



VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum

February 6, 2024

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 email sara.sundeen@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, and comments via Microsoft Form: [Q&A Microsoft Form](#) .
- **Technical Issues:** If you have technical issues, please contact sara.sundeen@state.mn.us .
- **Recording:** This session will be recorded and posted to the VRS website along with the agenda, presentation, and transcript.

Agenda

- **Welcome:** Janeen Oien, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Earned Safe and Sick Leave:** Janeen Oien
- **7.1.2024 Contracting Process and Timeline:** Sara Sundeen, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Contracted Services & RFP Review Workgroup Update:** Janeen Oien
- **Other Updates:** Sara Sundeen
- **Q & A and Wrap Up:** Janeen Oien

Earned Safe and Sick Leave Time – VRS reimbursement process

Earned Sick and Safe Time

- On January 1, 2024, the Department of Labor and Industry's (DOLI) Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) law went into effect for all Minnesota employers. Sick and safe time is paid leave employers must provide to employees in Minnesota.
- On January 22, 2024, Lori Thorpe, Director of Contracts and Partnerships, sent out an email with a recorded video which details the process of how Vocational Rehabilitation Services will reimburse those partners that have Wages on their contract.
- These changes only apply to our Community Partners who have Wages for Job-Related Services and Pre-ETS on their Professional/Technical Contract

Earned Sick and Safe Time, cont.

- In a nutshell, between January, 2024 and June 30, 2024, VRS will add one hour of wages for each 30 hours of wages on authorizations to cover the ESST requirement of our Community Partners.
- Beginning on contracts starting July 1, 2024, the Wages + 60% administrative cost will begin to be authorized. The additional percentage in administrative costs will cover the ESST requirement for our Community Partners.

Earned Sick and Safe Time, cont.

You can view Lori Thorpe's email and the video that was recorded on our Community Partnerships Website under
VRS News – Messages

<https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/partners/updates/>

July 1, 2024 Contracting Process and Timeline

All existing P/T contracts are due to expire on 6.30.2024.

There are different processes for a variety of our contracts to be renewed for 7.1.2024

Contracting, cont.

- Community Rehabilitation Partners' contracts are being amended to have a larger budget, negotiated fees for services, and a new end date of 6.30.2027. These amendments will have a start date of 7.1.2024.
- Limited Use Vendors that began a contract on 7.1.2022 will have an open Request for Proposal and will submit new applications for a contract to begin on 7.1.2024 and end on 6.30.2026.

Contracted Services Review Workgroup

CSRWG Update

- Thank you for your recent feedback on Intake for Hourly Services. An updated definition, sample report, and “Best Practices” document has been submitted to VRS Executive Leadership for review and was approved.
- The Community Partner Website will be updated to show an updated definition, along with links to a sample report and a “Best Practices” list.
- Any feedback outside the scope of the workgroup has been shared with the appropriate groups and VR staff.

CSRWG update, cont.

This quarter's topics include: OCSS differential, and Social Coaching

- VRS staff will have opportunities to give feedback to their peers on the workgroup.
- Community Partners can join a feedback session on Monday, 2.12.2024
 - You are invited to a ZoomGov meeting.
 - When: February 12, 2024 at 12:30p.m. Central Time
 - Register in advance of this meeting: <https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltf-GhqzwqHZdplhnzz9pBCBC4ZvmiDAs>
 - After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.
 - *If you require accommodations, please contact Janeen.Oien@state.mn.us

Reminders and Updates

Managing authorizations for budgets:

Teamwork makes the Dream Work!

- It is vital to have accurate budgets for all LUV and CRP contracts.
- Accurate authorizing and budgets for Vocational Rehabilitation Services is essential for our fiscal management and financial forecasting.
- VRS staff have the primary responsibility to authorize and manage the open encumbrances (i.e. 30-60-90 day reports).
- Community Partner agencies can help manage the authorizations by requesting accurate hours for authorizations, billing in a timely fashion, and notifying the referring VRS staff when remaining hours can be cancelled.

We have a robust Community Partner pool!

- We currently have 178 Community Partners with active contracts! We are grateful for each of them and their dedication to providing quality services.
- The four Community Partnership Program Specialists are each meeting with several new applicants for contracts.

Several of our newer Community Partners have received no, or very few, referrals.

Please reach out to the Community Partnership Program Specialists if you would like to learn more about these valuable partners.

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](#)



Thank You!



We'd love to hear your feedback on our VRS Community Partner + VRS Staff Forums.

Please provide your thoughts in the Microsoft Form below. The forum feedback questions are at the end of the form.

[MS Form for Q&A and Forum Feedback](#)

Funding Notice

The VR program receives 78.7 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For federal fiscal year 2022, the total amount of grant funds is \$44,081,347. The required state match for these funds is \$11,930,529 (21.3 percent). The state of Minnesota has appropriated \$14.3 million to exceed the matching requirement.