



VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum

August 6, 2024

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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 the ability to “multi-pin” please email Janeen.Oien@state.mn.us.
- **Closed Captioning** is available. A livestream is linked in the chat.
- **Your name:** Please change your Zoom name to display your first and last name and the agency where you work. 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 Janeen.Oien@state.mn.us.
- **Recording:** This session will be recorded and posted to the VRS website along with the agenda, presentation, and transcript.

Agenda

- **Welcome:** Lori Thorpe, VRS Director of Contracts & Partnerships
- **Virtual Intake Unit for VRS:** Eric Wittbrodt, RAM VIU, Lisa Hatz, Southern MN Regional Director, Chris McVey, Deputy Director of Disability Employment Services
- **Connect 700 Applications:** Marci Jasper, VRS Placement Specialist
- **WF1 Partner Access update:** Jessica Outhwaite, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Invoicing and Billing reminders:** Lori Thorpe
- **Upcoming events:** Janeen Oien, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Q & A and wrap-up:** Anne Paulson, Community Partnerships Program Specialist and Lori Thorpe

Virtual Intake Unit for Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Eric Wittbrodt, Lisa Hatz and Chris McVey

VRS Virtual Intake Unit

A virtual intake process is being developed for adult applicants to VRS

A technology option that will be available for applicants anywhere in the state to learn about and express interest in VRS services

The virtual intake team will be comprised of Counselors, VR Technicians, and a Rehabilitation Area Manager

Connect 700 Applications

Marci Jasper

**Connecting Individuals
with Disabilities to
State of Minnesota
Employment**

What is Connect 700?

A Pathway to State Employment

- Connect 700 allows eligible individuals with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to perform a specific position for up to 700 hours on the job
 - An alternative selection process for individuals with certain disabilities seeking employment in state government
 - A pre-probationary trial work program

Connect 700 Eligibility:

To be eligible to participate in C700, individuals must:

- ✓ Meet the minimum qualifications for the position
- ✓ Have a “severe” disability that makes them unable to demonstrate their skills and abilities in the standard competitive selection process
- ✓ Apply for C700 by submitting an 'Application for Eligibility' form
- ✓ Receive and submit a 'Proof of Eligibility Certificate' to HR prior to job posting close date

- 'Application for Eligibility' form:
<https://mn.gov/mmb/careers/diverse-workforce/people-with-disabilities/connect700/>
- Job seeker completes the first part of application and signs/dates
- VRS counselor, physician or licensed medical professional writes the Certification Letter stating the person is eligible and gives to job seeker (noting whether the disability is expected to be temporary or permanent)
- **Job seeker submits both the application and certification letter to C700Eligibility.MMB@state.mn.us**

Proof of Eligibility Certificate

- If approved, candidate receives a Proof of Eligibility Certificate which is valid for either 2 years or has no expiration date (depending on whether the disability is expected to be temporary or permanent)
- Delayed Certifications: Check spam/junk mail. Wait 2 weeks and have the Job Seeker send an email from **their** email account to: C700Eligibility.MMB@state.mn.us. If no response, reach out to Michelle Chmielewski or Marci Jasper with VRS
- Obtaining a Certificate of Eligibility does not guarantee a Connect 700 interview or a C700 appointment

Applying for Jobs - Applicant must:

1. Apply online at the State Careers Website:
<https://www.mn.gov/mmb/careers/>
****Note: Most state jobs are full-time.**
2. Contact the HR person on the announcement **before the closing date** to request being considered as a C700 candidate
3. Submit valid Proof of Eligibility Certificate to the HR person **before closing date (No Exceptions!)**
4. Individuals with disabilities are not required to apply as a C700 candidate
5. Job Postings include: “Connect 700 Yes/No” If not C700 Eligible, likely it is a temporary/seasonal position

Resumes and Applications

MINIMUM and PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Applicant must meet ***all*** minimum qualifications to be eligible
- Take extra time on the application and resume to clearly reflect how the person meets the minimum – MORE information is better!
- **Include any and all of the preferred qualifications on resume**

What happens after I apply for a job?

- May receive a call from HR for a Connect 700 interview
- If no interview, multiple C700 candidates may have applied and the person was not selected to interview (Hiring manager has discretion as to how many candidates are interviewed.)
- Candidate receives a notice from HR that minimum qualifications were not met (burden is on applicant to relay how they meet the minimum qualifications)

Connect 700 and PBAs:

- The 2nd PBA milestone is paid on the first day of work as a C700 employee
- The 3rd PBA milestone is paid after the individual has completed the C700 program, received a job offer and successfully worked 90 days
- If the candidate is offered a job before the 700 hours is completed, the 90 days starts on the first day of work as a regular state employee
- The C700 appointment may end prior to completing 700 hours if it is not a good job match

Information for Job Seekers

- Receiving a Proof of Eligibility Certificate does not guarantee a C700 interview
- A C700 interview does not always lead to a C700 appointment
- A C700 appointment may or may not lead to a permanent job offer
- If hired permanently after the C700 appointment, they must pass a probationary period

Questions?

Please contact Michelle or Marci with questions about the C700 program:

Michelle Chmielewski - michelle.chmielewski@state.mn.us

Marci Jasper - marci.jasper@state.mn.us

Workforce One Partner Access Update Jess Outhwaite

WF1 Partner Access



The WF1 Partner Access project is necessary to protect the confidential data of the individuals we serve.

WF1 Partner Access

The VRS team is contacted and trained on WF1 Partner Access. After that meeting the VRS team indicates their most frequently used partners.

Those partners are sent a welcome email along with information about next steps. This includes setting up their agency in WF1, viewing the tutorial video, completing user access forms, and scheduling a Q&A session with Jess Outhwaite and Laura Cheney from VRS.

Once the Q&A session is complete the partner and VRS staff begin using WF1 for all tasks.

WF1 Partner Access

WF1 Partner Access was piloted in Rochester and then continued to Monticello. It has now been rolled out to the Cambridge, Bemidji and Duluth areas.

Future Timeline:

- We are at an exciting time, as we move to new VRS offices, with partners trained and ready!
- Invitation have gone out to northwest MN locations, including St. Cloud, Fergus Falls, and Crookston.
- After that will be the Marshall (Mimi Schafer), Faribault (Karla Tauer), Mankato (Christine Hendrickson), and Rochester (Alisha Otteson) areas.
- The final stop will be the metro VRS teams and partners.

Invoicing and Billing Reminders

- Providers must ensure they have an authorization in hand before initiating any service.
- Communication with providers and within VRS teams about which authorizations can be closed or reduced is critical.
- Providers should indicate on each invoice if it is a partial invoice or final invoice.

Timely invoices

Language on DEED-VRS authorizations currently reads:

- ***Invoices must be submitted within 90 days of end date of the work authorization. Invoices not submitted within 90 days of the end date of the work authorization will be considered a material breach of contract. This will result in non-payment of this service.***
- VRS is enforcing a 90-day invoicing requirement on all invoices submitted to VRS.

Upcoming VRS events

Upcoming events at VRS

Pre-ETS CoP meetings resume: Community of Practice for Pre-ETS for Community Partners and VRS Staff resumed in August!

- Metro CoP - 8/15, 9:00-10:30a.m.
- Southern CoP - 8/20, 1:00-2:30p.m.
- Northern CoP - 9/4, 8:30-10:00a.m.

CP Conversations: Monthly office hours for Community Partnership staff to meet with the CP Program Specialists. Next session is

- Wednesday, August 7th, 8:30a.m. - 9:30a.m. [Here is the recurring Zoom link!](#)

Next VRS + CP Forum: bi-monthly forums to discuss topics related to both the work of VRS staff and our Community Partners. Next Forum is:

- October 1, 2024, 10:30a.m. – 12:00p.m.
- [Registration](#)
- Agenda will include training and updates on Job Related Services

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.