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CHAPTER 1 – Preface

Section 1.1 – Structural Base

Section 1.2 – Policy Manual Definitions

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Section 1.1 – Structural Base

A. The Vocational Rehabilitation program is structured under the following documentation and is required to function within the confines of these documents:

1. Federal requirements
   a. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 720 et seq as amended; and
   b. 34 CFR § 361, 363, and 397

2. State of Arizona requirements
   a. A.R.S. §§ 23-501 through 23-508; and
   b. State of Arizona Administrative Rules Title 6 Chapter 4

3. Guiding documents
   a. State of Arizona Unified State Plan; and

B. Authority is granted by the federal government for the following oversight structure for the Vocational Rehabilitation program in Arizona:

1. Designated State Agency (DSA) is the Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services (DERS); and

2. Designated State Unit (DSU) is the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (AZRSA).

C. Standards for staff are as follows:

1. All staff of AZRSA are required to abide by the most current Code of Ethics of the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).

2. Qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors:
   a. Vocational rehabilitation counselors must meet one of the following criteria to be considered qualified to perform the
non-delegable functions of a vocational rehabilitation counselor as defined in 34 CFR § 361:

i. Currently a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) as defined by the CRCC;

ii. Have the academic and experience that would allow the staff to sit for the certification exam to become a CRC as defined by the CRCC; or

iii. Currently involved in an active plan approved by the administration of AZRSA that will allow, at the completion of the plan, the staff to sit for the certification exam to become a CRC.

b. Staff hired as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor that do not meet the criteria of qualified as defined in this section must have oversight and signature from a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the following non-delegable functions:

i. Determination of an applicant’s eligibility status for the VR program;

ii. Determination of the significance of an applicant’s disability;

iii. All Individualized Plans for Employment and subsequent amendments; and

iv. Decisions to close a VR case.

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Section 1.2 – Policy Manual Definitions

1. “Accredited Institution” means an institution that is recognized for maintaining standards required for its graduates to gain admission to other reputable institutions of higher learning or to achieve credentials for professional practice.

2. “Administrative Law Judge” or “ALJ” means an impartial official who presides at an administrative hearing to resolve a dispute between a government agency and someone affected by a decision of that agency.

3. “Administrative Review” means an investigation of laws, regulations, and policies that apply to the situation as well as any options available to resolve the concerns of the client by the AZRSA Administrator or their designee.

4. “Administrative Unit” means any division, group, or entity which works to support the function of AZRSA.

5. “Applicant” means an individual who has submitted an application for VR services but has not yet been determined eligible.

6. “Application” means the form that AZRSA has approved for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program that allows an individual to formally request to take part in the VR program.

7. “Auxiliary Aids and Devices” means qualified interpreters; note takers; transcription services; exchange of written notes; telephone amplifiers; assistive listening devices and systems; closed caption decoders; open/closed and real-time captioning; voice/text/video-based telecommunications products and systems or equally effective telecommunications devices; videotext displays; accessible electronic and information technology; or other effective methods of making aurally delivered information available to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; qualified readers; taped texts; audio recording; braille materials and displays; screen reader software; magnification software; optical readers; secondary auditory programs (SAP); large print materials; accessible electronic and information technology; or other effective methods of making visually delivered materials available to individuals who are blind or have low vision; acquisition or modification of equipment or devices; and other similar services and actions.
8. “Bioptic Telescopes” means miniature telescopes which are mounted into the lens in a pair of eyeglasses that allows the driver to use his/her regular prescription lenses as well as the telescope gaining first an overall view and then very detailed view of the road, traffic and signs up ahead.

9. “Bioptic Telescope System” means a system which allows a trained user the opportunity to detect objects or movement within his/her driving scene using the wide field of view available through the regular spectacle lens and to resolve the fine details such as road signs and traffic lights by glancing briefly into and out of the miniature telescope.


11. “Child Care” means a service that provides assistance with supervised planned care for children during a portion of a 24-hour day.

12. “Clear and Convincing Evidence” means that the qualified staff member will have definitive evidence from a trial work experience to conclude that a client is incapable, with or without supports, of benefitting from services in terms of an employment outcome.

13. “Client” means an individual who has applied to VR for services and has been determined eligible.

14. “Client Assistance Program” or “CAP” means a program authorized under the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, and is intended to advise, inform, assist, and advocate for clients and applicants in their relationships with projects, programs and community rehabilitation programs providing services under the Act.

15. “Client Information” means all information specific to a particular client acquired by or generated by AZRSA in the process of application, eligibility determination, and service provision.

16. “Close Associate” (Section 2.3 only) means an individual who is or has been actively involved on a regular basis in business, social events, co-habitation, a romantic or sexual relationship, a
service provider/recipient relationship, or other relationship that may affect the impartiality of an AZRSA employee.

17. “College or University Training” means full-time or part-time academic training above the high school level leading to a degree, a certificate or other recognized educational credential. Such training may be provided by a four year college or university, community college, junior college, or technical college.

18. “Communication” means an individual’s ability to exchange information effectively when participating in work related activities.

19. “Commuting distance” means travel in excess of 50 miles one way from the client’s permanent residence.

20. “Comparable benefits” means services and benefits, including accommodations and auxiliary aids and services, that are-

   a. Provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other federal, state, or local agencies, by health insurance, or by employee benefits;

   b. Available to the client at the time needed to ensure progress towards achievement of the employment outcome; and

   c. Commensurate to the services that the client would otherwise receive from the VR program.

21. “Competitive Integrated Employment” means work that—

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

      i. 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;

      ii. 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

iii. 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

iv. Is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees; and

b. Is at a location-

   i. Typically found in the community; and

   ii. 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., customers 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

   c. 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.

22. “Confidential Caseload” (Section 2.3 only) means a caseload delineated for the sole purpose of managing client cases that are determined to present a conflict of interest due to the relationship between the client and an employee, service provider, or overseeing council member of AZRSA. This caseload is typified by being protected from access from staff not assigned to the case and being assigned to a Counselor being supervised by an AZRSA Manager.
23. “Conflict of Interest” (Section 2.3 only) means the involvement of an AZRSA employee in relationships outside of AZRSA that have the potential to corrupt or motivate an AZRSA employee to act, during the course of their job duties, contrary to the policy, procedure, and equitability of AZRSA programs.

24. “Contract work” means work performed under a contract that may be home-based employment and meet the definition of self-employment or be telecommuting and be considered as working for an employer.

25. “Counselor” means an employee of AZRSA who provides vocational guidance and counseling but may not meet the requirements to be qualified staff.

26. “Custodian of Records” means the individual designated by the AZRSA Administrator to be responsible for the maintenance, distribution, and tracking of client records.

27. “Customized Employment” means competitive integrated employment that is obtained through flexible strategies (job exploration, job creation or customization, job coaching, etc.), services, and supports for a client with a most significant disability. Customized employment requires a person-centered individualized determination of strengths, needs and interests of the client and is designed to meet the specific abilities of the client and the business needs of the employer.

28. “Department of Economic Security” or “DES” means a social service agency in the state government of Arizona which provides services and supports in order to promote the well-being and economic sufficiency of individuals in need.

29. “Director of DES” or “Director” means an individual appointed to oversee the functions of the Department of Economic Security.

30. “Economic Need” means consideration of the financial need of a client in order to determine the extent of their participation in the cost of vocational rehabilitation services.

31. “Electronic Case File” or “ECF” means the portion of the client record of service created and/or stored in an electronic case management system.
32. “Electronic Signature Pad” means an RSA approved electronic device designed to accept an individual’s signature and produce it digitally in an electronic format.

33. “Eligible Training Provider List” or “ETPL” means a list of training providers who meet training provider requirements and are eligible to receive funding as stated in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

34. “Employment Goal” means a profession or occupation a client is expected to achieve as a result of the services provided under an Individualized Plan for Employment.

35. “Employment Outcome” means 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 self-employment that is consistent with the client’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

36. “Extended Supported Employment services” or “ESE”, means ongoing support services provided by any appropriate resource such as but not limited to, any State agency, private nonprofit organization, employer, or natural support, to support and maintain a client with a most significant disability in supported employment after the transition from support provided by Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation. Youth with the a most significant disability may receive extended supported employment services provided by Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation for up to four years or until the youth reaches the age of 25.

37. “Extension of IPE Implementation” or “IPE extension” means a document which provides for the allowance of extra time to implement an IPE and should be used only in exceptional circumstances.

38. “Fair Hearing” means a process by which an impartial Administrative Law Judge or “ALJ” will review the case and evidence provided by both the client and the agency in order to provide a written decision with regard to the disagreement.
39. “Fair Labor Standards Act” or “FLSA” means a law that establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and youth employment standards affecting employees in the private sector and in federal, state, and local governments.

40. “Family Member” (for Section 2.3 only) means an individual who is the spouse, domestic partner, natural child, adopted child, foster child, step-child, natural parent, step-parent, adoptive parent, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law or father-in-law of staff.

41. “Franchise” means the operation of a business that is either owned or controlled in some manner by the grantor of the franchise.

42. “Functional Capacity Areas” means life areas (communication, mobility, self-direction, self-care, interpersonal skills, work skills, and work tolerance) in which functional limitations may occur.

43. “Functional Limitation” means a limitation imposed by a disability that impedes or limits an individual’s functioning in an employment setting.

44. “Hobby” means an activity or interest that is pursued outside of a person’s regular work and is primarily for pleasure. It is not considered work, nor can it be considered self-employment.

45. “Independent Contractor” means a person who contracts with others to perform services at a specified price.

   a. This person generally controls his own services, hours, pricing, and furnishes his own tools and equipment in performing the service.

   b. This person incurs the opportunity for profit or loss in performing the service.

   c. This person would be considered self-employed.

46. “Home Modification” means removing barriers in the home environment which will improve accessibility and safety.
47. “Individualized Plan for Employment” or “IPE” means a written program of services developed with the client that comprehensively documents the purpose, goals, responsibilities, and services necessary for a client’s successful rehabilitation.

48. “Informal Resolution” means a meeting with the client and the vocational rehabilitation counselor’s supervisor and/or Program Manager using objectivity and fairness to all parties in order to resolve the decision under contention.

49. “Informal Review” means review of the client case and the associated disagreement by the AZRSA local office supervisor.

50. “Informed Choice” means a decision making process in which the client analyzes relevant information and selects, with the assistance of counselor, vocational goals, intermediate objectives, services, and service providers.

51. “Intermediate Objective” means a statement which describes a specific, measurable, and realistic skill or level of knowledge which will be attained within a specified period of time. Multiple intermediate objectives may be identified during IPE development.

52. “Interpersonal Skills” means an individual’s ability to establish and maintain relationships with other at a level which allows the individual to participate in work related activities.

53. “Labor Market Information” or “LMI” means a collection of data that provides employment statistics, among other things, which includes information regarding the employment opportunities, income, and employment wage rates.

54. “Legal Ability to Work” means possessing the required documentation that proves that a client is legally authorized to work in the United States.

55. “Mediation” means an informal resolution process which utilizes a qualified and impartial individual who is appointed by the State Attorney General’s office to assist in the resolution of the disagreement.

56. “Mobility” means an individual’s ability to get to work from home and to move around a work site or participate in work activities.
57. “Natural Supports” means any assistance, relationships, or interactions that allow a client to secure, maintain, and advance in a community job of his or her choosing in ways that correspond to the typical work routines and social actions of other employees and that enhance the client’s social relationships.

58. “On-the-Job Training” or “OJT” means training in specific job skills by a prospective employer within the employment setting. Generally the employee is paid during this time and will remain in the same or similar job upon successful completion.

59. “Optometrist” or “OD” means a doctor of optometry and is a practitioner who performs eye examinations to detect vision problems and is able to prescribe corrective lenses.

60. “Order of Selection” or “OOS” means an organized and equitable method for serving groups of clients in a priority order if all clients cannot be served.

61. “Paid Work Status” (Section 2.3 only) means any time that staff is being paid to perform their regular job duties. Excluded from this are times when staff is on annual or vacation leave, on sick leave, and before or after an employee’s work shift.

62. “Post-Employment Services” or “PES” means one or more Vocational Rehabilitation services that are provided subsequent to the achievement of an employment outcome and that are necessary for a client to maintain, regain, or advance in employment, consistent with the client’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

63. “Potentially Eligible” means a student with a disability whose disability has been verified through review of documentation by VR staff, yet has not applied to the VR program and had their eligibility determined.

64. “Pre-Employment Transition Services” means one or more specific career exploration/work preparation services that are provided to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services.
65. “Priority Category 1- Eligible persons with the most significant disabilities” means a person with a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits three or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome; and whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require 2 or more vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time (longer than 6 months).

66. “Priority Category 2- Eligible persons with significant disabilities” means a person with a significant physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome; and whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require two or more vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time (longer than six months).

67. “Priority Category 3- All other eligible persons” means a person with a physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one functional capacity in terms of an employment outcome; and whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require one vocational rehabilitation service over a limited period of time (six months or less).

68. “Pseudo-Social Security Number” means a number generated by an entity outside of the Social Security Administration to serve as a placeholder when a Social Security Number is needed but not available.

69. “Public Education Agency” or “PEA” means a high school or District Office associated with the identified high school that may be contacted to obtain verification of a youth’s completion or refusal of transition services.

70. “Qualified Personnel” means an individual qualified to diagnose and document the existence of a disability in accordance with applicable national and/or state-approved recognized certification, licensing, registration or other comparable requirement that applies to the profession or discipline.

71. “Qualified Staff” means staff who meet the stated definition in the most current Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan.
72. “Referral” means a request initiated by an individual or by another person to formally initiate participation in AZRSA programs.

73. “Request for Review of Determination” means a form provided to the client, or their representative, which serves as a written notice of appeal rights regarding decisions made by Staff.

74. “Self-Care” means an individual’s ability to perform activities of daily living at a level which allows the individual to participate in work activities.

75. “Self-Employment Review Committee” means a statewide committee established by AZRSA to review and approve business plans.

76. “Self-Direction” means an individual’s ability to initiate, organize, and make decisions in one’s own best interest at a level which allows the individual to participate in work activities (this does not pertain to the validity or worth of the goals or plans).

77. “Self-Employment” means work done for a profit in an individual’s own business, profession, or trade.

a. The individual takes personal responsibility for activities that make or break the business;

b. The individual controls his/her own services, hours, pricing, furnishes own tools/equipment;

c. The individual owns at least 51% of the business; and

d. The individual directly operates the business and manages all or most of the aspects of the operation (or, in the case of supported self-employment, operates and manages those aspects of the business of which he/she is capable).

78. “Signature” means a direct signature in ink on the document; signature via electronic signature pad on the document; or email approval attached to the document, from the person authorized to make decisions (approval, acceptance or obligation) regarding the client’s VR program.
79. “Social Security Number” or “SSN” means a nine-digit number issued by the Social Security Administration to all citizens and non-citizens who have permission to work in the United States. This number is used as a unique client identifier in the Libera case management system.

80. “Staff” means any VR employee, including qualified staff.

81. “Student with a Disability” means an individual with a disability in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program who is not younger than 14 years of age and not older than 22 years of age; is eligible for, and receiving special education or related services under Part B of IDEA; or who is a student with a disability under section 504. This includes secondary students who are homeschooled, and students in non-traditional secondary education programs such as special education programs within the juvenile justice system, GED programs, and occupational training programs.

82. “Subminimum Wage Employment” means employment where the individual earns less than the Federal minimum wage identified under section 6(A)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

83. “Supported Employment” means competitive integrated employment, including customized employment for clients with the most significant disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent, as a result of a significant disability. Clients in supported employment require extended supported employment services after transition from support provided by Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation to maintain employment.

84. “Supported Employment Services” means ongoing support services, including customized employment, and other appropriate services needed to support and maintain a client with a most significant disability in supported employment that are:

   a. Organized and made available in such a way to assist the client in achieving competitive and integrated employment;

   b. Based on client need as specified in the IPE;
c. Provided by VR for a period not to exceed 24 months unless the client and staff have agreed to extend the time needed to achieve the employment outcome; and

d. Made available as post-employment services if unavailable from the ESE provider and necessary to maintain or regain the job placement or advance in employment.

85. “Talx Work Number” means a contracted service through the Equifax Corporation which provides employment information from a database of employers nationally.

86. “Telecommuting” means work done out of one’s own home for an employer where the individual is generally an integral part of the employer’s business and is not normally considered to be self-employed.

87. “Third Party” means any individual or entity who is not directly involved, either organizationally or contractually, in the provision of service for a client of the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration.

88. “Training” means services designed to help the client improve educationally or vocationally, or to adjust to the functional limitations of his or her impairment.

89. “Transition Services” means a coordinated set of services based on the student or youth with a disability’s needs and interests, designed to promote movement from school to post-school services (education, training, employment, independent living, etc.) and promote the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the individual’s IPE.

90. “Trial Work Experience” means an exploration of a client’s ability and capacity to perform work duties in a realistic, integrated work setting for the purposes of eligibility determination.

91. “Trial Work Plan” means a written plan to assess a client’s ability to perform in work situations through the use of a trial work experience or extended evaluation.

92. “Vocational or Occupational Training” means occupational, vocational, or job skill training provided by a community college and/or business, vocational/trade or technical school to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation.
93. “Wages PDQ” means a pre-defined query within the AZRSA case management system which provides employment information specific to Arizona employers and gathers information from Arizona Unemployment Insurance claims.

94. “Work Skills” means an individual’s ability to meet employment expectations.

95. “Work Tolerance” means an individual’s ability to meet the demands of participating in work related activities.

96. “Youth with a Disability” means an individual with a disability who is not younger than 14 years of age and not older than 24 years of age.

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CHAPTER 2 – Client Information

Section 2.1 – Protection, Use, and Release of Client Information
Section 2.2 – Case Record and Signature Requirements
Section 2.3 – Employee Conflicts of Interest

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Section 2.1 – Protection, Use, and Release of Client Information

A. Policy

1. Staff will ensure all records containing protected client information are handled in accordance with Department of Economic Security (DES) policy 01-07-07 Safeguarding Protected Information, and DES policy 1-38-0079 Secure Email Policy.

2. Staff will only share information that may identify a client with:
   a. Persons directly concerned with the administration of the client’s Vocational Rehabilitation program;
   b. The client and their guardian if applicable; and
   c. Persons authorized, in writing, by the client to receive specific information.

3. Staff will utilize appropriate forms of communication to inform clients of the policies regarding the protection, use, and release of their personal information, including when the provision of information requested by VR is optional and, the potential impact of not providing requested information.

4. AZRSA may release client information without the signed consent of the client or the client’s legal guardian in the following situations:
   a. For purposes directly connected with the administration of the Vocational Rehabilitation program;
      i. The information shared will not exceed the amount and type of information that is necessary to achieve the goals for which the information is being provided.
   b. In response to investigations in connection with law enforcement investigations;
   c. In response to investigations from the DES Office of Special Investigations (OSI) when OSI is acting in an official capacity on behalf of the Director of DES;
d. To report to Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, or any law enforcement officer, any incidents of documented or suspected child abuse or adult abuse;

e. To protect the client or others when the client poses an immediate threat to his or her safety or to the safety of others; and

f. In other situations required by law.

5. Prior to the release of client information based on criteria (4) b-f of this section, the Custodian of Records must consult with the Arizona Attorney General’s office to ensure the legality of the release.

6. AZRSA requires a written request for all client information being released, other than client information released based on criteria (4) a-f of this section.

7. Requests for client information must be submitted in writing and sent to the AZRSA Custodian of Records or other single point of contact designated by the AZRSA Administrator within two (2) business days of receipt.

   a. The Custodian of Records or point of contact designated by the AZRSA Administrator will begin processing the request within 24 hours of receipt.

   b. Records will be sent to the requesting source along with a list of all items from the request that were included. If any records from the request were not included, the list will include a rationale for not sending the records and any method the requestor might use to obtain the excluded records.

      i. A copy of this list must be maintained by the Custodian of Records.

8. AZRSA will only release information that is generated or purchased by AZRSA.

   a. Information that is obtained from another agency or organization may only be released under the conditions established by that agency or organization, or allowable by law.
9. AZRSA is required to release records that may be potentially harmful to the client through a third party source who can aid the client in appropriately interpreting the information being provided.
   a. The third party source should be chosen by or agreed to by the client.

10. A client who, after review of the requested information, believes that information in their record is inaccurate or misleading, may request that the information be amended.
   a. If the information is not amended, the request for amendment must be documented in the record of services.

11. Direct access to client information in the ECF is limited to individuals who have been approved by AZRSA security and who are logged in under their own individual login ID.
Section 2.2 – Case Record and Signature Requirements

A. Policy

1. The official client case record is located in the ECF, which is maintained in the Libera system.

2. The case record must contain the following documentation:

   a. Any VR document related to the VR program that includes a signature from the client, their representative as applicable, and/or staff;

   b. Documentation of any contact or correspondence related to the client’s VR program;

   c. Any report, assessment, progress note, or document purchased by the VR program or provided to AZRSA by the client or their representative as applicable;

   d. Documentation of legal ability to work in the United States;

   e. Proof of legal guardianship, if applicable;

   f. Any eligibility determination, documentation supporting eligibility or ineligibility criteria, and a case note narrative that describes how eligibility was determined.

   g. Any Order of Selection (OOS) Priority Category determination, documentation supporting the OOS Priority Category determination, and a case note narrative that describes the client’s functional limitations and service needs that were used to determine OOS Priority Category.

   h. Justification for closing an applicant or client’s case and verification that all criteria for closure have been met;

   i. Justification of the need for, and the plan relating to a Trial Work Experience for eligibility determination if applicable, including documentation of the periodic assessment of progress;

   j. Documentation supporting the determination of economic need and comparable benefits as applicable;
k. The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and all amendment/revision documents, including the justification and supporting documents for the IPE and amendments/revision;

l. Documentation that describes the extent to which the applicant or client exercised informed choice during assessment services and IPE development with respect to the selection of the employment goal, services needed to obtain the employment goal, service providers, employment setting, service setting, and method to procure services;

m. Coordination of Extended Supported Employment form for clients receiving supported employment and extended supported employment services;

n. Justification to support any IPE service that is provided in a non-integrated setting;

o. Verification that any client who obtains competitive employment is compensated at or above minimum wage and that the wages and benefits are commensurate to wages and benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by non-disabled individuals;

p. Evidence of any action or decision resulting from a Request for Review of Determination;

q. Information and referral services provided to, or on behalf of an applicant or client in accordance with Section 8.26 Information and Referral Services; and

r. Evidence that IPE services contributed to any successful closure.

3. Any document requiring signature will be signed by the person authorized to make decisions regarding the client’s VR case using one of the following methods:

a. Direct signature in ink on the document;

b. Signature via signature pad on the document; or

c. Email approval attached to the document.
i. Documents sent for email approval will contain the document in the body of the email.

ii. The person approving the document will reply to the email and clearly indicate what they are approving.

iii. The entire email approval will be scanned into the ECF and include:

   1) The email approval with header (showing recipient, sender, subject, date and time); and

   2) Original email with the document that is being approved in the body of the email.

4. All case notes will be entered into the ECF within 7 calendar days from the date of the event that is being documented.

5. Any document related to the client and received by the VR program, unless otherwise precluded, will be scanned into the ECF within three (3) calendar days of receipt. Once scanned, hard copy will be destroyed.

6. A document or case note will only be deleted from an Electronic Case File (ECF) when the document or case note has been placed in the wrong client’s case file and written approval for deletion has been provided by the local office supervisor, Assistant Program Manager, or Regional Program Manager.

7. The Libera Systems Administrator or their designee will delete a document or case note from the ECF and maintain documentation of the deletion in a centralized location with the following information:

   a. The date the action was taken;

   b. The case file from which the document or case note was deleted;

   c. The case file that the document or case note was intended for and placed into;

   d. The name of the deletion requestor;

   e. The name of the individual performing the deletion;
f. The name of the supervisor approving the deletion;
g. The name of the Libera Systems Administrator approving deletion; and
h. A detailed description of the document or case note that was deleted.

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Section 2.3 – Employee Conflicts of Interest

A. Policy

1. Employees of AZRSA will immediately report to their Regional Program Manager, or the Deputy Administrator if working in an administrative unit, if:

   a. The employee is currently a client of any AZRSA program;
   
   b. The employee applies to become a client of any AZRSA program;
   
   c. One of the employee’s family members or close associates is currently a client of any AZRSA program; or
   
   d. One of their family members or close associates applies to become a client of any AZRSA program.

2. While in paid work status, employees of AZRSA cannot:

   a. Receive services provided by or funded by any AZRSA program;
   
   b. Participate or attend services provided by or funded by any AZRSA program for a family member or close associate;
   
   c. Communicate with other staff or AZRSA vendors regarding their status as a client;
   
   d. Communicate with other staff or AZRSA vendors regarding the status of a family member or close associate as a client;
   
   e. Advocate, research, or provide advisement regarding their status as an AZRSA client;
   
   f. Advocate, research, or provide advisement regarding the status of a family member or close associate as an AZRSA client;
   
   g. Use equipment or resources provided by AZRSA for the purposes of the employee’s AZRSA employment in relation to the employee’s status as a client of any AZRSA program; and
h. Use equipment or resources provided by AZRSA for the purposes of the employee’s AZRSA employment in relation to the employee’s family member or close associate’s status as a client of any AZRSA program.

3. Employees, their family members, and their close associates cannot be provided services or case managed by staff within the same office where the employee is stationed.

4. Employees cannot have access to or work in relation to their case, their family member’s case, or their close associate’s case within any AZRSA programs.

5. A client’s status as an AZRSA employee, family member of an AZRSA employee, or close associate of an AZRSA employee will not serve as a reason to:
   a. Provide expedited, enhanced, or extended services;
   b. Impact the quality or quantity of services provided;
   c. Provide varied criteria for eligibility, Order of Selection placement, or any other decision related to the provision of AZRSA services from what is provided to all other clients of AZRSA programs;
   d. Influence the AZRSA employee’s work performance evaluation unless the AZRSA employee has violated the policy in this section; or
   e. In any other way impact the employment of the AZRSA employee or the services provided to the AZRSA employee, the AZRSA employee’s family member, or the AZRSA employee’s close associate in a varying manner than all other employees and clients are impacted.

6. All applicants to any AZRSA program will be asked at the time of application or at the time of the first meeting between the applicant and staff if they are a family member, close associate of, vendor for, or appointed member of a council responsible for oversight of any aspect of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
a. Any positive response will be documented in the ECF if applicable, or documented in writing, and include information related to the potential conflict of interest.

7. Staff who become aware of any potential conflicts of interest, as defined in this section of policy, or their clients or co-workers will report these potential conflicts to the Regional Program Manager or the Deputy Administrator, as appropriate.

8. All decisions regarding permanent case assignment, eligibility, and receipt of services will be placed on hold until the Regional Program Manager or Deputy Administrator, if appropriate, provides directive related to the assignment of the client’s case.

9. If the Regional Program Manager or Deputy Administrator determine that a conflict of interest exists, they will identify a qualified staff located in a different office than where the employee in question is stationed to manage the case, and establish procedures to ensure the confidentiality and protection of all aspects of the client’s case.

10. If a conflict of interest is determined to exist for the Regional Program Manager or AZRSA Deputy Administrator then the situation will be referred to their designee for review and assignment.

11. Employees determined by the AZRSA Administrator to have violated this policy shall be subject to progressive disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

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CHAPTER 3 – Appeals

Section 3.1 – Overview of Appeals
Section 3.2 – Informal Resolution
Section 3.3 – Administrative Review
Section 3.4 – Mediation
Section 3.5 – Fair Hearing
Section 3.6 – Director Review of Fair Hearing Decisions

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Section 3.1 – Overview of Appeals

A. Policy

1. Any time a decision which affects the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services that has been made by staff, staff will provide the following information to the client or their representative:
   
   a. Advise the client of their right to request a review of the determination;
   
   b. Provide a written notice of client rights and appeals options by utilizing the Request for Review of Determination form; and
   
   c. Advise the client of the availability and the right to utilize the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

2. Notice of client rights and written notice of appeals will be provided in writing by utilizing the Request for Review of Determination form to the client, and their representative if appropriate, at the following times:
   
   a. When the client applies for services;
   
   b. When staff makes an eligibility decision;
   
   c. When staff determines placement into an Order of Selection category;
   
   d. When an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed;
   
   e. At any time that the staff makes a decision or intends to reduce, suspend, or terminate planned services and/or goods being provided;
   
   f. When staff notifies the client of intent to close the case for any reason; and
   
   g. Upon denial of Post-Employment Services (PES).

3. Staff will advise the client of the following appeals processes available to them:
a. Informal Resolution;
b. Administrative Review;
c. Mediation; and/or
d. Fair Hearing.

4. If a decision is being disputed, staff will ensure that the client, or their representative if appropriate, is aware that a formal request for review of a determination must be submitted within 15 calendar days of the date that the written decision letter was mailed.

5. Formal written requests are acceptable in the following formats:
   a. Utilizing a Request for Review of Determination; or
   b. Any other written communication which will include:
      i. An explanation of the issue(s) under contention;
      ii. Client, or their representative if appropriate, signature and date; and
      iii. An indication whether the client is willing to resolve the issue(s) through an informal review, administrative review, mediation, or formal due process hearing.

6. Staff will direct a client who requests assistance in completing a written appeal to the AZRSA Ombudsman or local CAP office.

7. The AZRSA Ombudsman will schedule a Fair Hearing to occur within 60 days of submitting a Request for Review of Determination regardless of the resolution options chosen.

8. Staff will work with the client and the AZRSA Ombudsman throughout the appeal process until a final resolution is provided.

B. Procedure

1. Staff will advise the client in writing of any decisions made which affects VR service provision and provide the client with a Request for Review of Determination.
2. Staff will advise the client of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and provide the client with CAP contact information when issuing a written decision letter.

3. Staff will accept any written request for review and date stamp the request.

4. Staff will scan the written request for review of determination and load into the client’s ECF.

5. Staff will forward the written request for review electronically or via interoffice mail to the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days of receipt of document.
Section 3.2 – Informal Resolution

A. Policy

1. Staff will date stamp any written request for review upon receipt and will enter the request into the client’s ECF within ten (10) calendar days.

2. Staff will forward the date stamped written request for review to the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days.

3. The AZRSA Ombudsman will request a Fair Hearing be scheduled to meet the 60 day requirement within three (3) days of receipt of the Request for Review of Determination.

4. The AZRSA Ombudsman will assign an Informal Review action to the supervisor, Regional Program Manager, or their designee, within three (3) business days of receipt of the Request for Review of Determination.

5. The designated supervisor, Regional Program Manager, or their designee, will conduct a review of the determination and complete an informal resolution within ten (10) business days of the receipt of the Informal Review action.

6. Documentation of the informal review will contain the following:
   a. Restatement of the issue in dispute;
   b. A review of the facts as presented by both parties;
   c. A statement of the decision rendered;
   d. An explanation of the decision which includes an analysis of the issues and applicable policies; and
   e. The electronic signature of the reviewer and date of review.

7. The client will be provided with the results of the informal review and the client will be informed of their right to Request a Review of the Determination and to proceed with any of the following processes:
   a. Administrative Review;
b. Mediation; and/or

c. Fair Hearing.

8. The Staff responsible, as listed in B(5) of this section, for completing the informal review, is responsible for sending the results of the informal review to the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days of the client’s acceptance of determination or wish to proceed with another appeal process.

9. A Program Manager will be involved in the following circumstances:

   a. The local office supervisor made the decision which is in dispute; or

   b. Potential solution will require a decision and action which is only delegable to a Program Manager.

B. Procedure

1. Upon receipt of the request for Informal Review, Staff will:

   a. Date stamp the request on date received;

   b. Scan the request and file in the client’s ECF;

   c. Forward the request to the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days; and

   d. Mail the client a completed letter titled “Informal Review Request Received”.

2. Within five (5) business days of receipt of the Request for Review of Determination, the AZRSA Ombudsman will request a Fair Hearing to be scheduled within 60 days of the receipt by AZRSA of the client’s Request for Review of Determination.

3. An Informal Resolution Action Form will be initiated by the AZRSA Ombudsman.

4. The AZRSA Ombudsman will task the supervisor, or their designee, requesting that the supervisor, or their designee, complete the action.
5. Upon receipt of the action, the supervisor, or their designee, will complete the action by reviewing the issue and applicable regulations, laws, and policies and will render a decision based on all of the above information.

6. Upon completion of the action the supervisor, or their designee, will mail a completed Informal Review Decision letter to the client with a Request for Review of Determination.

7. AZRSA will permit the client 15 calendar days to respond in writing regarding the client’s agreement or non-agreement with the AZRSA decision related to the Informal Review.

8. The supervisor, or their designee, will monitor the 15 calendar day timeline to ensure compliance.

9. If the client does not agree with the Informal Review decision, the client will indicate their preference for an Administrative Review, Mediation, or Fair Hearing.

10. After the 15th calendar day or upon response from the client the supervisor, or their designee, will complete the Informal Resolution Action Form and inform the AZRSA Ombudsman via email that the action has been completed.

11. Based on the response from the client, the AZRSA Ombudsman will advise all pertinent parties of the next steps as listed in the following sections.
Section 3.3 – Administrative Review

A. Policy

1. Staff will date stamp any written Request for Review of Determination upon receipt.

2. Staff will forward the date stamped written Request for Review of Determination to the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days of the receipt of request.

3. Within three (3) business days of receipt of the Request for Review of Determination the AZRSA Ombudsman will request a Fair Hearing be scheduled to be held within 60 days.

4. The AZRSA Administrator, or their designee, will conduct a review to include the following:

   a. A review of the determination;
   
   b. A review of regulations, laws, and applicable policies; and
   
   c. A review of any options available to resolve the concerns of the client.

5. Documentation of Administrative Review will contain the following:

   a. Reinstatement of the issue in dispute;
   
   b. A review of the facts as presented by both parties;
   
   c. A statement of the decision rendered;
   
   d. An explanation of the decision which includes an analysis of the issues and applicable policies;
   
   e. A Request for Review of Determination with explanation of further appeal rights;
   
   f. The electronic signature of the reviewer and date of review.

6. The AZRSA Administrator, or their designee, will provide the client with the results of the Administrative Review in writing and the client will be informed of their right to request a review.
of the determination and proceed with any of the following processes:

a. Mediation; and/or

b. Due Process Hearing.

7. If the client does not respond within 15 days the case will proceed to Due Process Hearing.

8. The AZRSA Administrator will inform the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days of the client’s acceptance of determination or their wish to proceed with another appeal process.

B. Procedure

1. Upon receipt of the request for an Administrative Review, staff will:

   a. Date stamp the request on the date received;

   b. Scan the request and file in the client’s ECF; and

   c. Forward the request to the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days.

2. The AZRSA Ombudsman will schedule a Fair Hearing when the Request for Review of Determination is received.

3. Within two (2) business days of receipt of request for an Administrative Review the AZRSA Administrator, or their designee, will complete a review per B(3)(a-c) of this section.

4. The AZRSA Administrator, or their designee, will inform the client in writing of the Administrative Review per A (4)(a-f) of this policy.

5. The client will respond in writing within 15 calendar days if they are not in agreement with the decision.

6. The AZRSA Administrator, or their designee, will monitor the 15 day calendar day timeline to ensure compliance.
7. If the client does not agree with the Administrative Review decision, the client will indicate their preference for Mediation or Fair Hearing.

8. After the 15th calendar day or upon response from the client the AZRSA Administrator, or their designee, will inform the AZRSA Ombudsman of the client’s acceptance or request to continue with the appeal process.

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Section 3.4 – Mediation

A. Policy

1. Staff will date stamp any written Request for Review of Determination upon receipt.

2. Staff will forward the date stamped written Request for Review of Determination to the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days.

3. The AZRSA Ombudsman will request a Fair Hearing be scheduled to meet the 60 day requirement within three (3) business days of receipt of the Request for Review of Determination.

4. Mediation will not be used to deny or delay the right of the client to a hearing or to deny any other right afforded under laws regulating the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

5. Vocational rehabilitation counselors will honor the client’s request for mediation and agree to participate in the mediation process except when the decision by a higher authority or law supersedes the counselor’s authority and the vocational rehabilitation counselor is not able to mediate the issue.

6. A representative from AZRSA with the authority to approve and agree to the outcome of the mediation will be present at all mediations.

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

8. If the mediation results in a mediation agreement, the written agreement will be sent to the AZRSA Ombudsman for review.

9. If the mediation does not result in an agreement, the client will agree to one of the following options:
   a. Discontinue the dispute resolution process; or
   b. Proceed with a Fair Hearing.

B. Procedure
1. Upon receipt of the request for an Administrative Review, staff will:
   a. Date stamp the request on the date received;
   b. Complete the section on the Request for Review of Determination indicating their willingness to participate in mediation;
   c. Scan the request and file in the client’s ECF; and
   d. Forward the request to the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days.

2. Within five (5) business days of receipt of the Request for Review of Determination, the AZRSA Ombudsman will request a Fair Hearing to be scheduled within 60 days of the date stamp received date on the request.

3. The AZRSA Ombudsman will notify the Attorney General Conflict Resolution Section of the need for a mediator.

4. The Coordinator for the State Attorney General’s mediation office will contact all parties involved including the AZRSA Ombudsman, Attorney General, vocational rehabilitation counselor, Vocational Rehabilitation supervisor, client, and their representative if appropriate to schedule an appointment to conduct the mediation.

5. If an agreement is made, the mediator will prepare a mediation agreement document.
   a. The AZRSA Ombudsman will review the mediation agreement for the following:
      i. To ensure the mediation agreement is consistent with laws and policy; and
      ii. To ensure that the mediation agreement can be implemented.
   b. All parties will sign the mediation agreement indicating the next steps.
6. If all parties cannot come to an agreement, the client will elect to discontinue their rights to a resolution or pursue a Fair Hearing.

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Section 3.5 – Fair Hearing

A. Policy

1. Staff will date stamp any written Request for Review of Determination upon receipt.

2. Staff will forward the date stamped written Request for Review of Determination to the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days.

3. The AZRSA Ombudsman will request a Fair Hearing within three (3) business days of receipt of the Request for Review of Determination.

4. A written request for a Fair Hearing will be considered received and filed timely on the date:
   a. The request was mailed as evidenced by the postmark or postage meter date on the envelope; or
   b. The request was received in the office of the AZRSA Administrator if the request was transmitted by any other means.

5. A Request for a Review of Determination that is not filed by the client within the specified 15 calendar days from the disputed determination, or mailing of the decision resulting from an informal or administrative review, will be considered timely if it is established to the satisfaction of the AZRSA Ombudsman that the delay in submission was due to:
   a. AZRSA error or misinformation; or
   b. The delay or other action of the U.S. Postal Service.

6. The AZRSA Ombudsman will schedule a Fair Hearing upon receipt of a timely filed Request for Review of Determination.

7. The AZRSA Ombudsman will request the DES Office of Appeals to schedule a Fair Hearing within 60 days of receipt of the Request for Review of Determination.

8. If requested, the client and AZRSA will attempt to resolve the dispute prior to the hearing informally as listed in this chapter.
a. This client may choose to voluntarily withdraw the request for a formal hearing if a resolution is obtained informally prior to the date of the Fair Hearing.
b. Upon receipt of a written request to voluntarily withdraw their request for a Fair Hearing and the matter in dispute has been resolved, the hearing will be vacated.

9. AZRSA will agree to extend the 60 day timeframe for the provision of a Fair Hearing if the client requests an extension on the original Request for Review of Determination.

10. Staff members who were involved in making the determination in dispute will participate in the Fair Hearing process including but not limited to attending the Fair Hearing if requested by the AZRSA Ombudsman, other official of AZRSA, or by an official of the Administrative Law office.

B. Procedure

1. Upon receipt of the request for a Fair Hearing, staff will:
   a. Date stamp the request upon receipt;
   b. Scan the request and file in the client’s ECF; and
   c. Forward the request to the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days.

2. The AZRSA Ombudsman will schedule a Fair Hearing when the Request for Review of Determination is received.

3. The AZRSA Ombudsman will notify the Attorney General Conflict Resolution Section of the need for a Fair Hearing to be scheduled within 60 days.

4. All involved parties will prepare and forward a summary of events and may be asked to participate in a pre-hearing meeting at least ten (10) days prior to the Fair Hearing.

5. The Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) will provide a written report of findings.
6. The AZRSA Ombudsman will review the findings and if necessary will staff the case with the AZRSA Administrator and the Manager of Policy and Programs.

7. The AZRSA Ombudsman will inform all involved parties of the outcome of the hearing and will facilitate any additional steps if they are required.

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Section 3.6 – Director Review of Fair Hearing Decisions

A. Policy

1. If either the AZRSA Administrator or the client, upon receipt of the decision by the ALJ, are in disagreement with the decision of the ALJ, the entity in disagreement will file in person or by mail with the DES Office of Appeals a request that the Director of DES, or their designee, review the decision made by the ALJ within 20 calendar days of the decision.

2. In the event that the client or AZRSA files a request for reconsideration, the other party will have 20 calendar days to file a response to the request.

   a. The request for review may be filed in person or by letter to the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Office of Appeals, 207 E. McDowell Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85004.

   b. The request should contain the client’s name, Social Security Number, and a statement regarding the reason for the appeal.

3. Within 30 days of receipt of the request for review of the ALJ’s decision, the Director of DES, or their designee will do one of the following:

   a. Request a rehearing and provide documentation of additional evidence which is based on the following substantive criteria:

      i. The ALJ’s decision is inconsistent with the facts or evidentiary record and applicable federal and state laws or Vocational Rehabilitation policy and is not supported;

      ii. The ALJ’s decision erroneously or fails to interpret or apply the provisions of federal laws, regulations, Arizona State Plan, or Arizona VR policies which are consistent with federal requirements; or

      iii. The ALJ’s decision fails to find appropriate or adequate interpretations to key portions of conflicting testimony or fails to recognize state agency options in the
delivery of services which are permissible by federal law or regulations.

b. Agree with the decision on record; or
c. Issue a written decision that contains a modified finding and the grounds upon which the decision is based; this will be considered the final decision of DES.

4. Reasonable time extensions will be granted at the sole discretion of the Director upon request of either or both parties for demonstrable good cause.

5. DES will distribute a copy of the decision and statement explaining the right for judicial review of the decision to each interested party.

6. The Director will not delegate the responsibility to make any final decisions to any officer or employee of AZRSA.

B. Procedures

1. Upon receipt of the request for Director Review of Fair Hearing Decision, staff will:
   a. Date stamp the request on the date received;
   b. Scan the request and file in the client’s ECF; and
   c. Forward the request to the AZRSA Ombudsman within two (2) business days.

2. The AZRSA Ombudsman will forward the request to the DES Office of Appeals within five (5) business days of receipt of request.

3. The AZRSA Ombudsman will coordinate the review of factual information and gathering of evidence for AZRSA as necessary.
Section 4.1 – Voter Registration

A. Policy

1. Staff must offer voter registration in accordance with DES Voter Registration Policy (DES 01-21-24) and Voter Registration Procedures (DES 1-01-24-01).

2. Staff will offer all individuals the opportunity to vote at the following times:
   a. With each application for benefits or services;
   b. With each renewal or redetermination of benefits or services;
   c. When the individual appears at the office to report a change of address;
   d. Any time an individual requests information about the process to register to vote.

3. Staff are encouraged to also offer individuals the opportunity to vote at the following times:
   a. If the individual reports a name change;
   b. If the individual requests a party affiliation change; and/or
   c. If the individual has moved.

B. Staff will:

1. Ask if the individual if they would like to register to vote;

2. Complete the Offer of Voter Registration (NVRA-5) form for each offer;

3. Ensure that one copy of the completed Offer of Voter Registration (NVRA-5) form is provided to the individual, one copy is maintained in the ECF, and one copy is given to the designated staff person to be added to the Bankers Box;

4. Document in the ECF that a copy of the completed Offer of Voter Registration (NVRA-5) form was provided to the individual;
5. Supply anyone interested in registering to vote a Voter Registration form;

6. Offer to assist anyone who is registering to vote with completing the Voter Registration form;

7. Review all voter registration forms for any errors and advise the individual of any noted errors;

8. Accept all voter registration forms that are submitted to you regardless of errors or oddities.

C. Staff will not:

1. Seek to influence someone who is being assisted to register to vote regarding their political preference or party affiliation;

2. Seek to dissuade anyone from registering to vote regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, disability, legal status, or any other factor; or

3. Imply that registering to vote has any impact on the availability or quality of services that might be provided to the individual.

D. At the end of each workday, the designated person in each office will:

1. Collect all completed and incomplete Arizona and Federal Voter Registration forms, and all Offer of Voter Registration (NVRA-5) forms;

2. Count all Offer of Voter Registration (NVRA-5) forms and complete a Batch Report (NVRA-6);

3. Make a copy of the Batch Report (NVRA-6);

4. One copy must be maintained by the office for two years and the other copy is to be placed on top of the Offer of Voter Registration (NVRA-5) forms that are collected each day.

5. Place the Offer of Voter Registration (NVRA-5) forms and corresponding Batch Report (NVRA-6) in a Bankers Box (no other form of storage is to be used);

6. Mail the Arizona and Federal Voter Registration forms to the County Recorder’s office that is listed on the form within 5
calendar days from receipt.

E. At the end of every month, the designated person will:

1. Complete a Voter Registration Report; and
2. Forward the Voter Registration Report to the designated RSA Regional Office.

F. When the Bankers Box is full, the Bankers Box and all contents (copies of the Batch Report (NVRA-6) and all Offer of Voter Registration (NVRA-5) forms) must be forwarded to the DES Records Center in accordance with DES 01-21-24 Voter Registration and DES 1-01-24-01 Voter Registration Procedures.

1. Bankers Boxes must be ordered from the DES Supply Center (Item Number 725: Bankers Boxes, 12x10x15).
CHAPTER 5 – Referral, Application, Eligibility, and OOS

Section 5.1 – Application, Eligibility, Order of Selection

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Section 5.1 – Application, Eligibility, Order of Selection

A. Policy

1. Staff will enter all referrals into the case management system within one (1) business day of receipt of referral.

2. Staff will utilize a pseudo-SSN provided by the AZRSA Data Unit if the referral does not include a SSN, or if the SSN presented matches with a different applicant or client in the case management system.
   a. The pseudo-SSN will be used until the individual referred provides their true SSN or the discrepancy is resolved.
   b. Staff will inform applicants and clients who do not provide a valid SSN that AZRSA will not be able to provide services that require a valid SSN and will not be able to place the client in employment without a valid SSN.

3. Every individual referred to AZRSA will be contacted and provided information regarding the application requirements for the VR program within five (5) business days of the receipt of referral.

4. Any individual who is present in the State of Arizona and who reports having a disability may submit an application for VR services with the following exception:
   a. An individual who was previously determined ineligible for VR services based on a finding that the individual is incapable of achieving an employment outcome, due to the significance of their disability, has the right to request a review of that decision within 12 months from the date of case closure and annually thereafter.
      i. Reapplications will not be accepted earlier than 12 months from the date of case closure unless the individual provides clear evidence of a significant change in disability.

5. AZRSA will consider an application submitted and the individual to be an applicant when the following criteria are met:
a. The individual has completed and signed the agency application, completed a common intake application form in a One-Stop center requesting Vocational Rehabilitation services; or has otherwise requested service from the VR program;

b. The individual has provided information necessary to initiate assessment to determine eligibility and priority for services; and

c. The individual is available to complete the assessment process.

6. Qualified staff will determine an applicant’s eligibility and Order of Selection (OOS) Priority Category within 60 calendar days from the date of application.

7. Qualified staff will utilize and review existing records, reports, and data, in conjunction with counselor observations and information provided by the applicant or the applicant’s family to the greatest extent possible, in order to determine eligibility and order of selection priority category.

8. If existing records are not available or are not sufficient to determine eligibility and order of selection priority category, AZRSA will purchase existing records or additional assessments from qualified personnel only for the purpose of determining eligibility and order of selection priority category.

9. AZRSA will consider an applicant to be eligible for VR and a client of the VR program when Qualified Staff determine that all of the following criteria are met:

   a. A determination by qualified personnel that the applicant has a physical or mental impairment;

   b. A determination by qualified personnel that the applicant’s physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment;

   c. A determination by qualified staff that the applicant requires VR services in order to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment that is consistent with the individual’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice; and
d. A presumption by Qualified Staff that the applicant can benefit from the provision of VR services in terms of achieving an employment outcome unless:

i. Qualified staff question the applicant’s ability to benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome due to the severity of the disability, in which case a Trial Work Plan will be developed to explore the applicant’s ability, capability, and capacity to perform in work situations.

10. ECF must contain documentation of the physical or mental impairment signed by qualified personnel making the diagnosis and any other documentation supporting the eligibility determination.

11. Extension of the eligibility determination may be considered if:

a. A Trial Work Plan is being utilized to explore the applicant’s ability, capability, and capacity to perform in work situations.

i. Trial Work Plan must be opened no later than the 59th day after the date of application.

b. Clear evidence exists which indicates circumstances beyond the control of RSA will prevent the determination of eligibility and Order of Selection within the 60 day timeframe.

i. Extension of eligibility form must be signed and dated by the applicant and staff no later than the 59th day after the date of application.

12. Qualified Staff will determine the client’s Order of Selection Priority Category by assessing the client’s functional limitations and vocational rehabilitation service needs in the following functional capacity areas:

a. Communication;

b. Interpersonal Skills;

c. Mobility;
d. Self-Care;

e. Self-Direction;

f. Work Skills; and

g. Work Tolerance.

13. The client will be placed in one of the following Order of Selection Priority Categories based on assessment and documentation of their functional limitations and vocational rehabilitation service needs:

a. Priority Category 1- Eligible persons with the most significant disabilities;

b. Priority Category 2- Eligible person with significant disabilities; or

c. Priority Category 3- All other eligible persons.

14. Any applicant who is eligible for Social Security benefits under Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act and whose eligibility for that benefit has been verified by RSA, is presumed eligible for VR services and will be considered at least an individual with a significant disability and placed in Priority Category 2 unless:

a. Qualified staff determine that the client has functional limitations and service needs which warrant Priority Category 1 designation.

b. Qualified staff question the applicant’s ability to benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome due to the severity of the disability, in which case a Trial Work Plan will be developed to explore the applicant’s ability, capability, and capacity to perform in work situations.

15. If a trial work plan is developed, trial work experiences will be conducted in competitive and integrated employment settings over a sufficient period of time to determine by clear and convincing evidence the ability or inability of the applicant to benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome.
a. Qualified staff will review and assess the applicant’s progress as often as necessary but at least every 30 days during the Trial Work Plan.

b. Qualified staff will discontinue all services associated with the Trial Work Plan when the following has been determined:
   
   i. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that the applicant can benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome; or
   
   ii. There is clear and convincing evidence that the applicant is not able to benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome.

16. Staff will provide a signed and dated letter of eligibility and OOS determination, notification of appeal rights in the form of a Request for Review of Determination, and CAP information to the applicant or client for each determination made.

17. Staff will ensure compliance with closure policies as needed.

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CHAPTER 6 – Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

Section 6.1 – IPE General Requirements

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Section 6.1 – IPE General Requirements

A. Policy

1. Staff will, through the review of original documents, verify that the client is legally able to work in the United States in accordance with the requirements of Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification prior to implementing an IPE. A complete list of acceptable documents is available here.

   a. Proof of legal ability to work in the United States will be scanned into the ECF.

   b. IPE will be implemented for a client who is unable to provide documentation of their legal ability to work in the United States only if a plan can be developed for how the required documentation will become available by the time the client is ready to pursue employment.

      i. The IPE will contain intermediate objectives that describe how the required documentation will become available prior to pursuing employment.

2. Staff will develop and implement an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with the client, and their representative if appropriate, within 90 calendar days from the date of eligibility determination or movement into an open Priority Category.

   a. An IPE will be considered completed and implemented upon signature from the client, their representative as appropriate, and all necessary Staff.

3. Staff will only consider implementing an IPE extension when circumstances beyond the control of AZRSA will prevent an IPE from being implemented within the 90 calendar day timeframe.

   a. Staff will document the reason for the extension and obtain all necessary signatures on the IPE Extension form no later than the 89th calendar day from the date of eligibility determination.

4. Staff will provide the client with the necessary accommodations, and the opportunity to exercise informed choice in accordance with VR Policy Section 8.1, throughout the IPE process.
5. The client, and their representative if appropriate, may develop their IPE on their own or with assistance from the following entities:
   a. Counselor employed by AZRSA;
   b. A qualified Vocational Rehabilitation counselor who is not employed by AZRSA;
   c. A disability advocacy organization; or
   d. Any other resource determined by the client to be helpful in IPE development.

6. Staff will collaborate with partner agencies to identify and plan services during IPE development as needed.

7. Staff will provide general information on the potential impact that employment may have on SSI/SSDI benefits, and assist with benefits planning through use of the Disability Benefits Calculator.

8. Staff will ensure the chosen and agreed upon employment goal meets all of the following criteria:
   a. Is consistent with the client’s unique strengths, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice;
   b. Has been developed using labor market information that projects an average number of job openings in the next several years;
   c. Is not determined to be illegal by the state or federal government;
   d. Is not a hobby venture;
   e. Is not sufficiently controversial as to create community disapproval; and
   f. Is not contrary to generally accepted moral standards of the community, such as an employment goal related to nudity or sex/sexual appeal.

9. The IPE will contain the following elements:
a. A specific employment outcome that is chosen by the client and is consistent with the client’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice;

b. Services needed in order to achieve the employment goal, including supported employment and extended supported employment services as required for clients pursuing supported employment;

c. Estimated timelines for the initiation of services and achievement of the employment goal;

d. The entity chosen by the client, or the client’s representative as appropriate, that will provide the Vocational Rehabilitation service and the method used to procure those services;

e. The intermediate objectives and criteria that will be used to evaluate progress toward the achievement of the employment goal (Refer to Appendix 3- Intermediate Objectives on the IPE for further guidance);

f. The responsibilities of AZRSA in relation to achieving the employment outcome;

g. The responsibilities that the client will assume in relation to achieving the employment outcome;

h. The responsibilities of the client with regard to applying for and securing comparable services and benefits;

i. The responsibilities of the client with regard to the extent that the client is expected to participate in paying for any service;

j. The responsibilities of other entities as a result of arrangements made regarding service provision including extended support and employment services; and

k. Any post-employment services as necessary.

10. The final IPE document will be prepared on AZRSA forms and signed by the client/client representative and Staff.
11. Staff will provide a copy of the entire IPE and all subsequent amendments and revisions to the client and their representative if appropriate, in the native language or mode of communication of the client or their representative.

12. The IPE will be amended or revised, as necessary and appropriate, if there are substantive changes in the employment outcome, the services to be provided, or the service providers.
   a. Amendments and revisions will not take effect until agreed to and signed by the client, their representative as appropriate, AZRSA counselor, and AZRSA management staff as necessary.

13. Staff, the client, and their representative as appropriate, will review the IPE every 90 days and at least annually to assess the client’s progress in achieving the intermediate objectives and employment goal.
   a. Results of the review will be documented in the ECF;
   b. Decisions regarding the client’s continued participation in the VR program will be based on the client’s consistent progress and achievement of the intermediate objectives and employment goal.

14. Staff will notify the client of their appeal rights and provide information about the Client Assistance Program when completing an IPE extension and when developing or amending the IPE.

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CHAPTER 7 – Self-Employment

Section 7.1 – The Role of Self-Employment in Vocation Rehabilitation
Section 7.2 – Self-Employment IPE – Phase 1
Section 7.3 – Self-Employment – Phase 2
Section 7.4 – Adding the Business Plan to the IPE

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Section 7.1 – The Role of Self-Employment in Vocation Rehabilitation

A. Self-Employment is a work setting, not an employment outcome.
   1. The outcome is the field of work, profession or trade that the client is capable of performing.
   2. Self-Employment is one of an array of employment settings available to a client.

B. If self-employment is the client’s choice for employment setting, this option needs to be explored, and a decision made, as early as possible in the rehabilitation process.
   1. Active participation by both the vocational rehabilitation counselor and the client are critical in making this decision.
   2. The advantages and disadvantages of the challenging process of owning a business and the nature of self-employment should be carefully considered.

C. The decision to commit Vocational Rehabilitation funds in support of self-employment must be based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to:
   1. The viability of the business plan,
   2. Potential for obtaining supporting resources (financial and non-financial),
   3. Total start-up costs,
   4. Sound business decision making.

D. Supported self-employment may be a feasible option for clients with very significant disabilities needing employment support services to maintain self-employment.
   1. Support may come from family, friends, advocates, partners, paid job coaches, etc.
   2. The costs for such supports must be factored into all the planning for self-employment.
3. These costs must be part of the business plan itself, if the responsibility for paying employment support services is going to be the client’s (i.e., in the absence of available employment support services resources).

E. Clients who are already self-employed upon Vocational Rehabilitation eligibility may be assisted to maintain or improve their current self-employment only following a thorough assessment to evaluate the client’s strengths, abilities, and resources to continue with a self-employment work setting.

1. Vocational Rehabilitation support is limited to the cost of additional or new equipment and supplies necessary for business expansion (never for replacement equipment or replenishment of supplies).

2. It is suggested that a business consultant be used to help examine the viability of the existing business and whether the self-employment setting is appropriate.

3. All policies regarding Vocational Rehabilitation supervisor or Self-Employment Review Committee approval apply for already self-employed clients.
Section 7.2 – Self-Employment IPE – Phase 1

A. The IPE when self-employment is a consideration is developed by the vocational rehabilitation counselor and client in phases.

1. An employment outcome will have already been established.

2. One of the Intermediate Objectives of the IPE will be assessing the feasibility of Self-Employment.

B. There are two different levels, or types, of assessment, one for employment outcome planning and one for planning for self-employment:

1. Employment outcome planning includes:

   a. Assessments necessary for establishing an employment outcome, to plan services such as restorative services, skill training, etc. to deal with disability issues, and to begin preparing for employment are done as part of the normal IPE planning process (VR Status 10).

2. Planning and consultation for self-employment during Phase 1 of IPE implementation:

   a. Self-Employment is only one strategy for achieving the selected employment outcome.

   b. It is not the employment outcome itself.

   c. Besides the intermediate objective of self-employment, as a way of achieving the selected employment goal, other intermediate objectives need to be written to assist with:

      i. Achieving needed knowledge, skills, experiences in the chosen area of employment; and

      ii. Ameliorating or supports for disability-related impairments as possible/necessary for achieving success in the chosen employment area.

C. Vocational rehabilitation counselor activities related to Phase 1 of the IPE will include the following:
1. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and the client will assess the client’s interests, strengths, resources, rehabilitation technology needs, etc. in regard to working in a self-employment work setting.

2. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and client may begin the assessment process by using self-assessment inventories, which consists of self-evaluations in five (5) different areas and warm-up exercises for the client.
   a. The result of this activity, whether these tools are used or not, must be included in the vocational rehabilitation counselor's comprehensive summary when the business plan is presented to the Self-Employment Review Committee.

3. Considerations when deciding to proceed with self-employment as an IPE Intermediate Objective include, but are not limited to, the following:
   a. Viability of the business concept as an employment strategy;
   b. Work goal as it pertains to the client’s abilities, capabilities, functional impact of disability, level of skills and training, problem-solving and interpersonal skills (including stress management), the effect of earnings on benefits, business operating skills, and economic need;
   c. Job options available to the client in the labor market working for another person, business or organization;
   d. Risks and responsibilities of self-employment;
   e. Client’s long-term personal commitment required to keep a business going.
   f. Why is self-employment the best way to achieve the employment goal?
   g. Does the client demonstrate the initiative and self-discipline to run a business?
   h. What experience does the client have in meeting and dealing with the public?
i. What opportunities exist, given the business concept and the competitive business environment?

4. Besides the counselor/client initial review and assessment, assessments will also include an evaluation by individuals who can best evaluate the client’s strengths and weaknesses for self-employment.

   a. Assessments must include consultation with an expert who can evaluate the client’s entrepreneurial strengths/limitations.

   b. Consultation is obtained from recognized sources and contracted vendors with AZRSA.

   c. Recognized agencies/persons must be used, such as Small Business Administration (SBA), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), AZRSA contracted business consultants or individual business consultants; i.e. those who normally explore the full range of entrepreneurial planning with people.

   d. While a recognized source may be utilized, AZRSA is limited to paying the cost of contracted vendors only.

   e. Consultation from someone in one specific field of endeavor (business) alone will not fulfill this requirement.

   f. The consultant should be asked to write an evaluation of the client’s readiness for self-employment and the client’s needs for further research or training.

       i. The business consultant should assist the client, as needed, in developing his/her business plan.

   g. The assessment must be comprehensive, covering a thorough evaluation of the client’s abilities, interests, strengths, concerns, priorities, physical and mental abilities, previous work habits, and availability of family and others to assist the potential owner as needed.

5. Provide the client with training necessary to prepare for self-employment (i.e. update skills, entrepreneurship training).
D. Entrepreneurship training:

1. A client desiring self-employment who has never successfully operated a business must complete a self-employment training course.
   
a. Such courses are available from postsecondary institutions, the SBA, SBDCs, or micro-lending agencies.
   
b. The course must be comprehensive in nature, covering the financial, managerial, marketing, and personal factors involved in owning/operating a business.
   
c. If supported self-employment is being developed, individuals who will be integral members of the client’s supported plan and who have never successfully operated a business must also complete entrepreneurship training.

E. During Phase 1 of the IPE, Vocational Rehabilitation will not fund goods and services that actually create a business.

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Section 7.3 – Self-Employment – Phase 2

A. Vocational Rehabilitation will pay for goods/services in a business plan with the following conditions:

1. All applicable Vocational Rehabilitation service policies apply;

2. All applicable Vocational Rehabilitation economic need policies must be applied;

3. All applicable city, county, state and federal laws, policies and procedures must be followed, including the need for business permits and licenses;

4. All applicable zoning regulations must be followed;

5. AZRSA purchasing policies must be followed when providing goods and services;

6. All self-employment business plans of $5,000.00 or more must be reviewed and approved by the Self-Employment Review Committee;

7. The Vocational Rehabilitation program sets limits to its overall financial participation in a business plan.
   a. Exceptions will be given only when absolutely necessary and the need exists because disability-related issues increase the costs over the set amounts.

8. The Vocational Rehabilitation program can pay only for start-up costs allowed in federal regulations and as defined in policies listed below.
   a. Vocational Rehabilitation support is not a grant and participation is only for specific cost items.

B. Financing a Business Plan

1. Vocational Rehabilitation support of a business plan for self-employment is limited to a maximum of $18,000.00, except with an approved exception.
2. Costs that can be covered by Vocational Rehabilitation are listed under the service category of Employment Related Goods and Services.
   
i. Public funds will not be used to support any business or enterprise that violates or is contrary to generally accepted moral standards of the community or is of a morally culpable quality, such as any business that conveys products that appeal to be a prurient interest in sex or nudity.

3. Any costs for items not covered by Vocational Rehabilitation or covered items in excess of $18,000.00 are the responsibility of the client.

4. The following services are not included as part of the $18,000.00 limit:
   
a. Skill training;
   
b. Entrepreneurship training;
   
c. Business consultation prior to business start-up;
   
d. Rehabilitation technology;
   
e. Vocational Rehabilitation Supported Employment services; and
   
f. Other Vocational Rehabilitation services not specifically part of business start-up costs.

5. Use of other resources:
   
a. All comparable benefits must be pursued before expending Vocational Rehabilitation monies for self-employment.
   
b. Other potential funding sources should be considered, e.g. family, friends, micro-loan, SBA, bank loans, and SSA Work Incentives, such as Pathways to Academic Student Success (PASS), should also be explored.

6. Partnerships
a. In a partnership, Vocational Rehabilitation will assist only for the client’s portion of the business. A partnership contract must be in place and available for review.

7. Client Contributions

a. Any costs which exceed the Vocational Rehabilitation allowable funding limit of $18,000.00 must be the client’s responsibility to fund through other resources.

b. If the client does not meet the economic need criteria, the client must provide a 10% contribution toward the business plan start-up costs from personal resources, loans, family assistance, or in-kind contributions toward the expenses of the business plan start-up costs.

c. In-kind contributions include items such as tools and equipment already owned by the client, and rent and utility costs for a business outside the client’s private residence.

d. Those items, which are to be considered in-kind contributions, must be appraised and value assigned, as accurately as possible.

   i. Example of client contribution: If a business plan is written for $700.00, the client participation would be $70.00.

8. Exceptions:

a. Any exception to the Vocational Rehabilitation financial support limit will need to be documented in the client record and approved by the Self-Employment Review Committee.

b. Exceptions may be granted based on reasons of a client’s unique personal factors, employment outcome and/or disability-related needs.

C. The Self-Employment Business Plan:

1. Required elements are listed on the Self-Employment Business Plan.

2. The following elements are not included:
a. Vocational Rehabilitation services for assessment, entrepreneurship and/or skill training;

b. Business consultation prior to start-up;

c. Rehabilitation technology; and,

d. Other Vocational Rehabilitation services which are personal or supportive in nature.

i. For example, a client may be offered counseling, therapy, and/or skill training which would be included in his/her IPE, but will not be part of the business plan.

3. Business Consultant Final Review and Recommendation(s):

a. Written documentation from the business consultant will indicate that all recommendations have been satisfied and support the business plan.

b. If extenuating disability-related circumstances present related to the client attending in person, and exception should be presented to the Self-Employment Review Committee chairman in a timely manner for consideration.

4. Business Plan Reviews and Approvals:

a. If AZRSA’s portion is under $5,000.00, a business plan may be approved by the Vocational Rehabilitation supervisor and implemented.

b. Such a business plan may be referred to the Self-Employment Review Committee, if the counselor and supervisor feel it is in Vocational Rehabilitation’s and/or the client’s best interest.

c. Business plans costing more than $5,000.00 must be submitted to the Self-Employment Review Committee for review and approval.

5. Amendments to Business Plan:
a. It is expected that a business plan will account for future business improvements, market changes, additional business needs for the continued viability of the business.

b. If an approved business plan is going to exceed its costs, the counselor will handle amendment costs as follows:
   
   i. A 10% overspend (due to price increases) of the originally planned business plan costs is allowed.
   
   ii. No new equipment or supplies will be allowed as part of the 10% overspend that have not been approved by Self-Employment Review Committee.
   
   iii. Thereafter, any additional overspend of the business plan, including any added post-employment services, must be approved at the level dictated by policy.

D. Presentation of a Business Plan and a Comprehensive Summary to the Self-Employment Review Committee (Committee).

   1. The vocational rehabilitation counselor will prepare a comprehensive summary for Committee members.

      a. The summary will include all relevant assessment information and client planning information.

      b. Examples of information which should be included:

         i. Client’s work history/strengths;

         ii. Vocational/psychological assessment, when appropriate, relating to self-employment;

         iii. How the disabling condition would impact the business;

         iv. Client participation and time spent in planning;

         v. Client supports from other individuals, agencies, etc.;

         vi. Consultation(s) obtained, including resulting information;
vii. Client’s ability to financially support self and family during the Vocational Rehabilitation plan (cost of labor needs to be recorded in the Self-Employment plan).

viii. The client must also have a plan as to how they will cover his/her disability-related expenses and/or insurance;

ix. Intermediate objectives and criteria for when a client will have achieved successful employment (VR Status 22).

x. Client’s financial goals (profits) to be considered successful;

xi. Vocational rehabilitation counselor issues; and

xii. Criteria for when a client’s case can be closed successfully (VR Status 26), including timeline for such closure.

2. The comprehensive summary, a client resume, the Phase 1 IPE, the business consultant’s documentation, and the completed business plan must be sent to all committee members two (2) weeks in advance of the scheduled Self-Employment Review Committee meeting.

3. The vocational rehabilitation counselor, client, and other individuals significant to the client’s plan, will attend the presentation to the Self-Employment Review Committee.

   a. If the client has a guardian or legal representative, the guardian/representative must attend the Committee presentation.

4. The client will present his/her business plan to the Committee.

5. The vocational rehabilitation counselor will present, in summary form, the client’s desire and preparedness for self-employment.

6. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and client must expect questions and discussion from Committee members as they evaluate the information before them.
7. The Committee may request additional information and/or make recommendations to the counselor and client.

8. Approval or denial of, or required changes to, the self-employment plan (the Business Plan and Phase 1 IPE) will be transmitted to the counselor in writing within ten (10) working days, unless delayed due to the need for additional information.

9. The decision will be verbally presented to the client with an explanation on the day of the review.

E. Any exceptions to the self-employment policies must be reviewed and approved by the Self-Employment Review Committee, whatever the cost of the business plan.
Section 7.4 – Adding the Business Plan to the IPE

A. Following approval by the Self-Employment Review Committee of a Business Plan, the approved goods/services in the Business Plan will be added to the IPE as Phase 2 for achieving the intermediate objective of Self-Employment.

B. The IPE will reflect only those portions of the business plan which Vocational Rehabilitation can/will assist with.

C. Included in the amended IPE will be all of the start-up costs associated with the business plan that Vocational Rehabilitation will pay for.

1. The vocational rehabilitation counselor and client may consider, if appropriate, start-up goods and services purchased in stages, depending on the nature of the business.

   a. For example, if the client needs only a few pieces of equipment for the first few months, the IPE may indicate, and the ECF reflect, the purchase of what is needed immediately. Other equipment noted in the approved business plan can then be purchased at a later date.

D. When an IPE costs exceeds $20,000.00 and the Vocational Rehabilitation portion of the business plan costs are more than $5,000.00, the Self-Employment Review Committee will be the approval authority for the business plan.

E. District Program Manager approval will be necessary for expenditure of Vocational Rehabilitation funds.

F. IPE plans not subject to Self-Employment Review Committee review and approval must follow the Supervisor and District Program Manager review policies.

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Section 8.1 – General Policies for all VR Services

A. Policy

1. The VR program provides services in order to:
   a. Assist potentially eligible students with disabilities with an early start at career exploration;
   b. Determine whether an applicant is eligible for VR services
   c. Determine the nature and scope of VR services needed by the client, including evaluations and/or services needed to assist the client to make informed decisions concerning services needed; and
   d. Assist a client to achieve an employment goal in accordance with their approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

2. VR policies must be applied consistently statewide.

3. VR services must be equally accessible across the state.
   a. When this is not the case, a statewide waiver is required.
   b. Equal accessibility of resources does not imply that all resources must look alike or have the same title or that all services are equally available everywhere in the State.

4. Clients must maintain contact with VR, actively participate in their VR program, and make consistent progress towards achieving an employment outcome in order to continue to receive services.

5. Involvement in the VR program does not entitle an applicant or client to any specific services.
   a. VR policies regulate the specific type or amount of goods and services that are available and under which circumstances they are available to an individual participating in the VR program.

6. The following types of services are allowable and may be provided to applicants or clients participating in the VR program in accordance with policy:
a. Assessment
b. Treatment of Impairments
c. Rehabilitation Counseling
d. Educational Training
e. Miscellaneous Training
f. On-the-Job Training and Registered Apprenticeship Training
g. Job Readiness
h. Disability Related Skills Training
i. Job Search Assistance and Job Placement
j. On-the-Job Supports-Short Term
k. Supported Employment
l. Transportation
m. Maintenance
n. Rehabilitation Technology
o. Reader Services
p. Information and Referral
q. Benefits Planning
r. Interpreter
s. Personal Assistance
t. Technical Assistance Including Self-Employment
u. Other Services
v. Randolph-Sheppard Entrepreneurial Training
w. Customized Training
x. Customized Employment Services
7. The following types of services and supports are unallowable and may not be provided to applicants or clients participating in the VR program under any circumstance:

a. Reimbursement to individuals for debts and expenses they have incurred. This includes goods and services that the individuals have ordered which have not been agreed to and which are not included on an authorization or in the IPE;

b. Ongoing or long term support of a self-employment business venture;

c. Basic living expenses (food, shelter, clothing, hygiene products) that are not in excess of the individual’s normal expenses due to the individual’s participation in the VR program;

d. General living costs resulting from a loss of income due to participation in VR services or a self-employment plan;

e. Services which are available from other agencies or organizations as comparable benefits (when use of comparable benefits is required);

f. Services based on economic need for persons who do not meet economic need criteria;

g. Salaries or payment for employees in a self-employment plan;

h. Illegal, high-risk, hobby, or speculative ventures;

i. Co-signing or underwriting of loans, refinancing of any debt;

j. Multiple self-employment businesses;

k. Operating capital, franchise fees, and support for non-profit businesses (self-employment);

l. Fees, fines, tickets or legal costs of any nature (including licenses, ID cards, proof of legal ability to work);
m. Vehicle payments, registration, or tags;

n. Office modifications which do not meet the VR requirements regarding home/office modifications;

o. Businesses or services which are illegal by federal or state law or which may be sufficiently controversial as to create community disapproval including any business or service that violates or is contrary to generally accepted moral standards of the community or is of morally culpable quality, such as any business or service that conveys products that appeal to a prurient interest in sex or nudity;

p. Purchase of personal computers unless required to address a disability related need that is directly associated with achievement of the agreed upon employment outcome or identified as a course requirement for an approved training program;

q. Specific goods and services such as: purchase of vehicles, residences, land, construction or major modifications of a building;

r. Treatment services that are not medically and vocationally necessary to achieve the employment goal as identified in the most current approved IPE;

s. Experimental, high risk or controversial treatment procedures.

B. Informed Choice

1. Applicants or clients of the VR program will be provided with information and support to assist in exercising informed choices of services, service providers, and methods of procuring services when choices are available.

2. Staff support the informed choice process by providing counseling and guidance, information and support to help applicants or clients involved in VR services make choices that match their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests by:

   a. Explaining what choices are available throughout the rehabilitation process;
b. Assisting applicants or clients to identify and get the information they need to explore the options available;

c. Providing information and referral to community supports and relevant consumer groups that can assist the applicants or client in making informed choices; and

d. Helping applicants or clients understand and evaluate the options available to them, including assisting in the arrangement of phone calls, meetings, and tours between the client and available service providers.

3. Information provided by staff to assist applicants or clients of the VR program in practicing informed choice when choosing services and service providers will include:

a. Types of services offered by the potential provider;

b. Cost, accessibility, and duration of potential services;

c. Consumer satisfaction with those services, if available;

d. Qualifications of potential service providers;

e. Degree to which services are provided in an integrated setting; and

f. Outcomes achieved by applicants or clients working with service providers, if available.

4. Selected services, service providers, and method of procuring services will:

a. Be made in accordance with applicable federal, state, Department of Economic Security, and VR policies and procedures;

b. Be necessary to determine eligibility, assess rehabilitation needs, and/or achieve the employment goal as identified in the most current approved IPE; and

c. Be agreed upon by the applicant or client of the VR program and staff.

5. VR will pay for the lowest cost service option that meets the client’s disability related needs and/or employment goal when
the client has been approved to participate in a non-contracted service in which the provider sets their own rates (i.e. college).

a. If the applicant or client chooses the higher cost service for reasons unrelated to their disability and/or employment goal, the applicant or client is responsible for those costs that are in excess of the lowest cost service.

6. Documentation of informed choice will be maintained in the ECF.

C. Economic Need

1. Staff will consider the economic need of the client when:
   a. Providing any service after an eligibility determination; and
   b. Planning and authorizing Post-Employment Services.

2. Clients will have their economic need determined if they need VR support for any service other than the following:
   a. Assessment for determining eligibility and Order of Selection priority category;
   b. Assessment for determining VR service needs;
   c. VR counseling and guidance;
   d. Information and referral services;
   e. Job-related services;
   f. Personal Assistance services; and
   g. Any auxiliary aid or service which a client requires in order to participate in the VR program.

3. Clients will be determined to meet economic need if the individual’s household adjusted gross income is at or below 100 percent of the current Arizona median income for that family size as published annually in the AZRSA Economic Need Chart (see Appendix 1).
   a. Clients who have been determined eligible for Social Security benefits under Titles II or XVI based on their own disability automatically meet economic need.
i. Proof of benefits must be verified by staff and documentation scanned into the ECF.

4. Staff will evaluate a client’s economic need by using one of the following sources:
   a. Adjusted gross income amount from the most current U.S. federal income tax statement for the client or the individual who claimed the client;
   b. Current Social Security Award letter for SSI or SSDI beneficiaries based on the client’s own disability;
   c. Documentation that the client is a Ward of the Court/State;
   d. Documentation of the client’s current eligibility for any government assistance which is based on poverty or median income guidelines; or
   e. Any other credible and verifiable documentation related to economic status which may include pay check stubs, documentation of eligibility for unemployment benefits.

5. Staff will not count the client’s past year’s earnings toward computing economic need if the client or individual who claims the client is no longer employed and has no income.

6. Staff may subtract any disability related costs from the adjusted gross income if:
   a. The client or their family pays for the services;
   b. The client or their family does not claim these costs as deductions on their income tax statements;
   c. The client or their family does not receive reimbursement for the costs from any other public or private source; and
   d. The client or their family provide documentation which verifies the cost of the disability related need being subtracted from the client’s adjusted gross income.

7. Staff will determine that a client does not meet economic need if the client does not provide the requested and required documentation to support an economic need determination.
8. Staff will re-determine the client’s economic need status if the client’s financial situation has changed since the time of the most economic need determination and the redetermination will allow the client to meet economic need.

9. All documentation used to support the economic need determination will be scanned into ECF.

D. Comparable Benefits

1. Staff and clients will explore the availability of services and benefits, including accommodations and auxiliary aids and services that are provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other Federal, State, or local public agencies, by health insurance, or by employee benefits prior to the provision of all VR services EXCEPT for the following services:

   a. Assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs;

   b. Counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an client in exercising informed choice;

   c. Information and referral services to secure needed services from other agencies;

   d. Job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow along services;

   e. Rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices; and

   f. Post-Employment services.

2. Comparable benefits that will be explored at a minimum include:

   a. Medicaid/Medicare;

   b. PELL grant or other available grants;

   c. Any non-merit based scholarship;

   d. Private or any other type of medical insurance;
e. Veteran’s Administration (for health care and rehabilitation center programming);
f. Worker’s Compensation (when the person has been injured on the job); and
g. State funded child care.

3. If comparable benefits exist and meet the client’s disability-related and/or employment needs, the comparable benefit must be utilized.

4. If it is known that comparable benefits exist but are not available at the time needed to ensure the timely progress of the client toward achieving an employment outcome, VR will provide services until those comparable benefits become available.
   a. VR will immediately begin using a comparable service or benefit that becomes available at any time during VR service provision.
   b. VR will not purchase a service when the client refuses or fails to make 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.

5. Scholarships awarded based on merit, grades, or achievements are not considered comparable benefits.

6. The results of the search for comparable benefits, including the specific comparable benefits that were considered will be documented in the ECF prior to the provision and re-authorization of each VR service, other than services listed in D(1)(a-f) of this section.

E. Service Planning and Documentation Requirements

1. All goods or services provided to an applicant or client must be planned and authorized in accordance with the general average level of services provided to applicant or client unless the applicant or client’s individual needs require a different level of service.
2. All goods and services provided to applicants or clients must include rationale in the ECF explaining:
   a. How the good/service addresses the applicant or client’s disability related needs;
   b. How the applicant or client exercised informed choice when choosing the good/service and provider;
   c. The expected outcome of the good/service;
   d. The expected ability of the applicant or client and provider (if applicable) to achieve the expected outcome;
   e. The anticipated length and level of good/service needed to achieve the expected outcome; and
   f. Updates on the applicant or client’s participation and progress with the good/service at least every 90 days.

3. All goods or services provided after IPE implementation must be contained in the most current and approved IPE. See Section 6.1 IPE General Requirements for more information.

4. If a good or service is not producing the expected outcome within the expected time period or level of service provision, staff, applicant or client, and provider (if applicable) will meet to review the information in (F)(1) and decide if the service should continue.
   a. Staff make the ultimate decision whether a service will continue.
   b. Result of discussion and justification for decision will be documented in ECF.

5. If a good or service is denied or discontinued, staff will provide the applicant or client with the following documentation:
   a. Denial of Service letter, including justification for denial or discontinuation of service;
   b. Request for Review of Determination; and
   c. CAP brochure.
F. **Procurement of Services**

1. The VR program adheres to the applicable federal, state, Department of Economic Security, and VR policies and procedures when planning, authorizing, purchasing, and paying for goods or services for applicants or clients of the VR program.

2. Once an applicant has been determined eligible and all necessary services have been completed to develop the IPE, the VR program will only authorize, purchase, and pay for services contained in the most current approved IPE.

3. All services are authorized, purchased, and paid for in accordance with the established procurement methodology, fee schedule, or contracts.

4. The VR program will not reimburse any entity or be held responsible for any expenses that are not covered by a current and approved written authorization.

G. **Authorization to Client: Client Purchase Agreements (CPA)**

1. Authorization directly to the client will only be completed if all of the following apply:
   a. The service is not available through a contracted vendor;
   b. The client has signed a Client Purchase Agreement form; and
   c. Requirements of the Client Purchase Agreement form are met.

2. Services/goods purchased with a CPA must be used in order to assist the client in the achievement of their employment goal and cannot be disposed of, sold, or misused.

3. Clients will obtain documentation of the cost of the particular service/good(s) and submit documentation to the VR Counselor for review and approval.

4. If the cost is approved, the following steps are completed by the VR Counselor:
   a. CPA form is completed;
b. Completed CPA and client responsibilities are reviewed with the client;

c. The client’s signature is obtained on the CPA; and

d. Copy of the signed CPA is provided to the client.

5. CPA amount will not exceed $4,000 per service unless supervisor approval is obtained and documented in the ECF.

a. Multiple CPAs for the same service may not be used to circumvent the requirement to obtain supervisor approval and exceed the $4,000 limit.

b. CPA duration (start and end dates of service) will not exceed 1 semester or period of tuition renewal for education services or 6 months for all other VR services.

6. If any changes occur (change in cost, dates of service, etc.) after the form is signed, a new Client Purchase Agreement must be completed.

7. Within 30 calendar days of the receipt of funds, the client will:

a. Purchase the agreed upon service/good;

b. Provide original receipt to verify the purchase of the agreed upon service/good; and

c. Return any unspent funds totaling $5.00 or more to the VR Counselor in the form of a money order made payable to Department of Economic Security (DES).

i. The client may use some of the unspent funds to purchase the money order.

8. VR Counselor will keep the original receipt and provide a copy to the client.

a. Original receipt will be provided to the Purchasing Technician (PT) who will attach it to the corresponding authorization.

b. Bank statements will not be accepted as a form of receipt.
c. Copies of a receipt will only be accepted in instances where attempts to obtain the original receipt were unsuccessful.
   i. Attempts to collect receipts will be documented in the ECF.

9. If the client fails to provide receipts to verify the purchase of the agreed upon service/good, and/or fails to return any unspent funds totaling $5.00 or more within 30 calendar days of receipt of funds, the VR Counselor will make 2 additional attempts to collect the receipts and/or unspent funds over the next 30 days.

   a. No further CPAs will be provided to the client during this time.

   b. Attempts to collect receipts will be documented in the ECF.

10. If the VR Counselor is unable to collect receipts that verify the purchase of the approved service/good, and/or collect any unspent funds totaling $5.00 or more within 60 calendar days of the client’s receipt of funds, it will be assumed the client did not adhere to the terms of the Client Purchase Agreement and funds were misspent.

11. If it is determined that funds were misspent, the VR Counselor will:

   a. Inform the client that they are not eligible to receive any further CPAs for the duration of the current case as well as any future VR cases unless funds are repaid; and

   b. Case note the determination in the ECF.

12. If misspent funds total more than $500, VR Counselor will send the case to the District Program Manager or designee for review.

   a. District Program Manager or designee will collect pertinent information regarding the misspent funds and refer the case to the DES Office of Accounts Receivable and Collections to initiate the collections process.

H. Exceptions from Policy Regarding the Provision of Allowable Services
1. Exceptions from policy for the provision of ALLOWABLE services may be considered for the purpose of meeting an applicant or client’s unique rehabilitation requirements if all of the following criteria are met:

   a. The exception to policy must be necessary because of the unique needs of the applicant or client;

   b. The exception to policy must be necessary for the client to achieve the agreed upon employment outcome;

   c. The exception to policy will not violate any state or federal law;

   d. The exception to policy will not violate the intent of the given policy;

   e. The exception to policy will not violate fairness to other individuals.

2. Exception requests will meet the following criteria:

   a. Be made by the VR Counselor in writing and approved prior to any obligation for the exception on behalf of the VR program.

   b. Explain:

      i. Why the policy should not apply to the particular applicant or client's services;

      ii. To what extent the exception will deviate from policy;

      iii. The consequences to the applicant or client and the client’s IPE, if applicable, if the exception is not made; and

      iv. Any alternatives that have been considered outside of the exception request.

   c. Be reviewed and approved by the office supervisor and the District Program Manager or designee.

3. Any documentation related to the policy exception request and response will be included in the ECF.
I. **Exceptions from Policy Regarding the Procurement of Allowable Services**

1. Exceptions from policy for the procurement of allowable services may be considered for the purpose of meeting an applicant or client’s unique rehabilitation requirements if all of the following criteria are met:
   
   a. The exception from policy must be made in writing by the VR Counselor prior to any obligation for the exception on behalf of the VR program;
   
   b. Explain why the existing payment methods cannot be applied or providers cannot be used;
   
   c. Be reviewed by the office supervisor and District Program Manager or designee prior to being sent to AZRSA Contracts Manager.

2. The Contracts Manager and/or DES Office of Procurement will explore available procurements methods and assist the counselor and/or purchasing technician in procuring the needed services.

3. Any documentation related to the procurement exception request and response will be included in the ECF.

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Section 8.2 – Reserved
Section 8.3 – Reserved
Section 8.4 – Reserved
Section 8.5 – Reserved

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Section 8.6 – Assessments

1. Assessment services, including services provided in a trial work experience or extended evaluation, are provided to obtain additional information necessary to:

   a. Determine applicant’s eligibility and assign priority for the Order of Selection;

   b. Determine the factors that affect the employment and rehabilitation needs of clients and barriers for preparing for, obtaining and maintaining employment;

   c. Determine the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, including the need for supported employment;

   d. Identify client’s rehabilitation needs, employment outcome and the nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation services to be included in the IPE;

   e. Assess and develop client’s abilities, capabilities, and capacities to perform adequately in a work environment;

   f. Assess client’s needs for rehabilitation technology necessary for work.

2. Economic Need does not apply to:

   a. Assessments for determining eligibility and priority for services except non-assessment services;

   b. Assessments for determining vocational rehabilitation needs;

   c. Any auxiliary aid or services (e.g., interpreter services, reader services) that an applicant or client requires under section 504 of the Act (29 U.S.C. 794) or the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101, et seq.), or regulations implementing those laws, in order for the applicant or client to participate in the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

3. The service outcomes for assessments/evaluations include, but are not limited to:
a. Review of applicant or client’s existing records;
b. Confirmation of diagnosis;
c. Recommendations for additional evaluation(s);
d. Identification of restrictions/functional capacities needed for employment planning purposes;
e. Prognoses and treatment recommendations;
f. Provision of a written assessment summary or an evaluation report;
g. Provision of a monthly progress report if the assessment/evaluation is conducted over a period of time.

4. AZRSA will pay for transportation, food, and lodging expenses that are incurred to permit the applicant or client’s involvement in diagnostic or evaluation services.
   a. Cost will not exceed the maximum daily per diem and travel reimbursement set for state employees.
   b. Service can be purchased directly or a voucher may be provided to the applicant or client.

5. Medical Evaluations:
   a. May include but are not limited to general and comprehensive medical evaluations/exams; medical consultations; separate/specialty medical evaluations/exams (e.g. ENT, psychiatric, neurology, and cardiology); rehabilitative services evaluations.
   b. The purposes of the medical evaluation in the rehabilitation process are to determine the existence and the extent of disability, client medical limitations and remaining capacities, the client’s capabilities to fulfill various types of vocational demands, and the types of adaptive services that would benefit the client in regards to achieving a vocational goal.
c. A referral should be provided to the medical professional with a specific list of questions that need to be answered via medical evaluation.

d. A comprehensive medical evaluation should provide the following information:

   i. Evaluation of specific body systems to determine the presence of disability, its severity and progressive nature;

   ii. Determination of functional implications of impairment (e.g. the impact on vocational and daily living functioning and the potential side effects of medication) and/or limitations imposed by disability and whether the disability is short term or long term;

   iii. Potential for recovery and service needed to achieve the employment goal;

   iv. Existing vocational capacities and limitations of the applicant or client.

e. A comprehensive written report with precise conclusions and recommendations that answered the counselor’s referral questions is required.

f. Types of medical evaluations

   i. General medical exams/evaluations: a service that includes physical examinations for clients to determine the extent and nature of the disability and to establish a prevention or treatment plan for the client as well as to monitor health status as needed for rehabilitation purposes.

   ii. Medical consultations: a service provided by a physician whose opinion or advice regarding evaluation and or management of a specific problem is recommended by another physician when basic medical data/evaluation is already available and a specialist consultation is recommended.

      1) This should not be confused with the consultation provided by an official AZRSA medical consultant.
6. Eye Assessments
   a. Must be provided by a board certified Ophthalmologist; Medical Doctor MD, Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), or Optometrist (OD), depending on the type of assessment/exam being done.
   b. May include:
      i. Determination of Refractive State. This level of assessment is used to determine current refraction to obtain a prescription for glasses.
      ii. Intermediate new patient medical examination and evaluation to establish the presence of a visual disability with resulting functional limitations and pertinent recommendations, does not include refractive exam.
      iii. Comprehensive new patient medical examination and evaluation with field exam, tonometry, neurological tests, which are required to establish the presence of a visual disability with resulting functional limitations and pertinent recommendation, does not include a refractive exam.

7. ENT Specialty Exam
   a. These examinations are conducted by Otolaryngologists, or more commonly referred to as ENT physicians who are trained in the medical and surgical treatment of patients with diseases and disorders of the ears, nose, throat (ENT), and head and neck.
      i. These physicians treat ear disorders.
      ii. These physicians are specialists trained in both the medical and surgical treatment of hearing, ear infections, balance disorders, ear noise (tinnitus), nerve pain, and facial and cranial nerve disorders.
   b. An ENT exam is used when the primary care physician or audiologist has recommended the exam or when the client has not utilized hearing aids prior and is now requesting VR support with the purchase of hearing aids.
c. This service is provided by a physician who is specialized as an Otolaryngologist or otologist.

d. Referral to an Otolaryngologist/ENT physician is in most situations required if the client has any of the following otologic conditions:

   i. Visible congenital or traumatic deformity of the ear;

   ii. History of sudden or rapidly progressive hearing loss within the last 90 days;

   iii. Acute or chronic dizziness;

   iv. Unilateral hearing loss of sudden or recent onset within the last 90 days;

   v. Air-bone gap equal to or greater than 15dB at 500, 1000 and 2000 hertz;

   vi. Visible evidence of significant cerumen (earwax) accumulation or a foreign body in the ear canal, or pain or discomfort in the ear;

   vii. A foreign object in the ear canal;

   viii. Pain or discomfort in the ear.

e. Clients who are current or prior users of hearing aids may not require a referral to an Otolaryngologist/ENT physician.

   i. If the need for an Otolaryngologist referral is in question, an audiological consultant should provide input on the decision.

8. Audiology Assessment

   a. This service includes a variety of audiological tests to determine if an applicant or client has deficiencies and may provide corrective action and/or treatment guidance.

   b. A comprehensive audiological evaluation must include all six of the following:

      i. Audiometry threshold and speech recognition;
ii. Tympanometry;

iii. Acoustic Reflex testing;

iv. Speech-in-noise testing;

v. Otoscope for appropriate audiology management or as a basis for medical referral to specialty physicians; and

vi. Cerumen management to prevent obstruction of the external ear canal and of amplification devices.

c. See the Audiological contract for procedure and other information regarding how to utilize audiological services.

d. If an audiologist cannot diagnose a hearing loss, the client may be referred for an Auditory Processing Disorder assessment (APD).

i. There are two assessments/tests used to gauge APD.

1) SIN

2) HINT

9. Psychiatric Assessment

a. This service provides an assessment of a person’s history, mental status and functioning by a psychiatrist for the purpose of establishing a psychiatric diagnosis and/or recommending a course of psychiatric treatment.

10. Psychiatric Pharmacologic Assessment

a. This service provides an assessment of psychotropic medication including adjustment and monitoring services for prescriptions for psychotropic medications, review of the effects and side effects, and adjustment of the type and dosage of psychotropic medications prescribed that address the therapeutic goals outlined in the service plan.

11. Dental exam

a. This service is to evaluate and determine the client’s need for dental treatment services provided by a dentist licensed in accordance with Arizona laws or by the laws of the state
in which he/she conducted the exam. A completed AZRSA Dental Examination form is required.

12. Rehabilitative Service Evaluations

a. Physical therapy evaluation

i. A comprehensive history systems review, tests and measures; this service may include, but is not limited to, tests of range of motion, motor function, muscle performance, joint integrity, neuromuscular status, and review of orthotic and prosthetic devices.

ii. Re-evaluation: The physical therapist re-examines the client to obtain objective measures of progress toward stated goals.

b. Occupational therapy evaluation

i. The occupational therapist evaluates the client’s various movements required for activities of daily living such as dexterity, range of movement, and other elements may be suitable.

c. Physical performance test or functional capacity evaluation

i. The clinician (i.e. physical or occupational therapist) performs a test/measurement of physical performance evaluating function of one or more body areas and evaluates functional capacity. A written report is included. This is an addition to routine evaluation and re-evaluation.

d. Speech evaluation

i. This service may include evaluation of speech, language, voice, communication, and/or auditory processing, and/or aural rehabilitation status prior to speech therapy authorization.

13. Eye exams services

a. Regular eye exams for prescriptive lenses
i. This is a service that provides for the examination of the eye and ocular function provided by an optometrist (OD), ophthalmologist (MD or DO) with training and experience in low vision evaluation, or a dispensing optician under the supervision of an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

b. Clinical low vision evaluation

i. This is a specialty evaluation with the goal of assessing residual vision with emphasis on addressing functional problems of daily living and recommendation for low vision aids and adapted devices.

ii. This evaluation is provided by an optometrist (OD), ophthalmologist (MD or DO) with training and experience in low vision evaluation, or a dispensing optician under the supervision of an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

iii. This evaluation is appropriate for clients whose vision:

1) Is best corrected vision to 20/60 or worse but no worse than 20/800.

2) Has extensive field loss that interferes with tasks of daily living such as travel.

3) Has double vision, vertigo, or glare sufficient to interfere with tasks of daily living such as reading or traveling.

iv. The clinical low vision evaluation includes:

1) Exterior eye examination

2) Interior eye examination

3) Visual Acuities including refraction with contrast or glare

4) Test of eye coordination and muscle function

5) Color vision

6) Glaucoma tests
7) Functional history

8) Reading and Near Vision

9) Intermediate Activities

10) Activities of daily living such as use of computer, cell phones and PDAs, recreation, mobility, driving, educational and vocational needs

11) Recommendations for low vision aids and training in the use of the recommended aids including head mounted optical devices and systems

c. Functional low vision evaluation

i. This is a specialty evaluation with the goal of assessing residual vision with emphasis on addressing functional problems of daily living.

ii. This evaluation includes review of clinical information, medical eye report, client demographics and comprehensive history of onset, treatments, surgeries, medications, family history, education and adjustment to vision loss.

iii. This evaluation also includes a visual needs assessment and task analysis, contrast sensitivity and color vision assessment, evaluation and recommendation for non-prescriptive aids and devices, computer software, task lightening, glare control and recommendations for additional training.

iv. This type of evaluation is provided to AZRSA clients with best-corrected vision of 20/60 or worse but not worse than 20/800.

v. Low vision evaluations should at minimum include:

1) Review of clinical information accompanying the referral;

2) Client interview;
3) Clinical evaluation to assess current visual function and the potential need for adaptive devices.

14. Psychological Evaluation

a. Psychological evaluations are used to:

   i. Determine the existence of a disability, the vocational significance of disability and the person’s potential level of intellectual and psychosocial functioning;

   ii. Provide recommendations for psychological services.

b. Counselors will provide the psychologist with specific information about the social/vocational history, medical history, and vocational objectives of the person being referred (if applicable) in order to increase the probability of a thorough psychological evaluation.

c. Counselors will make an effective referral using the Referral for Service form by providing the psychologist with a specific list of questions that need to be answered via psychological evaluation addressing the areas of ambiguity regarding the person’s behavior, psychosocial, or intellectual functioning.

d. Providers will determine appropriateness of each psychological test for particular clients in relation to their disabilities and presenting problems.

e. Psychological assessment should result in:

   i. Concrete, predictive statements about the applicant or client’s behavior in a wide range of situations and person’s ability to cope with life demands.

   ii. A comprehensive written report with precise conclusions and recommendations that answered the counselor’s referral questions.

f. Types of psychological evaluations

   i. Minimal psychological evaluation is:
1) Provided by a psychologist;

2) Used to confirm or update an established diagnosis and is appropriate for clients with a known history of psychosocial or cognitive impairment, for whom recent psychological information is available and only clinical interview and review of records by a psychologist is required;

3) Modified to accommodate an applicant or client’s disability, specifically for visually impaired and deaf clients.

ii. Standard psychological evaluation is provided by a psychologist and is appropriate for most applicant or clients when current psychological or mental health information is not available.

1) The Standard evaluation will at minimum provide the following:

   a) The five axis DSM IV diagnostic scheme;

   b) A detailed picture of the applicant or client’s cognitive and behavioral assets and liabilities;

   c) Assessment of psychopathology including personality disorder, barriers to employment and services required to achieve a vocational outcome, and other recommendations that may be appropriate;

   d) Assessment of cognitive aspects such as general intelligence, verbal intelligence, performance intelligence, working memory, attention and concentration, speed of processing and concept formation;

   e) Academic skills which may be measured to assess current grade levels for reading, mathematics, and spelling as well as potential for learning;
f) Adaptive functioning aspects which may include activities of daily living, money management, travel skills, communication skills, and homemaking;

g) Psychosocial aspects which may include mental health functioning in the areas of personality structure, interpersonal relationships, attitudes towards work, family dynamics in relationship to the applicant or client’s disability, adjustment to disability, etc.;

h) Accommodations for an applicant or client’s disabilities in the form of modified testing.

iii. Standard psychological evaluation with educational component:

1) Expands on elements contained in a standard evaluation assessing specific domains and it is used when cognitive abilities, academic achievement and scholastic aptitudes should be measured to obtain information needed for rehabilitation planning purposes;

2) Places an additional emphasis on the diagnosis of learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder.

iv. Standard psychological evaluation with vocational interest component:

1) Expands on elements contained in a standard evaluation assessing specific domains;

2) Should provide leads as to the fit between the person’s personality and abilities and various vocational demands, in particular what the person wants from a job; and

3) Will identify the client’s career beliefs, vocational skills, proficiencies and abilities, vocational values and interests, aptitudes, and temperaments.
v. Standard psychological evaluation with psycho-sexual component:

1) Is used only when an applicant or client has been convicted of sex offenses, has documented history of sex offenses, or has a diagnosis of paraphilia, personality disorder, or conduct disorder that predisposes the applicant or client to commit sexual acts that constitute a danger to the health and safety of others and the applicant or client is not being monitored by another agency to prevent re-offenses;

2) Focuses on an individual’s sexual development, sexual history, paraphilic interests, sexual adjustment, risk level, and victimology;

3) Typically includes psychosexual and psychological inventories, and may include physiological testing of sexual arousal patterns, the individual’s veracity, etc.;

4) Should contain a predictive statement of likelihood of committing sex offenses and the protection required to protect the community if VR places the individual in community employment when such information is not already available;

5) Should be performed by a psychologist or a psychiatrist who are licensed and familiar with the state’s statutes regarding sexually violent individuals and sexual offender treatment program, and who have experience and training in this specialized field.

vi. Neuropsychological evaluation:

1) Are provided by a neuropsychologist;

2) Is used when cognitive, behavioral or personality changes due to brain injury, disease or dysfunction is known or suspected, and consideration is being given for a comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation program;
3) Can be modified to accommodate an individual’s disabilities, particularly for visually impaired and deaf clients.

15. Vocational Evaluations

a. Vocational evaluation is an individualized and systematic process designed to determine the client’s present and future vocational potential by evaluating the client’s employment-related strengths and limitations.

b. Vocational evaluation uses work activities, (either real or simulated) for assessing capabilities, exploring vocational areas and guiding employment choices.

c. Types of vocational evaluations

   i. Basic Evaluation

      1) This level of evaluation is appropriate for clients with a prior vocational evaluation where only basic updating of the previous vocational information is desired.

      2) Basic Evaluation may include but is not limited to assessing the following:

         a) Vocational interests;

         b) Intellectual capacities;

         c) Physical, psychomotor and sensory capacities;

         d) Aptitudes;

         e) Academic achievements;

         f) Learning style.

   ii. Moderate Evaluation

      1) This level of evaluation is appropriate for clients who have not participated in any prior vocational testing and who require a more in depth
vocational evaluation than described in Basic Evaluation.

2) Moderate Evaluation may include but is not limited to assessing the:
   a) Vocational interests;
   b) Intellectual capacities;
   c) Physical, psychomotor and sensory capacities;
   d) Aptitudes;
   e) Academic achievements;
   f) Learning style;
   g) Transferable skills analysis;
   h) Work skills and work tolerance;
   i) Attitudes toward work and knowledge of occupational information and job seeking skills.

iii. Comprehensive Evaluation

1) This level of evaluation is appropriate for clients requiring a specialized, extensive vocational evaluation to answer the referral questions.

2) The evaluator’s report will provide an extensive description of the client’s assets limitations, and detailed findings from a variety of assessment test batteries and techniques, and the use of real or simulated work.

3) Elements of the evaluation may include the following:
   a) Cognitive abilities;
   b) Academic achievements (grade level) in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics;
c) Physical abilities;

d) Sensory abilities;

e) Aptitudes and vocational interests/exploration;

f) Behavioral observations and work habits.

iv. Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation – McCarron-Dial System

1) Is appropriate for clients who are blind and/or visually impaired and for clients with neuropsychological problems requiring a specialized, extensive vocational assessment to answer the referral questions.

2) This evaluation identifies relative strengths and weaknesses in verbal-spatial-cognitive, sensory, motor, emotional, and adaptive behavior areas of functioning.

3) This evaluation is expected to be completed within a one-week period.

4) This evaluation will include, but is not limited to, the following:

   a) Physical, psychomotor, cognitive and sensory capacities, and limitations;

   b) Academic and vocational achievements;

   c) Learning style including ability to understand, recall, and respond;

   d) Personal, social, and work related behaviors (e.g. motivation and attitude toward work, attendance and punctuality, acceptance of supervision);

   e) Vocational interests, aptitudes, and career aspirations;
f) Analysis of transferable skills, job seeking skills, knowledge of occupational information, and job keeping skills;

g) Analysis of the client’s potential for success in the specific field of work;

h) Analysis the client’s needs for job and other accommodations.

v. Trial Work Assessments:

1) Is used to create real life work situations in a controlled or supervised setting;

2) Is for applicants or clients who have had unsuccessful or very limited exposure to work;

3) Is typically used for applicants or clients who have already had psychological or vocational testing done but need additional observation while performing real work or for those who are determined to not need structured testing or for whom such testing is not appropriate;

4) Is often used for persons with limited cognitive ability;

5) Counselors will authorize Trial Work assessment for a maximum of four weeks (one month);

   a) If more time is needed to assess an applicant or client’s vocational potential, supervisory approval is required.

d. Comprehensive neuro-rehabilitation evaluation

   i. Is a comprehensive multidisciplinary evaluation of clients who need post-acute treatment, or disability skills development services that address the injuries, diseases, and disorders of the central and peripheral nervous system including but not limited to:

      1) Brain Injury (acquired or traumatic brain injury);
2) Spinal Cord Injury (disease, injury or disorder);
3) Neuromuscular Diseases;
4) Cerebral Palsy;
5) Peripheral Neuropathies;
6) Multiple Sclerosis;
7) Epilepsy;
8) Parkinson’s disease.

ii. These evaluations must include at least two (2) different professions and two (2) different services that are related to the client’s needs.

iii. These assessments must include vocational assessment including an analysis of the client’s personality, career interests, social pragmatics, intelligence and related cognitive functions, educational achievement, work experience, vocational aptitudes, and employment opportunities.

iv. The involvement of a particular discipline in this assessment process depends upon the client’s specific needs and goals, as well as the availability of any prior evaluations.

v. This multidisciplinary team approach means the evaluation report will include separate sections for each discipline involved in the assessment, with an integrated recommendations section that offers both separate and joint treatment proposals.

vi. This assessment must be limited to information that is necessary to identify the rehabilitation needs of the client and develop the IPE and may include an analysis of the pertinent medical, psychiatric, neuropsychological and other vocational, educational, cultural, social, recreational other factors, and related functional limitations that affects the employability and rehabilitation needs of the client.
vii. Following the initial assessment a follow-up consultation is required.

1) The consultation includes the VR Counselor, the client and his/her advocates, and if appropriate, the clinical coordinator, case manager, or primary clinician.

2) Optimally all of the staff who participated in the assessment should attend the assessment staffing.

3) The primary questions to be addressed at this meeting are:
   a) Is the client competitively employable?
   b) Does the client require extended supports?
   c) What level of family or community supports exist?
   d) What are the client’s transferable skills?
   e) What are the client’s unmet rehabilitation needs; cognitive, social, and physical?
   f) What level and duration of services will be needed to achieve a vocational outcome?

viii. Follow-up assessment may be authorized to address issues which were not addressed in depth, due to time constraints, during the initial assessment or to address issues that were identified during the initial assessment.

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Section 8.7 – Treatment Services

A. Treatment Services are used to diagnose and treat physical and mental impairments.

1. Vocational Rehabilitation only provides treatment services if all of the following are met:

   a. A client’s disabling condition is stable or slowly progressive;
   b. The treatment service is expected to substantially modify, correct, or improve a physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to the agreed upon IPE employment goal within a reasonable length of time;
   c. Financial support is not readily available from another source, such as health insurance; and
   d. The client meets economic need.

2. Vocational Rehabilitation does not provide medical care or emergency medical or psychological services except:

   a. Vocational Rehabilitation may pay for treatment costs of medical complications and emergencies associated with treatment services sponsored by AZRSA when the success of the IPE is directly jeopardized and comparable benefits are not available.

3. Treatment services are provided only when included in an Individualized Plan for Services (IPE) and when there is an agreement on a set of clearly stated objectives.

4. Treatment of Impairments may include:

   a. Corrective surgery or therapeutic treatment that is likely, within a reasonable period of time, to correct or modify substantially a physical or mental impairment that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment;
   b. Diagnosis and treatment for mental and emotional disorders;
   c. Dentistry;
   d. Nursing services;
e. Necessary hospitalization (either inpatient or outpatient care) in connection with surgery or treatment;

f. Drugs and supplies;

g. Prosthetic, orthotic, or other assistive devices, including hearing aids;

h. Eyeglasses and visual services, including visual training, and the examination and services necessary for the prescription and provision of eyeglasses, contact lenses, microscopic lenses, telescopic lenses, and other visual aids prescribed by personnel who meet state licensure laws and are selected by the client;

i. Podiatry;

j. Physical therapy;

k. Occupational therapy;

l. Speech or hearing therapy;

m. Mental health services;

n. Treatment of either acute or chronic medical complications and emergencies that are associated with or arise out of the provision of physical and mental health treatment services or that are inherent in the condition under treatment;

o. Special services for the treatment of clients with end-stage renal disease, including transplantation, dialysis, artificial kidneys, and supplies; and

p. Other medical or medically related rehabilitation services.

5. The scope, duration and frequency of each medically related therapeutic modality must be prescribed by the client’s examining physician as part of the rehabilitation plan and the client must have the potential for improvement due to rehabilitation intervention.

6. Individualized prescription and fitting of sensory and other technological aids and devices must be performed only by
individuals licensed in accordance with state licensure laws or by appropriate certified professionals.

7. Clients shall be actively involved in selecting the type and nature of restorative services and in selection of service providers.

8. Staff will authorizes no more than three (3) month increments of treatment services at a time.
   a. Extension of services must be reviewed by an agency consultant.
   b. Services extension will only be granted, if appropriate, if there is documented progress toward the stated goals of the service.

9. A review of comparable benefits must be conducted prior to purchasing treatment services unless the availability of these benefits would place the client in extreme medical risk and delay the client’s progress toward achieving an employment outcome/jeopardize immediate job placement.
   a. Any available benefits must be used either in lieu of or to supplement Vocational Rehabilitation services.

B. Physical Treatment Services includes, but is not limited to:
   a. Medical treatment;
   b. Surgical services;
   c. Hospitalization;
   d. Dental Treatment; and
   e. Rehabilitative services.

2. Medical Treatment Provided by Various Medical Specialties
   a. Services in this category may include medical treatment and surgical services performed in the office, clinic, hospital, home, nursing facility or other location by a licensed doctor of medicine or osteopathy.
b. The scope, duration and frequency of each therapeutic modality in medical specialty areas such as cardiology, dentistry, Neurology, ophthalmology, ENT, respiratory therapy, chiropractic, podiatry, massage, and manual therapy, etc. must be prescribed by a qualified physician as part of the rehabilitation plan and the client must have the potential for improvement due to rehabilitation intervention.

i. Laboratory and radiology services, lab work, anesthesia, medication, etc. should be identified with the treatment service itself.

3. Surgical services

i. Corrective surgery or therapeutic treatment that is likely, within a reasonable period of time, to correct or modify substantially a physical or mental impairment that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment;

ii. When including surgery as an IPE service, the counselor must analyze and document the following factors:

1) Prognosis and doctor’s written recommendation.

2) Vocational and medical necessity.

3) Analysis of how the surgery will correct, stabilize, or reduce the progression of the disabling condition, if appropriate.

4) Client’s willingness to adhere to lifestyle changes, as appropriate, before and after surgery.

5) Client’s prior efforts to resolve the issue using alternatives to surgery, if such alternatives are available and medically feasible.

6) Availability and application of comparable benefits (unless the client requires the service immediately because of extreme medical risk).
7) Analysis of how/why the surgery is required to reduce or minimize an impediment to employment and the impact of this service on the client’s ability to achieve employment.

8) Analysis of whether there are feasible alternatives.

b. Cataract removal is a covered surgical service when the cataract is visible by exam, ophthalmoscopy or slit lamp, and any of the following apply:

i. Visual acuity that cannot be corrected by lenses to better than 20/70 and is reasonably attributable to cataract;

ii. In the presence of complete inability to see posterior chamber, vision is confirmed by potential acuity meter reading; or

iii. For clients who have corrected visual acuity between 20/50 and 20/70, a second opinion by an ophthalmologist to demonstrate medical necessity may be required;

iv. Cataract surgery is covered only when there is a reasonable expectation by the operating ophthalmic surgeon that the member will achieve improved visual functional ability when visual rehabilitation is complete.

c. Cochlear implantation provides an awareness and identification of sounds and facilitates communications for persons who have moderate to profound sensory-neural hearing loss (nerve deafness).

i. Cochlear implant (CI) is an electronic device, surgically inserted, which converts speech and other sounds into electrical signals and sends these signals to the auditory nerve.

ii. Evaluation, counseling and education prior to surgical implant are required to determine suitability of candidates for cochlear implantation.
iii. To ensure the successful outcome for an implant recipient, post-implant rehabilitation must be provided by professionals familiar with cochlear implants.

iv. AZRSA support for cochlear implant is only warranted when hearing aids are not an option and the cochlear implant is necessary for the successful completion of the IPE and for obtaining and maintaining gainful employment.

v. The role of the counselor is to ensure that the client has sufficient information to make a decision whether or not the cochlear implant is the most effective method for facilitating communication, to assist them in achieving their vocational goal.

1) If the client does not fully understand the implication of a cochlear implant, the VR counselor will refer the client back to the cochlear implant team as the vocational rehabilitation counselor does not have the expertise in the field of cochlear implants to provide this education.

vi. The role of the cochlear implant team (ENT surgeon and audiologist) is to provide counseling and guidance, based on their assessments, to the client to make an informed decision.

vii. Before beginning this process it is important the client:

1) Understands the prescribed cochlear implant program, and is willing and able to complete the program;

2) Is aware of side effects and similar communication enhancements with tactile stimulation instruments, but elects the cochlear implant to stimulate hearing; and

3) Has expressed realistic expectations that the implant may be enhanced by a hearing aid in the better ear and/or use of other assistive listening devices; and
4) Understands the implant can create the perception of sound, but will not restore normal hearing.

viii. AZRSA support may only be approved once all other possible options and comparable benefits are ruled out.

ix. Cochlear implant purchases must be pre-approved before it is made a part of an IPE. Purchase of the cochlear implant will occur only in Status 13, Individualized Plan for Employment and should not be purchased for the purpose of eligibility determination.

x. All services related to cochlear implants are performed by ENT surgeons and licensed audiologists.

xi. The following criteria must be documented prior to AZRSA supporting a cochlear implant:

1) The consumer has a moderate to profound sensorineural hearing loss in both ears and is unable to effectively utilize hearing aids.

2) The consumer has been pre-approved as a cochlear implant candidate by the cochlear implant team.

3) The cochlear implant likely will ameliorate the vocational impediment.

xii. Evaluation/Medical process for receipt of a cochlear implant

1) Comprehensive Audiological Evaluation
   a) Documentation from a licensed audiologist is required (i.e... comprehensive exam with comments regarding the appropriateness of hearing aids).
   b) An AZRSA Audiological Consultant must be utilized to confirm that a hearing aid is not feasible.
2) Pre-approval Process involves:
   a) Documentation from an ENT surgeon is required to confirm the AZRSA consumer is an appropriate candidate.
   b) An evaluation report must include a diagnosis, recommendations for treatment, and prognosis.
   c) The client is in good general health, as evaluated by a general history and physical examination, and does not have any serious medical problems that would preclude surgery or the aural rehabilitation program.
   d) If any additional evaluation is required (e.g. psycho-social evaluation or general medical examination) the ENT surgeon and CI team will inform the consumer.
   e) If additional evaluation is required the VR counselor could assist with the purchase of these evaluations if comparable benefits are not available.

3) Documentation in the case file showing how the cochlear implant will ameliorate the barriers to employment. The following areas must be addressed by the VR counselor:
   a) Understanding of spoken communication,
   b) Job performance,
   c) Job security,
   d) Increased confidence, and/or
   e) Expanded capability.

xiii. Approval Process

1) Prior to IPE development AZRSA Statewide Coordinator for Deaf and Hard of Hearing must
review and approve the recommendation for a cochlear implant to ensure the case is consistent with policy.

2) High cost case approval policies apply and should be followed after approval by the AZRSA Statewide Coordinator for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

3) When sending the information for review, the following must be included:
   a) Any required or supplemental evaluations as specified in this policy; and
   b) Justification of how the cochlear implant surgery will lessen the vocational impediment; showing it is feasibly appropriate and required to meet the consumer's IPE goal.

xiv. Aural rehabilitation is required of all clients receiving cochlear implants. AZRSA will support with twelve (12) sessions with a certified speech pathologist/audiologist.

   1) Approval for additional sessions as requested by specialists (e.g. audiologist or Speech-Language Pathologist) will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

xv. Replacement of cochlear implant processors will be purchased by AZRSA as replacements when the processor has either been lost or stolen and an extended warranty is no longer available.

xvi. Upgrades of cochlear implant processors are appropriate when:

   1) The client’s current processor is beyond repair, and

   2) The specific processor model is obsolete, or when it is warranted for the client to maintain their current educational or employment goals.
xvii. AZRSA Audiological Consultant must be utilized prior to authorization and purchase of all cochlear implant processors.

d. The Baha System (Baha) is an implanted hearing technology that works through direct bone conduction.

i. Sound is conducted through the skull bone bypassing the outer and middle ear and stimulating the cochlea.

ii. Bone anchored Osseo integrated implants transmit the sound from the deaf side through the bones in the skull to the normal functioning cochlea.

iii. The Baha sound processor is connected to a fixture implant, which has been surgically placed in the bone behind the ear.

iv. The Baha sound processor, for single-sided deafness, is intended for clients who have been diagnosed with unilateral sensorineural deafness.

v. The following criteria must be documented prior to AZRSA supporting a Baha.

1) The client has Mixed Hearing Loss, or

2) The client has Conductive Hearing Loss, or

3) The client has unilateral sensorineural hearing loss (single sided deafness) and the client has normal hearing in the contra lateral ear

   a) Normal hearing is defined as PTA AC threshold equal to or better than 20dB at .5, 1, 2 and 3kHz,

4) The client has been approved by an ENT surgeon and the licensed audiologist (Baha team) as a candidate for the Baha.

vi. The approval process for cochlear implants displayed in Section 8.7 E-5m should be followed for approval for the Baha system also.
e. Treatment of either acute or chronic medical complications associated with or arise out of the provision of treatment services.

   i. Allowable charges may include room charges, supplies used, and lab or x-ray services.

      1) If a client is referred to a hospital for x-rays but is not actually admitted as an inpatient or outpatient, the x-rays will be paid by CPT codes and at the rates allowed for those codes.

      2) If the hospital bills for physicians such as a hospital call or surgery, these services will be paid at by CPT codes and at the rates allowed for those codes.

4. Dental Treatment

   a. Dental treatment services are restricted to situations in which dental conditions prevent employment due to severe cosmetic reasons (i.e. missing teeth and/or visible decay) or chronic infection.

   b. AZRSA will not authorize the following:

      i. Gold inlays;

      ii. Fixed bridges, except in unusual circumstances, and only for anterior teeth;

      iii. Partial dentures, unless they replace one or more anterior teeth and/or at least four posterior teeth on one side of the arch and one on the other side of the arch;

      iv. Restoration of natural teeth or implants, posterior to the second bicuspids, including fillings, crowns and endodontics.

   c. Consultation on dental plans in excess of $850.00 must be obtained from the AZRSA dental consultant.

   d. The Dental Examination Form must be used for obtaining the dental exam and for subsequent consultation.
e. Consultation is obtained from the AZRSA dental consultant to:
   
   i. Determine if rates proposed by the attending dentist are acceptable.
   
   ii. To identify procedures which are outside of the scope of AZRSA policy.

f. Dental services: provided by dentists licensed by the state dental board in accordance with A.R.S. 32-1232.

5. Rehabilitation Therapies (Occupational, Physical, Speech)

6. The scope, duration and frequency of each therapeutic modality must be prescribed by a qualified physician as part of the rehabilitation plan and the client must have the potential for improvement due to rehabilitation.

   a. These services must be provided by or under the direct supervision of a licensed therapist.

7. Physical therapy (PT) is service provided by a licensed and certified physical therapist to restore, maintain or improve muscle tone, joint mobility or physical function.

8. Physical therapy has the following goals:

   a. Increasing or maintaining a joint’s range of motion,
   
   b. Increasing muscle strength,
   
   c. Relieving pain or muscle spasms,
   
   d. Teaching techniques of ambulation.

9. Based on the results of an evaluation, a physical therapist selects from among a variety of treatment modes, including passive exercise, active exercise, use of heat or cold, massage, manipulations, electrotherapy, and ultrasound.

10. AZRSA covers necessary physical therapy services which include but are not limited to:
a. The administration and interpretation of tests and measurements performed within the scope of practice of PT as an aid to the client’s treatment,
b. The administration, evaluation and modification of treatment methodologies and instruction, and
c. The provision of instruction or education, consultation and other advisory services.

11. Occupational therapy (OT) is a service provided by a licensed and certified occupational therapist that directs the client’s participation in selected activities to restore, maintain or improve functional skills.

12. OT services are medically prescribed treatments to improve or restore functions which have been impaired by illness or injury, or which have been permanently lost or reduced by illness or injury.

13. OT is intended to improve the client’s ability to perform those tasks required for independent functioning.

14. OT services may include, but are not limited to:
a. Cognitive training,
b. Exercise modalities,
c. Hand dexterity,
d. Hydrotherapy,
e. Joint protection,
f. Manual exercise,
g. Measuring, fabrication or training in use of prosthesis, arthrosis, assistive device, or splint,
h. Perceptual motor testing and training,
i. Reality orientation,
j. Restoration of activities of daily living,
k. Sensory reeducation, and

l. Work simplification and/or energy conservation.

15. Speech therapy is the medically prescribed provision of diagnostic and treatment services that include evaluation, program recommendations for treatment and/or training in receptive and expressive language, voice, articulation, fluency, rehabilitation, and medical issues dealing with swallowing.

16. This service is provided by a licensed and certified speech/language pathologist.

17. Therapy services may include:
   a. Articulation training,
   b. Auditory training,
   c. Cognitive training,
   d. Esophageal speech training,
   e. Fluency training,
   f. Language treatment,
   g. Lip reading,
   h. Non-oral language training,
   i. Oral-motor development, and
   j. Swallowing training.

C. Mental Health Treatment Services

1. The expectations of mental health treatment services are:
   a. A written treatment plan with clearly stated treatment goals;
   b. Monthly progress reports indicating progress toward achievement of the goals;
c. Client has improved their ability to cope with the symptoms of their mental health condition(s).

2. Mental health treatment services include psychotherapy and professional counseling for the purpose of helping a client with symptoms of mental illness, behavioral problems or personal growth.

3. Providers of mental health treatment services will maintain active licensure and certification as required by the State of Arizona for providing said services.

D. Prosthetic and Orthotic

1. This group of services include:
   a. Orthotic devices
   b. Prosthetic devices
   c. Durable medical equipment
   d. Visual aids/optical devices

2. AZRSA covers reasonable and medically or vocationally necessary durable medical equipment (DME) and orthotic/prosthetic devices.

3. This service includes aids and devices prescribed by personnel who meet state licensure law.

4. Orthotics is a service that provides durable items and appliances that can withstand repeated use and are medically necessary and essential to the rehabilitation of the client; may include but is not limited to:
   a. Knee brace
   b. Cane (for support)
   c. Compression stocking
   d. Crutches
   e. Orthotic shoes
f. Shoe inserts  
g. Sit/stand stool  
h. Special shoes – foot conditions  
i. Support stocking  
j. Walker

5. Prosthetics is a service that provides a fabricated substitute for a diseased or a missing part of the body; may include but is not limited to:  
   a. Artificial limb  
   b. Eye, prosthetic  
   c. Prosthesis

6. Durable medical equipment (DME) means sturdy, long lasting items and appliances that can withstand repeated use, are designed to serve a medical purpose and are not generally useful to a person in the absence of a medical condition, illness or injury; may include but is not limited to:  
   a. Custom seating  
   b. Footplates  
   c. Power wheelchair  
   d. Three wheel scooter  
   e. Wheelchair, manual

7. DME may be purchased or rented only when there are no reasonable alternative resources from which the medically necessary medical equipment can be obtained at no cost.

8. Total expense of rental will not exceed the purchase price of the item.

9. Rental fees must terminate no later than the end of the month in which the client no longer needs the equipment.
10. Reasonable repairs or adjustment of purchased equipment is covered when necessary to make the equipment serviceable and when the cost of the repair is less than the cost of rental or purchase of another unit.

11. Visual aids/optical devices include, but are not limited to:
   a. Eye glasses (spectacles)
   b. Contact lenses
   c. Low vision aids (e.g. vision magnifier)
   d. Tinted lenses
   e. Microscopic lenses
   f. Telescopic lenses
   g. Low vision services training in use of low vision aids; fitting

12. Eye glasses consist of glass or plastic lenses mounted in a plastic or metal frame to compensate for refractive errors in a client’s lens or cornea to achieve best corrected vision.
   a. Eye glasses may or may not correct a client’s visual acuity to 20/20.
   b. With the exception of telescopic or microscopic lens systems AZRSA does not differentiate between eye glasses and low vision glasses.

13. Contact lens are thin plastic lens that are fitted over the cornea of the eye to compensate for refractive errors in an client’s lens or cornea to achieve best corrected vision, or address diseases or injuries of the cornea.
   a. AZRSA provides contact lens based on medical or vocational necessity.

14. Eye glasses and contact lens can be dispensed by an Ophthalmologist (MD or DO), Optometrist (OD), or Licensed Dispensing Optician.

15. AZRSA VR will provide one (1) pair of glasses every two (2) years, using the AZRSA contracted rates, unless the client’s
vision has changed. If the client’s vision has changed prior to the two (2) year period, documentation will be required to show that the current glasses no longer correct vision to 20/40 in the best eye.

16. AZRSA will not replace lost, stolen, or damaged glasses prior to the end of the two (2) year period.

E. Other Restorative Services

1. Comprehensive neurorehabilitation services are post-acute treatment or disability skills development services that address the needs of AZRSA clients with injuries, diseases, and disorders of the central and peripheral nervous system.

a. These include but are not limited to:
   i. Brain injury (acquired and traumatic brain injury)
   ii. Spinal cord injury (disease, injury or disorder)
   iii. Neuromuscular diseases
   iv. Cerebral palsy
   v. Peripheral neuropathies
   vi. Multiple sclerosis
   vii. Epilepsy
   viii. Parkinson’s disease

b. Comprehensive neurorehabilitation is provided to AZRSA clients with injuries, diseases, and disorders of the central and peripheral nervous system in order to return (rehabilitate) them to their former level of vocational functioning, or develop the ability to function in an employment setting (habilitate) and to become gainfully employed through treatment or disability skill development.

c. Comprehensive neurorehabilitation is a multi-disciplined approach to treatment or disability skill development which includes the following professions:
   i. Neuropsychology (required)
ii. Occupational Therapy (required)

iii. Physical Therapy (required)

iv. Speech and Language Therapy (required)

v. Vocational Specialist/Therapist (required)

vi. Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (optional)

vii. Neurology (optional)

viii. Special Education (optional)

ix. Recreational Therapy (optional)

x. Social Work (optional)

xi. Psychiatry (optional)

xii. Clinical Coordination/Case Management (optional)

xiii. Assistive Technology Assessment and Training (optional)

xiv. Other professions as approved by AZRSA Central Office Staff (optional)

d. Comprehensive neurorehabilitation service planning is based on the results of the comprehensive assessment as documented in the functional limitation and service needs detailed on the Eligibility Worksheet.

i. It means that two (2) or more separate service needs were identified by two (2) or more professionals.

ii. Comprehensive services must include vocational services or work reintegration.

iii. Vocational services include development of job seeking skills, acting as an employer resource for development of compensatory employment skills, on site job coaching, and conducting work station evaluations.

e. A staffing must take place within ten (10) calendar days of the end of each treatment period.
i. The staffing will include the vocational rehabilitation counselor, the client and his/her advocate, and at a minimum the assigned primary clinician.

ii. Optimally each professional who provided services within the treatment period should participate.

f. The staffing will review the client’s progress toward completing his/her intermediate objectives as stated on the IPE.

i. Adjustment to services, time frames, amendments to the IPE and recommendations for additional services not covered by comprehensive neurorehabilitation services will be discussed and if consistent with AZRSA policy implemented.

g. If it becomes apparent that the intermediate objectives cannot be met, the IPE goal cannot be met, or the client does not adhere to his/her responsibilities as specified by the IPE, the neurorehabilitation services will be terminated.

h. Upon completion of services a discharge staffing is expected to be held. The staffing will include the vocational rehabilitation counselor, the client, and at a minimum the primary clinician.

i. For Vocational Rehabilitation clients who are employed full time a staffing is not required.

ii. The staffing will review service delivery, achievement of the client’s intermediate objectives, and recommendation for post closure services.

iii. A written discharge summary and final invoice must be submitted within 20 calendar days from the date of the discharge staffing.

2. Cognitive Skills Development

a. Cognitive skills development includes developmental or restorative services for clients with inherited learning disabilities or clients who lost their cognitive skills as a result of brain injury.
b. This service provides training to recover or maintain cognitive skills using specialized/adaptive learning techniques.

c. The client often needs to develop compensatory methods of processing and retrieving information when disability, illness or injury has affected cognitive processes.

d. These services should be provided by a licensed/certified psychologist, neuropsychologist, occupational therapist, rehabilitation specialist, or special education teacher.

e. Cognitive skill development includes mental exercises that assist the patient in areas such as:
   
   i. Attention/concentration
   
   ii. Memory
   
   iii. Organizing
   
   iv. Reasoning
   
   v. Problem solving
   
   vi. Decision making
   
   vii. Social pragmatics

3. Prescription Medications/Pharmacy Services

   a. Any medications, including over-the-counter drugs, must be specifically prescribed by a health care provider in order to be paid for through Vocational Rehabilitation funds.

   b. Prescription medications prescribed by a primary care provider, physician, other practitioner or a dentist and provided by a licensed pharmacy or dispensed under the direct supervision of a licensed pharmacist in accordance with Arizona laws is required.

   c. Vocational Rehabilitation policies related to provision of services apply.

4. Dance, Music, Art Therapies, Native Healing, and Fitness Services
a. The Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration respects and values alternative healing processes to support clients in their vocational goals.

b. These may include, but are not limited to: Dance therapy, Art therapy, Music therapy, Native Healing, and Fitness.

c. Native Healing ceremonies will be coordinated with the appropriate tribal entity to ensure the use of a qualified practitioner.

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Section 8.8 – Rehabilitation Counseling

A. Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor:

1. Rehabilitation counseling and guidance is individual counseling and guidance services that are necessary for a client to achieve an employment outcome, including personal adjustment counseling, counseling that addresses medical, family, or social issues, vocational counseling, and any other form of counseling and guidance that is necessary for a client with a disability to achieve an employment outcome.

2. This service is distinct from the general counseling and guidance relationship that exists between the counselor and the client during the entire rehabilitation process.

3. It does not include treatment services (treatment and management of diagnosed psychological conditions).

4. This service is identified as a separate service on the IPE only when the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor themselves develop a counseling program with the client, with specific goals, etc., or when such a program is purchased from a community provider.

5. In all cases, a counselor develops a collaborative relationship with each client and promotes the client’s full involvement and participation in the rehabilitation process.

6. The counselor’s role in providing information about and guiding the client in exploration of options is critical to supporting informed choice of the client.

7. Rehabilitation counseling and guidance also includes support and assistance with problem solving and clarification of values, as well as information about and referral to community resources and coordination of services.

8. If required by the client, the counselor will provide individual, substantial counseling services that are vocational in nature and are specifically designed to assist the client in participating in the rehabilitation process and in reaching an employment outcome.
9. Such rehabilitation counseling will involve multiple sessions throughout the rehabilitation process, be included in the IPE, and address issues such as vocational exploration, career decision making, establishment of a career path including short and long-term goals, self-advocacy in the workplace, development of problem-solving skills, and use of community resources related to employment.

10. This substantial level of service is distinct from the general counseling relationship that exists between the counselor and the client throughout the rehabilitation process.

11. The level of service is determined according to the vocational rehabilitation needs of the client consistent with his or her informed choice.

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Section 8.9 – Postsecondary Education Training

A. Definitions

1. “Accredited Institution” means an institution that is recognized for maintaining standards required for its graduates to gain admission to other reputable institutions of higher learning or to achieve credentials for professional practice.

2. “Commuting distance” means travel in excess of 50 miles one way from the client’s permanent residence.

3. “Comparable benefits” means services and benefits that are provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other federal, state, or local agencies. Scholarships awarded based on merit, grades, or achievements are not considered comparable benefits.

4. “Eligible Training Provider List” or “ETPL” means a list of training providers who meet training provider requirements and are eligible to receive funding as stated in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

5. “Employment Goal” means the employment outcome that the client is expected to achieve as a result of the services provided in an Individualized Plan for Employment.

6. “Individualized Plan for Employment” or “IPE” means a written program of services developed with clients that comprehensively document the goals, responsibilities, and services necessary for a client to obtain employment.

7. “Training” means services designed to help the client improve educationally or vocationally, or to adjust to the functional limitations of his or her impairment. Training includes College or University Training, and Vocational or Occupational Training.

8. “College/University Training” means full-time or part-time academic training above the high school level leading to a degree, a certificate or other recognized educational credential. Such training may be provided by a four year college or university, community college, junior college, or technical college.
9. “Vocational/Occupational Training” means occupational, vocational, or job skill training provided by a community college and/or business, vocational/trade or technical school to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation, not leading to an academic degree.

B. Policy

1. VR will support College/University or Vocational/Occupational training costs in accordance with VR policy when all of the following criteria are met and supporting documentation is scanned into ECF:

   a. Training is required by, and consistent with, the client’s employment goal as specified in the approved IPE, and is based on generally accepted employer expectations for the approved employment goal.

   b. Chosen training institution is approved, accredited, and listed under one of the following:

      i. AZRSA, DES, or statewide contracts; or

      ii. U.S. Department of Education list of accredited institutions located at ope.ed.gov/accreditation; or


   c. IPE contains intermediate objectives detailing how training progress will be measured and client demonstrates consistent progress towards the achievement of the objectives.

   d. Comparable benefits are explored during every period of tuition renewal and any available benefits are utilized to pay for training costs prior to VR support.

      i. Client must provide proof of application for Pell grant prior to starting any training program and results of Pell must be provided prior to the second semester or sixth month of study;

      ii. Clients will be presumed eligible for a full Pell grant aware if they or their parent/guardian refuse to
provide information which results in a denial of the Pell grant, or neglect to apply for the Pell grant;

iii. If the client is awarded a Pell grant for a semester or period of training that VR has paid for, the client will reimburse VR for tuition and training expenses, up to, but not to exceed the amount of the Pell grant.

e. Documentation of training needs and costs, including but not limited to, grades or transcript from previous semester, tuition statement, course schedule, and list of required books, uniforms, supplies with associated costs are reviewed and approved by staff prior to every period of tuition renewal.

i. Tuition support is not based on economic need.

ii. Purchase of required books, uniforms, supplies, support services, maintenance and transportation is based on economic need.

1) Used or rented textbooks should be purchased whenever possible.

2) Purchase of general (non-required) training supplies will not exceed $100.00 per academic year.

f. Plan of Study or list of preset coursework has been reviewed and approved by staff within two (2) months of initial enrollment in training program.

i. Clients will abide by the approved Plan of Study or list of preset coursework when enrolling in and completing courses.

ii. All amendments or deviations from the approved Plan of Study or preset coursework must be mutually agreed upon by staff and the client prior to any change in coursework.

iii. Staff and client will review the Plan of Study or list of preset coursework annually, at a minimum, to ensure successful completion of classes in a timely manner.
g. Client is attending training full time, unless justified by a disability-related need.

h. Client is making satisfactory progress towards completion of the Plan of Study as determined by staff.

i. Client is in good academic standing based on the Standards of Academic Progress reported by the educational institution and is maintaining at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA.

j. Coursework has not previously been paid for with VR funds or Pell grant award monies;

k. Client has not defaulted on student loans or has any outstanding debts with any training institution.

   i. Proof that a current payment plan is in place or repayment requirements have been waived must be provided before VR will support any training costs.

2. VR will only pay published in-state tuition rates based on the rate of the public institution with the lowest cost that is within commuting distance of the client.

   a. Policy exception must be pursued in cases where the client’s disability-related needs or requirements of the employment goal preclude attending the public institution with the lowest cost that is within commuting distance of the client.

      i. Alternative training institutions that meet the client’s disability-related needs, and/or requirements of the employment goal must be considered in order of cost (lowest cost option must be considered first).

      ii. VR will not be responsible for any training costs that exceed the cost of attending the public institution with the lowest cost that is within commuting distance of the client in cases where the client chooses to attend a training program outside of the requirements under this section in (2)(a).

3. VR will only support training up to the following limits per client case:
a. Up to 12 credit hours of pre-college level coursework;

b. Up to 60 credit hours, not including pre-college level courses, to obtain an Associate Degree;

c. Up to 120 credit hours, this includes credit hours paid by VR for the Associate Degree, to obtain a Baccalaureate Degree;

d. Up to 60 credit hours for the Master’s Degree alone, or up to 180 credit hours if including hours paid by VR for a Baccalaureate Degree;

e. Advanced degrees may be considered consistent with the educational requirements of the vocational goal;

f. One occupational/vocational training program leading to a recognized certification or credential.

4. VR will assist clients with the following maintenance support when the client has been approved to attend a training institution outside of commuting distance due to disability-related needs or requirements of the employment goal, economic need is met, and the client is attending training full time:

a. Meal costs not to exceed that which would be paid to the institution (or comparable institution if the institution attended does not offer meals) for a campus meal plan.

b. Residential costs (on or off campus) not to exceed the cost of the client’s share of the posted dorm rate (double or shared room) during the academic year.

   i. Clients living off campus will provide their counselor with a copy of the rental agreement and list of roommates and VR will support only the amount resulting from dividing the total residential costs by the number of roommates.

      1) This amount must be equal to or less than the posted double or shared dorm rate.

   ii. Clients will be responsible for all residential expenses, including but not limited to utilities, water, and
internet services that are above the client’s share of the posted double or shared dorm rates.

5. VR will assist clients with the following transportation support when the client has been approved to attend a training institution within commuting distance and economic need is met:

   a. Travel to and from the training institution in accordance with the course schedule in the form of a bus pass or mileage.

6. VR will assist clients with the following transportation support when the client has been approved to attend a training institution outside of commuting distance due to disability-related needs or requirements of the employment goal, economic need is met, and the client is attending training full time:

   a. Travel home in the amount of two round trips per academic year.

      i. The amount of monies available for travel home is based on a round trip plane tickets from an airport in Arizona to the training institution using the best rates that are available a month or earlier before the client’s schedule departure, or mileage from the training institution to the client’s home, whichever is most feasible for client travel.
Section 8.10 – On-the-Job Training (OJT)

A. Policy

1. Staff, client, and/or vendor will identify potential employer for On-the-Job Training (OJT).

2. Qualified staff will ensure that OJT supported by VR is specific to the client’s employment goal.

3. Qualified staff will ensure the client has the basic knowledge and skills needed to perform the job before negotiating OJT with the employer.

4. Qualified staff will negotiate the training period and wage reimbursement schedule with the employer using the On the Job Training Contract form.

5. Qualified staff will ensure that wages reimbursed by VR are no more than 50 percent of the total wages paid to the client over the entire course of the OJT period.

6. Qualified staff will verify that the employer has employment opportunities available at the time the OJT contract is being negotiated.

   a. Employer is not required to guarantee continued employment once the OJT is complete.

7. Qualified staff will inform the employer that they must:

   a. Place the client on the payroll at the beginning of the OJT, deduct necessary social security deductions, and provide workers compensation coverage over the entire course of the OJT period;

      i. If the client is not considered an employee of the OJT provider/employer, workers compensation is provided through AZRSA.

   b. Be knowledgeable about Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA);

   c. Complete a Substitute W-9 form to become an AZRSA vendor before the OJT can begin; and
d. Submit a monthly report and invoice for every month the client is participating in the OJT.

8. Qualified staff will not authorize additional job training services for the client while paying reimbursement to the employer for the OJT.

   a. Staff or contracted service provider may provide consultation to the employer in order to accommodate the client’s disability-related needs, and/or provide limited job coaching to the client.

9. Qualified staff may authorize job retention services after completion of the OJT, if the client is hired and job retention services are necessary to help the client retain employment.

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Section 8.11 – Basic Education, Literacy Training and Tutoring

A. Basic education and literacy trainings are used for clients who want to go to college or vocational schools but who are not ready for such coursework and/or clients who do not aspire to college but need a higher level of skills in order to function effectively in the work place and may need basic education or literacy training.

1. Basic Education is a service that provides instruction in educational areas necessary for a client to function effectively.
   a. An academic foundation in basic subjects (reading, writing and arithmetic) is often required in order for a client to progress to higher education or to function in employment.
   b. If this is the result of life circumstances (clients who dropped out of high school early) rather than disability-related factors or English not being a client’s primary language, it is considered basic education.

2. Literacy training is a service that provides instruction in practical English language skills and English as a Second Language (ESL).

3. Service Provision
   a. AZRSA will pay for a maximum of 24 credit hours based on the current college rate per credit hour for pre-college level coursework.
   b. For students who are not planning to attend college, the counselor must set clear and measurable objectives consistent with IPE goals and continue to provide basic, or literacy education/training based on progress and measured achievement of goals.
   c. The counselor must include any planned basic academic or literacy training in the IPE.
      i. Intermediate objectives need to be set whether these services are provided as a precursor for further educational/vocational training or to function in employment.
   d. Tuition authorizations/payments must be consistent with the Plan of Study.
e. Prior to requesting an authorization for additional education costs or approving payments, the counselor must check to make sure that:

i. The client is actively participating in educational or training programs, and

ii. The client has provided required reports of satisfactory progress or of grade reports for the prior school term or session.

4. Prior to AZRSA assuming payment for these services, comparable benefits should be explored such as:

a. Community resources;

b. Programs available at community colleges;

c. Programs available at One-Stop Centers;

d. Programs provided by the Arizona Department of Education;

e. Programs offered through the Labor Department;

f. Online programs;

g. Other programs provided by the school the client is attending.

5. Basic education and literacy can be provided by programs available under the Competition Impracticable exemption

a. These are listed under any of the following:

i. U.S. Department of Education list of accredited institutions located at ope.ed.gov/accreditation; or


b. Payment is based on the current rates published by the qualified educational institutions;

c. Public schools (academic, literacy and tutoring programs) are paid on a semester or quarterly basis;
d. If the program is not available under the approved Competition Impracticable, the service is purchased using the Request for Quotes in accordance with the AZRSA Procurement Policy.

B. Basic computer literacy training

1. Basic computer literacy programs are programs that teach essential computer skills by providing a series of highly interactive exercises, and hands-on assistance in using Internet, Windows, Microsoft Office, Excel, and other computer programs.

2. Programs available under the Competition Impracticable for educational and vocational training programs should be used.

3. A classroom setting should be utilized whenever possible.
   a. If a classroom setting is not appropriate and one-on-one instruction is required, providers must submit evidence that they have experience, skills and knowledge in computer applications as demonstrated by their education and/or work experience.

C. Remedial Education

1. This service focuses on the use of special learning strategies to compensate for learning disability or other cognitive disorders.

2. It includes remediation and adapted education/instruction.

3. It does not include neurorehabilitation or other cognitive retraining.

4. This service includes intensive intervention and instruction to improve and/or achieve previously deficient academic skills (e.g. reading, writing and mathematics) necessary to perform academically at the level required by the minimum qualifications of a job or of a postsecondary educational institution.

5. Specific populations will require specific methods of approach to effectively assist them in learning.
   a. The client’s preferred communication and preferred learning media method should be utilized by the provider in this process.
6. All professional expectation related both to the provision of this type of service as well as specific to the population being served should be met by the service provider.

D. Academic tutoring

1. Academic tutoring is a service that provides additional, special or remedial private instruction and it is used for clients who need assistance in learning a specific classroom subject.
   
   a. This must be distinguished from remedial education, literacy training, and supported education when the client’s disability-related deficits require additional assistance.
   
   b. This includes one-on-one instruction with postsecondary course homework assignments and comprehension of subject matter, to include separation of relevant from irrelevant information, techniques for test taking, studying, note taking and organizing course material, and help understanding concepts and their relationships.

2. Academic tutoring includes instruction/tutoring specifically designed to increase the academic achievement of eligible AZRSA clients by attaining proficiency in the core academic area(s).

3. Core academic subjects include but are not limited to the following:
   
   a. Reading/language arts;
   
   b. English, mathematics;
   
   c. Science (including the areas of biology, chemistry, physics, earth science and general science);
   
   d. Arts (visual and music);
   
   e. History;
   
   f. Geography;
   
   g. Civics/government;
   
   h. Economics; and
i. Foreign languages.

4. Academic tutoring provided by a peer
   a. The school’s tutor program should be utilized when available.
   b. If tutoring is not available in a college/university setting, rates paid by VR are equivalent to customary rates paid within colleges or universities to student tutors.
   c. Payment is made to a client following the Client Purchase process.
      i. The client submits a form Statement of Services Rendered at the end of each month as evidence that service was provided.
   d. To qualify as a peer tutor the tutor must:
      i. Be a student who is currently enrolled in an accredited college or university;
      ii. Demonstrate experience in subject area by minimum of a 3.0 GPA in the subject requiring tutoring (transcripts are required).

5. Academic tutoring provided by qualified professionals/agencies
   a. It is expected that these services will:
      i. Be based on the client’s specific educational needs in order to meet the required academic standards.
      ii. Assist in building the client’s comprehension and skills necessary for successful completion of the selected educational goal which will lead to obtaining employment consistent with the client’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.
      iii. Be accessible outside of regular school hours.
      iv. Provide appropriate accommodations and support for the client’s disability-related needs.
v. Utilize only instruction, content, and curriculum that are secular, neutral, and non-ideological to model positive behavior and encouragement.

vi. Utilize instruction, content, and curriculum that are consistent with the client’s course of study and aligned to the required academic standards.

b. Providers are expected to utilize staff with applicable licensure, certification, expertise, and experience to tutor regarding specific areas of study, meet state and federal requirements, and to also accommodate optimally the specialized and individualized needs of persons with disabilities.

E. GED Preparation

1. This service is used for clients who want to go to college or to vocational schools but are not ready for such coursework and/or clients who do not aspire to college but need a higher level of skills in order to function effectively in the work place and may need a GED.

   a. This includes GED preparation

2. The counselor must include any planned GED training in the IPE.

3. Intermediate objectives need to be set whether these services are provided as a precursor for further educational/vocational training or to function in employment.

4. The counselor must set clear and measurable objectives consistent with IPE goals and continue to provide this training based on progress and measured achievement of goals.

5. Authorizations/payments must be consistent with the Plan of Study.

6. Prior to requesting an authorization for additional education costs or approving payments, the counselor must check to make sure that:

   a. The client is actively participating in educational or training programs, and
b. The client has provided required reports of satisfactory progress or of grade reports for the prior school term or session.

7. Comparable benefits such as free programs available in the community should be used prior to the use of VR funds, for example:
   a. One-Stop Centers – Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs;
   b. Arizona Department of Education – local colleges;
   c. Other community programs.

8. GED preparation programs available under the Competition Impracticable exemption and listed under any of the following should be used:
   a. U.S. Department of Education list of accredited institutions located at ope.ed.gov/accreditation; or
   b. Eligible Training Provider List located at https://www.azjobconnection.gov/ada/r/training

9. Payment is based on the current rates published by the qualified educational institutions.

10. Public schools are paid on a semester or quarterly basis.

11. Private programs are expected to accept payment on a month-to-month basis for services provided.
   a. Payments are based on receipt of monthly progress reports along with monthly billings which indicate both progress in the course subjects and attendance.
   b. If the client terminates, payment for that month will be prorated.
   c. The counselor should be notified, immediately, of any absences exceeding three (3) days in any given month.

F. Basic education, literacy and tutoring programs are expected to accept payment on a month-to-month, unless otherwise specified, basis for services provided.
1. Payments are based on receipt of monthly progress reports along with monthly billings which indicate both progress in the course subjects and attendance.

2. If the client terminates, payment for that month will be prorated.

3. The counselor should be notified, immediately, of any absences exceeding three (3) days in any given month.
Section 8.12 – Job Readiness Training

A. This group of services assists clients to explore their employment options and to achieve employment readiness skills.

B. These are stand-alone training opportunities which are not part of a larger job placement effort for which employment services are designed.

C. Several services comprise this group:

1. Career/Work exploration;
2. Work Adjustment Training;
3. Supported Education; and

D. Career/Work Exploration is defined as a service that provides orientation to the world of work for the purpose of assisting clients with disabilities in understanding the meaning and value of work, making a decision to pursue employment, or preparing for employment.

1. Work exploration is different than employment services, employment, and retention because it does not involve paid work and because the purpose is not to achieve the IPE vocational goal.

E. Work Adjustment Training is defined as a service that provides treatment and training in the meaning, value, and demands of work in the development of positive attitudes toward work.

1. This service is designed to:
   a. Provide training to foster an understanding of the meaning, value, and demands of work; and develops skills, good work habits, and a positive attitude towards work;
   b. Uses real work as a vehicle for the training; and provides assistance in obtaining employment.

F. Supported education
1. This service provides one-time, temporary or intermittent assistance, within an educational setting, to vocational rehabilitation clients with significant disabilities who require assistance with registration, navigation, connecting with school resources or accessing needed accommodation services.

2. This service is not educational tutoring, rehabilitation or career counseling, or to be used for providing ongoing or continuous supports within the educational setting.

3. They are intended:
   a. To help register students for school, to orient them to the school campus and school services, and assist a student to coordinate any needed special services.
   b. To provide a one-time, temporary or intermittent assistance in the educational setting.

4. This service should be provided by persons who are familiar with campus environments/processes and are qualified by their training, education and experience to work with persons with significant disabilities.

G. Job Readiness Training- Not Elsewhere Classified (NEC)

1. These services are limited to single, short-term educational/training experiences such as:
   a. Individual classes about dressing/grooming;
   b. Time management and career exploration provided at community colleges or in specialized training seminars.

2. These services are generally used in a combination with work exploration, disability skills training programs, and orientation and adjustment to disability.

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Section 8.13 – Disability-Related Skills Training

A. This grouping comprises a variety of instructional services designed to help a person with a disability be more independent in the home and within the community.

1. These services can be provided before or with other vocational services.
   a. They should always be provided in a context of preparing for or reinforcing an employment goal.
   b. Vocational Rehabilitation provides only those disability-related services that are rehabilitative in nature and help achieve an employment outcome.

2. These services may be provided only when the barrier resulting from the disabling condition can be corrected, ameliorated or circumvented within a reasonable period of time as part of or in preparation for an overall vocational rehabilitation plan.

3. Upon review of the assessments by the client and the counselor, a determination will be made regarding the need for these services.
   a. Evaluations and consultations should be used when necessary.

4. Counselors should discuss with clients the advantages and disadvantages of different settings (itinerant services, day services, and residential services), philosophy or approach and intensity of different service providers, and client needs (client’s age, past abilities, skills, level of confidence, etc.).

5. The counselor should work with the provider to develop a written disability skill training plan and to set clear and measurable service objectives to be achieved.

6. Economic need is not a requirement for provision of any of these services.
   a. Client transportation to receive these services also can be provided regardless of economic need.
7. Comparable benefits should always be used when available and appropriate.
   a. These may include but are not limited to:
      i. Support groups,
      ii. Independent living centers,
      iii. Free training by community organizations.

B. Orientation and mobility training

1. This service provides orientation to the environment and instruction in independent travel and mobility within the home, community or work environment.

2. For blind or visually impaired clients, this service includes instruction, as needed, in:
   a. Basic concept development;
   b. Pre-cane skills;
   c. Cane techniques;
   d. Residential travel;
   e. Light business travel;
   f. Downtown travel;
   g. Public transportation;
   h. Rural travel;
      i. Special situations;
      j. Instruction in independent travel.

3. For clients with other disabilities besides blindness:
   a. This is a contract service that assists a client in safely navigating an identified environment.
   b. Service objectives may include but is not limited to:
i. Use of power operated mobility devices;

ii. Safe transfer and travel techniques;

iii. Accessibility issues;

iv. Instruction in how to follow directions and identification of environmental clues;

v. Safe navigation of streets;

vi. Use of public transportation.

C. Vision rehabilitation therapy/rehabilitation teaching

1. This service provides instruction in independent living areas of adapted communications skills, personal management, and home management using low-vision and adaptive techniques.

2. Training in adaptive communication skills include but are not limited to:
   a. Personal record keeping;
   b. Braille;
   c. Keyboarding;
   d. Time management;
   e. Handwriting;
   f. Telephone use;
   g. Assistive technology.

3. Training in personal management includes but is not limited to:
   a. Diabetic adaptive techniques;
   b. Medication management;
   c. Coin & paper money ID;
   d. Banking system;
   e. Budgeting procedures;
f. Clothing;
g. Grooming/Hygiene;
h. Managing mail;
i. Pre-cane skills.

4. Training in home includes but is not limited to:
   a. Food preparation;
   b. Sewing;
   c. Cleaning;
   d. Laundry;
   e. Child care;
   f. Home maintenance.

5. Service providers are expected to have Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT) certification by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) or to be working toward their ACVREP and operating with direct supervision by a CVRT.

D. Orientation and adjustment (O&A) to disability

1. Orientation and adjustment to disability training for the blind and visually impaired.
   a. This service provides information and/or hands-on orientation regarding all aspects of vision loss.
      i. While these sessions can be presented individually, it is AZRSA-SBVI preference that orientation and adjustment services be administered in group sessions whenever possible or appropriate.
      ii. In addition, all O&A services must meet AZRSA-SBVI competency, and Best Practice Standards.
   b. Information includes but is not limited to:
i. Use of braille;
ii. Use of low vision services;
iii. Use of community resources related to blindness;
iv. Blindness advocacy organizations and support groups;
v. Rehabilitation teaching, and orientation and mobility;
vi. Self-advocacy support and skill development;
vii. Medical, psychological, and social aspects of disability and how they relate to independent living;
viii. Assistive technology;
ix. Transportation approaches and resources;
x. Instruction and/or counseling is provided to assist clients to know the implications of, and adjust to, their disabilities and its impact on independent living and on work.

c. Service provision will be coordinated by a certified Rehabilitation Teacher, or rehabilitation counselor.

d. Individual service sessions will be provided by individuals who meet the professional standards for that particular service.

2. Orientation and adjustment to disability training for all other disabilities

a. This is a contract service that provides instruction in a number of independent living areas such as:
   
i. Assisting clients to understand and accept their disability;
   
ii. Using disability-related community resources, goods and services;
   
iii. Providing training in self-advocacy, personal living skills, home management, and independent travel.
b. These services are frequently available and provided by independent living centers to a broad range of individuals with physical disabilities.

c. This service is not therapy or rehabilitation counseling.

d. Service objectives may include but are not limited to assisting clients in:

   i. Understanding and gaining acceptance of their disabilities;

   ii. Obtaining information about specific disability-related services;

   iii. Developing self-advocacy, personal living skills and home management.

e. AZRSA contracts should be referred to for specific details on service provider requirements.

E. Adapted communication

1. This is a service that provides training to assist a client to communicate effectively using adapted communication techniques.

2. Adapted communication is training/education in other languages which are specifically adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities.

   a. This does not include adapted communication training to access or make use of technological aids or devices and/or access and use of computer applications (including augmentative communication devices).

3. This includes but is not limited to training to a level of intermediate proficiency in:

   a. Braille training;

   b. Deaf/blind tactile training;

   c. American sign language (ASL);

   d. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC);
4. Providers should meet professional standards and/or contract requirements for the provision of specific trainings.

F. Comprehensive day based disability-related skills training for the blind

1. A residential or day based comprehensive disability-related skills training program is designed to meet the unique vocational rehabilitation needs of clients who are blind or visually impaired.

2. The services provided to each client are identified by a comprehensive assessment.

3. The services may include:
   a. Teaching adapted communication skills, personal management skills and home management skills,
   b. Orientation to the environment and instruction in independent travel and mobility (e.g. use of public transportation, map reading, cane training, etc.),
   c. Training and support in self-advocacy, interpersonal skills, personal safety and use of leisure time,
   d. Assistance in understanding and acceptance of disability,
   e. Training in use of assistive technology,
   f. Readiness for work in terms of teaching job seeking skills, work exploration, trial employment, etc.

4. The service provision should result in:
   a. Clients having the necessary adaptive skills and self-confidence to be successful in employment or postsecondary education,
   b. Seamless transition from high school to post high school vocational services,
   c. Expediting a client’s progress toward achieving self-sufficiency through work.

G. Disability related skills training not elsewhere classified (NEC)
1. Disability related skills training NEC includes, but is not limited to, services such as remediation for persons with learning disabilities, cognitive skills development, community and work integration skills development, etc.

H. Cognitive skills development

1. Cognitive skills development includes developmental or restorative services for clients with inherited learning disabilities or clients who lost their cognitive skills as a result of brain injury.

2. This service provides training to recover or maintain cognitive skills using specialized/adaptive learning techniques.

3. The client often needs to develop compensatory methods of processing and retrieving information when disability, illness or injury has affected cognitive processes.

4. Cognitive skill development includes mental exercises that assist the patient in areas such as:
   a. Attention/concentration;
   b. Memory;
   c. Organizing;
   d. Reasoning;
   e. Problem solving;
   f. Decision making;
   g. Social pragmatics.

5. These services should be provided by a licensed/certified psychologist, neuropsychologist, occupational therapist, rehabilitation specialist or special education teacher.

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Section 8.14 –Miscellaneous Training (including Job Training)

A. Miscellaneous training includes:

1. Job Training
   a. This service provides various paraprofessional vocational training services to AZRSA clients with disabilities to assist them in developing specific vocational skills and improve their ability to secure and maintain employment.
   b. The services include a systematic vocational training program, in a disability-friendly environment, that prepares clients with disabilities for entry-level employment opportunities or for career advancement in the competitive and integrated labor market.
   c. Job Placement is an optional component that may be provided under this service.
   d. Job Training can only be purchased from community rehabilitation program (CRP) providers and/or other organizations under contract with AZRSA to provide a specified job training program.
   e. The client should develop specific vocational skills and improve his/her ability to secure and maintain employment as well as completing internships if applicable.

2. Training Not Elsewhere Classified (NEC)
   a. This service includes financial support to pay for a seminar, conference or class which conveys specific, focused information which is not used as part of a degree or certificate program or formal program of training, but is required or recommended for a job.
   b. The scope is limited, although may be scheduled over multiple days.
   c. This service should lead to knowledge/information acquisition the client can use on a job.

3. Economic need is not required to receive training services.
4. Economic need is required for books, materials, and supplies.

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Section 8.15 – Job-Related Services

A. Job-related services include job search assistance, job placement assistance, and on-the-job support services.

1. Job search and job readiness activities support and assist a client in searching for an appropriate job. Job search assistance may include help in resume preparation, identifying appropriate job opportunities, developing interview skills, and making contacts with companies on behalf of the client.

2. Job placement assistance is a referral to a specific job resulting in an interview, whether or not the client obtained the job.

3. On-the-job supports are support services provided to a client who has been placed in employment in order to stabilize the placement and enhance job retention and may include job coaching, follow-up and follow-along, and job retention services.

B. Employment services is a contracted service through AZRSA which prepares and places clients in a job that is consistent with their IPE goal.

1. The service chosen to achieve this goal is based on the needs of each client.

2. These services are purchased only after an IPE has been completed and a vocational goal has been identified.

3. These services are not to be confused with vocational evaluations/trial work assessments, work exploration contracts, disability-related skills training or on-the-job training.

4. Staff should be involved and support the client throughout the entire employment and placement process including:
   a. Employment goal planning;
   b. Deciding on an appropriate employment setting;
   c. Placement in a specific job.

5. When a decision is made to purchase one of the three employment services to assist in the employment preparation and placement process of a client with special needs, these
services will be purchased only from providers and/or organizations under contract with AZRSA.

6. A face-to-face meeting ("Pre-service consultation meeting") between the client, the contractor and staff is required prior to deciding to proceed with services.

   a. This meeting is used to select the appropriate service and set clear objectives and timelines for the selected service.

7. The counselor is responsible for monitoring the appropriateness of the job placement.

8. These services, except for related uniforms/tools/supplies (if purchased separately), will be provided regardless of economic need.

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Section 8.16 – Transportation Services

A. Transportation and travel-related expenses are services necessary to enable an applicant or client to participate in Vocational Rehabilitation services or to relocate for a job.

1. Examples include but are not limited to:
   a. Vehicle repair;
   b. Per diem mileage;
   c. Bus;
   d. Taxi;
   e. Air fare; or
   f. Relocation expenses incurred by the client in connection with a job placement that is a significant distance from the client’s current residence.

B. Vocational Rehabilitation will not buy vehicles requiring a license, even when needed to achieve an IPE goal.

C. The Vocational Rehabilitation program does not replace or supplement programs or services (e.g. TANF, SSI, public housing, other income assistance) that are intended to meet the client’s basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, transportation, child/adult care, reader/interpreter services, attendant care services, child day care services, etc.

1. The Vocational Rehabilitation program can pay for additional costs for these services which are incurred as a result of, or which are part of, a vocational rehabilitation effort.

2. The Vocational Rehabilitation program provides or supplements existing support services when necessary only to support Vocational Rehabilitation sponsored activities or services.

3. For eligible clients with an IPE, the supports are provided only to support activities written in the IPE.

D. Vocational Rehabilitation support of a client’s transportation needs is considered in the following order of precedence:
1. Public subsidized transport, if available, will be used unless disability-related issues prevent its use. Public subsidized transportation includes Rapid Transit, bus, Dial-A-Ride, Van Tran, etc.

2. When public transportation is not available or appropriate, AZRSA will support a client using his/her own transportation by paying mileage reimbursements.

3. Vocational Rehabilitation will only pay for car insurance or repair of a client’s (or family member’s) vehicle when public transportation is not available or is inappropriate for disability-related reasons.
   a. Repairing a vehicle must be the only economical method of making transportation available for the client.
   b. Any decision to repair a client’s vehicle must be reviewed and approved by the supervisor.

4. The cost of taxi transportation, or more expensive alternatives, may be provided as a last resort.

E. Transportation services are conditioned on economic need, unless they support assessment services or disability-related skill training services.

F. Car repair and towing

1. Car repairs will not be supported by Vocational Rehabilitation until after an IPE has been developed and approved.
   a. The approved IPE must contain the needed repairs.
   b. Prior to IPE implementation (Status 13), counselors and clients will find other means to meet the client’s transportation needs.

2. Vocational Rehabilitation will not pay for routine automobile maintenance (e.g. tune-ups, oil changes, tires rotation, routine replacement of belts and hoses, routine tire replacement).

3. Vocational Rehabilitation support for car repair is limited to a total of $4,000.00 per client during the IPE and post-employment services.
a. Any exception to the $4,000.00 car limit must be reviewed by a supervisor and approved by the District Program Manager.

b. Exceptions must be based on unique disability-related needs of a client (see Section 8.3).

c. In the case of an exception, Vocational Rehabilitation will only pay for 80% of the eligible car repair that exceeds $4,000.00.
   i. The client will be responsible for the remaining 20%.

4. Towing costs and diagnostic testing related to the specific vehicle repair can be paid for by AZRSA.
   a. These costs are separate and should not be factored into the overall $4,000.00 car repair limit.

5. Car repair will be provided only by qualified dealers or repair shops that can provide a warranty/guarantee for their services.

6. Prior to agreeing to pay for a car repair, the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor must determine that the vehicle can legally be driven and that the driver can legally drive.
   a. Without this determination car repair services cannot be provided by AZRSA.
   b. This determination is accomplished by:
      i. Viewing and scanning copies into the ECF documentation that the vehicle has a current and valid registration and is registered to the client or the family member driving the client;
      ii. Viewing and scanning copies into the ECF documentation that the vehicle is currently insured to the standards of the State of Arizona; and
      iii. Viewing and scanning copies into the ECF documentation that the client or whomever will be driving the client is currently licensed to drive.

G. Relocation expenses
1. Vocational Rehabilitation will pay for transportation-related moving expenses in connection with a job placement that is a significant distance from the client’s current residence.
   a. This includes but is not limited to expenses required to move the client’s household goods.

H. **Mileage/Lodging**

1. If necessary to support the client’s own transportation, Vocational Rehabilitation will pay for mileage.
   a. Mileage is calculated using the Transportation Worksheet.

2. Per diem and lodging is paid only for one-time travel situations rather than ongoing maintenance.
   a. Short-term lodging and meals required to participate in assessment or training services not within commuting distance of the client’s home are included; and
   b. Per diem and lodging expenses incurred in providing services will be billed in accordance with the current Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) Accounting Manual, Section II-D and the laws relating to travel contained in the Arizona Revised Statutes 38-621 through 38-627, as may be amended.
   c. Travel guidelines can be located on the Arizona Department of Administration’s website at [https://gao.az.gov/travel](https://gao.az.gov/travel).

I. **Car insurance**

1. Car insurance will not be paid unless the all of the following conditions exist:
   a. The client is employed in the IPE employment goal and the employment will be jeopardized if the car insurance is not paid;
   b. The client has no alternatives to driving; and
   c. The client has no resources to pay for insurance;

2. Car insurance will be paid once by AZRSA for a term of six (6) months to one (1) year.
J. Other transportation related expenses such as bicycles or parking passes can be paid for by AZRSA, if they are required to assist the client in achieving their employment goal.
Section 8.17 – Maintenance

A. Maintenance is vocational rehabilitation support service that is available only to support a client’s participation in the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

1. Provision of maintenance is never the purpose or focus of a rehabilitation effort.

2. Maintenance is monetary support provided for those expenses, such as food, clothing and rent that are in excess of the client’s normal expenses and that are necessitated by participation in an assessment for determining eligibility, participation in IPE planning, or receipt of services under an IPE.

3. The Vocational Rehabilitation program does not replace programs or services (e.g. TANF, SSI, public housing, other income assistance) that are intended to meet the client’s basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, transportation, child/adult care, reader/interpreter services, attendant care services, child day care services, etc.

   a. The Vocational Rehabilitation program can pay for additional costs for these services which are incurred as a result of, or which are part of, a vocational rehabilitation effort.

   b. The Vocational Rehabilitation program provides or supplements existing support services when necessary only to support Vocational Rehabilitation sponsored activities or services.

   c. For eligible clients with an IPE, the supports are provided only to support activities written in the IPE.

4. Payment of maintenance is restricted to costs in excess of the client’s customary living expenses which are a result of participating in vocational rehabilitation services.

5. Counselor and client are required to explore the potential impact of maintenance payments on the client’s receipt of support payments from SSA, food stamps, TANF, AHCCCS, etc.

B. Comparable benefits
1. All alternative resources must be investigated and used first before maintenance services can be provided.

C. Economic need

1. Maintenance payments are conditioned on the client having economic need.

2. Vocational Rehabilitation may pay for these services only if all of the client’s financial resources are not sufficient to pay these costs.

D. Maintenance payments for clients while they are living at home.

1. These expenses, if appropriate, may include, but are not limited to:
   a. Lunch when a client is away from home during mealtime, the meal is not provided for free, and the client cannot reasonably be required to carry a lunch.
   b. The costs for other suitable clothing or hygiene products directly related to being in the community when the client was not in the public prior to his rehabilitation program.
   c. The actual cost of short-term expenses required in order for a client to participate in IPE services at a site that is not within commuting distance of a client’s home.

E. Maintenance payments for clients while they are living away from home.

1. AZRSA may pay for the cost of a client’s rent when he/she requires an extended period of time living away from home to participate in IPE services, while retaining his/her primary residence.

2. Maintenance for clients living away from home for educational/training purposes are detailed in Section 8.9 Postsecondary Education.

F. Vocational Rehabilitation may pay for initial one-time costs, such as security deposits or charges for the initiation of utilities, required for a client who has relocated for a job placement consistent with their IPE employment goal.
1. Maintenance is not used for relocation expenses related to the transportation of a client’s household goods.
   a. See Section 8.16 – Transportation Services for policies relating to relocation costs related to the transportation of a client’s household goods.

G. AZRSA does not pay for:

1. Residential costs if the student lives within commuting distance of the program or is living away from home by choice, not due to a disability or program-related need;
2. Rent, except for clients living away from home;
3. Other basic living needs, not listed above;
4. General living costs resulting in a loss of income due to participation in IPE services or a self-employment plan.

H. Clothing as maintenance

1. Clothing (maintenance) is a client’s ongoing responsibility.
2. Clothing assistance is never routine or provided on an ongoing basis.
3. Decisions about the need for clothing assistance should be based on evidence that the client’s existing wardrobe does not meet the basic requirements for the activity that he/she will be performing.
   a. The activity should be related to tasks in the IPE.
4. Since clothing is a client’s ongoing responsibility, clothing (maintenance) will not be provided as a post-employment service.
Section 8.18 – Rehabilitation Technology

A. Rehabilitation technology is the systematic application of technologies, engineering methodologies or scientific principles to meet the needs of, and address the barriers confronted by, clients with disabilities in areas that include education, rehabilitation, employment, transportation, independent living and recreation.

1. This includes the following types of services:

a. Rehabilitation engineering service: the systematic application of engineering sciences to design, develop, test, evaluate, apply, and distribute technological solutions to problems confronted by clients with functional limitations in areas such as mobility, communications, hearing, vision, and cognition, and in activities associated with employment, independent living, education, and integration into the community.

b. Assistive technology device: any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a client.

c. Assistive technology service: any service that directly assists a client in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device including but not limited to:

   i. Evaluating the needs of an client with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the client in his/her customary environment;

   ii. Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition by an client with a disability of an assistive technology device;

   iii. Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices;

   iv. Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;
v. Training or providing technical assistance for an client with a disability or, if appropriate, the family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of the client; and

vi. Training or providing technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services), employers, or others who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of clients with disabilities to the extent that training or technical assistance is necessary for an client with a disability to achieve an employment outcome.

B. The application and use of rehabilitation technology should be a consideration throughout the rehabilitation process, starting at referral.

1. The functional limitation and service needs on the Eligibility Worksheet are the first formal tool to begin identifying potential rehabilitation technology needs.

2. Clients who are diagnosed with blindness, visual impairments, deafness, hearing impairment or with significant upper extremity limitations should have an AT evaluation done prior to doing any other evaluations.

3. If there is reason to believe that the client needs, or can benefit from rehabilitation technology, the Assistive Technology Profile and AT Plan should be completed with the client, counselor, and AT Specialist.

4. Rehabilitation technology goods or equipment are never provided solely to help another agency or employer to meet their ADA accessibility and/or reasonable accommodations requirements.

5. Rehabilitation technology planning must include all of the following:

   a. Evaluations (comprehensive evaluations are often the most important component of rehabilitation technology),

   b. Consultations by agency contractors or staff,
c. Training in the use of the technology,
d. Follow-up/follow-along services,
e. Setup/installation,
f. Adjustments/configuration (such as JAWS scripting),
g. Client involvement in all phases of the process, including final review and sign-off on the results of a technology project before AZRSA makes final payment, etc.
h. Installation, training (in the use of technological devices from the contract provider) and follow up, when appropriate, will be authorized and paid for when these services are not part of a contract or provided for in the original purchase price.

6. Team staffings between the counselor, the client, and rehabilitation technology specialists are required to identify needs, finalize prescriptions, assess most appropriate technology needs, and to integrate all the parts of the process.

7. Employment related technology services/devices are purchased for a client when the technology is portable, not specifically designed to a specific employer’s work station and can be used in other jobs or for independent living applications.

8. A personal computer is considered as “assistive technology equipment” when the purpose of the purchase is to accommodate a disability-related need.

9. The Equipment Contract with Client is to be completed by the counselor, and signed by the client, whenever equipment valued at over $300.00 is purchased.
   a. The Equipment/Software List is completed by an adaptive aids and devices contractor or the counselor and becomes part of the Equipment Contract with Client.

10. The Equipment Disposition is to be completed by the counselor whenever equipment is to be:
   a. Retained by the client upon closure,
b. Is no longer needed and has been returned to AZRSA, or

c. Equipment has been transferred to another client.

11. The process of placing a client into a job should include a consideration of the client’s rehabilitation technology needs related to successfully performing the essential functions of the job.

a. This may include assisting the employer with a jobsite assessment.

C. Economic need is not a consideration for this category of services, except for vehicle modifications.

1. A computer purchased for reasons other than an accommodation to a disability is considered to be goods or services and is also subject to an economic need determination.

D. This category of services is exempt from the requirement to make a prior determination about the availability of comparable services and benefits available under any other program.

1. However, where such services have been determined to be available, such resources shall be used.

2. AZRSA can facilitate the process by purchasing the evaluation, training or other supports.

E. Assistive technology assessments

1. Seating and mobility assessment

a. A service that provides evaluations to determine a client’s need for an item or equipment to perform normal living or employment skills tasks.

2. Home modification assessment

a. A service that provides evaluations to determine a client’s need for alterations to a home to assist the client to continue to reside in the property.

b. See Section 8.20 Home Modifications for further details

3. Computer access assessment
a. A service that provides evaluations to determine a client’s need for software and/or hardware to assist the client in utilizing a personal computer in relation to work functions.

4. Work station evaluation

a. A service that provides evaluations to determine a client’s need for alterations to a work environment to assist the client in performing work functions.

5. Adaptive driving assessment and vehicle modification assessment

a. A driving evaluation is a comprehensive assessment of a client’s abilities and/or potential to become a safe and independent driver.

b. See Section 8.19 Vehicle Modification and Adaptive Driving for further details.

6. Augmentative communication evaluation

a. A service that provides an assessment and recommendation to determine a client’s need for augmentative or alternative communication devices/equipment for the purpose of generating speech communication.

F. Instructions in use of AT

1. This service provides training in the use of an item or equipment to perform normal living or employment skills/tasks.

2. Technology training is provided to ensure that a client learns how to use assistive devices which have been provided to him/her and can therefore achieve the maximum benefit from the use of assistive technology.

a. When training is not provided as part of the purchase or when additional training is needed it may be provided by the vendor from whom the devices were purchased, or may be purchased separately.

b. A client who is skilled in the use of the device should provide the needed training.
c. The trainer should have knowledge of the special needs of clients with the particular disabilities of the client being served, and can practice good instruction techniques which are appropriate for each client.

3. These services include:
   a. Services that assist clients in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.
   b. Coordination and use of other therapies or services with assistive technology devices.

G. Access and use of computers

1. This service provides opportunities to access computer technology that will assist an client to obtain information, develop skills, and/or perform tasks, and includes:
   a. Adapted computer access training: one-on-one training with a client on the use of specialized computer access equipment and programs.
   b. Instruction in adapted computer access: provides instruction in the use of adaptive computer applications. A client who has the necessary knowledge and communication skills should provide this instruction.

H. Assistive technology/adaptive aids and devices

1. Any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether maintained commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of clients with disabilities.

2. Examples of assistive technology/adaptive aids and devices that might be purchased for blind/visually impaired clients:
   a. Computer software for adaptive purpose (screen reading, speech input, work prediction, screen magnification, etc.)
   b. Computer hardware for adaptive purpose (adaptive keyboards, mice, etc.)
   c. Digital voice recorder
d. Dome magnifier/video magnifier

e. Large print overlay

f. Talking calculator, compass, watch

g. White cane

h. Taped text

3. Examples of assistive technology/adaptive aids and devices that might be purchased for deaf/hard of hearing clients:

a. Telephone amplifiers

b. Captioned videos,

c. Doorbell amplifier

d. Sonic boom alarm clock

e. Flasher alarm

f. Signalers

g. TTD

h. TTY

i. FM systems

I. Other assistive technology services

1. Installation: a service that provides installation and inspection of equipment to ensure that the equipment is complete, that it works and that it was shipped as ordered in order to assist a person in using equipment to perform living and employment skills/tasks.

   a. Installation of access equipment and software and/or assistance to worksite technical support personnel to ensure proper setup may also be provided.

2. Follow up involves follow-up visit to make sure the setup is working and to make modifications.
a. This includes short-term training with the devices, to evaluate the effectiveness of the assistive technology devices, environmental or vehicle modifications in improving the client’s functional capacities, and to determine if the assistive technology goals have been achieved.

3. Repair: a service that repairs or modifies aids and devices that assist persons in performing normal living skills.

J. Assistive technology warranties

1. AZRSA can pay for an initial manufacturer’s warranty for an assistive technology device, piece of equipment, or product for a specified period of time following the date of purchase if the warranty is available at the time of purchase by the manufacturer.

2. An initial manufacturer’s warranty must guarantee repair and/or replacement of parts or the entire device, equipment, or product when the parts and/or workmanship are faulty.

3. AZRSA will not purchase extended warranties.

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Section 8.19 – Vehicle Modification and Adaptive Driving

A. Policy

1. Vehicle modifications and/or Adaptive Driving may be considered for the purpose of enabling a client with a disability to go to work when all of the following criteria are met:
   
a. The client’s disability prevents the use of any other reasonable transportation alternative (public transportation, family member, etc.);
   
b. The need for the client to use their own vehicle, or if a family member is providing transportation, the family members vehicle, is documented in the ECF;
   
c. The client must be able to drive in order to achieve their employment goal;
   
d. The client’s disability prevents the use of driver training methods used by the general public;
   
e. The client has a prescription for an Adaptive Driving Assessment from their doctor; and
   
f. The results of an Adaptive Driving assessment indicate the need for a vehicle modification and/or Adaptive Driving training.

2. Adaptive Driving Assessment and Training are not subject to economic need policies.

3. Vehicle Modifications and Adaptive Driving Fitting and Follow up Services are subject to economic need policies.

4. AZRSA will only modify vehicles which the client or family member own, or will own, and which are insured.
   
a. Vocational Rehabilitation will not modify leased vehicles.

5. The driver of the vehicle must have:
   
a. The ability to drive and use the modifications;
   
b. A legal right to drive (the counselor must visually verify the driver’s license and make a copy for the file).
6. Vehicle modification and/or adaptive driving paid for by AZRSA are limited to those items/services which directly relate to improving or ameliorating the client’s disability-related functional limitations in regard to driving.

7. Structural modifications are done only to vehicles with odometer readings of less than 50,000 miles, unless the vehicle can pass an inspection by an auto mechanic of the brakes, electrical system, body, power train, engine, and safety features, which documents that the vehicle is in good working order and requires no major repairs.

8. If the vehicle to be modified is a used vehicle, the counselor must take into consideration the safety of the vehicle and the ability of the vehicle to meet the client’s needs before agreeing to participate in its purchase.

9. Plans must be made with the client to purchase necessary insurance coverage for adaptive modifications made to vehicles and for continued maintenance checks and servicing after modifications have been done.

B. Procedure

1. If the client meets required policies for vehicle modification and/or adaptive driving, the client will participate in an adaptive driving assessment provided by a Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialist to assess their ability and/or potential to become a safe and independent driver.

2. Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialist will provide the results for the assessment including, if applicable, the specifications for a vehicle modification and/or recommended adaptive driving training.

   a. If the client needs only adaptive driving training to overcome disability related barriers to driving, the training may be provided in accordance with the recommended training plan.

   b. If the client needs a vehicle modification to overcome disability related barriers to driving, the vehicle modification specification must be a complete plan for all of the modifications and adaptive equipment necessary to meet the client’s needs.
i. Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialist should only make specification recommendations after viewing the vehicle, reviewing adequate literature regarding the vehicle, conferring with vendors, vehicle dealerships, manufacturers and/or an automotive or rehabilitation engineer.

ii. Recommendations should be made for a specific make, model/year vehicle.

iii. Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialist will include an expiration date for the specification, not to exceed one (1) year.

3. Client will participate in a vehicle assessment to determine whether an existing vehicle is suitable (i.e. safely accommodate the modifications being considered for the client’s transportation needs) for the recommended modifications and whether the vehicle is mechanically and structurally sound.

   a. The following areas must be considered as part of the vehicle evaluation for both structural and non-structural modifications:

      i. Mechanical: AZRSA requires a mechanical inspection and a reliability check for vehicles requiring structural modifications with odometer readings of 50,000 to 75,000 miles or if there are plans to make modifications which significantly change the weight distribution or otherwise have significant impact on major systems of the vehicle. Vehicles having more than 75,000 miles are normally not eligible for structural modifications funded by the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

      ii. Adaptability: Vehicles must be compatible with all recommended adaptive equipment to be installed and planned structural modifications.

4. Counselor will schedule a meeting with the Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS) who did the evaluation and wrote the specifications, the Vocational Rehabilitation client, and the contract vendor to review results of vehicle assessment and plans for modification.
a. The vehicle to be modified must be available for this meeting.

5. The contractor will provide AZRSA with a specific list of planned modifications and anticipated costs for review.

6. Upon review and approval, AZRSA will issue the appropriate authorizations with the approved list of modifications, to the vendor to start the vehicle modification process.

7. Upon completion of the modification and prior to discharging the vehicle to the client, a vehicle modification inspection is done to assure that the equipment installed is consistent with the recommendations of the CDRS and that the installation meets or exceeds manufacturer’s specifications for installation.

a. This must involve the CDRS who did the evaluation and wrote the specifications, and the Vocational Rehabilitation client.

b. The modified vehicle must be available.

c. Payment is authorized if the modification is complete, satisfactory and performed within the criteria that were set.

8. Adaptive Driving Training will be provided if necessary for the client to utilize the modified vehicle.
Section 8.20 – Home Modifications

A. Policy

1. Home modifications will only be provided by AZRSA in order to remove barriers to the existing home that are impediments to the achievement of an employment goal in an approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

2. AZRSA will not purchase or pay for permanent structures, add-on's to structures, enclosed carports, or other major reconstructions including the removal of load bearing walls.

3. The Home Modification Construction Coordinator will make an on-site visit to determine the feasibility of performing a home modification.

4. Modifications to rental housing will be considered with written permission from the landlord/owner/lien holder prior to any work performed on the property.

5. Specific home modifications will only be provided once during a VR case unless a new disability-related reason is identified.

6. Moving, in and of itself, is not a reason for a new and/or repeated home modification.

7. Staff will provide the client with the Home Modification Letter of Understanding prior to the completion of any modifications.

B. Procedure

1. The counselor and/or the Home Modification Construction Coordinator will conduct a home visit with the client to identify the barriers in the home and will utilize the AT-Home Modification Planning Tool during this visit.

2. The counselor and/or Home Modification Construction Coordinator will determine if additional assessments are required.

   a. If necessary, the counselor will plan an AT-Home Modification Assessment.
b. The counselor will task the Purchasing Technician to generate an authorization for an AT-Home Modification Assessment.

3. The Home Modification Construction Coordinator will coordinate with the home modification assessment vendor, the counselor, and the client to determine the necessary modifications.

4. Once the necessary modifications are determined, the Home Modification Construction Coordinator will create a Project Pricing form.

5. The Home Modification Construction Coordinator will obtain verbal approval from the client to send the Project Pricing form to all contractors within the applicable county for a competitive bidding process.

6. The Home Modification Construction Coordinator will make an award to a contractor based on competitive pricing and the skill sets of the contractor.

7. The client may choose to utilize an alternative AZRSA contractor and the Home Modification Construction Coordinator and/or the counselor will inform the client of their financial responsibility to pay for any difference in costs.

8. The Home Modification Construction Coordinator will ensure that the chosen vendor/contractor and the client are in agreement with the planned modifications before the construction begins.

9. The counselor will receive the Project Pricing form of the chosen contractor and will plan the services in the IPE based on the Project Pricing form.
   a. The counselor will task the Purchasing Technician to authorize AT-Home Modification services.
   b. The Purchasing Technician will send the authorization to the contractor and will copy the Home Modification Construction Coordinator.

10. In the event that unforeseen costs are expected to be incurred, the Home Modification Construction Coordinator will verify and approve the changes prior to any change in the IPE or the authorizations.
a. Once the Home Modification Construction Coordinator approves the changes, the counselor will amend the IPE to reflect the necessary changes; and

b. The counselor will task the Purchasing Technician to amend the Home Modification Authorization.

11. The counselor will receive a Home Modification Completion Report from the contractor upon completion of the home modification.

   a. The counselor will task the Home Modification Construction Coordinator that the Home Modification Completion Report is available in the client’s ECF.

   b. The Home Modification Construction Coordinator will verify that the home modification is complete by signing the Home Modification Completion Report.

   c. The counselor will sign the Home Modification Completion Report upon verifying with the client that the home modification is complete.

   d. The final Home Modification Completion Report is scanned into the ECF.

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Section 8.21 – Supported Employment Services and Extended Supported Employment Services (ESE)

A. Policy

1. Supported Employment services are only available to individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom supported employment has been identified as the appropriate employment outcome on the IPE based on a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs.

2. Supported Employment services may consist of any VR service determined necessary for the individual to maintain employment.

3. Supported Employment services may be provided for up to 24 months after an individual with a most significant disability obtains employment to help the individual achieve and maintain stable employment prior to transitioning to Extended Supported Employment (ESE).
   a. Supported Employment services may only exceed 24 months if necessary for the individual to achieve an employment outcome and an extension is agreed upon by the individual and VR staff.

4. Source of ESE services must be identified for all individuals in Supported Employment prior to the completion of IPE/Supported Employment services.
   a. Sources of ESE may include a state agency, private non-profit organization, employer, or any other appropriate source including natural supports.
   b. A youth with a most significant disability for whom no other source of ESE can be identified may receive ESE provided by the VR program for up to four years or until the youth reaches the age of 25, whichever occurs first.
      i. Alternative ESE source will be identified prior to concluding VR funded ESE services if needed.

B. Procedure
1. Staff will work with an individual for whom an employment outcome in a supported employment setting has been determined to be appropriate to decide:

   a. Services to be provided by VR, including supported employment services;
   b. Expected ESE service needs; and
   c. Provider/Payor source for ESE services.

   i. If ESE source cannot be identified at the time of IPE development, the Supported Employment IPE may be implemented as long as there is a reasonable expectation that a provider/payor source for ESE will become available upon completion of IPE services.

2. Staff and the individual will plan all necessary services in a Supported Employment IPE.

   a. Supported Employment IPE will identify services to be provided by VR, including any ESE services that will be provided by VR for youth with disabilities.

      i. ESE services provided by a source other than VR will not be planned on the IPE.

   b. IPE Justification will identify the expected ESE services and source.

3. If at any point during provision of IPE/Supported Employment services it is determined that the individual will no longer need of ESE services, Staff and the individual will amend the IPE plan type and associated supported employment services.

4. Once the individual obtains employment, Staff will:

   a. Arrange for the provision of the agreed upon supported employment services which include, at a minimum, twice-monthly on-worksite monitoring or off-site meetings between the individual and Staff or vendor to provide job training, coaching, observation, and/or follow-up services to reinforce and stabilize the employment; and
b. Complete and document monthly contacts with the individual to discuss employment stability, progress, concerns, and the need for additional services or extension of Supported Employment services beyond 24 months.

5. When the individual has achieved stable employment, supported employment services provided by VR are considered complete and Staff, the individual, and ESE source will agree on the date of transition to ESE support.

   a. Staff will document the agreed upon transition to ESE date in the ECF and the ESE source will take over the provision and payment of ESE services as of that date.

6. Staff will periodically confirm that the individual continues to receive ESE services from the identified ESE source and that the individual’s employment remains stable and appropriate for 90 days after transition to ESE.

7. Staff will consider the individual to have achieved an employment outcome in supported employment if the individual has maintained employment and achieved stability in the work setting for at least 90 days after transitioning to ESE.
Section 8.22 – Reader Services, Braille Transcription and Document Conversion

A. Reader services are for clients who cannot read print because of blindness or other disability.

1. Reader services include, in addition to reading aloud, transcription of printed information into Braille or sound recording if the client requests such transcription.

2. Reader services are generally for clients who are blind or deaf-blind, but may also include clients unable to read because of serious neurological disorders, specific learning disabilities, or other physical or mental impairments.

3. Reader services may be provided at any time during the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

4. Reader services/note taker services are not conditioned on economic need.

B. Reader/scriber services

1. The purpose of this service is to make printed text available and/or accessible to blind/visually impaired clients for the purposes of IPE development, reaching intermediate objectives, and/or obtaining an IPE goal.

2. Examples of reader services can include but are not limited to:
   a. Reading textbooks or class materials to students,
   b. Assisting clients with paperwork needed for obtaining employment,
   c. Assisting students with note-taking in class,
   d. Assisting clients with proofreading for visual formatting when composing documents for school or employment purposes.

3. Reading/scribing services do not include decision making with respect to the completion of the assignment and should be provided in accordance with the AZRSA-SBVI Best Practice standards.
a. Reading/scribing services are not considered tutoring and should not be utilized as such.

4. Readers/scribers may be selected by the client, or recruited by the school/college/employer to perform a specific reading service or services.

5. In order to be approved as a reader/scriber vendor, the provider must have received, read and submitted an AZRSA reader/scriber competency form which instructs the provider on the standard procedures for service provision.

6. The vendor will be identified through mutual agreement between the client, vendor or counselor or designated Staff member in order to establish reading assignments and fee schedule rates based on AZRSA-SBVI Best Practice standards.

7. The following competency levels must be established to determine the most appropriate level of reading assignment as well as appropriate payment rate.
   a. Basic reader: read aloud in person or on four-track tone-indexing machine. Ability to read fluidly in English. Must provide services within time lines approved by client.
   b. Intermediate reader/scriber: read/scribe printed information in person in English. Ability to spell Basic English with assistance from client. Ability to enlarge the printed page with use of copy machine to the client’s preference if needed. Ability to meet timelines by client.
   c. Advanced reader/scriber: reading/writing in foreign languages. Ability to verbally or tactile depict charges and graphics. Ability to scan and edit text in electronic format including enlargement if needed. Ability to proof read and assist client with formatting. Ability to meet client time lines.

8. Reader/scribers will utilize the reader timesheet provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and submit it to the client each month for payment and service verification purposes.

9. The client is responsible for providing the verified timesheet to the counselor or designated Staff member for payment.
10. The reader/scriber may not provide services past the amount indicated by the authorization letter until an extension agreement has been made between the client and vendor.

C. Note taker

1. A service generally used in a classroom or training setting, that provides an alternate method for a client to take notes.

D. Braille transcription services

1. This service converts text to a system of writing and printing for the blind using varied arrangements of raised dots that represent letters and numbers identifiable by touch; and trains in its use.

2. Services can include:
   b. Hard Braille copy in English or other languages.
   c. Hard-copy Braille in Nemeth Code with or without graphics.
   d. Electronic version of the Braille Transcription Service, including scanning, formatting, Grade I & II Nemeth Code, and Graphics transcription.
   e. Braille hard-copy in English or other languages.
   f. Nemeth Code math Braille hard-copy, with or without graphics.
   g. Binding.

3. In order to be approved as a Braille transcription vendor, the provider must have the Library of Congress Braille Transcription Certification, or possess Braille transcription experience as determined by AZRSA-SBVI competency and Best Practice.

E. Advanced scripting (configuration)

1. This service is writing code to make a specific assistive technology product perform as required, including reading what is not read automatically and identifying and/or eliminating software conflicts.
2. Service providers:
   a. Must have completed advance workshops in advanced software configuration such as the Freedom Scientific Scripting Level I and II workshops, or demonstrate experience in the ability to write logic based code which enables assistive technology products to perform reasonably across multiple environments.
   b. Must have experience with specific assistive technology/software to be considered to be a provider in that assistive technology environment.
   c. Must adhere to the AZRSA-SBVI Competency and Best Practice standards.

F. Document conversion

1. The purpose of this service is to perform the task of creating accessible forms and documents for screen reading software (e.g. JAWS 6, 7, 8), screen magnification (e.g. Zoom Text 8, 9), custom color themes (e.g. High Contrast Black – as listed in Microsoft) and speech input products (e.g. Dragon Naturally Speaking 8, 9) for DES/AZRSA.
Section 8.23 – Interpreting Services for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

A. Interpreting services include sign language and oral interpretation services for applicants or clients who are deaf or hard of hearing; and tactile interpretation services for applicants or clients who are deaf-blind.

1. Video remote interpreting is also available for applicants or clients who utilize sign language.

2. Interpreting services may be provided as a support service, or accommodation, at any time during the VR process.

3. Real-time captioning, or CART, services are also available for applicants or clients who are deaf or hard of hearing who may not know sign language.

B. When purchasing services, counselors must use DES contracted providers (statewide contract for sign language interpreting/CART) who have the skill, expertise and ability to communicate with the deaf and hard of hearing.

1. AZRSA will utilize only those interpreters who have general or legal licensure, unless one is not available and the VR applicant or client specifically requests an interpreter who only has provisional licensure.

2. Reference applicable contracts for details related to contractor requirements and payment.

C. Sign language interpreting for assessments and evaluations (e.g. vocational evaluations, hearing/medical exams, trial work assessments) required for eligibility or IPE planning:

1. If direct communication is not available by the evaluator, and sign language is the client’s primary communication mode, the interpreter must possess both certification and legal or general licensure.

2. Interpreters with provisional licensure are not to be utilized.

3. For applicants or clients who are deaf or hard of hearing, psychological evaluations must be administered by a
practitioner who is knowledgeable about deaf culture, the ramifications of hearing loss and various communication modes.

a. The sign language interpreter needs to possess either NAD Level 4 or 5, NIC (Advanced or Master) or RID (CI and CT) certification and possess (legal or general) licensure issued by the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

b. The psychologist should ask the interpreter for a copy of their certification and license before administering the evaluation and preferably at time of confirming the interpreter for the assignment.

D. Interpreting services are not provided based on an applicant or client's economic need.

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Section 8.24 – Personal Assistance Services

A. Attendant care/personal assistance is a service that provides a qualified individual to supply needed services in order for a client to remain in his/her home and/or participate in work/community activities.

1. Services must be necessary to achieve an employment outcome and may be provided only in conjunction with other Vocational Rehabilitation services.

2. These personal assistant services can only be provided during the time that the client is involved in an IPE.

3. Personal assistant services for separately authorized travel to evaluations and special events may be provided, as necessary.
   a. Counselor may provide for the assistant’s per diem expenses if it is necessary that the assistant accompany the client.

4. The client is expected to manage his/her own personal assistant services.

5. Comparable benefits must be reviewed prior to authorization of this service.
   a. AHCCCS/ALTCS attendant care services should be used first for non-IPE related activities.

6. Economic need is not a pre-condition for receipt of this service.

7. If personal assistant services are required to enable the client to attain the vocational goal, Vocational Rehabilitation may reimburse these services for no more than a total of 54 hours per month.

8. Vocational Rehabilitation cannot support this level of personal assistance if a spouse, family member or friends are available.

B. Sighted guide service.

1. The purpose of this service is to provide one-on-one assistance for clients who are blind and visually impaired in navigating new environments through the use of sighted guide technique.
2. Examples include sighted guide assistance to navigate college or universities, one-stop centers, IPE development assessments, etc.

3. Sighted guide services may be used to assist the client when the environment is new, or when orientation and mobility skills are such that independent travel is limited.

4. Sighted guide services are inappropriate for those clients with sufficient skills to navigate specific environments.

5. Sighted guide services do not include transportation to the specific location.

6. Clients can identify a potential sighted guide.
   a. Recruitment sources can include college/universities, employment settings, or any other source where willing vendors may be found.
   b. In order to be approved as a sighted guide vendor, the provider must have received basic sighted guide competency training by a designated blindness services staff in accordance with the AZRSA-SBVI Best Practice standards.
   c. Sighted guides must be able to provide services according to the client’s scheduling needs.

C. Support service providers for people who are deaf-blind.

1. Support service providers (SSPs) provide visual information to deaf-blind clients to allow them to access their own community and to make their own decisions.

2. Support service providers are not interpreters.

3. By utilizing SSPs, deaf-blind clients are able to participate in vocational-, home-, and community-based activities.

4. Support service providers can be utilized at any time during the client’s Vocational Rehabilitation program to assist with the tasks mentioned above.

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Section 8.25 –Self-Employment Technical Assistance Services

A. Self-Employment consultation

1. This service provides consultation to AZRSA clients in planning for self-employment and developing an approvable Business Plan.

2. Self-Employment consultation (or Phase I of Self-Employment Plan) occurs prior to the client pursuing self-employment and developing a Business Plan.

3. The provider should discuss the client’s proposed self-employment goal and explore the full range of entrepreneurial planning issues, as well as the client’s entrepreneurial strengths and limitations related to the achievement of that goal.

4. A written assessment report should be provided to the referring AZRSA counselor within ten (10) business days after the meeting with the client which includes:
   
a. An assessment of the appropriateness of the client’s self-employment goal in relation to his/her entrepreneurial strengths and limitations.


   c. A summary of recommendations concerning the client’s need for further research, training, self-employment training course(s) and steps necessary for a development of an appropriate business plan.

5. Specific contracts should be consulted for further details related to payment and requirements.

B. Business Plan consultation

1. After the client has completed the recommended and required training (provided by AZRSA) and developed an initial Business Plan, the provider should:

   a. Review the proposed Business Plan;
b. Advise the client of the Business Plan’s strengths and weaknesses; and

c. Make recommendations for the Business Plan’s improvement;

d. Depending on the client’s individual needs and the AZRSA counselor’s request, the provider may assist the client with improving the Business Plan and prepare the client for presenting the Business Plan to the Self-Employment Review Committee (SERC);

e. Communicate the findings and recommendations for improvement of the Business Plan in writing to the client and to the referring AZRSA counselor after the meeting with the client;

f. Provide a written summary to the AZRSA counselor indicating that the client’s Business Plan is complete and ready to be presented to the SERC.

C. Entrepreneurship training

1. A client desiring self-employment who has never successfully operated a business must complete a self-employment training course.

   a. Such courses are available from postsecondary institutions, the SBA, Small Business Development Centers, or micro-lending agencies.

   b. The course must be comprehensive in nature, covering the financial, managerial, marketing, and personal factors involved in owning/operating a business.

   c. If a local course of training is not available, the client may use the audio-visual self-employment training tapes available in each district.

   d. If the material is too complex for a client, the counselor will find other methods of developing the client’s awareness of the essential elements of operating a business and document the methods used in the ECF.
2. If supported self-employment is being developed, other individuals who are integral members of the client’s supported plan and who have never successfully operated a business must complete entrepreneurship training.

D. During Phase 1 of the IPE, Vocational Rehabilitation will not fund goods and services that actually create a business.
Section 8.26 – Information and Referral Services

A. Information and referral services- VR Counselor.

1. Staff provide information about services available from other agencies, assists individuals to contact another agency and does appropriate follow-up.

2. Every individual who has a disability has a right to request and receive information and referral services about the availability of disability services and resources from the Vocational Rehabilitation program regardless of eligibility status.

3. Vocational Rehabilitation local offices must arrange work schedules in order to provide information and referral services to clients and non-clients.

4. Requests for information and referrals should be responded to within 24 hours of receipt of the request.

5. Clients who are required to wait for services due to Order of Selection or lack of long-term employment support services must be provided individualized information and referral services, by the vocational rehabilitation counselor, to help the client to know and access other resources.

B. Information and Referral Services- Benefits Counseling

1. Staff provide information and assistance with benefits counseling through:

   a. Use of the Disability Benefits 101 Calculator; and/or

   b. Referral for consultation services provided through certified work incentive specialists that can assist the client in determining whether they should attempt to work, potential impact of work on benefits, and to assist with financial planning, as appropriate.

2. Every SSI/SSDI recipient who applies for Vocational Rehabilitation services must be informed about available benefits counseling and/or consultation and planning services from certified work incentive specialists and/or Social Security directly.
3. VR Counselors are expected to know basic information about the impact of work on benefits and incorporate that information to help the client decide whether to apply for Vocational Rehabilitation services, plan a program of Vocational Rehabilitation services and decide to close their case as successfully employed.

4. Benefits Counseling/Consultation should include:
   a. Disseminating accurate information on how employment will impact Social Security benefits and medical benefits.
   
   b. Providing information to beneficiaries regarding employment incentives, including Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE), Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and Trial Work Period, if appropriate.
   
   c. Providing information regarding the Ticket to Work Program.
   
   d. Providing information regarding services to assist beneficiaries to obtain or return to economic self-sufficiency.
   
   e. Developing, as necessary and appropriate to the specific beneficiary, a personalized benefit planning and management plan.
   
   f. Providing ongoing assistance to beneficiaries on issues concerning Social Security benefits.
   
   g. Providing the service in a group or beneficiary one-on-one, which may include the AZRSA Counselor and/or the beneficiary’s family/guardians.

5. Economic need is not required in order to receive information and referral services.
Section 8.27 – Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

A. Policy

1. Pre-Employment Transition Services are meant to provide students with disabilities with an early start at job exploration and include one or more of the following services provided in individualized or group settings:

   a. Job exploration counseling;

   b. Work-based learning experiences, including in-school or after school experiences;

   c. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;

   d. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;

   e. Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

2. Pre-Employment Transition Services will be made available Statewide to all students with disabilities in need of such services who are potentially eligible or eligible for VR services unless:

   a. The student completed Pre-Employment Transition Services, chose not to apply for VR and their record of service was closed;

   b. The student applied for VR, was determined eligible and placed on a waitlist prior to the receipt of any Pre-Employment Transition Services (if the student started Pre-Employment Transition Services prior to being placed on a waitlist, they may continue to receive Pre-Employment Transition Services);

   c. The student applied for VR and was determined ineligible; or

   d. The student is no longer in need of Pre-Employment Transition Services in order to access competitive and integrated employment.
3. Pre-Employment Transition Services will:
   a. Begin once a student with a disability requests or is recommended for one or more Pre-Employment Transition Services and documentation of a disability is provided to, and verified by the VR agency;
   b. Assist students with disabilities with identifying career interests, which may be further explored through additional VR services, including transition services; and
   c. Be provided or arranged in collaboration with Public Educational Agencies (PEAs).

4. Documentation to verify that an individual is a student with a disability and potentially eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services must include at least one of the following:
   i. Copy of IEP or documentation or 504 accommodations;
   ii. Proof of receipt of SSI/SSDI based on client’s own disability;
   iii. Medical or psychological documentation with diagnosis signed by a licensed professional verifying the diagnosis;
   iv. Pre-Employment Transition Services Request Form identifying that the individual is a student with a disability.

   1. If the Pre-Employment Transition Services Request Form is the only source of documentation used to verify disability, the form must be signed by school staff and the student or the student’s representative if applicable.

5. If a student with a disability is applying for VR services other than Pre-Employment Transition Services, eligibility will be determined in accordance with eligibility requirements in Section 5.1 of this manual.
6. Auxiliary aids or services to students with disabilities will be provided by VR if the auxiliary aid or service is necessary to enable student to access or participate in Pre-Employment Transition Services and no other public entity is required to provide such aid or service.

B. Procedure

1. Upon receipt of a request for Pre-Employment Transition Services, VR staff will determine if the individual requesting services is:
   
a. A new referral; or
   
b. Has an open VR case and is eligible for VR services (open or closed OOS Priority Category).

2. If the individual requesting Pre-Employment Transition Services is a new referral, VR staff will:
   
a. Enter referral information into the case management system. Information must include (at a minimum):
      
i. Student Name
      
ii. Date of Birth
      
iii. Social Security Number (VR staff will request a pseudo SSN if actual SSN is not available)
      
iv. Race
      
v. Ethnicity
      
vi. Identification of the student's disability or involvement in an IEP or 504 plan.
   
b. Verify the individual is a student with a disability and potentially eligible using documents listed in B(4); and
   
c. Scan all documentation that supports the determination that the individual is a student with a disability and is potentially eligible into the ECF.
3. If the individual requesting Pre-Employment Transition Services has an open VR case and is eligible for VR services, VR staff will verify the individual is:
   
a. A student with a disability; and

b. In an open OOS Priority Category; or

c. In a closed OOS Priority Category but started receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services prior to being placed in a closed OOS Priority Category.

i. The student is not eligible to receive Pre-Employment Transition Services if they were placed in a closed OOS Priority Category prior to starting Pre-Employment Transition Services.

4. VR staff, the eligible or potentially eligible student with a disability, and their representative if applicable, will agree upon the Pre-Employment Transition Services that are appropriate and necessary to meet the student’s needs, based on the student’s unique strengths, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

5. VR staff will provide or arrange for the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services as a pre-planned service or as a planned service in the IPE as appropriate.

   a. Pre-Employment Transition Services provided directly by VR staff will be tracked via individual staff calendars and allocated as Pre-Employment Transition Services staff time on the timecard.

   b. Pre-Employment Transition Services provided by contracted vendors will be tracked through authorizations and payments in the case management system.

6. VR staff will provide recipients of Pre-Employment Transition Services with notification of their appeal rights in the form of a Request for Review of Determination, and CAP brochure at the following times:

   a. When Pre-Employment Transition Services are made available to the eligible or potentially eligible student with a disability;
b. Upon any disagreement during the receipt of Pre-Employment Transition Services;

c. Upon completion of Pre-Employment Transition Services.

7. VR staff will send the Pre-Employment Transition Services Completion letter, Request for Review of Determination, and CAP brochure to a potentially eligible recipient of Pre-Employment Transition Services when any of the following occur:

a. All agreed upon Pre-Employment Transition Services are complete and the student declines to submit an application for further VR services;

b. The student declines to participate in further Pre-Employment Transition Services;

c. The student no longer meets the definition of a student with a disability.
Section 8.28 – Reserved
Section 8.29 – Child Care

A. Policy

1. Child care will only be paid to DES Certified Child Care Providers.
2. Client must meet economic need in order to receive child care.
3. Comparable benefits must be explored and utilized, including benefits through the State of Arizona Child Care Administration or other comparable benefit, prior to VR support.
4. Co-payment from AZRSA for child care services must follow guidelines established by the Child Care Gross Monthly Income Eligibility Chart and Fee Schedule.
5. AZRSA may pay the full DES provider rate based on the DES Maximum Reimbursement Rates for Child Care form in Appendix 6, if the client is not eligible for, or is on a waitlist for DES child care.
6. Policy exception should be pursued if required child care costs exceed the amount detailed on the DES Maximum Reimbursement Rates for Child Care form in Appendix 6 or the Child Care Gross Monthly Income Eligibility Chart and Fee Schedule.
7. DES Certified Child Care Providers should be added as vendors in the case management system whenever possible.
8. If necessary, a Client Purchase Agreement can be utilized to pay child care costs to DES Certified Child Care Providers.
9. The Statement of Services Rendered form must be completed by the child care provider and provided to staff each month to verify purchase of child care services.

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Section 8.30 – Hearing Aids

A. AZRSA’s contribution to the purchase of hearing aids and services focuses on meeting the functional needs of the client to assist them in meeting their vocational goals.

B. It is the vocational rehabilitation counselor’s responsibility to determine the vocational necessity of the hearing aid(s) based upon medical documentation from a licensed audiologist and/or ENT physician, feedback from an AZRSA Audiology Consultant, and information provided by the client.

C. The vocational rehabilitation counselor should clearly understand the client’s vocational and/or educational related communication needs prior to determining if the hearing aid(s) are necessary for a successful employment outcome.

D. Counselors and other professionals will assist clients in determining which hearing aids and audiological services best meet their needs.

E. Purchase of hearing aids can be done:

1. In Status 06 as part of an extended evaluation (Status 06).

2. In Status 10 if the counselor can document the necessity of the hearing aids for activities which lead to determining a feasible vocational goal and/or for psychological and vocational evaluation.

3. In Status 13 as part of the IPE.

4. In Status 32 as part of a post-employment service (see Chapter 11 Post-Employment Services for further details and restrictions).

5. Hearing aids should not be provided in Status 02.

F. For clients who have not yet utilized hearing aids or have a progressive hearing loss, prior to purchasing a hearing aid, a comprehensive audiological evaluation must be completed by a licensed and contracted audiologist.

1. A hearing aid dispenser cannot complete evaluations.
G. Use of an AZRSA Audiology Consultant is required to approve the hearing aids recommended by the licensed audiologist and to review comprehensive audiological evaluations to determine if appropriate or if further evaluation is needed.

1. AZRSA should only supply services in regards to type and quantity of hearing aids that have been recommended by the AZRSA Audiology Consultant.

2. Additional hearing aids not recommended by the AZRSA Audiology Consultant will not be purchased by AZRSA.

H. The client may have the option to select a more costly or cosmetically desirable hearing aid, but it is the client’s responsibility to pay any costs beyond that approved by AZRSA.

I. AZRSA will support the client with one initial purchase of hearing aids for the duration of the VR case which includes post-employment services.

J. AZRSA will include the manufacturer’s warranty at the time of initial purchase of hearing aids.

1. An initial manufacturer’s warranty must guarantee repair and/or replacement of parts or the entire device, equipment, or product when the parts and/or workmanship are faulty.

K. Extended warranties are the responsibility of the client.

L. Clients may elect to use only one hearing aid for environmental sound awareness if such is their preference despite a recommendation from a licensed audiologist for two (2) aids.

M. Trial periods of hearing aid use are appropriate to help clients determine if they can benefit from hearing aids.

N. Refer to applicable contracts, PPT manual, and Appendix 8 of this manual for specifics regarding process and procedure for purchasing a hearing aid or any components of a hearing aid.

O. Hearing Aid Repairs and Replacements

1. AZRSA can pay for repairs for hearing aids if necessary for the successful completion of an IPE goal.
a. Before purchasing a hearing aid repair the client must be referred to a contracted audiologist for hearing aid examination and evaluation (hearing aid testing).

b. Any warranties already in existence for the hearing aids should be used before AZRSA pays for repairs.

c. If the existent hearing aid cannot be repaired and a recommendation is made for the purchase of a new hearing aid:

   i. If AZRSA purchased the broken hearing aid during the curation of the current VR case and/or during PES services an exception to policy as detailed in Section 8.3 must be pursued prior to the new hearing aid purchase.

   ii. If AZRSA has not purchased an initial hearing aid during the duration of the current VR case and/or during PES services procedures as detailed in this section, the policy for the purchase of an initial hearing aid should be followed.

2. See Appendix 8 for details related to appropriate procedure for providing hearing aid repairs.

3. Policy for providing repairs/replacement for hearing aids must comply with overall AZRSA Equipment Policy which can be found in Section 8.27 I.

P. Hearing aids and related services are not subject to economic need.

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Section 8.31 – Other Services

A. Services which have not been described elsewhere in this manual, which are not explicitly or implicitly prohibited, and which are necessary for a client’s rehabilitation may be made available but must have prior review and approval by the supervisor.

1. Consultation with Central Office Policy Unit and/or Contract Unit should be considered in situations where the services being considered is unfamiliar or out of the ordinary.

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Section 8.32 – Reserved
Section 8.33 – Bioptic Telescope Lens System

A. Policy

1. A bioptic telescope system for driving purposes will only be provided to address impediments to employment resulting from the client’s impairments and promotes the achievement of intermediate objectives for an employment outcome.

2. The following criteria are required by Arizona Department of Transportation and will be verified prior to the provision of bioptic telescope system for driving purposes:
   
a. The driver will be able to meet the current Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) visual acuity standards using no more than a 4X bioptic telescope. The current visual acuity standards state that a person will be granted a regular driver’s license with best corrected visual acuity of 20/40 or better in one eye corrected.

b. The driver with binocular vision and visual acuity of 20/60 will be restricted to daytime driving only.

c. An eye doctor must determine the visual acuity of the driver and complete the ADOT Driver’s Vision form. The driver will have a visual field of at least 60 degrees, plus 35 degrees on the opposite side of the nose in at least one eye.

d. The driver will pass the standard driving test with an Arizona Department of Transportation driving instructor. The driver will demonstrate that they can perform all regular driving tasks such as speed control, merging, driving in traffic and effective use of mirrors.

e. The driver will have an ADOT Driver’s Vision form completed by their eye doctor on an annual basis.

3. The VRC will authorize the following assessments to be conducted by an Optometrist (OD) to determine if the client is a candidate for bioptic driving:
   
a. Visual Acuity test;

b. Visual Field test;
c. Dilated Eye Examination;
d. Contrast Sensitivity test; and
e. Useful Field of View test.

4. The VRC will conduct a staffing with the client to review the recommendations of the assessments and determine if a bioptic telescope system is appropriate.

5. If a bioptic telescope system is appropriate, the VRC will inform the client that training to use the bioptic telescope system is required.

6. The VRC will write a comprehensive case note which describes the results of the client’s vision assessments, the results of staffing, and justification for the need of a bioptic telescope system if appropriate.

7. The VRC will authorize the bioptic telescope system for the client.

8. The VRC send a referral and will authorize driver’s evaluation and training once the bioptic telescope system is available.

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CHAPTER 9 – Reserved

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CHAPTER 10 – Closures

Section 10.1 – Closure Criteria

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Section 10.1 – Closure Criteria

A. Policy

1. Qualified staff will close a client prior to determining eligibility only when the following criteria are met:
   a. The client fails to complete an assessment which is necessary for eligibility purposes;
   b. The client is not available to participate in an assessment; or
   c. The client requests that their VR case be closed.

2. Qualified staff will close a client as ineligible only when the following criteria are met:
   a. The client does not have a documented physical or mental impairment, and/or the impairment does not result in a substantial impediment to employment, and/or the client does not need VR services in order to achieve an employment outcome; or
   b. The client is determined to be unable to benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome based on the results of a trial work experience.
      i. Staff must offer the client, and their representative if applicable, the opportunity to participate in a consultation to review the results of the trial work experience; and
      ii. Staff must provide the client, and their representative if applicable, with referral information to other programs which may be available to address the client’s training or employment-related needs.

3. Qualified staff will close a client as not meeting an employment outcome only when the following criteria are met:
   a. Multiple attempts to contact the client and encourage participation made over a reasonable period of time have been unsuccessful;
i. A single attempt to contact is sufficient for closure from referral status.

b. The client fails to actively participate in VR services on a consistent basis;

c. The client fails to make consistent progress toward their employment goal;

d. The client’s employment history cannot be verified through the Wages PDQ or Work Number systems and utilized to close the case as meeting an employment outcome.

e. The client requests closure prior to meeting an employment outcome.

4. Qualified staff will close a case as meeting an employment outcome for a Vocational Rehabilitation or Job Retention IPE plan type, only when the following criteria are met:

a. Employment is consistent with the IPE goal;

b. Employment is in a competitive and integrated setting;

c. The client has maintained employment for an appropriate period of time to demonstrate stability in a single position for a period of not less than 90 consecutive calendar days;

d. IPE services are complete and the client no longer requires VR services to maintain employment;

e. The counselor, client, and authorized representative if applicable, are satisfied with the employment outcome and benefits counseling has been provided if applicable; and

f. The client has been informed of the availability of Post-Employment Services (PES).

5. Qualified staff will close a case as meeting an employment outcome for a Supported Employment IPE plan type only when the following criteria are met:

a. For clients receiving ESE from a source other than VR:

i. Employment is consistent with the IPE goal;
ii. Employment is in a competitive and integrated setting;

iii. IPE services are complete and the client no longer requires VR services to maintain employment;

iv. The client has maintained employment for an appropriate period of time to demonstrate stability in a single position for a period of not less than 90 consecutive calendar days after transitioning to the ESE source;

v. The counselor, client, and authorized representative if applicable, are satisfied with the employment outcome and benefits counseling has been provided if applicable; and

vi. The client has been informed of the availability of Post-Employment Services (PES).

b. For youth receiving ESE from VR:

i. Employment is consistent with the IPE goal;

ii. Employment is in a competitive and integrated setting;

iii. IPE services are complete and the client no longer requires VR services to maintain employment;

iv. Employment has been maintained for a period of not less than 90 days after transitioning to ESE;

v. The client no longer needs ESE, or the client is no longer eligible to receive ESE provided by VR because they have turned 25 years old, they have received ESE for a period of four years, or they have transitioned to another source of ESE;

vi. The counselor, client, and authorized representative if applicable, are satisfied with the employment outcome and benefits counseling has been provided if applicable; and

vii. The client has been informed of the availability of Post-Employment Services (PES).
6. Qualified staff will close a case as meeting an employment outcome for a self-employment IPE plan type only when the following criteria are met:
   a. Employment is consistent with the IPE goal;
   b. IPE services are complete and the client no longer requires VR services to maintain employment;
   c. The client appears to be managing the business appropriately (with or without supports);
   d. The goals regarding profit levels have been reached or profit levels are determined to be satisfactory to the counselor, client, and authorized representative if applicable;
   e. The counselor, client, and authorized representative if applicable, are satisfied with the employment outcome and benefits counseling has been provided, if applicable; and
   f. The client has been informed of the availability of Post-Employment Services (PES).

7. Qualified staff will close a client from Post-Employment Services (PES) when any of the following criteria are met:
   a. The client has achieved the rehabilitation objectives established during PES and has maintained, regained, or advanced in employment;
   b. The scope and duration of services to address the client’s rehabilitation needs are such that a new rehabilitation effort should be considered and a new determination of eligibility and OOS should take place; or
   c. The condition or situation becomes such that PES cannot enable the client to maintain, regain, or advance in employment.

B. Procedure

1. Staff will document all closure in the ECF and include a description of how all criteria required for closure have been met.
2. Supervisor will review and approve all closure decisions of counselors who are not qualified staff.

3. Staff will send the following information to the client prior to closing a case:
   a. VR Planned Closure (15 day) letter or VR Planned Closure (from 00) if closing from referral status;
   b. Request for Review of Determination; and
   c. CAP brochure.

4. Staff will close a case no sooner than 15 calendar days and no later than 20 calendar days after the date of the VR Planned Closure letter if the client does not request a review of the closure determination.
   a. Refer to Chapter 3 of this manual if a client requests a review of the closure determination.

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Section 11.1 – Post-Employment Services (PES)

A. Policy

1. PES may only be provided to a client whose case has been closed successfully in status 26 within the last 12 months and all of the following criteria are met:
   a. The service is needed to address a disability-related need that was documented in the original case.
   b. The service(s) is limited in scope and duration.
   c. The service(s) is needed to support the employment outcome that was in the IPE at the time of closure.
   d. The service(s) is required to help the client avoid losing the job; regain employment that was lost for disability-related reasons; or advance in current employment.

2. The economic need of the client must be re-determined and comparable benefits explored prior to the provision of PES.
   a. Employer training programs and employer financial assistance for career advancement must be explored and utilized prior to providing PES;
   b. The employer should be considered as a potential source of services if the needed service can be considered an ADA accommodation; and
   c. The Extended Supported Employment provider, if applicable, should be explored as a comparable benefit.

3. PES for self-employment will only be provided for a viable self-employment business and will not exceed the 10% overspend of the original plan without re-submittal of the business plan to the supervisor or Self-Employment Review Committee.
   a. A professional business consultant should be utilized to help determine the viability of continuing the business.

4. PES is considered an amendment to the last existing IPE and subject to IPE policies.
5. PES is not to be utilized to:
   a. Repair equipment;
   b. Upgrade existing AT equipment that is not required to meet impairment-related needs or not supported based on feature match analysis;
   c. Pay maintenance costs of current equipment;
   d. Replace equipment for reasons other those stated in B 5(b);
   e. Pay for warranty renewals.

6. PES may be utilized to:
   a. Provide initial upgrade and/or follow up after the client is working successfully to make adjustments for minor changes in job duties or changes in the work environment that impacts AT.
   b. Provide additional AT to the employer;
   c. Provide re-training on a specific aspect of the client’s AT equipment.

7. A new case should be opened and an eligibility determination made in the following situations:
   a. A different disability than was originally present in the original IPE or major exacerbation of the original disability is suspected as the reason for seeking Vocational Rehabilitation services;
   b. A new employment goal is being considered;
   c. The client’s needs are complex or there is a need for comprehensive services.

[Return to Chapter Start]
CHAPTER 12 - Special Populations

Section 12.1 - Youth Seeking Subminimum Wage Employment

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Section 12.1 Youth Seeking Subminimum Wage Employment

A. Policy

1. Any youth with a disability who wishes to enter subminimum wage employment and the youth’s representative will be informed that the following services must be completed and documented before the youth will be eligible to enter subminimum wage employment:

   a. Pre-Employment Transition Services provided by VR to a potentially eligible or eligible student with a disability, or Transition Services provided by a school (transition services are considered complete if the youth’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) contains transition services and the youth has exited the school system);

   b. Receipt of career counseling and information and referral to federal/state employment programs and local resources (for competitive and integrated employment);

   c. Application for VR services and eligibility or ineligibility determination;

      i. If the youth is eligible for services and in an open Priority Category, the following additional services must be completed and documented:

         1. Development and implementation of Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with a specific employment goal consistent with competitive and integrated employment; Receipt of IPE services, including reasonable accommodations and supports, for a reasonable period of time (up to 24 months for individuals in Supported Employment unless an extension of time is agreed upon by client and VRC) leading to a determination that the youth is unable to reach their employment goal; and Case closure based on the determination that the youth is unable to reach their employment goal.

2. The youth/youth representative will be informed that refusal to participate in services required to engage subminimum wage employment will result in the youth’s inability to engage in subminimum wage employment.
3. Pre-Employment Transition Services, if needed, are only available to a student with a disability who is eligible or potentially eligible for VR services and include one or more of the following services provided in individualized or group settings:

   a. Job exploration counseling;

   b. Work-based learning experiences, including in-school or after school experiences;

   c. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition on postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;

   d. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;

   e. Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

4. Documentation to verify that a student with a disability is potentially eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services must include at least one of the following:

   i. Copy of IEP or documentation or 504 accommodations;

   ii. Proof of receipt of SSI/SSDI based on client’s own disability;

   iii. Medical or psychological documentation with diagnosis signed by a licensed professional verifying the diagnosis;

   iv. Pre-Employment Transition Services Service Request Form identifying that the individual is a student with a disability.

      1. If the Pre-Employment Transition Services Request Form is the only source of documentation used to verify disability, the form must be signed by school staff and the student or the student’s representative if applicable.

5. Documentation of services in B(1) of this section will be provided by VR staff to the youth/youth representative as soon as possible but no later than:
a. 45 days of the youth’s completion of the service; or

b. 10 days of the youth’s refusal to participate in the service.

6. Upon providing the last documentation regarding the completion or refusal of services to the youth/youth representative, VR staff will provide the youth/youth representative with a cover sheet that itemizes all documentation that has been provided to the youth/youth representative regarding the completion or refusal of services in B(1).

**B. Procedure**

1. Upon receipt of a referral for a youth seeking subminimum wage employment, VR staff will:

   a. Enter referral information into the ECF;

   b. Provide the youth/youth representative with information on the services in B(1) that must be completed and documented in order to engage in subminimum wage employment; and that refusal to participate in any of the services in B(1) will result in the youth’s inability to engage in subminimum wage employment.

2. VR staff will coordinate the planning and provision of services with other provider agencies such as Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), behavioral health, etc. as needed.

   a. VR staff will obtain a Release of Information, if needed, to communicate and coordinate services with other providers.

3. Prior to accepting an application for VR services, VR staff will inquire whether the youth completed Transition services (offered through a Public Education Agency (PEA) and considered complete when the youth has exited the PEA and had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that included transition services) or Pre-Employment Transition Services (offered through the VR program).

   a. If the youth completed both Transition services and Pre-Employment Transition Services, VR staff may determine which service to document.

   b. If the youth completed transition services, VR staff will:
i. Obtain the youth’s PEA contact information and send the ‘Verification of Transition Services (RSA-511A)’ form to the associated District Office for completion (District Offices may be located using http://www.ade.az.gov/edd/).

   1. The youth/youth representative may choose to take the form to the PEA for completion instead of VR sending the form.

ii. Once the ‘Verification of Transition Services (RSA-511A)’ form is completed by the PEA and received by VR staff, VR staff will:

   1. Scan the completed form into the ECF; and

   2. Provide a copy of the completed form to the youth/youth representative within 45 days of completion.

   iii. The youth/youth representative may choose to take the form to the PEA for completion instead of VR sending the form.

   iv. If the youth represented by the youth/youth representative is a student with a disability and is potentially eligible using documents listed in B(4) prior to providing Pre-Employment Transition Services.

   1. VR staff will scan all documentation that supports the determination that the youth is a student with a disability and is potentially eligible into the ECF.

     a. If the youth is not eligible to receive Pre-Employment Transition Services, proceed to D(3)(d).

   v. Discuss, with the youth/youth representative, the Pre-Employment Transition Services that are appropriate and necessary to meet the youth’s needs, based on their unique strengths, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

   vi. Provide or arrange for the provision of the agreed upon Pre-Employment Transition services which may include:

     1. Job exploration counseling;
2. Work-based learning experiences, including in-school or after school experiences;

3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;

4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;

5. Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

iv. Complete the 'Verification of Pre-Employment Transition Service (RSA-511 B)' form;

v. Scan the completed form into the ECF; and

vi. Provide a copy of the completed form to the youth/youth representative within 45 days of completion.

d. If documentation of Transition Services cannot be obtained and the youth is not eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services, VR staff will:

i. Document the attempts to collect documentation of Transition Services and the youth’s ineligibility for Pre-Employment Transition Services in the ECF;

ii. Complete the 'Incomplete- Transition and Pre-ETS (RSA-511G) form;

iii. Scan the form into the ECF;

iv. Provide a copy to the youth/youth representative within 45 days of completion; and

v. Inform the youth/youth representative that in order to be eligible for subminimum wage employment, the youth must complete Career Counseling, apply for VR services and be determined eligible, develop an IPE, receive IPE services for a reasonable period of time, and
have their case closed as unable to achieve their employment goal.

4. During or upon completion of Transition Services or Pre-Employment Transition Services, VR staff will provide Career Counseling and Information/Referral services to the youth/youth representative.

   a. Career Counseling and Information/Referral services must be completed within 30 days of an ineligibility determination or closure due to the youth not meeting an employment outcome.

   b. Career Counseling and Information/Referral services may include:

      i. Providing information on the VR program and potential services and supports that may be available to assist the youth in obtaining competitive and integrated employment;

      ii. Exploring the youth’s interests, skills, abilities, capabilities, resources, priorities, concerns, and employment goals (type, pay, hours, benefits, etc.);

      iii. Exploring labor market information (job exploration, in-demand occupations, career pathways, etc.);

      iv. Introducing DB 101 or Social Security Benefits Planning resources if applicable;

      v. Providing information and referrals to community resources such as ARIZONA@WORK Job Centers, Adult Education programs, community rehabilitation programs, Ticket to Work Employment Networks, Veteran’s Administration, Centers for Independent Living, etc.).

   c. Upon completion of Career Counseling and Information/Referral services, VR staff will:

      i. Complete the ‘Verification of Career Counseling Information and Referral (RSA-511C)’ form;

      ii. Scan the form into the ECF;
iii. Provide a copy to the youth/youth representative within 45 days of completion; and

iv. Offer the youth/youth representative an application for VR services.

5. If, after receiving Career Counseling and Information/Referral services and submitting an application for VR services, the youth/youth representative choose:

a. To pursue subminimum wage employment instead of competitive and integrated employment, VR staff will:
   
i. Determine the youth ineligible for VR as the youth does not need VR services in order to obtain their employment goal of subminimum wage employment (Trial Work Plan/Experience is not necessary).
   
   1. Upon the ineligibility determination, VR staff will:
      
a. Complete the ‘Verification of Application and Eligibility (RSA-511D)’ form;
      
b. Complete the ‘Verification of Services Cover Sheet (RSA-511F)’ form;
      
c. Scan the completed forms into the ECF;
      
d. Provide copies of the completed forms to the youth/youth representative within 45 days of completion; and
      
e. Close the VR case in accordance with VR Policy Manual Chapter 10 Closures. Youth is eligible to seek subminimum wage employment.

b. To pursue competitive integrated employment, VR staff will:
   
i. Determine whether a Trial Work Experience (TWE) is necessary to determine eligibility.
   
   1. If the TWE is not necessary to determine eligibility or the TWE is necessary and upon completion of the TWE, the youth is determined to have the
potential to achieve competitive and integrated employment, proceed to D(6).

2. If the TWE is necessary and upon completion of the TWE, the youth is determined to be unable to benefit from VR services in terms of achieving competitive and integrated employment due to the significance of their disability, the youth is determined ineligible.

   a. Upon the ineligibility determination, VR staff will:
      
      i. Complete the ‘Verification of Application and Eligibility (RSA-511D)’ form;
      
      ii. Complete the ‘Verification of Services Cover Sheet (RSA-511F)’ form;
      
      iii. Scan the completed forms into the ECF;
      
      iv. Provide copies of the completed forms to the youth/youth representative within 45 days of completion; and
      
      v. Close the VR case in accordance with VR Policy Manual Chapter 10 Closures.

6. If the youth is determined eligible and in Priority 1 (not on the waitlist), VR staff will:

   a. Develop the IPE with a specific employment goal consistent with competitive and integrated employment;

   b. Arrange for and provide IPE services including reasonable accommodations and supports, for a reasonable period of time (up to 24 months for individuals in Supported Employment unless an extension of time is agreed upon by client and VRC) to assist the youth in obtaining competitive and integrated employment.
i. If, after receiving IPE services for a reasonable period of time, the youth is able to achieve an employment outcome, VR staff will:

   1. Close the VR case in accordance with the VR Policy Manual Chapter 10 Closures. No further documentation is provided to the youth/youth representative as the youth will not be entering subminimum wage employment.

ii. If, after receiving IPE services for a reasonable period of time, the youth is unsuccessful in achieving an employment outcome, VR staff will:

   1. Complete the ‘Verification of IPE Development, Receipt of IPE Services, and Case Closure (RSA-511E)’ form;

   2. Complete the ‘Verification of Services Cover Sheet (RSA-511F)’ form;

   3. Scan the completed forms into the ECF;

   4. Provide copies of the completed forms to the youth/youth representative within 45 days of completion; and

   5. Close the VR case in accordance with VR Policy Manual Chapter 10 Closures. Youth is eligible to seek subminimum wage employment.

7. If, at any time, the youth/youth representative refuse to participate in any of the services in B(1), VR staff will:

   a. Document the refusal on the corresponding verification form;

   b. Scan the completed form into the ECF;

   c. Provide a copy of the completed form to the youth/youth/representative within 10 days of refusal;

   d. Complete the ‘Verification of Services Cover Sheet (RSA-511F)’ form when the last documentation of refusal is provided to the youth/youth representative; and
e. Close the VR case in accordance with VR Policy Manual Chapter 10 Closures. Youth is not eligible to seek subminimum wage employment.
VR POLICY MANUAL APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – ECONOMIC NEED CHART
APPENDIX 2- YOUTH SEEKING SUBMINIMUM WAGE EMPLOYMENT
APPENDIX 3- INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES ON THE IPE
APPENDIX 4 – SCHEDULE A DOCUMENTATION
APPENDIX 5 – CLIENT STATUS
APPENDIX 6 – AUDIOLOGY SERVICES FLOW CHART
APPENDIX 7 – SELF-EMPLOYMENT BUSINESS PLAN

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# APPENDIX 1 – ECONOMIC NEED CHART

## Economic Need Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Size</th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$3,085.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$4,034.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$4,984.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$5,933.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$6,882.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$7,831.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$8,009.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$8,187.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$8,365.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>$8,543.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>$8,721.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>$8,899.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Services Conditioned on Economic Need

- All purchased counseling services
- All treatment services
- All books/tools/computers/software/tape recorders and other training materials purchased for basic education, skill training/education, and business/vocational/technical education
- All occupational licenses, tools/computers, work equipment purchased for work
- Vehicle modifications
- All transportation costs, except transportation in support of an evaluation or adjustment to disability service
- All food/clothing, living away from home, and relocation maintenance
- Child care services

Economic Need must also be determined if any of these services are to be provided to a family member.
**Youth Requests SMW**

- Did youth complete transition services?
  - No
  - Yes

**Is youth a 'student w/a disability' and 'potentially eligible' for Pre-ETS?**

- Yes
  - Send ROI & RSA-511A form to PEA for completion
  - Provide copy of completed RSA-511A to youth

- No
  - Provide CC I&R and application for VR services
  - Begin Eligibility Determination: After receipt of CC I&R, does youth want CIE?

**Ineligible for VR (does not need VR services)**

- Complete RSA-511D and RSA-511F. Provide copies to youth.

**Youth achieves CIE, closed from VR**

- No TWE
  - Proceed w/ determining eligibility using existing docs, additional assessments
    - Ineligible for VR (does not need VR services)
      - Complete RSA-511D and RSA-511F. Provide copies to youth.
    - Eligible
      - Develop IPE and begin IPE services
        - Youth achieves CIE, closed from VR
          - No SMW docs needed
        - Youth does not achieve CIE
          - Complete RSA-511E and RSA-511F. Provide copies to youth.

**TWE**

- Yes
  - Begin Eligibility Determination: After receipt of CC I&R, does youth want CIE?
    - Ineligible
      - Complete RSA-511D and RSA-511F. Provide copies to youth.
    - Eligible
      - Develop IPE and begin IPE services
        - Youth achieves CIE, closed from VR
          - No SMW docs needed
        - Youth does not achieve CIE
          - Complete RSA-511E and RSA-511F. Provide copies to youth.

**Youth is eligible for SMW. Close VR case.**

*If documentation of transition services cannot be obtained and youth is not eligible for Pre-ETS, the youth must complete all required activities, including development of an IPE, receipt of IPE services, and case closure in order to be eligible for SMW.

**Definitions**

- SMW: Subminimum Wage Employment
- CIE: Competitive and Integrated Employment
- CC I&R: Career Counseling, Information/Referral
- Pre-ETS: Pre-Employment Transition Services
- IPE: Individualized Plan for Employment
- TWE: Trial Work Experience
- PEA: Public Education Agency

**Document eligibility for Pre-ETS and provide service**

- Complete RSA-511B and provide copy to youth
- Provide CC I&R and application for VR services

**Provide copy of completed RSA-511A to youth**

*Complete RSA-511G and provide copy to youth*
APPENDIX 3- INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES ON THE IPE

Intermediate Objectives are the steps the client will take to reach their employment goal.

These steps are added to the IPE as statements that describe specific, measurable, and realistic skills or levels of knowledge which will be attained within a specified time frame.

Multiple objectives may be identified during IPE development.

Why are intermediate objectives important?

1. Objectives help the client and VR staff understand how the employment goal will be achieved and in what order the tasks will be accomplished.

2. The client must be consistently participating in VR services and making continued progress towards their employment goal for VR services to continue. Participation and progress is measured by the client’s ability to meet their intermediate objectives.

3. Achieving an employment goal is a huge accomplishment! Intermediate objectives provide the client with small, achievable goals that build skills and confidence while working towards their larger goal of competitive employment.

Objectives should be SMART.

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time Oriented

Objectives should tell a complete story.

- Who
- What
- When
- Why
Objectives should have an order.

1. The client should understand what they need to do first, second, etc.
2. Completion of each objective should bring the client one step closer to achieving their employment goal.

Examples of Intermediate Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obj.</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Measurement of success</th>
<th>Client Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>will identify 3 public schools that offer a certificate program in graphic design</td>
<td>by June 1, 2017</td>
<td>in order for Jane and VRC to discuss and identify the school that best meets her disability-related needs and employment goal.</td>
<td>Jane and Supported Education vendor will provide VRC with information (location, cost, program details) on 3 public schools by June 1, 2017.</td>
<td>Jane will attend all appointments with the vendor and provide monthly progress reports to VRC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>will learn to ride the bus to and from the agreed-upon school</td>
<td>by Aug. 1, 2017</td>
<td>in order to attend school independently when the fall semester starts.</td>
<td>RIS provider will report that Jane can ride the bus to and from the identified school by herself by August 1, 2017.</td>
<td>Jane will maintain a monthly bus pass. Jane will attend all appointments with vendor and provide a monthly progress report to VRC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>will complete a certificate program in graphic design</td>
<td>by June 30, 2019</td>
<td>to prepare for employment in the field of graphic design.</td>
<td>Jane will provide VRC with documentation from the school that shows the completion of the certificate program by June 30, 2019.</td>
<td>Jane will provide VRC with a tuition statement, book list, plan of study, grades, and PELL award letter prior to the beginning of every semester. Jane will attend school full time and maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>will visit an Arizona@Work job center and apply for employment with the assistance of a job developer</td>
<td>by Aug. 31, 2019</td>
<td>to learn how to apply for employment, increase knowledge of available employment resources, and obtain a job in</td>
<td>Jane and job developer will provide progress reports regarding the job search.</td>
<td>Jane will attend all appointments with vendor and provide VRC with monthly progress reports. Jane will notify VRC of any interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obj.</td>
<td>Who</td>
<td>What</td>
<td>When</td>
<td>Why</td>
<td>Measurement of success</td>
<td>Client Responsibilities</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>will obtain entry-level employment in the field of graphic design</td>
<td>by Dec. 31, 2019</td>
<td>to increase her experience and skills in her field of training.</td>
<td>Jane will obtain and maintain her employment for at least 91 days. Her case will be closed as meeting an employment outcome at that time.</td>
<td>Jane will provide VRC with monthly progress reports and information on her employment (wages, hours, etc.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 4 – SCHEDULE A DOCUMENTATION

Schedule A is a hiring practice that federal agencies may use to hire qualified individuals with disabilities into positions non-competitively without going through the traditional hiring process.

- To be eligible for appointment via Schedule A, an individual must be able to provide supporting documentation upon request by the federal agency with the employment opportunity.
  - The documentation must indicate that an individual has an intellectual, physical, or psychiatric disability.

- The following individuals can provide Schedule A documentation:
  - A licensed medical professional
  - A licensed rehabilitation professional
  - A certified rehabilitation counselor
  - Any federal or state level agency or entity that issues or provides disability benefits.

- The individual must provide documentation from a qualified professional that documents the stated disability.

- Schedule A documentation must be on official letterhead.
  - A standard template named Schedule A documentation letter is in the Libera letters form drawer and is available on the intranet.

- Additional information can be found at
  
APPENDIX 5 – CLIENT STATUS

A. The case management system utilizes codes to delineate stages throughout the Vocational Rehabilitation program. These codes are referred to as “status” and are used to facilitate internal case management and record keeping. Applicable areas of policy should be reviewed for the proper application of these status’ and the activities which are allowed within each status.

B. The statuses are as follows:

00 **Referral**
A referral to the VR program has been received. All referrals will be entered into the case management system.

02 **Application**
The client has submitted an application that has been signed by all necessary parties.

04 **Order of Selection**
The client has been determined eligible but is placed in an Order of Selection category which is not open.

06 **Trial Work during Eligibility**
A trial work plan may only be implemented if the counselor determines that the client will not be able to obtain employment after the benefit of having participated in VR services. Supervisory approval is required.

8 **Case Closed Prior to Eligibility or Not Eligible**
The case has been closed prior to eligibility determination or the client has been found not eligible.

9 **Case Closed, Not Eligible**
The case has been closed after a trial work experience has been completed and it has been determined that the client cannot benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome.

10 **Eligible for Services**
The client has been determined eligible for services and is placed in an open Order of Selection priority category.
12 **IPE Completed and Signed**  
The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) has been developed and signed but services have not been implemented. Case should be immediately moved to status 13.

13 **IPE Implemented**  
An IPE has been implemented.

20 **Ready for Employment**  
All substantial services have been completed and the client is ready to actively seek employment.

22 **Employed**  
The client is employed in an integrated setting, earning competitive wages in a job that closely matches the IPE employment goal.

24 **Service Interruption**  
Services are interrupted due to a disability-related reason for a period of time not to exceed three to six months. This status can only be used if the client has an implemented IPE.

26 **Closure Due to Meeting an Employment Outcome**  
The client has maintained stable employment for a period of no less than 90 days.

28 **Closure Due to Not Meeting an Employment Outcome**  
The client has not achieved an employment outcome.

30 **Closed After Eligibility Determination but Before IPE Implementation**  
The client was determined eligible but the case was closed prior to implementing an IPE.

32 **Post-Employment Services (PES)**  
The client is eligible to receive discrete services necessary to maintain, regain, or advance in the same job goal within twelve (12) months of closure after meeting an employment outcome.
36  **Successfully Closed from Post-Employment Services**  
The client has received and successfully completed Post-Employment Services.

38  **Closure from OOS**  
The client has been closed from Order of Selection and has not received any planned services.

40  **Unsuccessfully Closed from Post-Employment Services**  
The client has been unsuccessfully closed from Post-Employment Services.
APPENDIX 6 – AUDIOLOGY SERVICES FLOW CHART

AZRSA will only use contracted audiologists for audiology services. For a complete list of contractors, please see the AZRSA Intranet under Contracts, “RSA Fee Schedule Contracts”. For ENT examinations, Staff will use any ENT physician, and the service code for medical evaluation (001A).

Step 1

VR office send the client to a contracted audiologist for testing.

   Service – Comprehensive Audiological Evaluation
   Service Code C01D for $280.00 (maximum amount)
   Include Exhibit 1 – Audiology Evaluation Report
   Include Exhibit 2 – Hearing Aid Order Form

Step 2

Audiologist performs the Comprehensive Audiological Evaluation, and completes both Exhibit 1 – Audiology Evaluation Report, and Exhibit 2 – Hearing Aid Order Form. These two (2) completed forms, along with audiologist’s billing invoice, are to be sent back to the VR office by the audiologist.

Step 3

VR receives the above completed forms from the audiologist. Both the Hearing Aid Order Form, and the Audiology Evaluation Report, must be reviewed to make sure they have been completed correctly. Please contact the audiologist if Staff suspect any errors. Purchasing Technician does not pay the bill unless both forms are completed.

If the audiologist has checked the box titled “Is ENT Exam Recommended?”, then Staff will need to utilize CPT codes from AHCCCS, and plan and authorize the exam before proceeding. Otherwise, these documents, along with any other relevant information (e.g. hearing test, medical information, case notes), are then sent to the AZRSA Audiology Consultant. The form titled RSA Counselor/Consultant Worksheet is to be used for this purpose.

Please Note: If the AZRSA Audiology Consultant disagrees with the audiologist’s recommendation, then he/she and the audiologist must discuss and agree on a final recommendation.
At this point, the audiologist’s invoice for the Comprehensive Audiological Evaluation, (which should be a maximum of $280.00), may be submitted for processing.

**Step 4**

VR Counselor receives the consultation comments from the AZRSA Audiology Consultant, with the approved hearing aid recommendation. The VR counselor then signs PART II of the Hearing Aid Order Form, approving the purchase. (*if the VRC sends a task for an auth – that serves as a signature)

The PPT then inputs the VR office address for the “bill-to” address and the contracted audiologist’s office address for the “ship-to” address on the bottom of the Hearing Aid Order Form. The PPT also includes the hearing aid manufacturer contact information at the bottom of this form. The form is returned to the audiologist via fax.

Please Note: The total amount of the hearing aids (per manufacturer contracted pricing) does not need to be included on this form at this time. The audiologist only needs to obtain VR signature approval so he/she knows they can proceed with ordering.

**Step 5**

The PT locates the hearing aid contracted price for the recommended and approved hearing aid(s).

An authorization is created for the total price of the hearing aid(s), using service code C16H, and PPT sends/faxes the authorization directly to the hearing aid manufacturer contact person. Be sure to include the account number if designated. See the manufacturer contact list for account numbers.

The authorization letter created in Step 6 below is sent to the audiologist at this time. The PPT writes the authorization number for the hearing aid manufacturer on the Exhibit 2 – Hearing Aid Order Form, or sends a copy of Exhibit 2 with the AZRSA authorization letter for the hearing aids to the manufacturer.

**Step 6**

The PPT creates an authorization for the audiologist:

Service – Hearing Aid Fitting and Follow Up
Service Code – C02F for either $890.00 for a single hearing aid, or $1335.00 for a pair of hearing aids.

When the audiologist receives the hearing aid(s) from the manufacturer, they are to contact the VR office to inform them the hearing aids have arrived. The audiologist will schedule the client’s fitting appointment.

**Step 7**

The audiologist sends PART I of the completed *Hearing Aid Fitting and Follow Up Report* with both the client and audiologist’s signatures, and the billing invoice for the Hearing Aid Fitting and Follow Up services to the VR office.

**Step 8**

PPT will pay audiologist’s invoice only if both signatures are on the form and the two (2) follow-up appointment dates are listed. In addition, the amounts must match with the contract amounts listed in Step 7.

This completes the process.

**Special Circumstances**

**Hearing Aid Testing** (hearing aid examination)

1. When to use this test: When client has hearing aids but reports to the VRC that their hearing aid(s) don’t seem to be working right.

2. Use RSA Service Code 001F.

3. A Client Purchase Agreement is issued equivalent to the cost of the CPT code 92591, per current AHCCCS Fee Schedule pricing, to pay for this testing.

4. Use only AZRSA contracted audiologists.

**Ear Molds**

1. Please remember for those clients who already have hearing aids and just need new ear molds, or have already completed their hearing test but now need ear molds for the new aids, the counselor issues Client Purchase Agreement only using service code 016N.

2. Do not use this process if a comprehensive audiological evaluation (service code C01D) is purchased for the client.
Hearing Aid Repairs and Warranties

1. At the time of hearing aid purchase, AZRSA purchases initial warranty from the contracted hearing aid manufacturer. This warranty covers repair for a specified period of time. The counselor should obtain a copy of the manufacturer warranty from the client and place this copy in the client’s file.

2. The client is to be responsible for any extended warranties.

3. The AZRSA counselor should inform the client of the benefit of an extended warranty which covers unexpected repairs after the initial manufacturer warranty expires.

4. At the present time AZRSA can purchase a repair for a client’s hearing aid as long as it is in support of the vocational goal as stated in the Individualized Plan for Employment.
   - Use service code 016O for this service
   - Client Purchase Agreement only
   - Check warranty prior to purchasing a repair and use warranty first

Equipment Contract

The counselor must complete a RSA Equipment Contract with Client form for all hearing aid purchases.

Hearing Aids and Economic Need

As of November 18, 2008, AZRSA no longer applies economic need to hearing aids.
APPENDIX 7 – SELF-EMPLOYMENT BUSINESS PLAN

1. **TITLE PAGE**
   
   Business Name, Address, Phone Number, Owner(s) Names

2. **TABLE OF CONTENTS**
   
   List the title of each section of the document and indicate the page number where each is located.

3. **BUSINESS CONCEPT/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

   A one-page explanation of what your business is and its competitive advantage. Provide a clear description of the industry in which you are competing and a precise explanation of your business’s unique qualities that sets your venture apart from others who are competing for the same customers.

   - In what general market does your business compete?
   - What does your business do?
   - What quality image will it have?
   - In what price range will it compete?
   - What volume of sales or service is expected?
   - What customer needs are met?
   - What makes it unique from the competition?

4. **MARKETING PLAN**

   A. **Target Market**

   - What needs/benefits are sought by your customer that your product/service satisfies?
   - When and under what circumstances does your customer buy your product or service?
   - Describe the volume and frequency of your customer’s purchases.
Based on available data, what is the expected volume of your target market?

Of that target market, what is the projected volume of actual paying customers?

Describe your customer base. It is important for you to develop a clear, mental picture of your ideal customer. Describe your potential customers using the following factors: age, sex, income level, education level, geographic location, occupational area, leisure interests, buying habits, and goals and aspirations. If you intend to provide a product or service to another business, your description should include: type of business (service, retail, manufacturing, etc.), size of business, priority placed on purchasing your product, projected image of your business, markets that the business services, trade publications read by the business, trade organizations and memberships of the business.

B. Competition

A description of your competition should answer the following questions:

Who are your major competitors?

Why are they successful?

What substitutes are there for your product?

What impact do these substitutes have on your sales?

What distinctive differences separate you from your competitors?

Why should customers leave your competitors to choose your product?

What market share do you expect to get? Why?

C. Location Analysis
Describe your business location and how it will enhance the sale of your product or service. Your description should answer the following questions:

- What strategic advantages do you have at this location?
- Is there opportunity for expansion?
- What are the neighboring businesses?
- Do they complement/detract from yours?
- Are building renovations needed? If so, at what cost?
- What is the zoning classification?
- Is the neighborhood stable, changing, improving, deteriorating? How?
- How is customer access, parking, etc.?

(Note: Include a photograph of the building, a drawing of the immediate area showing road access and identity of adjoining businesses, and a drawing of the floor plan of your business.)

D. Price Determination

A description of the price structure for your product or service will answer the following questions:

- Describe how the unit cost of your product compares to the relative value seen by the customer.
- How does your price compare with the competition?
- Why will customers pay your price?
- What image will be projected by this price?
- What special advantages do your customers get that is included in the price?
- Will you offer credit terms?

E. Marketing Approach
A description of your marketing effort should answer the following questions:

- What are the preliminary or test market results?
- Where (or from whom) do your customers seek information about purchasing your product or service?
- How will your image be clearly and consistently conveyed to potential buyers?
- Which media are most suitable? Why?
- How will you evaluate the effectiveness of each advertising and promotional effort?
- How will a sales staff be used? Evaluated?

5. MANAGEMENT PLAN OR OPERATIONAL PLAN

This section contains a description of who will run the business and how they will do it, including the following:

A. Management Team

Your description of how the business will be managed will answer the following questions:

- What business management background do you have?
- How will that experience help drive the business?
- How is the education and/or experience of key people related to this type of business?
- What legal form (sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation) will the business be?
- Who does what? Who reports to whom?
- What other resources (accountant, lawyer, special support personnel, etc.) are needed and who will provide them? Include in the appendix the resumes for key personnel.

B. Employee Relations
Your description of your methods for hiring, training and communicating with your staff will answer these questions:

- What are your personnel needs now? In the future?
- What skills will be required?
- How will you go about hiring and training?
- What salary and benefits will be provided?
- How will you determine and communicate wage increases to employees?
- What personnel policies will be provided to your employees?

C. Operational Controls

Your description of the kinds of management systems and how they will be used will answer these questions:

- What is your production capacity?
- What operating advantages do you have? How will you capitalize on them?
- What elements are critical to your success? How will you make sure they are available?
- What will be key indicators of success?
- How will you monitor these factors?
- What hazards do you anticipate for your business? What protection and/or alternate plans do you have?
- What policies will you establish for the operation of your business?

6. FINANCIAL PLAN

A. Current Funding Requirements
How much money will be needed for start-up?

What will be the sources of start-up capital?

B. Use of Funds

How will the money be spent (capital expenditures, debt repayment, working capital)?

How will borrowed funds make your business more profitable?

C. Long-Range Financial Strategies

How will you repay debt?

What terms of repayment are feasible?

What back-up plan will be used if repayment cannot be accomplished as planned?

D. Financial Statements

To support this section, several financial statements will be required, such as the following:

- Personal financial statement of owner
- Business start-up costs
- Capital equipment list
- Expected cash flow analysis
- Balance sheet (actual or proposed)
- Income statement (actual or proposed)

7. STRATEGIC PLAN

It is very important to include a description of where you want your venture to be in the next few years and how you intend to move toward those goals. This plan should focus on years two through five and include descriptions of the following items:
- Strengths within your organization
- Weaknesses within your organization
- Opportunities available to you (and your competitors)
- Threats impeding you (and your competitors)

Using the preceding four factors, you should describe strategies that use your strengths to take advantage of opportunities and overcome threats; and strategies to reduce weaknesses and avoid threats to your business. The strategies should identify intermediate goals (yearly) and the marketing, management, and financial resources that will be used to accomplish these goals.

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