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OF REHABILITATION SERVICES**  
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*“Helping individuals with disabilities to choose, find and keep employment”*

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**TO:** ORS Rehabilitation Counselors, Supervisors, and Administration  
**FROM:** Barbara Mulligan, Assistant Administrator Transition and RI Works  
**DATE:** 4/24/20  
**SUBJECT:** Guidance to ORS staff, community providers, and schools, about the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services during a period of state mandated mitigation strategies for slowing the spread of Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19)

### **OVERVIEW**

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 remains our top priority. All community partners and businesses are encouraged to follow the most recent guidance issued by the Governor’s Office. Please reference the latest information about COVID-19 from the Rhode Island Department of Health (<https://health.ri.gov/covid/>) as it provides the most updated information on the statewide efforts.

Pre-employment Transition Service activities and rates remain the same, with minor changes made for the utilization of virtual services. During this time, specific pre-employment transition services will be handled as follows in accordance with the Governor’s current directives (as of this document’s publication date):

1. ORS Staff may continue to provide all 5 of the required (Job exploration counseling, Counseling on Postsecondary Options, Workplace Readiness Training, Instruction in Self-advocacy, or Work Based Learning) virtual individual and group services using available online platforms.
2. ORS staff will continue to monitor and facilitate service delivery. Only ORS staff may determine a student’s needs and authorize the purchase of services.
3. Because Job/Group Shadowing, Paid Work Experiences, Community Work Instruction, and Group Travel Training are exploratory community-based experiences, these provider services are currently on hold and providers should not attempt to develop new experiences or attempt to provide these individual services in homes, in personal vehicles, or other public locations.
4. Provider instruction services (Job exploration, Workplace Readiness Training, Instruction in Self-Advocacy) may be offered virtually, at the request of ORS staff.
  - a. If a Community Provider wishes to provide virtual services, based upon needs identified, the following is required:
    - i. Prior to changing to or beginning virtual services, provider must have permission from ORS to provide virtual services. This will be documented in our service delivery management system and will be reflected in the fee-for-service authorization forms.
  - b. ORS will continue to utilize the same referral process to request virtual services from a provider. This

includes referral form, authorization and release of information.

c. ORS has implemented a virtual intake to assist in the referral process. This process consists of a virtual meeting with the student/family, community partner and VR Counselor allowing the VR Counselor to facilitate transfer of needed information to begin a Pre-ETS service. ORS will then follow up with student for signing any “hard” documents, i.e., formal release of information.

d. Instructor must be present during virtual sessions. Pre-recorded sessions, concurrent sessions, and/or stand-alone online curriculum are not allowable provider services.

e. Providers should also take attendance and may save recorded sessions on their own devices to verify the receipt of services.

f. Providers must continue to provide reports with billing, as well as a report statistic about attendance.

6. All materials must be made accessible and accommodations provided to students who need them. No person with a disability shall, on the basis of the disability, be excluded from participation in virtual service(s) when provided.

7. Payments will only be made for time spent rendering direct services to students.

8. ORS may discontinue the allowance of virtual services at any time at the discretion of our Administrator or Director.

9. Providers should complete reporting and bill for any services already rendered, including those that have been partially completed, using the online.

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.