



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services

40 Fountain Street ~ Providence, RI 02903
401-421-7005 ~ 401-222-3574 FAX
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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: ORS Vendors, Rehabilitation Counselors, Supervisors, and Administration

FROM: Michael Montanaro, Assistant Administrator Vendor Affairs and Workforce Development

DATE: 4/24/2020

SUBJECT: Provisions of Non-Supported Employment Vocational Rehabilitation Services During COVID-19 Mitigation.

PURPOSE: Guidance to ORS staff regarding provisions of Vocational Services during a period of state mandated mitigation strategies for slowing the spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID – 19).

The Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) is committed to providing quality services to Rhode Islanders with Disabilities. During this unprecedented time, the health and safety of our customers, staff, and community partners remain our top priority. All ORS staff should follow the most recent guidance issued by the Governor's Office. Please reference the guidance issued at <https://health.ri.gov/covid/for> updated information. All personnel are responsible for ensuring that they are adhering to the Governor's direction, universal precautions, and social distancing requirements. This information is intended to be a guide regarding the allowable services and service provision methodologies ORS will be adhering to during the COVID 19 mitigation response and does not apply to any other circumstance.

General Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Vocational Rehabilitation Services are considered an allowable business in accordance with the direction of the Governor's office. The nature of vocational rehabilitation services normally requires activities to be performed in person, which has been thwarted to a great degree with current CDC guidelines around self-distancing. Accordingly, ORS will continue to work with its vendor community to implement alternative service provision to continue where possible. We do see that it is the responsibility of the vendor to direct their staff in accordance with the requirements outlined by the Governor, the CDC, their governing agencies, boards, commissions, and/or executive leadership.

Services that are Unable to be Performed at this Time

If it is determined by your agency and/or executive leadership that services offered by your organization are unable to be performed under current restrictions, please notify ORS office so that a plan can be developed to communicate with customers; develop a transition plan if the service is still necessary for the customer currently or in the immediate future; begin consideration of a process for virtual services where applicable; and discuss long-term planning for services once mitigation restrictions have been reduced or lifted.

Services that can be Performed at this Time

If it is determined by your agency, and/or executive leadership that services offered by your organization may still be performed under current mitigation restriction, please notify ORS to discuss what services your organization are currently able to offer and under what methodologies.

Vendors must seek and receive approval from ORS to proceed with service model changes prior to continuing or beginning services utilizing an ORS authorization. As always, ORS services must be via an approved authorization **prior** to the start of services. If a new or amended ORS authorization is necessary ORS staff will issue one as soon as possible, and ORS staff are not permitted to authorize new services verbally.

ORS staff, in coordination with the vendor, must agree to how service can be authorized during the mitigation process:

1. number of hours or sessions;
 2. timeframe for service provision; and
 3. portion of services that may need to be held until in person services can resume;
- other restrictions or limitations, etc.

Once model service change has been approved by ORS and authorized, services may then proceed and be billed as usual, unless other restrictions (number of hours, sessions, time, etc.) have been placed on the virtual service by ORS staff, vendor availability, customer availability, etc. All standard documentation and reporting requirements are in effect for service to proceed virtually. If you have specific questions, direct them to your ORS and seek guidance as necessary. ORS strongly encourages vendors to submit invoices electronically when possible. Invoices may also be submitted via email to the Counselor for processing or can continue to be mailed to the District Office.

Customer Approval

If the vendor determines that services can still be provided, and ORS has approved the services and the model change, the ORS customer must agree to services under that modality. If at any time the customer determines that they are unable to proceed, or that the modality is ineffective, services must halt and a plan to address their concerns should be developed in coordination with the vendor, customer, and ORS counselor. Should a plan be unable to be crafted, services may need to be put on hold, or a different vendor selected to proceed with services.

We are further requesting that all services include the discussion of social distancing, personal protection, and the severity of COVID-19 to help reinforce the individual's understanding of the severity of this virus. We request that all reports include documentation that this has been completed.



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Service Changes Due to COVID-19

The following Non-Supported Employment services are **approved** for the duration of the enforced mitigation procedures and the inability to conduct in person services. We are requesting that all services include the discussion of social distancing, personal protection, and the severity of COVID-19 to help reinforce the individual's understanding of the severity of this virus. We request that all reports include documentation that this has been completed.

1. **VOCATIONAL EVALUATION (VIRTUAL) —\$1000.00 and approved for adult vocational evaluations, (SE and non-SE.)** This is a virtual/remote service that can consist of but is not limited to exploration, interest inventory testing and virtual job shadowing. Care should be taken to include social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
2. **Virtual Job Preparation (Non-SE)- \$1850.** Consists of 9 hours per week for 4 weeks; scheduling of classes is up to the Provider at a minimum of 9 hours per week. All other services similar to non-virtual job prep and should include a resume and interviewing skills as part of reporting. Care should be taken to include social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
3. **Job Retention (Non-SE) - \$200 per week.** Service can be provided virtually and would include at least weekly phone calls to check in with the employer (if necessary) and the client. Care should be taken to include social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
4. **Job Coaching Services (Non-SE) - \$30 per hour,** provided virtually and telephonically. Care should be taken to include social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
5. **Virtual Travel Training (Non-SE) \$150** Review travel safety, how to read a bus schedule, YouTube videos on public transportation, social distancing, Covid-19 Safety precautions.

These following services apply to Adult **Supported Employment** services.

1. **VOCATIONAL EVALUATION (VIRTUAL) —\$1000.00 and approved for adult vocational evaluations, (SE and non-SE.)** This is a virtual/remote service that can consist of but is not limited to exploration, interest inventory testing and virtual job shadowing. Care should be taken to include social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
2. **CBWE —**(Not Provided at this time). For CBWE's that have been started but temporarily stopped, reports and invoices may be submitted for services already provided.
3. **Virtual Job Preparation (SE)- \$1850.** Consists of 9 hours per week for 4 weeks; scheduling of classes is up to the Provider as long as 9 hours per week. All other services similar to non-virtual job prep and should include a resume and interviewing skills as part of reporting. Care should be taken to include social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.

4. **Job Retention (SE)** - \$200 per week. Service can be provided virtually and would include at least weekly phone calls to check in with the employer (if necessary) and the client. Care should be taken to include social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
5. **Job Coaching Services (SE)** - \$30 per hour, provided virtually and telephonically. Care should be taken to include social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
6. **Virtual Travel Training (SE) \$150** Review travel safety, how to read a bus schedule, YouTube videos on public transportation, social distancing, Covid-19 Safety precautions.

The following Pre-Employment Transition Services are **approved** for the duration of the enforced mitigation procedures and the inability to conduct in person services. We are requesting that all services include the discussion of social distancing, personal protection, and the severity of COVID-19 to help reinforce the individual's understanding of the severity of this virus. We are constantly monitoring the current situation and are ready to accommodate our services to meet the needs our students and schools. We request that all reports include documentation that this has been completed.

1. **Pre-ETS Virtual Job Exploration—\$1000.00** This is a virtual/remote service that can consist of but is not limited to exploration, interest inventory testing and virtual job shadowing. Care should be taken to include discussions/education about social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
2. **Pre-ETS Work Readiness Training - \$1850.** Consists of 9 hours per week for 4 weeks; scheduling of classes is up to the Provider at a minimum of 9 hours per week. All other services similar to non-virtual job prep and should include a resume and interviewing skills as part of reporting. Care should be taken to include discussion/education about social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
3. **Pre-ETS Virtual Summer Work-\$2000.00** This 5-day, 4-week, 60-hour program provides a work-based learning experience connecting students with employers. This will provide students with authentic interaction with local employers hiring in the industry of their interest, so students learn about job skills, employability, labor market information, earning a salary, and job demands. Care should be taken to include discussion/education about social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
4. **Virtual Travel Training -\$150** Review travel safety, how to read a bus schedule, YouTube videos on public transportation, social distancing, Covid-19 Safety precautions.
5. **Virtual Summer Employment Alliance -\$900.00** This 5-day, 5-week, 20-hour a week program is a collaboration between the LEA, ORS and CRP to allow students with significant disabilities to participate in work-based experiences that reinforce transition goals for employment. Care should be taken to include discussion/education about social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.