



# VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum

October 4, 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 email [Sara.Sundeen@state.mn.us](mailto:Sara.Sundeen@state.mn.us) or [Janeen.Oien@state.mn.us](mailto:Janeen.Oien@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: [Q&A form](#)
- **Microphones:** Please keep your microphone muted throughout the meeting.
- **Technical Issues:** If you have technical issues, please contact [Sara.Sundeen@state.mn.us](mailto:Sara.Sundeen@state.mn.us) or [Janeen.Oien@state.mn.us](mailto:Janeen.Oien@state.mn.us).
- **Recording:** The session will be recorded and posted to the VRS website along with the agenda, presentation, and transcript.

# Agenda

- **Welcome and VRS Updates:** Kim Babine, VRS Director of Community Partnerships
- **Updated Pre-ETS Authorizing, Reporting, and Invoicing Guide:** Alyssa Klein, VRS Youth Services Coordinator & Sara Sundeen, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Q&A:** Janeen Oien, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Wrap Up:** Kim Babine

# VRS Updates

# Reminder about required certifications - MDHR

- [Required Certifications / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](#)
- If your agency is exempt from the MN Department of Human Rights Workforce Certificate and Equal Pay Certificate, there is no action to take currently.
  - The exemption will expire June 30, 2024.
  - A new exemption will need be filed prior to that expiration date as part of your contracting process.
- Any agency that is required to hold either a Workforce Certificate and/or an Equal Pay Certificate is responsible for tracking the expiration date of those certificates and reapplying for the certificates in a timely fashion.
  - You can reach out to your contract liaison with questions.

# Upcoming Trainings to Note

- Don't miss the VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum on December 6, 2022, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Agenda:
  - Contracted Services Training
  - Contracted Service Review Process Update
- This is an important training for all VRS staff and Community Partner staff to attend if possible.
- Registration Link:  
[https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltcOquqTsiH1RMgOwuN242NxlX7kuTT\\_k](https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltcOquqTsiH1RMgOwuN242NxlX7kuTT_k)

# Upcoming Trainings to Note, cont.

## *Join us for our first VR Community Learning Connections!*

This free training series invites VRS, SSB, and Community Partner staff to join in a shared experience to strengthen skills and grow stronger together in serving Minnesotans with disabilities.

- **An Introduction to working with LGBTQ+ Individuals with Disabilities (1 CRC)**
  - December 1, 2022, 9:00am – 10:00am
- **Special Considerations for working with LGBTQ+ Youth and Students with Disabilities (1.25 CRCs)**
  - January 19, 2023, 1:00pm – 2:15pm
- **Supporting LGBTQ+ Individuals with Disabilities in Pursuing Work (1.25 CRCs)**
  - March 2, 2023, 1:00pm – 2:15pm

**Presenter:** DJ Ralston, M.A. (They/Them/Theirs), Senior Technical Assistance & Research Analyst, The George Washington University

# Updated Pre-ETS Authorizing, Reporting and Invoicing Guide



- Guide is for VRS and Community Partner staff
- Questions related to authorizing, reporting and invoicing can go to [VRS Community Partnerships staff](#)
- Questions related to Pre-ETS work experiences or internships can go to [VRS Placement Specialists](#) (click on “Contacts” tab)

# Definitions and Rates

- Updated: [Pre-ETS P/T Contract Definitions](#)
- Pre-ETS Rates:
  - No longer standardized
  - Must check each contract for which services are available, the rates, and whether they offer a group rate (as applicable)
  - For group services: Always *authorize* at individual rate, Community Partners (“CPs”) should *bill* at the group rate if **3 or more students** participated

- **NEW:** Both counselors and Pre-ETS Reps should use the [Pre-Employment Transition Services Referral](#) form when referring students potentially eligible (PE) or eligible for VR for any Pre-ETS service
- CPs must also complete the [Placement Plan](#) with the student (and their parent/guardian as applicable) and VRS staff when a referral is for an **Intermediate Work Experience**.

# Authorization End Dates

- Authorization end dates:
  - March 31
  - June 30
  - September 30
  - December 31
- Authorizations should not be extended
- VR staff will choose closest end date or one after (cannot authorize beyond June 30 or September 30)

# Only Exception to End Dates

- When services must end because a student will no longer meet the definition of a “student with a disability” for Pre-ETS purposes
  - They will no longer be enrolled in an education program (ie. they graduate and aren’t enrolled in a postsecondary education program)
  - They turn age 22 outside a regular academic year (can continue to receive Pre-ETS through spring semester)
  - See examples in guide
- Remember: Individuals eligible for VR can continue a service as a General VR service if that service is still needed!

# Activities Community Partners Can Bill Pre-ETS Time For

## Service Time:

- **Providing Pre-ETS with students:** Individually (one or two students at the individual rate), in groups (three or more students at the group rate), in-person, or virtually.
- **First Meeting Time:** The time for the student who is *potentially eligible for VR*, VRS and Community Partner to meet and talk about the services that will be provided. (Students *eligible for VR* will have a Pre-ETS intake authorized instead).
- **Site Development Time:** Calls, emails, web searches, and/or employer visits to arrange for Pre-ETS services. This can be done with or without the student present. This time is billed at the individual rate for one or two students or at the group rate for three or more students.
- **Team Meetings:** Attending a meeting (such as an IEP meeting) with the student's other "team" members (i.e. family, VRS, school staff, county case manager) to plan for and/or report on progress of Pre-ETS.

# Activities that can be billed, cont.

**Travel/Transportation Time:** Round trip time **traveling** from primary work location to where services to a student or group of students is provided. Can include time for a Community Partner to pick up/drop off (**transport**) **a student potentially eligible or eligible for VR.**

Travel/transportation must be discussed and agreed upon prior to services. Agreed upon travel/transportation hours are added to the Pre-ETS service hours and not a separate line on an authorization.

- **NOTE:** Community Partners **can** bill for travel/transportation time even when a student doesn't show up for their appointment. However, VRS asks Community Partners to remind students of appointments that are scheduled and to communicate no-shows to VRS staff.

# Community Partners CANNOT Invoice For

- Time spent case noting, writing reports, preparing invoices, or no-show fees.
- Community Partner preparation time (without the student present): Preparing/revising lesson plans or materials to be used for an individual or group session; creating and editing resumes, cover letters, and other related documents; communications/attempted communications with students and other team members to schedule or confirm meetings.



- Pre-ETS Internship-Services and Wages
  - Are now services on contracts
  - Guidance is NOT finalized yet
  - In the meantime, VRS staff should seek consultation from their supervisor **and** a VRS Placement Specialist if a student is in need of a Pre-ETS internship.

# Pre-ETS Work Experiences

- 3 ways Community Partners can support work experiences
  1. **Follow-up** for a work experience that has already been developed. VRS staff can authorize up to **20 hours** for this service (which includes a first meeting for potentially eligible students, service, and travel/transportation time).
  2. **Site development and follow-up for a Short-Term Work Experience**, which is a time limited opportunity, typically lasting 120 hours but it can be shorter or longer depending on what the student, VRS staff, employer and other student support team members agree is appropriate. VRS staff can authorize up to **30 hours** for this service.
  3. **Site development and follow-up for an Intermediate Work Experience** which is a competitive integrated work opportunity where a student is hired by an employer as a regular employee. VRS staff can authorize up to **40 hours** for this service

# Pre-ETS Work Experiences, cont.

- **Work experiences must be paid.**
- Only the student and employer evaluate how the work experience went.
- 20, 30, and 40 hour thresholds:
  - If additional hours are needed beyond thresholds, VRS staff must **consult with and receive approval** from their supervisor prior to authorizing.
  - Thresholds include time for first meeting for potentially eligible students, service, and travel/transportation time

# Pre-ETS Work Experience-Wages

- The Community Partner pays the student a prevailing wage or minimum wage, whichever is higher, for a Short-Term Work Experience.
- Prevailing wage: Average wage paid to similarly employed workers in a specific position in the area of intended employment.
  - Staff can refer to the [salary survey tool](#) or consult with a VRS Placement Coordinator/Specialist, as needed, when there are questions.
- Total cost reimbursement to a Community Partner equals 1.5 times the student's hourly wage multiplied by the total hours worked. Cost reimbursement includes administrative expenses. For example, if the student's wage is \$16 per hour, VRS reimburses the community partner \$24 per hour ( $\$16 \times 1.5 = \$24$ ).

# Important Notes About Pre-ETS Work Experience-Wages

- VRS staff must consult with and receive supervisory approval prior to authorizing for Work Experience-Wages **at or above \$20.00 per hour.**
- VRS Staff should not authorize for Work Experience-Wages until the work experience site has been secured and the prevailing wage determined.
- Pre-ETS Work Experience Authorizing Process desk aid:
  - [Pre-ETS Work Experience Authorizing Process- flow chart version](#)
  - [Pre-ETS Work Experience Authorizing Process- accessible version](#)

# Soap box moment...

- The goal is for all students with disabilities to have competitive integrated work experience (intermediate work experience) prior to graduation
- Short-term work experiences are typically for students who:
  - Have never had a job and need to try work first
  - Would like to try work within a career field
  - Need a “foot in the door” of a desired place of employment

# Follow-Up for Pre-ETS Work Experiences

- Once a work experience site has been secured, follow up is provided to identify and implement any supports that are needed. Accommodation needs and disability disclosure should be discussed, if necessary.
  - See additional items that can be included as follow up in guide
- Monthly work experience follow-up reports and invoices should be submitted summarizing student's progress
  - Community Partners can use *optional* [Pre-ETS Work Experience Follow-up Report to VRS](#).

# Work-Based Learning Coaching

- Pre-ETS Work Experience-Services do not encompass work-based learning coaching. If work-based learning coaching is necessary **for a student who is eligible for VR services**, it should be authorized separately by the counselor.
  - VRS cannot fund work-based learning coaching for students potentially eligible for VR.
- The work-based learning (WBL) coach provides support, training, and consultation to the student and business to facilitate a successful work experience.
  - A more intensive service than follow up



# WBL Coaching, cont.

- Supervisory consultation and approval are required to authorize WBL coaching services **beyond 60 hours**. This consultation and approval must be documented by the supervisor in Workforce One case notes.
- The WBL coach must provide **weekly updates** to the VRS counselor and submit a **monthly report** to the VRS counselor while WBL coaching services are being provided. The [Coaching Report](#) is an optional template Community Partners can use for their monthly reports.
- See guide for examples of WBL coaching techniques

# Estimating Pre-ETS Time for Authorizations

- Less than full hours should be authorized/billed at the quarter hour
- VRS and Community Partners should work together to estimate the number of hours
  - Do not authorize extreme amounts!
- Always consider service **and** travel/transportation time and **VRS staff must case note** how much of the time authorized is allotted for each.

# Estimating time for travel/transportation

- The starting location for an authorization for travel/transportation should be the Community Partner staff's **primary work location**.
- If the staff's primary work location is not the Community Partner site, then the Community Partner staff may provide an alternate primary work location such as the staff's residence to serve as the starting location **but only when this is the most direct, efficient, and shortest route**.
- If a Community Partner staff chooses the staff's residence as the starting location, the Community Partner must provide the address. If an address is not provided, the **zip code** of the staff's residence must be provided to VRS at a minimum.

# Guidance on Reports and Invoices

- Invoices and reports:
  - Indicate if service was individual/1:1 or to a group (3 or more students)
  - [VRS Invoice and Report Checklist](#)
- Invoices:
  - Submit student's timecard or list of all dates & times worked for Work Experience-Wages
  - [Pre-ETS Invoice Template](#)
- Much more detail within guide

# Additional Travel/Transportation Guidance

- [Transportation Desk Aid](#)
- Invoicing Travel/Transportation for Group Services:
  - CPs will be paid a maximum of their hourly Pre-ETS individual rate for Pre-ETS travel/transportation regardless of how many students they are traveling to serve.
  - Add up the total amount of travel/transportation time, multiply by hourly Pre-ETS rate, then divide by the number of students who participated in the group service for each invoice.
  - Example: A CP travels 1 hour round trip for a group service for 10 students. Their Pre-ETS rate is \$100/hour.  $\$100/10 = \$10$  invoiced for travel/transportation for each student
- See more examples in guide

- 4 examples with case notes, authorizations, reports and invoices linked
- Example 3: Scarlett Pine (Short-Term Work Experience)
  - **VRS staff case note:** After referring Scarlett to Pathway to Success today for a 120 hour short-term work experience at Little Tykes Daycare (a site they already have developed), Walter (Pathway to Success staff) and I agreed that the authorization will have a total of 20 hours Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning/Work Experience-Services (to include 12 hours service time and 8 hours travel/transportation time) and 80 hours of Pre-ETS Work-Based Learning/Work Experience-Wages for 80 hours at \$16.50/hour (prevailing wage is \$11/hour plus 50% (\$5.50)= \$16.50) to go through June.

# Scarlett Pine Continued

- **Authorization:** [Scarlett Pine Authorization](#) (Note: only the Pre-ETS total service time is indicated)
- **Report:** [Scarlett Pine Report](#) (Note: The Pre-ETS services (including detail on what occurred during that time) and travel/transportation time (including the address of the start and destination points) for each date of service is indicated. Also, there is a listing of each day that Scarlett worked and how many hours she worked each day- a copy of a time sheet could also suffice).
- **Invoice:** [Scarlett Pine Invoice](#) (Note: Only the total number of hours billed for each Pre-ETS service title is indicated)

# 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.*