



VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum

April 5, 2022

VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum

Housekeeping

- Welcome to the VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum.
- **ASL Interpreters** are designated as “co-hosts”, so they appear at the top of your participant list. If you need ability to “multi-pin” please message Sara.Sundeen@state.mn.us or Jessica.Outhwaite@state.mn.us.
- **Closed Captioning** is available. A livestream is linked in the chat.
- **Your name:** please change the name that Zoom displays to your first and last name. An easy way to rename is: 1) go to the participant list and find your name, 2) hover over your name, 3) select “more,” 4) select “rename.”
- **Questions and Comments:** Please submit feedback, questions, comments via Microsoft Form: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=RrAU68QkGUWPJricIVmCjLskeLmPGlxFoq2oFbqZ2CVUNUdNQVZYOE_s3WFk0MkgyVTg4V002Tkc3TS4u
- **Microphones:** Please keep your microphone muted throughout the meeting.
- **Technical Issues:** If you have technical issues, please contact Sara.Sundeen@state.mn.us or Jessica.Outhwaite@state.mn.us.
- **Recording:** The session will be recorded and posted to the VRS website along with the agenda, presentation, and transcript.

Agenda

- **Welcome:** Kim Babine, VRS Director of Community Partnerships
- **Updates on VRS In-Person Services:** Dee Torgerson, VRS Director
- **Contracted Services: Benefits Planning/Coaching Services:** Anne Paulson, VRS Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Contracted Services: Changes to Service Titles, New Definitions:** Janeen Oien, VRS Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Additional VRS Updates:** Kim Babine, VRS Director of Community Partnerships
- **Q&A:** Kim Babine
- **Wrap Up:** Kim Babine

VRS Updates – Dee Torgerson, VRS Director

- State of Minnesota: Work Evolving Vision and Opportunity
- VRS Staff Serving Participants in Person
- VRS Offices

If you have questions about VRS staffing or the offices in your area, please contact the local RAM:
https://mn.gov/deed/assets/field-staff-directory_tcm1045-131440.pdf

**Contracted Services Changes:
Benefits Planning and Benefits Coaching Services: July 2022**

Benefits Services Overview

- Benefits Services are intended for individuals who require assistance to understand how their benefits work in order to help them with their career planning.
- VRS authorizes for Benefits Services under two categories:
 - Benefits Coaching
 - Benefits Planning

Benefits Services Structure

Benefits Coaching Services

provide benefits information performed by a certified Benefits Coach who has completed the Disability HUB MN Benefits Coaching Training.

Benefits Coaching Report: VRS authorizes for completion of a Benefits Coaching Report and accompanying activities by a Benefits Coach on a per-report basis.

Hourly Benefits Coaching Services VRS also authorizes for some stand-alone hourly Benefits Coaching Services performed by a Benefits Coach.

Benefits Planning Services

are in-depth services for complex benefit situations performed by a certified Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) or Community Partner Work Incentive Coordinator (CPWIC) Work Incentive Practitioner (WIP).

BS&A Report: VRS authorizes for completion of a Benefits Summary and Analysis (BS&A) Report by a CWIC /CPWIC / WIP and accompanying activities on a per-report basis.

Hourly Benefits Planning Services: VRS also authorizes for some stand-alone hourly Benefits Planning Services performed by at CWIC/CPWIC/WIP.

Benefits Coaching: Benefits Coaching Report

- **Deliverable:** Benefits Coaching Report
- **Service Performed by:** Benefits Coach
- **Training/Certification Requirements:** Community Partner staff performing the Benefits Coaching Report service must have completed and hold certification from the Disability HUB MN Benefits Coaching training.
- **Rate:** Authorized on a Per-Report Basis or “Each”

Benefits Coaching: Benefits Coaching Hourly Services

- **Deliverable:** Benefits Coaching Hourly Services
- **Service Performed by:** Benefits Coach
- **Training/Certification Requirements:** Community Partner staff performing the Benefits Coaching Report service must have completed and hold certification from the Disability HUB MN Benefits Coaching training.
- **Rate:** Authorized on an Hourly Basis

Benefits Planning: Benefits Summary and Analysis (BS&A) Report

- **Deliverable:** Benefits Planning: BS&A Report
- **Service Performed by:** Certified Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC), Community Partner Work Incentive Coordinator (CPWIC), or a Work Incentive Practitioner (WIP).
- **Training/Certification Requirements:** Benefits Planning services must be completed by staff certified as a Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) or a Community Partner Work Incentive Coordinator (CPWIC) or a Work Incentive Practitioner (WIP). Certifications obtained through Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), or Cornell University.
- **Rate:** Authorized on a Per-Report Basis or “Each”

Benefits Planning: Benefits Planning Hourly Services

- **Deliverable:** Benefits Planning Hourly Services
- **Service Performed by:** Certified Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC), Community Partner Work Incentive Coordinator (CPWIC), or a Work Incentive Practitioner (WIP).
- **Training/Certification Requirements:** Benefits Planning services must be completed by staff certified as a Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) or a Community Partner Work Incentive Coordinator (CPWIC) or a Work Incentive Practitioner (WIP). Certifications obtained through Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), or Cornell University.
- **Rate:** Authorized on an Hourly Basis

Contracted Services: Changes to Service Titles, New Definitions

Rehabilitation Technology Assessment

Publishing Definition

- **Service Title:** Rehabilitation Technology Assessment/Consult
- **Service Type:** Medical Vocational and other Assessments
- **Definition:** Rehabilitation Technology Assessment/Consult assesses an individual's unique needs for rehabilitation technology use and support that will allow an individual with a disability to perform a task in environments including education, employment, transportation, independent living, and recreation. Examples of areas that can be assessed for rehabilitation technology include transportation, handwriting, reading, written expression, communication, mobility, seating and positioning, vision, hearing, computer access, recreation, and self-care.
- **Preferred Qualifications:** Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) under RESNA (the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America)

Rehabilitation (Assistive) Technology Training

Publishing Definition, Change to Service Title

- **New Service Title:** Rehabilitation (Assistive) Technology Training
- **Old Service Title:** Other Training
- **Service Type:** Training - Miscellaneous
- **Definition:** Rehabilitation Technology (Assistive) Technology Training Services provides training for the use of rehabilitation (assistive) technology for the person with a disability and their support system to allow the individual to use the rehabilitation (assistive) technology independently and successfully in a particular environment. This may include training for adapted driving, computer software (such as Dragon Naturally Speaking, or Read & Write), augmentative and alternative communication (such as speech-generating devices) and built-in accessibility features of computer operating systems.
- **Requirements:** This service requires consultation with the VRS Assistive Technology Program Specialist to assess your ability to provide quality Rehabilitation (Assistive) Technology Training services. Your VRS Community Partnerships Program Specialist will facilitate the consultation.

Social Coaching

Publishing Definition, Change to Service Title

- **Service Title:** Social Coaching
- **Old Service Title:** Social Coaching/Personal Adjustment Training or Services
- **Service Type:** Training – Disability Related Skills
- **Definition:** Social coaching refers to specific, time-limited training and techniques that assists individuals with social communication disorders (such as ASD), to improve their understanding of social communicating, and form stronger relationships with co-workers and others. Individuals may develop skills in the following areas: self-awareness, self-advocacy, interpersonal skills, verbal communication, and non-verbal communication. Vocational Rehabilitation participants will have improvement goal areas set by the referring Vocational Rehabilitation staff with a quantifiable result specific to finding and retaining employment. Social skills coaching techniques may include instruction, behavioral rehearsal, corrective feedback, positive reinforcement, social stories, social scripting, and other proven techniques.
- **Qualifications:** Special Education Teaching degree, Licensed Social Worker, Psychologist, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, potentially other combination of education plus training/certifications in social coaching techniques.

Small Business Consultation

Publishing Definition

- **Service Title:** Consultation for Small Business
- **Service Type:** Small Business Services
- **Definition:** Consultation for Small Business Services provides technical assistance and other consultation services to an individual as a means of achieving a small business career that provides competitive, integrated employment consistent with an individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. Consultation for Small Business is consultation on a specific topic or problem that the entrepreneur is finding. The service may include market research, transcribing the business plan, cost benefits analysis and a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat Analysis (SWOT analysis). This service can assist an individual to identify the necessary startup costs for the small business and consultation on how to complete the required financial documents for startup. A self-employed individual works for themselves and may work at home or at another work site, with or without on-going supports. Self-employment includes sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited liability companies or corporations.
- **Note:** This service requires consultation with the VRS Small Business Program Specialist to assess a Community Partner's ability to provide quality Small Business Consultation services. A VRS Community Partnerships Program Specialist will facilitate the consultation.

Small Business Job Coaching Definition

Publishing Definition

- **Service Type:** On the Job Supports – Time Limited
- **Service Title:** Coaching for Small Business – Time Limited Support
- **Definition:** Coaching for Small Business Services is job coaching to facilitate successful competitive, integrated employment for an individual as a small business owner. This service occurs after small business plan is approved by the Program Specialist and Vocational Rehabilitation professional. Coaching for Small Business services may be provided to any individual needing more intensive services than the follow-up services provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation professional and VRS Small Business Program Specialist. This service may include support, training, and consultation to an individual as they implement a small business plan approved by VRS. This service may be performed on or off the job site. This service may include completion of required VRS forms such as the Profit and Loss statements.

Post-Secondary Supports

Publishing Definition, Changes

- **Service Title:** Post-Secondary Supports
- **Service Type:** Post-Secondary Supports
- **Removing Service Title:** Postsecondary Education Counseling will be eliminated as a service title under General Services. The activities of Postsecondary Education Counseling services will be authorized under Post-Secondary Supports.
- **Definition:** Assist a VRS participant who is currently enrolled or exploring possible post-secondary or training program. Assist VRS participant to explore post-secondary education and training options; complete steps for enrolling in a post-secondary education or training; learn about post-secondary financial options and assisting with applying for financial aid or other financing opportunities and explore how to successfully transition to post-secondary education. Assist a VRS participant to engage or apply for various supports and assistive technology used by students with disabilities within training, such as connecting with Accessibility (Disability) Services or other accommodation/assistive technology options. Assist a VRS participant with supports to be successful in post-secondary, which could include prioritizing class work, advocating for self, or corresponding with teachers, advisors, VRS, financial aid, etc.

- **Service Title:** Intake Fee
- **Service Type:** Information and Referral Services
- **Definition:** An intake is authorized for a scheduled meeting with service provider, participant, and VRS staff to discuss the goals and parameters of the service. VRS will complete the VRS Referral Form. Providers are expected to come prepared with their paperwork packet to complete. VRS staff are present to support the participant and provide guidance and expectations for the service. VRS staff will create authorizations based on decisions made at intake for the provider.
- **Notes:**
 - Intakes are for hourly services and not applicable for Performance Based Agreements.
 - The VR program funds an intake for Extended Employment program services to an Extended Employment program provider when the individual being referred did not work with the Extended Employment provider as part of their PBA. The VR program does not fund an Extended Employment program Intake when it is an Extended Employment program provider who did the PBA and then provides Extended Employment program supports.

Transportation Training

Publishing Definition

- **Definition:** Arrange and provide opportunities for exploring public transportation options and learning how to access and safely use public transportation. May include training on reading schedules, assistance filling out para-transit applications, contacting transportation providers to arrange service, and how to access disability accommodations, as well as physical skill practice time on public transportation.
- **CFP:** No

Additional Changes to General Services

- Changing the structure of On-the-Job Work and Training Options where a Community Partner has the option to be the payroll agent. These services will have the "Services" and "Wages" Structure modeled after Pre-ETS Work Experience "Services" and Pre-ETS Work Experience "Wages."
 - Internships, On-the-Job Evaluation, Job Tryout, On-the-Job Training
- "Job Exploration Counseling" will be eliminated as a service title under General Services. The activities of Job Exploration Counseling will be authorized under Employee Development Services or Job Seeking Skills Training.

Other VRS Updates

Additional VRS Updates

- July 2022 RFP and Application Process: Timeline Update
 - RFP Publication
 - RFP Webinar
 - RFP Response/Application Due Date
- State of MN Covid Vaccination and Testing Policy
- No Mask Requirements for In-Person Services

Community Partner Conversations

- **What is the purpose?** The VRS Community Partners Conversations or “CP Conversations” meetings are meant to be casual office hours for VRS Community Partners to connect directly with VRS Community Partnerships program specialists. We hope this opportunity will provide support and community building for VRS Community Partners.
- **What's the structure?** VRS Community Partnerships Program Specialists lead the meetings, discuss a conversation topic each month, and facilitate a discussion with open questions and answers.
- **Who should attend?** Any Community Partner staff are welcome to attend. VRS sends the meeting topic ahead of each meeting so organizations may send staff that apply to that month’s topic. At this time, these meetings are not intended for VRS staff to attend. VRS is building other ways for the CP team to connect with VRS staff, and for VRS staff to connect with partners.
- **When will the meetings happen?** VRS Community Partners Conversations are recurring meetings on the first Wednesday of every month from 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
- **Meeting Registration:** Each CP Conversation has a unique zoom link to register which will be sent in the weeks prior to each month's CP Conversation. Registration links for the year are also posted on the [VRS Community Partners website](#).
- **Meeting Accommodations:** If you need an accommodation, please contact Sara.Sundeen@state.mn.us.
- **Meeting Recording and Materials:** A meeting summary, a recording of the mini conversation topic, and any shared meeting materials will be posted after each CP Conversation on the [VRS Community Partners website](#) for Community Partner staff and VRS staff to review.

Discussion – Questions and Answers

Please submit questions and comments using the Microsoft Form linked in the chat and listed below.

[MS Form for Q&A](#)



Forum Feedback

- We'd love to hear your feedback on our VRS Community Partner + VRS Staff Forums. Please provide your thoughts in the Microsoft Form used for the Q and A. The forum feedback questions are at the end of the form.

[MS Form for Q&A](#)

Thank you!



Funding Notice

The VR program receives 74.05 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For federal fiscal year 2019, the total amount of grant funds awarded were \$41,796,129. The remaining 25.5 percent of the costs (\$14,300,000) were funded by Minnesota state appropriations.