

OJT Exceptions for Youth in High School
- No referral for Employment Services or Supported Employment Services is required.
- Providers may serve as the Employer of Record and sign as the Employer on VR forms.
- The work site or business representative is not required to complete any VR forms.
- Wage reimbursement is not required.

Supported Employment (SE) Individual Career Plan (ICP)
- SE will begin five (5) months prior to exit from high school.
- Providers will collaborate with school system to:
  - Identify employment-related instruction (coursework and Community Based Instruction), services and programs students have benefited from and how that information may be used in SE service delivery.
  - Identify employment experiences (Community Based Work Experiences) students have participated in and how that information may be used in SE service delivery.
  - Identify (teaching, learning, assessment, behavioral, and environmental) accommodations that have helped students be successful and those that have not so that appropriate supports and services may be incorporated into SE service delivery.
  - Identify any behavioral concerns, including triggers, so that these issues may be addressed prior to stabilization.
- Other SE services begin at exit.
Services to Transitioning Youth

We occasionally get questions about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and what it means for you as a VR Provider.

First and foremost, you DO NOT need additional certification to provide WIOA services. If you are registered to provide Employment Services, Supported Employment Services, or On-the-Job Training, you can provide services to Transition Youth under WIOA.

Services which meet WIOA Requirements for Pre-Employment Transition Services are:

- Pre-Placement Training (PPT)
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Supported Employment (SE) Individual Career Plan (ICP)

PRE-PLACEMENT TRAINING (PPT)

1. Employment Service Providers may provide training to Youth with a regular or Supported Employment (SE) Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

2. Referral and authorization will be generated in REBA in the same manner currently used.

3. PPT takes place when school is not in session.

4. PPT may be done prior to, or in conjunction with, OJT (work experience).

5. Support services, such as transportation and assistive services or devices, will be provided, when needed, to participate in Pre-Placement Trainings.

6. PPT consists of a minimum of twenty (20) hours with an additional twenty (20) hours, if needed and approved.

7. Required documentation includes a survey and report.

8. Referral may be made independent of other placement services.

9. Providers should work closely with the local VR offices to identify the number of:
   - Students who will need training
   - Providers delivering training (options for Customers)
   - Customers available during specific time periods
10. Providers may wish to consider:
   - Separate morning and afternoon courses
   - Partnering with local Community Colleges when additional facilities are needed
   - Delivering multiple PPT courses over the summer months

11. PPT minimum required curriculum includes:
   - Resume Writing
   - Interviewing Skills
   - Searching and applying for jobs online
   - Finding and completing job applications
   - Managing employer initial contacts
   - Handling conflict
   - Navigating public transportation
   - Review of customer benefits, if needed

12. PPT Training examples include:
   - Creating a resume for use in a job search.
   - Conducting mock interviews to practice interview skills.
   - Demonstrating how to navigate online when searching and applying for jobs.
   - Instruction on the Dos and Don’ts when searching and applying for jobs.
   - Instruction on organizing and managing Employer initial contacts.
   - Instruction on handling conflicts on the job and conducting role-play activities to practice skills.
   - Securing dependable transportation and demonstrating public transportation navigation to increase independence.
   - Reviewing and understanding the value of Employer benefits.
   - Instruction on other job readiness skills; such as grooming, punctuality, and attendance.
   - Instruction on putting forth your best effort and first impressions during an interview and at work.
   - Instruction on employment related responsibilities; such as payroll deduction, insurance, retirement, other benefits and workplace safety.

**ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT)**

1. OJT does not have to align with the vocational goal listed on the IPE.
2. OJT may be done in conjunction with Pre-Placement Training.
3. Support services, such as transportation and assistive services and devices, will be provided, when needed, to participate in OJT.
4. OJT takes place when school is not in session.
5. OJT is used to develop needed work behaviors.
6. OJT is not used as training for a specific job.
7. OJT may be paid or unpaid work experiences.
8. OJT may be used to explore specific work settings and obtain exposure to various career fields.
9. OJT services can be provided to Customers with a regular or SE IPE.
**OJT EXCEPTIONS FOR YOUTH IN HIGH SCHOOL**

- No referral for Employment Services or Supported Employment Services is required.
- Providers may serve as the Employer of Record and sign as the Employer on VR forms.
- The work site or business representative is not required to complete any VR forms.
- Wage reimbursement is not required.

**SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT INDIVIDUAL CAREER PLAN (ICP)**

1. SE will begin five (5) months prior to exit from high school.

2. Providers will collaborate with school system to:
   - identify employment-related instruction (coursework and Community Based Instruction), services and programs students have benefited from and how that information may be used in SE service delivery.
   - identify employment experiences (Community Based Work Experiences) students have participated in and how that information may be used in SE service delivery.
   - identify (teaching, learning, assessment, behavioral, and environmental) accommodations that have helped students be successful and those that have not so that appropriate supports and services may be incorporated into SE service delivery.
   - identify any behavioral concerns, including triggers, so that these issues may be addressed prior to stabilization.
Employment Services Providers
Helpful Tips

JULY 1, 2017

TIP NUMBER 12

Project SEARCH

There are an estimated twenty-two (22) Project SEARCH (PS) sites located around the State of Florida. Each site is required to be licensed through the national office based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Site locations include; hospitals, major hotel chains, city governments, and even zoos!

To be eligible for Project Search, students must be between the ages of 18 and 21; are being served through school district; have an Individualized Education Plan; and have finished with their high school credit and graduation requirements.

PS students receive classroom instruction as well as On-the-Job Training experiences. Sites provide a series of three to four targeted internships, on a rotating basis, working directly with staff and supervisors. About a third of the students are hired at the host site. If the student is hired at any time, he/she may exit the program. If not hired, the student will begin placement services immediately after completing his/her last rotation.

Project SEARCH services:

Employment Service Providers that work with the PS sites can provide the following services to Students:

1. On-the-Job (OJT) Evaluation
2. OJT Training Plan and Agreement – payable for three rotations
3. OJT Training Final Report – payable on completion of each OJT rotation

Additional Provisions:

- You MUST be licensed as indicated above to provide Project SEARCH services to students.
- You may serve as the “employer of record”. If you choose to, you will complete and sign all necessary VR paperwork when serving as the “employer of record”.
- Host sites and staff will provide information to you to complete necessary VR paperwork.
- VR will not provide wage reimbursement for Project SEARCH participants.
- Students can be referred for Employment Services or Supported Employment Services. However, students will not be referred for Pre-Placement Training or Individual Career Plans, respectively. Specific services provided through Project SEARCH take the place of these services.
- VR may provide Transportation and Assistive Services and Devices, if required by the student to participate in Project SEARCH, and if unavailable through the school district.

For additional information on Project SEARCH or how to become a PROJECT SEARCH Provider, please contact (850) 245-3471 or Regina.Rice@vr.fldoe.org.
BACKGROUND SCREENING

Florida Statute 413.208 requires Administrators, Chief Financial Officers, persons providing direct services to Customers, and sometimes board members to complete a Level Two background screening. Completion of this screening is a condition of maintaining active registration as a VR Employment Services Provider.

Here are some simple tips for making sure screening is completed quickly and efficiently.

Requirements:

- All persons subject to background screening requirements MUST be screened through the Agency for Health Care Administration’s Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) every five years. VR can accept proof of screening from the below agencies IF completed within five years:
  - The Agency for Health Care Administration
  - The Department of Health
  - The Department of Elder Affairs
  - The Agency for Persons with Disabilities
  - The Department of Children and Families

Once these screenings have expired, the individual MUST be screened through the Clearinghouse.

- Clearinghouse Administrators should NOT initiate a screening until the individual has registered with the Clearinghouse and received notification that access has been granted.

- Once the individual is registered in the Clearinghouse, they must make an appointment to be fingerprinted. The individual must ensure they have the Originating Agency Identified (ORI) number that is unique to VR for fingerprint submission by the Livescan fingerprint provider. If the wrong ORI is submitted to the provider at the time of fingerprinting, the results will not be sent to VR for screening. If this occurs, another fingerprint submission will be required and additional fees incurred.

- As an Employment Services Provider, you must maintain an active employee roster in the Clearinghouse. Until the required background screening is complete, applicants can be hired for training and orientation purposes only. They will be entered into the roster with a provisional hire date. Initial hires and any changes in employment status must be reported within ten (10) business days.

Please contact the Vendor Registration Unit at vrbackgroundchecks@vr.fldoe.org or 850-245-3401 if you have questions or need assistance.
Employment Services Providers
Helpful Tips

Brochures and Other Marketing Materials

One of the first questions we get asked when a Provider becomes a Provider is, "How do I let Counselors know we are available to provide services?" One of the most common ways to advertise a company is with brochures and other materials.

There are no restrictions for creating these items; however, there are guidelines to follow when designing your brochures and other materials. For example; it’s OK to say you are a VR Provider, or affiliated with VR; however, you cannot imply you are a part of VR.

The VR Communications office has created a VR Style Guide to help you when creating brochures and other materials that reference your partnership with VR. There are also JPEG images of the VR and DOE logos you can use in your materials. Please contact your Provider Manager if you wish to receive any of these items.

Brochures and other materials should be sent to VR for review before distribution. **We ask that you please send these items to your Provider Manager.** Your Manager will submit these items to the Communications office for you.

The Communications Office will review your items to ensure they meet VR guidelines. They can also provide you with helpful tips that will make your brochures or other materials easy for persons with visual impairments to read.

You will be asked to provide any brochures or other materials during routine monitoring. Please provide any items, whether they have been previously provided or not. This will help us ensure we have all current materials on file.

Marketing is an essential part of any successful company, and we encourage the use of these tools. Ensuring the proper use of VR related logos, and providing feedback and tips on how to make your materials pleasing to the eye are just other ways of strengthening our partnership as we work towards our common goal.
Subcontractor or Independent Contractors

Subcontractor or independent contractor agreements are common in lots of professions, and Employment Specialists are no exception. Working with subcontractors or independent contractors is allowable under the Manual. There are a few additional steps you need to follow in order to get these individuals added as Employment Specialists:

1. The employee must complete an Employment Services Employee Application. In order to expedite the review of this Application, please provide as much backup documentation as possible. Backup documentation is used to verify education and experience listed on the Application. This documentation can include diplomas, transcripts, certificates, or any other relevant information.

2. Provide the employment agreement. This agreement must include, at a minimum; language the individual’s duties will be consistent with services provided under the Contract, language specifically addressing whether the individual will be covered under the Provider’s general liability insurance or the individual will carry individual general liability coverage, and language regarding confidentiality of Customer information.

3. Submit the Application, backup documentation, employment agreement, and a completed VR Employment Services Employee Contact Form to the Vendor Registration Unit. Fax and e-mail information is listed on the Form.

4. The Vendor Registration Unit will review the information. You will be contacted if additional information is needed.

5. As with employees, once the information is reviewed and accepted, you will receive notification for the individual to complete their background screening. Details on background screening can be found in Helpful Tip Number 13, BACKGROUND SCREENING.

6. You will be notified, via letter, when the individual has been registered and is cleared to provide employment services.

Failure to notify VR that an Employment Specialist is working as a Subcontractor or Independent Contractor is a violation of your Manual, and may result in corrective action, including suspension or termination.

For additional information or questions, please contact your Provider Manager.
On-the-Job Training Employer Reimbursement

On-the-Job Training (OJT) experiences can be invaluable to our Customers. Some of these Customers may have never had any work experience. The skills they learn through an OJT experience are extremely beneficial to help them become employable.

VR is committed to reimbursing Employers, or Providers acting as the Employer, for the wages and benefits paid on behalf of the OJT Customer.

In order to expedite your OJT reimbursement, please include the following:

1. A completed OJT Reimbursement Request Form.
2. Copy of paystub.
3. Any documentation that supports your reimbursement request.

TIPS

1. VR will reimburse for Employer FICA based on a 10% flat fee.

2. In lieu of the flat fee, you can request total reimbursement of these fees. In order to request a full reimbursement of Employer FICA, you must provide detailed documentation showing proof of payment for these amounts. The more information you can provide, the easier it is for Financial Payments to process the request. You cannot be reimbursed for any charges without proper supporting documentation.

3. Customer progress must be documented in the Monthly Progress Reports.

4. Items such as; uniforms, background screening, drug testing, etc. the Customer may need to begin their OJT experience cannot be listed on the OJT Reimbursement Request Form. The Counselor will make decisions on these specific items on a case by case basis per employer worksite expectations.

Workers Compensation

Effective July 1, 2018, VR will be responsible for providing Workers’ Compensation coverage for any of our participants placed in a work experience setting.

You must give a copy of the Division of the Vocational Rehabilitation Accident Reporting Instructions card to the participant prior to their first day of the OJT.

Copies of all the materials and reporting procedures is located on Rehabworks.org with the OJT forms.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Provider completes and signs the OJT Reimbursement Request Form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provider submits the OJT Reimbursement Request Form and backup documentation to the Counselor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. VR staff will print pay stub and OJT Reimbursement Request Form and generate the authorization for payment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training and Probation

Most companies provide formal training prior to the Employee starting their actual job duties. This training can be done on-the-job, or conducted in a formal training setting.

Training varies depending on the Employer. How the placement date is determined is based on the method of training used. When determining the official placement date for a Customer, consider the following examples:

Examples of Training Scenarios:

1. Customer is placed with the United State Postal Service. Before beginning their duties, the Customer must first attend training. This training includes; safety on the job, rules and regulations of the Postal Service, how to read and understand carrier routes, and other topics. Training lasts approximately ten (10) business days and the Customer is paid while in training. After training, the Customer is given their assigned duties and location. In this case, the Customer’s placement date begins the day they begin working at the job site. The clock begins ticking from this point and not the day the Customer began attending training.

2. Customer is placed at Ross. There is a brief, classroom-style training session on the Customer’s first day of employment. By the end of the shift the Customer is working on the floor conducting their job duties. Although the Customer may still be considered in “training”, they are performing the duties they were hired to do and will continue to do during their employment. In this case, the Customer’s placement date is their first day on the job. Even though they are in training, they are actively performing their job duties.

3. Customer is placed at QVC, working at home, taking orders over the phone. While Customer is actively working, they must engage in periodic web-based training in order to remain updated on new products coming out. On-going training will be required while the Customer is employed with QVC. In this case, the Customer’s placement date is the first day they begin taking orders. Even though they are required to take mandatory training, they are actively performing their job duties and the training portion is a requirement of that position.

4. Customer is placed at the local Toyota dealership as a salesperson. They are getting paid, but for the first three days of employment they are shadowing a veteran salesperson. After the third day, the Customer will be working on their own. In this case, the Customer’s placement date is their first day working on their own. Even though they were getting paid from the first day, job shadowing would not be considered as employment.

Probation

Employees are often placed on probation for a period of time; sometimes running from 120 days to a year.

As long as the Customer is performing their job duties and they are receiving compensation, the placement is valid. If the Customer doesn’t meet their probationary period and subsequent benchmarks aren’t met, the Provider will not be able to bill for those subsequent benchmarks, but Placement should still stand.