# VRS REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRANSPORTATION POLICY

# OVERVIEW

Effective July 1, 2022, the DEED-VRS Transportation Reimbursement will reimburse providers for:

* **Costs related to transporting an individual** for the purposes of ~~the~~ assessment or the individual’s employment plan, i.e. when the service provider staff and individual are both traveling together.

*and*

* **Costs related to traveling to and from an individual** for the purposes of ~~the~~ assessment or the individual’s employment plan, i.e. when the service provider is traveling alone.

VRS’s transportation reimbursement is different for ***“General Services”*** and ***“Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).”*** “Pre-ETS Services” pertains to services for VR Eligible Pre-ETS Students AND for VR Potentially Eligible Students. “General Services” pertains to services for all other individuals in the VR program. Please refer to Pre-ETS guidance when looking at transportation services for Pre-ETS students.

**General Services: $50 per hour.** VRS will provide a $50 per hour reimbursement rate for costs related to provider staff time in travel for general services.

# TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENT NOTES

***Transportation Rate vs. Service Rate:*** Transportation reimbursement to providers is a transportation service that is supporting a contracted VR service. The transportation reimbursement rate should be used when a provider staff person is transporting the individual for the purposes of assessment or their employment plan, not the rate for the service the transportation is supporting. While VRS recognizes that important conversations related to an individual’s assessment or employment plan can take place while the individual is in the car, VRS has made the decision that “transportation is transportation.”

The transportation reimbursement is available only when providing hourly services, not the job placement and retention PBA.

VRS’s transportation reimbursement is statewide.

# SERVICE TYPES AND TITLES FOR GENERAL SERVICES

* When authorizing for Travel Expenses when a provider is traveling to or from the individual – and the individual is NOT in the vehicle, VR staff should use service type” Travel *Expenses to Provider”* and service title *“Travel Expenses to Provider - Travel To/From Person.”*
* When authorizing for Transportation Services when a provider is transporting an individual for the purposes of assessment or their employment plan, VR staff should use service type *“Transportation Services”* and service title “*Transportation to Vendor.”*

# ASSESSING THE NEED FOR TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENT

* Adding transportation to an individual’s employment plan or authorizing for a provider to use that transportation time is always at the discretion of VRS staff.
* VRS staff will evaluate decisions about travel reimbursement involving transport of the individual using VR Transportation Policy chapter 5B. That policy can be found on DEED’s

external website at: <https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyDetail.aspx?pol=58>

* VRS staff make that decision in conversation with the individual and the provider.
* VRS staff is empowered to determine that no transportation time is needed and therefore not authorize for it.
* VRS staff will be evaluating each individual situation before adding it to the authorization.

# ESTIMATING TRANSPORTATION TIME FOR THE PURPOSES OF AN AUTHORIZATION

Less than full hours are authorized by the quarter hour.

Transportation time billed should be for the most direct, efficient and shortest route as provided by an online mapping service such as Google Maps.

VRS staff will work with service provider staff to estimate the number of hours of transportation time necessary to complete the services requested.

* + VRS staff and service provider staff should use an online mapping service such as Google Maps to determine the most direct, efficient, and shortest route and the expected transportation time given anticipated delays such as weather and rush hour traffic. VRS staff and service provider staff will estimate to the best of their ability.
  + VRS understands that accidents, road construction, and inclement weather cannot always be predicted. VRS will not cover increased transportation costs or incur purchasing violations in the event of unpredictable circumstances. If an authorization does not have adequate hours to cover increased transportation time in the event of unpredictable circumstances, the service provider will be responsible for those costs.

*Starting Location*

* + The starting location for an authorization for transportation should be the service provider staff’s primary work location.
  + If the staff’s primary work location is not the provider site, then the provider 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 provider staff chooses the staff’s residence as the starting location, the provider 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.

# INDIVIDUALS AT THE SAME LOCATION OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY

Here is the best practice for charging transportation time in the case of a partner providing services to two or more individuals in succession without returning to their primary work location. In this case, the partner would bill only the time from the starting location to the first participant, and then the time between the participants and the time back to the starting location for the second participant. The partner would not claim the full mileage from the starting location to each participant individually.

* + *Example: individuals in close proximity*: provider staff drives from St. Paul (starting location) to Northeast Minneapolis for person A, and then to North Minneapolis for person B, and back to St. Paul.
    - Person A transportation reimbursement: time traveling from St. Paul (starting location) to person A.
    - Person B transportation reimbursement: time traveling from person A to person B, and the time traveling from person B back to St. Paul (starting location).
  + *Example: individuals at same location*: provider staff drives from St. Paul (starting

location) to Northeast Minneapolis VR office for a meeting with person A, then a meeting with person B.

* Person A transportation reimbursement: time traveling from St. Paul (starting location) to person A.
* Person B transportation reimbursement: time traveling from person B back to St. Paul (starting location).

# PURCHASING VIOLATIONS

State law requires prior approval and prior “encumbrance” for any expenditure of funds. That prior approval and encumbrance comes in the form of an authorization from VRS. If VRS pays for services performed before an authorization issued or pays for services above the allotted hours on the authorization, VRS incurs a purchasing violation. VRS WILL NOT incur purchasing violations for the transportation reimbursement.

ONLY transportation time that has been authorized prior to the transportation occurring and ONLY transportation time that falls within the number of prior authorized hours will be paid by VRS.

Prior to authorizing, the number of authorized hours for transportation must be negotiated with VRS staff and Community Partner staff.

Requesting additional hours for transportation is the responsibility of Community Partner staff and is granted at the discretion of VRS staff.

Transportation time that occurs BEFORE an authorization is active will result in no payment for that time by VRS.

Transportation time in EXCESS of the number of authorized hours will result in no payment for that time. VRS understands that accidents, road construction, and inclement weather cannot always be predicted.

VRS will not cover increased transportation costs or incur purchasing violations in the event of unpredictable circumstances. If an authorization does not have adequate hours to cover increased transportation time in the event of unpredictable circumstances, the service provider will be responsible for those costs.

# AUTHORIZATIONS

*For General Services:* The Transportation Reimbursement rate will show as an additional line on the authorization.

*For Pre-ETS Services:* transportation time will NOT show as an additional line on the authorization. The transportation time is added to the service hours.

Transportation time will be authorized on an hourly basis and invoiced in 15-minute (0.25 hour) increments.

# VRS INVOICING AND REPORTING CONSIDERATIONS

Best practice: invoice for the services and transportation time to support those services at the same time.

When invoicing for the services and transportation time to support those services include the dates of service on the invoice. A range of dates is acceptable on the invoice.

For VRS staff to process the invoice there must be an accompanying report.

The report must show the actual dates and times for the travel time and for the services were provided.

The report must also show the starting location, destination, and ending location and if multiple participants were transport