

April 29, 2014

TO: Vocational Rehabilitation Services Vendors

SUBJ: Policy Changes Regarding Use of VRS Grant Funds

This letter is to clarify certain recent policy changes regarding the use of Vocational Rehabilitation Services grant funds for food and beverages and for activities such as meetings and conferences.

As you know, the operating budget of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is funded from state and federal sources, and uses a large share of those resources to provide funding to a variety of grantees that contract with VRS to provide services. Last year we learned that VRS vendors – that is, any grantee that receives payment from federal or state dollars – must not use grant funds to pay for food for meeting or conference attendees unless doing so is necessary to accomplish legitimate meeting or conference business.

Accordingly, VRS has adopted the policy that no state or federal grant funds will be used to purchase food or beverages for meetings or conferences. This policy will not be retroactive, but it will be applied to all future expenditures.

You will recognize that this is a departure from our past practice. However, the memorandum we received from the U. S. Department of Education, which provides the bulk of VRS funding, is quite clear on the matter. The memorandum, known as Enclosure 7, does outline a few allowable exceptions to the policy. But in our judgment, the threshold for exceptions is extremely high, and VRS has chosen what we believe is the prudent policy of simply not using public dollars to purchase food or beverages.

As a VRS vendor receiving state or federal dollars, you should take into consideration and apply all factors contained in Enclosure 7 when hosting a meeting or conference. I have attached a copy of the memorandum if you would like to read the details.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Kimberley T. Peck, Director
Vocational Rehabilitation Services