

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Program Name: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Policy Number: VR-7.2-v3

Effective Date: July 1, 2008

Last Revision: December 30, 2022

CHAPTER 7: General Services

Section 7.2: Comparable Benefits

I. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance in exploring and utilizing comparable benefits for goods and services, whenever applicable and when necessary for achieving a successful employment outcome. Comparable benefits include services and benefits provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other federal, State, or local public agencies, health insurance, or employee benefits.

II. Authority

Authority for policies contained in this document includes the following:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), 29 U.S.C. § 3101 et seq.
- Title IV Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, 34 C.F.R. §§:
 - Applicable definitions 361.5(c)(8)
 - Comparable services and benefits 361.53
- A.R.S. §§ 23-502 and 503
- Arizona Administrative Code, Title 6, Chapter 4 Economic need and similar benefits R6-4-403 (B)

III. Applicability

This policy applies to circumstances throughout the client's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) process when comparable benefits must be explored and applied for specific VR goods and services whenever readily available.

IV. Standards

- A. The VR Counselor must explore the availability of comparable benefits, including accommodations, auxiliary aids and services, that are provided and paid, in

whole or in part, by other federal, State, or local public agencies, health insurance, or employee benefits prior to the provision of any service.

- B. The following comparable benefits must be explored at a minimum:
1. Pell grants or other available grants,
 2. Any non-merit-based scholarship,
 3. Medicaid/Medicare [including Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS) and Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)],
 4. Private or any other type of insurance,
 5. Veterans Administration (for health care and rehabilitation center programming),
 6. Worker's compensation (when the person has been injured on the job), and
 7. State funded childcare.
- C. Comparable benefits are not required for the following services:
1. Assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs,
 2. Counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist a client in exercising informed choice,
 3. Information and referral services to secure needed services from other agencies,
 4. Job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services, and
 5. Rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and technology aids and devices.
- D. The VR Counselor must utilize the available comparable benefit(s) first before authorizing VR funds.
- E. Comparable benefits must be related to the client's employment goals.
- F. In instances when a comparable benefit exists but is not available at the time needed to ensure a timely progress for the client's employment goal, VR will provide services until that comparable benefit becomes available.
- G. The VR Counselor will immediately begin using the comparable service(s) or benefit(s) as they become available any time during VR service provision.
- H. VR will not purchase a service(s) in instances when the client refuses or fails to make a formal application for a comparable benefit to pay all or part of the cost of the service, or when the client refuses to accept a comparable benefit that is available to the client.

- I. Scholarships awarded based on merit, grades, or achievement are not considered comparable benefits and may only be used if required by the donor.

V. Procedure

- A. Refer to section IV, A-G.
- B. Refer to Standard Work on Comparable Benefits.

VI. Documentation Requirements

The client's electronic case file must include the following:

- A. Any search results for the client's comparable benefits, including the specific comparable benefits that were considered will be documented in the Electronic Case File prior to the provision and re-authorization of each applicable VR service, other than services listed in Section IV(C) (1-6) of this section.
- B. The specific comparable benefit(s) that have been explored and utilized as noted in the Individualized Plan for Employment justification narrative and why they were not utilized (if applicable).