

Introduction

Training is provided in accordance with an approved IPE to enable a participant to achieve their vocational goal. The type and length of training provided is determined based on the needs of the participant and the type of preparation required by the selected vocational goal.

Types of Training

There are several types of training described in this chapter:

Training	Sections 10.00 – 10.07
College Training	Section 10.01
Vocational, Technical, Business School Training	Section 10.02
Other Academic Training	Section 10.03
Work Experience Training	Section 10.04
On-the-Job Training	Section 10.05
Work Try-Out	Section 10.06
Job Coaching	Section 10.07
Vision Rehabilitation Therapy	Section 10.08
Orientation and Mobility	Section 10.09
Training in Community Rehabilitation Programs	Section 10.10

Comparable Benefits

Available comparable benefits must be used prior to authorizing training services. See Chapter 11.00, Comparable Services and Benefits, for additional information.

Economic Need

Some training services are provided without regard to economic need. Others are contingent upon economic need. Refer to the specific training section to determine whether that training is contingent upon economic need, and see Chapter 5.00, Determination of Economic Need, for additional information.

Introduction

College is considered a form of vocational training and should only be authorized when necessary to achieve the participant's vocational goal. The participant should understand that the appropriateness of the vocational goal on the IPE and college training will continue to be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Attendance at NYSCB programs that prepare participants for college should also be discussed and explored to help determine if they are ready to attend a college program.

The discussion about the appropriateness of college training can be challenging. There may be times that the VR counselor and the participant are not in agreement regarding the vocational goal and a more appropriate goal needs to be discussed. Lacking agreement, participants must be provided a rationale for the decision, notified of their rights under the appeals process and given information about the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

What is College Training

College is academic training provided at the post-secondary level. It includes undergraduate and graduate courses at an accredited university, college, junior college, online or extension program and tutorial training.

Accreditation

NYSCB will use only those colleges, universities and other degree granting institutions, including correspondence or online programs, accredited by a regional accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or approved by the New York State Board of Regents. Exceptions may be made where accreditation is pending or conditional and/or the course of study is sufficiently unique to justify use.

NYSCB reserves the right to review and disapprove the use of a college or university program that is not accredited.

Cutoff Dates for College Sponsorship

Participants who are interested in pursuing college training should notify their VR counselor by May 1st for the Fall semester and September 1st for the Spring semester. These cutoff dates have been established to allow adequate time to develop an appropriate IPE and to determine whether or not the participant meets the criteria for college sponsorship. Exceptions to these cutoff dates may be made by the senior counselor upon request by the VR counselor.

Work Opportunities for Students in College

Developing skills in a real work environment is critical for young adults and for older adults who have not had on-the-job experience. Work experiences along with education and training help to build resumes that enable individuals to successfully compete for jobs. NYSCB encourages those who attend college to participate in work experiences or internships during summer breaks and, if possible, during the school year. Preferably, some or all of the work experience will be related to the student's job goal.

Length of Training

NYSCB expects participants to complete their undergraduate and graduate programs within the customary attendance period (e.g., bachelor's - four years, associate's - two years). NYSCB does recognize that individual circumstances may sometimes interfere with the ability to do this. NYSCB may provide financial sponsorship for up to one semester in addition to each year of coursework required by the educational institution for the participant to complete their academic program. The typical attendance period can only be exceeded with documentation of the reasons for the extension in the case record and senior counselor approval. Below is a chart to help determine the maximum number of additional semesters that can be authorized if approved:

Customary Length of Program	Additional Semesters
4-year (8 semesters)	2-year (4 semesters)
2-year (4 semesters)	1-year (2 semesters)
18 months	1.5 semesters
1-year (2 semesters)	½ year (1 semester)

Time off in between semesters where NYSCB has not provided any sponsorship does not count toward the maximum number of semesters.

Examples of situations that may warrant exceeding the typical attendance period:

1. Equipment needed by the participant for their college courses was not received on time or in proper working order
2. The participant or their family member developed a medical problem which interfered with the participant's ability to attend college
3. The participant needs to reduce the number of credits taken in one semester to successfully manage their coursework. This needs to be approved by the senior counselor.

Graduate School Sponsorship

NYSCB sponsors training beyond the baccalaureate level only in instances where entry into the selected professional field of work requires completion of graduate or professional school training as documented on the IPE.

Graduate School IPE

Graduate school training should only be indicated as a service on the IPE after the successful completion of four semesters of undergraduate college study. This will be discussed with the participant and documented in a case note when a vocational goal is agreed upon that requires graduate school.

The amended IPE must be developed in accordance with the procedures in Chapter 6.00, IPE and prior to implementation must be signed by the district manager.

Part-Time Sponsorship

Part-time college training is defined as less than 12 credit hours of training per semester. Part-time study may be sponsored at any time during college training with VR counselor approval.

In approving part-time sponsorship, the VR counselor should inform the participant that part-time study may impact on their ability to complete college within the length of training allowed under NYSCB policy. If necessary, participants should be encouraged to take courses during summer session, mini-semester and intersession to complete their studies within the limits on length of training established by NYSCB.

College Training - Out-of-State/Foreign Country

College training may be sponsored in out-of-state schools. When attending an out-of-state program, participant should be advised of resources in that area such as the VR agency in that state. VR counselors maintain responsibility for service coordination and need a signed Release of Confidential Information to coordinate any needed services while attending the out-of-state program.

Students who attend college outside of New York State will receive sponsorship at the same level of financial support as they would if they attended a college within New York State.

College training in foreign countries is not sponsored by NYSCB. However, a student matriculated in an American university may participate in a semester/year abroad if required by their program. Expenses for tuition, transportation, and room and board are limited to the amount paid while the student is in the school in which they are matriculated. Excess expenses such as increased transportation costs and room and board incurred during foreign study are the responsibility of the student.

Online Degree and Certification Programs

College training through online programs may be sponsored when the VR counselor deems the program to be the most appropriate training program for the participant. The decision will be based upon the fact that

1. the training program is not available through other sources, OR
2. it is not feasible to utilize other available resources, AND
3. the training program will adequately prepare the individual to achieve their vocational goal.

This decision must be documented in a case note.

All college training needs to be provided by accredited programs. VR counselors will need to verify that the online program is accredited by a regional accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or approved by the New York State Board of Regents.

Summer, Mini-Semester or Intersession Sponsorship

Summer session, mini-semester, and/or training during intersession is only provided

1. to advance the date of completion of a program;
2. to enable a participant to complete their college program within the limits on length of training established by NYSCB;
3. to enable a participant to take required or sequential courses which would not be available at any other time;

4. as necessary, when a participant's disability restricts the number of credits to be taken per semester or trimester;
5. to enable a participant to complete a previously failed course within the time restrictions of this policy; and
6. when the program schedule includes mandatory summer courses.

Selecting A College

When selecting the most appropriate school the following questions must be addressed:

1. Will the education and training provided prepare the participant for their vocational goal?
2. Does the school meet established standards for accreditation set forth in this chapter?
3. Is the school able to accommodate any disability-related needs the participant may have?
4. Does the participant meet the school's selection criteria?

Remediation

Some participants may require remediation training to effectively participate in a college program. Efforts should be made to obtain remediation prior to entrance into a college program. When a student is receiving remediation at a college, college policy rates apply and sponsorship is contingent on economic need.

NYSCB will sponsor one semester of remediation courses. After that semester, it will be expected that the student takes at least 9 hours of credit bearing courses to qualify for sponsorship. The student will be expected to provide grades including information on credits earned, at the end of the semester. If a semester has less than 9 credit hours earned, NYSCB will not continue sponsorship. When provided with a transcript that shows that the student has completed a semester with 9 credits, sponsorship can be reinstated.

For these students, one semester of remediation will replace the trial semester utilized for students who are entering college in credit bearing programs, and will not count toward the maximum length of training allowed under NYSCB policy. After the first semester, however, semesters that include remediation courses count toward the

maximum length of college training. Therefore, this factor should be considered when approving remediation as it may affect sponsorship later on for credit bearing courses.

NYSCB will sponsor students for a semester of remediation or a trial semester but not for both.

Trial Semester

Participants can receive NYSCB sponsorship for up to one semester of part-time or full-time study as a trial semester. A trial semester will not count toward the maximum length of training allowed under NYSCB policy. College policy rates will be applied during trial semesters. Trial semesters are considered to be college training and are contingent upon economic need.

Trial semesters are appropriate when more information is needed to determine the participant's capability of successfully completing the vocational training.

If assistive technology is needed for the trial semester the VR counselor should attempt to obtain the equipment through the equipment loan closet. If the equipment is unavailable through the equipment loan closet the equipment will need to be obtained in accordance with NYSCB policy.

NYSCB will sponsor students for a semester of remediation or a trial semester but not for both.

Criteria to be Considered in Determining College Sponsorship

The following criteria will need to be considered prior to agreeing to an IPE goal that requires college training:

1. Acceptance by an accredited college or university (including junior college, community college, etc.).
2. Acceptance into a credit-bearing program operating with an open admission policy; the participant must meet the following criteria:
 - a. A high school academic average of at least a "C" (only applicable to students who have graduated within the last five years), **or**
 - b. Be deemed qualified by the VR counselor. This determination shall include consideration of the participant's scoring on college aptitude tests

and any other pertinent information available to the counselor. This determination requires senior counselor input and approval, and must be documented in the case file.

In addition, all participants must meet the following criteria:

1. Documentation of independence in mobility skills to travel to, from and about a setting similar to the proposed college environment
2. Documentation of independence in activities of daily living to care for one's daily needs on and off campus
3. Documentation of technology skills that demonstrate the ability to use any necessary adaptive equipment needed to access curriculum and complete assignments necessary to meet their educational requirements

Pre-College Programs

College students are encouraged to participate in one of the pre-college programs available in the state. These programs focus on providing students with an opportunity to learn about the college environment, develop self-advocacy skills, increase technology skills and writing and learn about their rights and responsibilities as a student with a disability. The pre-college programs help both the VR counselor and the individual discuss whether there are additional services needed before they start college.

Expectations for College Sponsorship

To continue to qualify for NYSCB sponsorship, the participant must

1. maintain adequate performance (as defined in this section),
2. continue to pursue an approved vocational goal within the context of the mutually developed IPE, and
3. be willing to participate in a minimum of two face-to-face progress reviews per academic year with a VR counselor.

Adequate Academic Performance

A student will be deemed to have maintained adequate academic performance only if, after the first two semesters of attendance, they maintain a minimum cumulative grade

point average equivalent of a C or 2.0. The student will be expected to maintain the minimum cumulative grade point average each semester thereafter.

If the cumulative grade point average falls below this level, support will continue for one semester while the student attempts to raise their grade point average. During this time, the student must be notified that they are on probationary status and the VR counselor and student should

1. address issues which may have affected their performance, and
2. reassess the appropriateness of the vocational goal and/or college as a means of obtaining that goal.

If unable to raise their grade point average after one semester with NYSCB sponsorship the VR counselor and the student should

1. reassess the appropriateness of the vocational goal and/or college as a means for achieving that goal, and
2. amend the IPE. (See Chapter 6.00, Individualized Plan for Employment.)

If the student is not interested in pursuing an alternative goal, the VR counselor must consider whether they continue to be eligible for services. NYSCB will not provide any services except counseling, guidance, evaluations and assessments until an amended IPE is developed.

The VR Counselor's Responsibilities for College Sponsorship

The VR counselor should

1. encourage the participant to seek their own admission to college,
2. offer guidance to the in selecting a particular college to obtain the education necessary to reach their vocational goal,
3. provide the information about reader's aid services (See Section 9.13, Reader Services.),
4. provide information about services available through disability resource centers on campus,
5. assess job readiness before the end of the third year of college, and
6. review the responsibilities listed below with the participant.

The Participant's Responsibilities for College Sponsorship

The participant's responsibilities are to

1. maintain adequate academic performance (as defined in this policy),
2. provide the VR counselor with copies of course grades and/or a transcript after every semester,
3. report any problems affecting their performance to the VR counselor,
4. report any anticipated changes in program to the VR counselor,
5. submit the college's billing statement to the VR counselor if NYSCB is paying for college training,
6. participate in a minimum of two face-to-face progress review meetings per academic year with the VR counselor,
7. work with the VR counselor to explore and apply for comparable benefits,
8. submit written verification of yearly application for comparable benefits funding to the VR counselor,
9. notify the VR counselor if excess financial aid is received directly from the college. The VR counselor will determine whether the funds should be refunded to NYSCB or applied to the following semester's expenses; and
10. provide the VR counselor with receipts as required in this policy.

Course Load Changes

Students should not drop credits or significantly change their curriculum without discussing this with their VR counselor. Curriculum changes may significantly alter the IPE and may make it invalid. This could result in an interruption or loss of NYSCB sponsorship.

If dropping a course reduces the number of credits to less than 12 credits for a semester, that semester is considered part-time training.

Comparable Benefits

Before NYSCB funds can be used for college training, comparable benefits available to the individual must be explored by the VR counselor. The participant and the VR counselor can work together to explore applying for alternate funding.

The participant must submit written verification of a yearly application for alternate funding. Funding sources should include but not be limited to the following:

1. Pell grant
2. Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)
3. Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)

For each application for alternate funding, the participant must submit *one* of the following to the VR counselor:

1. A copy of the award notice including the amount of the award and the starting date

OR

2. A copy of disallowance or denial of any award applied for

Notice of receipt of application is sufficient until the award/disallowance notice is received. A statement signed by the participant may be considered sufficient if they have received no other documentation.

All available comparable benefits must be applied to the costs of college training **prior to** authorizing NYSCB funds. See Chapter 11.00, Comparable Services and Benefits, for additional information.

At times, financial aid is not received prior to the provision of NYSCB sponsorship and it may be necessary for the VR counselor to authorize payment to the college to allow a student to maintain their enrollment status. In this instance, the VR counselor will need to write "less TAP and Pell" in the "Details" section of the authorization for payment. It is the student's responsibility to notify their VR counselor of any excess financial aid they receive directly, and it will be determined whether it is to be refunded to NYSCB or applied to the following semester's expenses.

Exception to Comparable Benefits Rule

Monetary awards or scholarships based on merit from civic, professional or social organizations are **not** considered as grants or comparable benefits as long as no

restrictions are placed by the organization on the use of the money. Even if the award is designated for general educational purposes, it is not considered a comparable benefit. If the money is specifically earmarked for tuition or particular college expenses, it is then considered an available resource and comparable benefit that may replace or reduce the NYSCB contribution to college expenses.

Guidelines for Application of Comparable Benefits

TAP should be applied to tuition.

The Pell Grant may be applied first toward the actual cost of room and board or tuition, whichever is to the greater financial benefit of the student. If a student receives an SEOG grant it is applied the same way as the Pell Grant. The balance of the grant should be applied toward the following:

1. College fees
2. Books
3. Equipment
4. Transportation
5. Maintenance and/or
6. Other college expenses

The Responsibilities of the College and NYSCB in Providing Comparable Benefits

Both NYSCB and colleges receiving federal funds are authorized and/or obligated to provide necessary services, such as interpreter services or other auxiliary aids, to allow each student to participate effectively in the college program. As both entities must conserve fiscal resources, it is important that NYSCB and the colleges negotiate on a case-by-case basis, to agree upon those services to be provided, and how to coordinate and pay for those services. In some instances, the college will routinely provide all needed services and accommodations. Other times, NYSCB and the college will agree to share costs.

Negotiations between NYSCB and Colleges

The VR counselor should work together with the student and a representative of the college to determine the nature and needs of the student regarding their academic activities. Once these services are identified, the college and NYSCB should decide how to provide and pay for those services. In most instances, these discussions will take place between the VR counselor and the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at the college.

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Whenever possible, the VR counselor should schedule these discussions prior to the beginning of the semester, so that arrangements will be in place when classes begin. Prior to discussion, the VR counselor should review the college's web site to determine what support services are customarily provided to students with disabilities.

In most instances, it is expected that the DRC will coordinate provision of the agreed upon services. Any discussions and resulting understandings must be documented in the case record.

Dispute Resolution between NYSCB and the College

If both parties cannot reach agreement within 20 days, the issue should be directed to the district manager for resolution with the college ADA Compliance Officer (if that is not the same as the DRC coordinator, or if it is, then the next level supervisor at the college).

If an agreement cannot be reached by the date classes begin, NYSCB will provide the necessary services and accommodations for that semester to avoid delays in the student's participation in college. NYSCB will continue to negotiate with the college regarding responsibilities for future semesters.

Student Responsibilities

In researching potential colleges, participants should learn what services and auxiliary aids are available from the college to meet their disability-related needs. This information may be key in selecting a college to attend.

At the time of acceptance to the college, the participant should submit any required applications and documentation to meet eligibility requirements for the disability resource center. The VR counselor may be asked to forward the certificate of legal blindness, or other disability documentation to the DRC.

Comparable Benefits - Defaulted Student Loan

To receive a grant, loan or work assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, a participant must not owe on grants previously received or be in default on any student loan. The limitation applies to provision of financial assistance for post-secondary

education by VR agencies to participants who have been refused grant awards because they defaulted on student loans. Since NYSCB requires that participants make every attempt to secure comparable benefits, a participant who has defaulted on a student loan should proceed to clear their default status prior to applying for financial assistance.

Determination of Default Status

In most instances, a VR counselor will be able to determine whether a participant is in default status from the grant award notice.

If a participant has been denied a grant, then the award notice will indicate whether the denial was based upon default status.

If a participant has not yet received award notification the VR counselor may base their determination upon a statement, signed by the participant, that they are not in default status.

Clearing Defaulted Loan Status

For the Perkins Loan program, a participant is no longer in default if

1. all past-due amounts have been repaid, cancelled, or deferred;
2. their loan has been discharged in bankruptcy; or
3. they have entered into a new repayment agreement for the loan.

For the Guaranteed Student Loan program, a participant may no longer be in default status if

1. the loan holder provides certification that the borrower has made satisfactory arrangements to repay the defaulted loan and is now eligible for Title IV funds; or
2. the loan is discharged in bankruptcy.

Implications for NYSCB Sponsorship

Prior to obtaining NYSCB sponsorship for college training, participants who are in default of a loan must arrange to clear their defaulted status. A participant who chooses not to repay a loan although financially able to do so is not eligible to receive NYSCB sponsorship for college training. In this instance the participant is not taking advantage of a comparable benefit or service that is available.

Inability to Repay

In some instances, a true hardship situation may arise where a participant has limited or no financial resources available and cannot work out a satisfactory repayment agreement with the lender, despite responsible repayment efforts. In such instances, it may be concluded that the participant has made maximum efforts to secure grant assistance and that comparable benefits and services are not available. The VR counselor should determine the appropriateness of VR assistance on an individual basis after careful examination of all the circumstances involving a participant's default status and financial situation.

College Related Services - Contingent Upon Economic Need

The college-related services listed below are contingent upon economic need.

1. Tuition in accordance with the rates in this chapter
2. Required college fees including but not limited to
 - a. application fees (limited to three applications),
 - b. aptitude test fees,
 - c. student activity fees,
 - d. college fees,
 - e. laboratory fees,
 - f. library fees,
 - g. health insurance fees (unless the individual has other medical coverage which would apply while in college), and
 - h. graduation fees.
3. Room and board in accordance with the rates and guidelines on in this section
4. Security deposits in accordance with the guidelines in Section 9.06, Maintenance
5. Books and supplies in accordance with the guidelines and rates in this chapter
6. Equipment in accordance with Sections 9.04, Assistive Technology Services and 9.05, Assistive Technology Devices
7. Transportation in accordance with the guidelines and rates in this section and Section 9.07, Transportation

College-Related Services - Not Contingent Upon Economic Need

The college related services listed below are not contingent upon economic need.

1. Reader services for individuals not eligible for the State Education Department Reader's Aid Program or as a supplement to such funds (See Section 9.13, Reader Services)
2. tutoring assistance
3. personal assistance services (See Section 9.14, Personal Assistance Services)

Temporary Exception to Economic Need for Certain Students

Many high school and post-secondary education students are not able to meet NYSCB economic need criteria because their parents' income is too high. When they reach their 18th birthday, they can apply for SSI benefits; and if found eligible for SSI will meet economic need.

Allowing temporary exceptions will

- provide a standardized method for providing equity for students negatively affected by the economic need policy based on their date of birth, and
- allow students expected to qualify for SSI benefits to receive the supports they need to succeed in post-secondary education.

Some students do not turn 18 early enough to qualify for SSI and services contingent on economic need prior to the start of college, vocational, technical or business school training. The process of assessing assistive technology needs, purchasing the technology, and training the student may take several months. As a result, students who do not turn 18 until shortly before or after the start of their first semester may begin their post-secondary education without assistive technology and the skills to use the technology. In addition, their parents pay full costs for tuition, room and board, and books and supplies that are also contingent on economic need.

The temporary exception will only apply to students prior to the time they become eligible to apply for SSI benefits on their own (before their 18th birthday). A student who is over age 18 who has not yet applied for SSI will only qualify under this policy on a case-by-case basis after a review of the individual circumstances by the NYSCB district manager.

The decision to allow the temporary exception will be made by the VR counselor after receipt of the required documentation, a determination that the student meets the requirements noted below and a determination that the student is likely to qualify for SSI on their 18th birthday.

To meet the requirements for the temporary exception, the student must

1. not meet economic need due to family resources,
2. be at least in the second half of their senior year of high school (applies to the provision of high-tech equipment),
3. not be eligible to apply for SSI benefits on their own early enough to determine if they meet economic need and obtain equipment for college training or qualify for NYSCB funding for tuition, room and board and books and supplies, and
4. provide proof of application for SSI benefits or, confirm their intent to apply for SSI benefits when they turn 18. The confirmation must be verified in writing by the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).

Once the VR counselor determines that the student meets the requirements for the temporary exception, high-tech equipment can be purchased and provided as a loan and tuition, room and board and books and supplies can be paid to the student's school for one semester.

An assistive technology assessment, training, equipment, tuition, room and board and books and supplies will be provided in accordance with NYSCB policy. An assistive technology assessment and training may take place prior to the second half of the student's senior year because they are services that are not contingent on economic need.

NYSCB reserves the right to reclaim equipment provided to students who are denied SSI benefits and who have exhausted all appeals for reconsideration of their application for SSI benefits. NYSCB will not provide tuition, room and board and books and supplies for a student who has been denied SSI benefits and does not meet economic need. If the student is in the process of appealing the decision, these services will continue to be paid by NYSCB.

Tuition Expenses - Academic Year

For students who meet economic need, NYSCB will pay actual tuition costs (after the application of all comparable benefits) up to the rates established by the State University of New York (SUNY).

Examples of Payment of Tuition

The following examples illustrate application of NYSCB tuition allowance:

Example 1: An undergraduate's tuition costs for an in-state private school are \$3,500/year. She receives an \$800 TAP award. NYSCB will pay the remaining tuition up to the undergraduate tuition rate established by SUNY.

Example 2: A regular graduate student's tuition costs are \$15,400/year. He receives a \$400 grant award. NYSCB will pay the remaining tuition up to the graduate tuition rate established by SUNY.

Tuition Expenses – Part -Time Study, Summer Session, Mini-Semester

For students who meet economic need, NYSCB will pay actual tuition cost, up to the credit hour rate established by SUNY. The maximum tuition rates for part-time, summer session, mini-semester and/or intersession will be applied on a pro-rata basis.

Undergraduates - for students taking fewer credits than the equivalent of a full-time semester (e.g., less than 12 credits) NYSCB will pay actual tuition costs up to the credit hour rate established by SUNY.

Graduates - for students taking fewer credits than the equivalent of a full-time semester (e.g., less than 12 credits) NYSCB will pay actual tuition costs up to the credit hour rate established by SUNY.

Tuition during summer-session, mini-semester and/or intersession is provided in addition to the maximum amount of funding per academic year.

Tuition for part-time study is included in the maximum per academic year.

Residential Statuses

COMMUTING STUDENT – a student who lives within a 20-mile radius or within one and one-half hours of travel who resides at home while attending a college program.

RESIDENTIAL STUDENT – a student residing in a college dormitory while attending a college program.

OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT – a student who must live away from home to attend a college program and who is living in an apartment or other residence off campus.

Room and Board - Commuting Students

NYSCB will not pay room and board expenses for commuting students. Room and board expenses are only allowable to pay additional costs incurred while participating in VR services.

Determining When an Individual is Considered to be a Commuting Student

The following guidelines are to be used to determine when a student is considered to be a commuting student.

If the student lives within a 20-mile radius or within one and one-half hours of travel time each way from the school and adequate transportation is available, then they should be considered a commuting student.

Students who meet the criteria listed above are not eligible to receive room and board payment if they choose to live away from home. Students who live more than one and one-half hours of travel time each way from the school or beyond the 20-mile radius can choose to live at home. These students are also considered commuting students.

Exception, Commuting Students

In some instances, even though a student lives within commuting distance of a school and adequate transportation is available, the student's home environment may seriously interfere with their ability to participate in college training. In such situations, if the VR counselor believes that it is in the student's best interest to reside on campus, the VR counselor can request that an exception be made. Exceptions may only be made on an individual basis with supervisory approval and appropriate documentation in the case record.

Room and Board and Transportation Expenses - Academic Year

NYSCB will pay room and board expenses to students who meet economic need in accordance with the following rules and guidelines.

Residential and Off-Campus Students

For students residing in a dormitory on campus or residing off campus, the VR

Counselor will authorize room and board and transportation, up to the established

maximums, as follows:

NYSCB will pay actual room and board and day-to-day transportation costs needed to attend college up to a maximum of \$4,500 per semester/\$9,000 per academic year. The student must provide documentation of actual room costs (a college bill for residential students; a copy of the lease agreement or a written statement from the landlord specifying the number of individuals sharing the living space and either a receipt from the landlord for the student's portion of the rent or a copy of the cancelled check payable to the landlord). Meals are calculated at the rate of \$450/month. This amount should be prorated during months when school is not in session for the entire month. This meal payment rate can also be used for students living on campus who do not participate in a meal plan. Room and board can also be authorized during school holidays if the student remains at the school during holidays. This documentation must be kept in the student's case record.

If the student is not purchasing a meal plan but is being provided a meal allowance, the VR counselor can pay a maximum of \$450/month (not to exceed the maximum allowable payment of \$4,500 per semester/\$9,000 per academic year for room and board) of school attendance based on the beginning and end dates of the semester. These dates must be entered in the "Details" section of the authorization.

Additional funds for day-to-day transportation can be provided if needed and the student demonstrates that the payment from NYSCB, and from Pell and SSI, for those that receive those benefits, does not cover the cost of their room, board and transportation.

Specific Guidelines

Commuting Students - Transportation

Since it is understood that students must not only attend classes, but also use the library, meet with instructors and access laboratories or other special facilities, counselors may assume that the student usually attends the college program five days per week. The number of days of class attendance per week should not be shown on the authorization.

For commuting students, the VR counselor will authorize the actual cost of public transportation or mileage for one roundtrip per day between the student's home and the college program, five days per week, except when the school is closed. See transportation guidelines below.

Transportation

For students who meet economic need, NYSCB will pay the actual cost or common carrier rate (bus, train, air) of transportation to school at the beginning of the semester or trimester and travel from school to home at the end of the semester or trimester. Exceptions will only be granted for emergency travel due to the death or serious illness of a member of the student's immediate family.

VR counselors should note that transportation services may not be authorized for holiday travel.

Room and Board Expenses - Part-Time Study, Summer Session, Mini-Semester, Intersession

NYSCB will pay room and board expenses to students who meet economic need in accordance with the following rules and guidelines.

Residential and Off-Campus Students - The maximum rates for room and board for individuals attending college for summer session, mini-semester or intersession will be applied on a pro-rata basis. NYSCB will pay room and board expenses up to a maximum of \$250 per week.

Example: A student who attends a college during a 6-week intersession can receive a maximum of \$1,500 for room and board expenses.

Room and Board Expense Waiver

The maximum limits for room and board may be waived by the district manager if room and board is provided in place of more expensive, special transportation for students who are eligible for special transportation. This waiver may be obtained only if

1. the student is eligible for special transportation;
2. the student has medical documentation to substantiate the fact that public transportation cannot be used due to the severity of their disability;
3. the VR counselor has determined that the student can function adequately while living on campus; and
4. it has been demonstrated that the cost of living on campus is equal to, or less than, providing special transportation. The costs of living on campus must

include dormitory fees, attendant services, special campus transportation, necessary room modifications, adaptive devices and any other costs incurred by the student. These costs must be detailed in writing by the VR counselor and compared to the estimated potential cost of special transportation for the same period of time.

Documenting the Waiver

Documentation to support the waiver must be prepared prior to the approval of the IPE. This documentation must be filed in the case record.

Schools with Support Services Included in the Cost

NYSCB will pay the full cost of room and board as charged by the college, when support services, such as interpreter services, are provided by the college without charge and the cost of room and board is less than the amount NYSCB would have paid for those same support services at other colleges.

NYSCB will contribute the current SUNY rate toward the cost of tuition, the required fees and books and the full amount of room and board when it is appropriate and cost effective. If the student chooses to live off campus, NYSCB will pay up to the full amount of the on-campus room and board costs less comparable benefits.

Equipment

For students who meet economic need, NYSCB will purchase all equipment necessary for the student to participate in their college program in accordance with NYSCB policy. The need for all equipment purchased must be documented in the case record.

Books and Supplies Expense

NYSCB will purchase books and supplies for students who meet economic need in accordance with the following rates and guidelines.

Books - NYSCB will purchase required reading books and supplies for students to participate in their college program. The need for the books purchased must be documented in the case record.

Supplies - NYSCB may authorize up to \$300 per academic year for supplies necessary for the student to participate in their college program. The need for supplies purchased must be documented in a case note.

When this amount is insufficient for certain college courses (e.g., photography, commercial art), additional funds may be provided with documentation of the need for additional supplies from the school or instructor and senior counselor approval.

Supplies Expenses - Part-Time Study, Summer Session, Mini-Semester, Intersession

The allowance for supplies for students attending college for part-time study, summer session, mini-semester, and intersession will be applied on a prorated basis.

For students taking fewer credits than the equivalent of a full-time semester (e.g., less than 12 credits) NYSCB will pay the actual cost of supplies up to a maximum of \$15.00 per credit.

Example: A student who attends a three-credit course during intersession can receive a maximum of \$45.00 for supplies.

Supplies purchased during summer session, mini-semester and intersession will be in addition to the maximum per academic year. Supplies purchased for part-time study are included in the maximum per year. In no instance shall total support per session or semester for supplies exceed half the maximum rate for an academic year.

Background

Vocational, Technical and Business Schools are private, profit or nonprofit schools that offer training in a variety of occupations. The programs typically award a recognized certification or credential upon successful completion of the training.

Selecting a Program

The following questions must be addressed when considering the most appropriate training program:

1. Will the training provided prepare the participant for the employment they seek?
2. Is the program approved by The State Education Department's (SED) Bureau of Proprietary School Supervision (BPSS). All business schools, trade schools and computer training facilities must be licensed or registered by BPSS to verify appropriate standards are met.
3. Is the program willing and able to accommodate any disability-related needs the participant may have?
4. Can the participant meet the program's selection criteria?

Online and Certification Programs

Online and certification training programs or courses offered by the schools, may be utilized by after consideration of the participant's needs and the ability of the school to prepare the participant to achieve the selected employment outcome. All training must be provided by BPSS approved programs.

Training through online programs may be sponsored when the VR counselor deems the program to be the most appropriate training program for the participant. The decision will be based upon the fact that

1. the training program is not available through other sources, OR
2. it is not feasible to utilize other available resources, AND
3. the training program will adequately prepare the participant to achieve his/her vocational goal.

This decision must be documented in a case note.

Part-Time Training

Participants are expected to enroll in full-time training. Where available, a part-time program may be utilized if the presence of another disability(ies) prevents the participant from engaging in full-time training. Documentation to support the waiver must be included in the case record and approved by the senior counselor or district manager.

Out-of-State Programs

Vocational, technical and business school training may be sponsored in out-of-state schools. When participants are attending an out-of-state program, they should be advised of resources in that area such as the VR agency in that state. VR counselors maintain responsibility for service coordination and need a signed Release of Confidential Information to coordinate any needed services while attending the out-of-state program. Participants who attend a program outside of New York State will receive sponsorship at the same level of financial support as they would if they attended a program within New York State.

In addition, to these factors, the factors listed under "Selecting A Program" must be considered when choosing an out-of-state school. Programs must be approved by similar entities in the other state.

Rates for Training

NYSCB will pay the full cost of tuition and fees after applicable comparable benefits have been deducted.

Economic Need

Sponsorship for training in vocational, technical or business schools is contingent upon economic need. See Chapter 5.00, Determination of Economic Need, for additional information.

Comparable Benefits

Many schools provide student financial aid. Participants must apply for Pell grants where applicable and explore other comparable benefits which may be available to them.

Introduction

Other academic training is training on a secondary educational level or lower. Other academic training is provided to improve a participant's academic functioning and provide specific vocational skills in accordance with an approved IPE.

Other Academic Training Services

Other academic training includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Adult basic education courses
2. English as a Second Language
3. High school equivalency programs
4. Tutorial services
5. Vocational training in specific occupations provided by the Board of Cooperative Educational Systems (BOCES).

BOCES Programs

Individuals up to age 21, may be eligible to participate in BOCES programs offered by the local school board. These programs are available without cost to NYSCB. Some BOCES programs offer adult education courses in the evening at a cost to the individual.

Reports

The VR counselor should obtain periodic written reports on the student's progress in training. The reports should contain

1. the period of time covered,
2. services or coursework provided,
3. summary of progress,
4. comments or concerns,
5. recommendations, and
6. test scores and/or certification of completion.

OTHER ACADEMIC TRAINING

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Economic Need

Academic training services are not contingent on a participant's economic need status. See Chapter 5.00, Determination of Economic Need, for additional information.

Comparable Benefits

Many training services in this category are provided by school systems at no cost. Other available comparable benefits must be used when appropriate. See Chapter 11.00, Comparable Service and Benefits, for additional information.

Introduction

Work experience is training provided by an employer (including not-for-profit employers such as community rehabilitation programs and independent living centers) to an NYSCB participant who is not currently employed and has not been promised a job by the employer.

Purpose of a Work Experience

The purpose of a work experience is to provide

1. the participant with an understanding of the work environment and job responsibilities,
2. the participant with specific work skills and experience, and
3. information on how the participant performs in the work setting.

Work experience differs from on-the job training (OJT) in that it is not intended as training in a specific job and does not require a commitment by the employer to hire the participant. A work experience is a time-limited experience that contributes to the participant's overall career development by giving hands on experience in a particular field and allowing a participant insight into their skills and work tolerance.

Examples of Work Experiences

Examples of work experiences:

1. An employer who trains a high school student during summer break on office skills
2. An established vending stand operator who provides a brief exposure to employment in the Business Enterprise Program
3. An employer who trains a recent college graduate in the field of market research and analysis

Selecting a Work Experience Site

When selecting a work experience site, the VR counselor, employer and participant should consider the participant's skills, interests and abilities. In addition, the training should give a clear description of job duties and training objectives.

Duration

Duration should be sufficient for the participant to acquire general work skills and experience, and for others to assess how the participant performs in a work setting. Work experiences should be for a minimum of 20 hours/week and should not exceed three months. A senior counselor or district manager may approve an extension of the work experience if information gathered during a three-month period is insufficient to reach a conclusion about the participant's abilities or if an extension of the work experience is likely to result in employment at the same work site. The total of all work experiences for a participant during one case opening may not exceed 1040 hours.

See the Comprehensive Services Contract (CSC) Guidelines for additional information.

NYSCB Financial Support for Work Experiences

Work experiences may be supported by NYSCB through the authorization of

1. job coaching services in support of a work experience (See Section 10.07, Job Coaching, for additional information);
2. reimbursement to the employer or community rehabilitation partner for training expenses (wages); and
3. a training stipend to the participant to cover work related expenses (e.g., maintenance/transportation) when a participant is not paid wages by the employer.

Wage Reimbursement

Whenever possible, efforts should be made to provide a paid work experience where wages are paid by the employer or through a comparable benefit such as workforce development funding sources. If these options are not available, the VR counselor may arrange to reimburse an employer for wages paid to a participant during a work experience.

Wage reimbursement can be arranged directly with an employer or through a community rehabilitation program (CRP) that is providing work experience services to NYSCB participants. Wages should not be authorized by NYSCB directly to a participant.

Work Experience and Job Coaching

Wage reimbursement and job coaching services may be authorized simultaneously in situations where the VR counselor has determined that job coaching services are necessary for the individual to benefit from the work experience. The VR counselor must clearly distinguish between the training role of the employer and the training role of the job coach. The job coach should be used to support the employer and participant during the work experience but must not serve as a substitute for the training and supervisory responsibilities of the employer. For example, the employer may provide a participant with regular training sessions during initial weeks on the job. The job coach would reinforce the training provided by the employer. The job coach can assist the employer with an understanding of adaptive equipment or reasonable accommodations needed by the individual.

Work Experience Agreements

When wage reimbursement is authorized by NYSCB, the following information must be documented in the Work Experience Training Agreement and in a case note:

1. A clear description of the participant's job duties and a plan for training the participant
2. Agreement from the employer to allow the VR counselor to monitor the work experience and to send periodic written progress reports for inclusion in the participant's case record
3. The employer or CRP will place the participant on their payroll and pay the participant at the current hourly rate received by other employees in the same job. The employer or CRP will assure that the participant will be covered under Workers' Compensation, Social Security and Unemployment Insurance.
4. The employer or CRP will agree that all federal and state standards for wage hours and safety are met.

Progress Reports

For all work experiences, the employer or community rehabilitation partner must share information for the duration of the experience and complete reports on the participant's progress during the work experience in accordance with the Comprehensive Services Contract Guidelines.

Impact on Social Security Benefits

Earnings from a work experience training may have an impact on a participant's Social Security Disability (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Earnings from a work experience training may count toward a trial work period and toward a determination by SSA of whether the participant is earning at the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level. Participants should be advised to inform the Social Security Administration (SSA) that the monies received during a work experience training include a subsidy (percentage contributed by NYSCB).

Each determination made by SSA is made on an individual case basis. VR counselors should assist participants in determining the impact of the work experience training on their benefits through contact with the SSA (web address www.SSA.gov) or through benefits advisement services provided by independent living centers, career centers, and other community resources.

Introduction

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is specific training, provided in an actual work setting by an employer, for the job which the participant is hired. It includes a commitment by the employer to retain the participant as an employee, after successful completion of training, if the participant is meeting the essential performance standards of the job. An OJT can be authorized for any employer willing and able to train and hire the participant except where the employer is an immediate relative of the individual (spouse, parent, stepparent, grandparent, foster parent, child, sibling or in-law).

Development of OJTs

The OJT can be developed through a variety of strategies including: cold calling prospective employers who hire in the participant's desired area of employment; following up on job leads; or working in collaboration with a local Career Center. The participant should work closely with the VR counselor during this development and play an active role in identifying potential employment sites.

Determining the Length of Training

Once it has been determined that there is a viable job offer and that the participant is an appropriate candidate for OJT length of time required for training should be discussed. The following factors should be considered when determining the length of training:

1. The time required to train other employees engaged in the same occupation
2. The complexity or uniqueness of the job duties
3. The participant's skill level and experience

OJT is generally limited to a maximum of six months. OJTs beyond this period may be developed with district manager approval when specialized, complex or unique training requires more training time.

Training Fee Contribution

As an incentive to provide OJT, the employer is partially reimbursed by NYSCB for training expenses. Typically, NYSCB reimburses the employer at the wage rate of the trainee for a portion of the time spent on the job. As an alternative to this method, NYSCB may provide partial reimbursement based on the wage of the employee who will be doing the hands-on training. As necessary, customary wages for certain positions may be verified through the New York State Department of Labor.

NYSCB's contribution to the training fee must be made in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. The level and percentage of the training fee is to be negotiated by the VR counselor with the employer and is intended to help offset loss of production time of the trainer(s).
2. The VR counselor should encourage the employer to contribute an increasing portion of the training costs thereby demonstrating their commitment to retaining the trainee.
3. The contribution made by NYSCB can vary among OJT situations, but can be reduced over time as the trainee becomes more proficient in the skills required to achieve a competitive level of performance; the contribution made by NYSCB will not exceed 50 percent of the training costs as computed over the duration of the training period.
4. Specific performance criteria to measure progress should be outlined for each phase of the estimated training hours that will be purchased through the OJT.

The OJT Agreement

The VR counselor must complete the OJT agreement in CIS. The agreement includes the following:

1. Start date, title, salary and hours
2. An assurance by the employer that the participant will be covered under Workers' Compensation, Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, Minimum Wage Law, IRS Withholding and any other usual employee benefits
3. Duration of training and the schedule for the NYSCB and employer contributions to the training costs
4. Reporting requirements for progress and payment

The employer must acknowledge the terms of the OJT in writing and indicate their commitment to retain the participant after the training period.

Example of an OJT Agreement

Example: An OJT Agreement is negotiated with an employer to train a participant to work as a mechanic. The participant, prior to losing his sight was an automotive repairperson. The employer agreed to hire the participant at a salary of \$800.00/week for a twelve-week training period. The VR counselor and employer negotiated to share the participant's training costs in accordance with the following schedule:

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1st four weeks: Employer Share - \$200/week (25%)
 NYSCB Share - \$600/week (75%) = \$2,400

2nd four weeks: Employer Share - \$400/week (50%)
 NYSCB Share - \$400/week (50%) = \$1,600

3rd four weeks: Employer Share - \$600/week (75%)
 NYSCB Share - \$200/week (25%) = \$ 800

NYSCB cost for the OJT = \$4,800

Payment for OJT is made directly to the employer.

Follow-up

The VR counselor is responsible for maintaining close contact with the participant, the job developer and the employer during the OJT to provide assistance and enable the participant to successfully complete the OJT.

Impact on Social Security Benefits

Earnings from an OJT typically have an impact on a participant's Social Security Disability (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Earnings from an OJT will count toward a trial work period and toward a determination by the Social Security Administration (SSA) of whether the participant is earning at the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level. Participants should be advised to inform SSA that the monies received during OJT include a subsidy (percentage contributed by NYSCB).

Each determination made by SSA is made on an individual case basis. VR counselor s should assist in determining the impact of the OJT on benefits through contact with the SSA (web address www.SSA.gov) or through benefits advisement services provided by independent living centers, career centers, and other community resources.

Moving to Status 22

A participant's case should be moved into Status 22 at the end of the established training period if all criteria for Status 22 are met. See Chapter 2.00, VR Process, for additional information.

Introduction

Work-Try-Out (WTO) offers an employer wage reimbursement while the potential employer and the job candidate assess whether the position is a good match. WTO requires an employer to put a participant on their payroll and there is an expectation to retain the participant if they meet the essential performance functions of the job. WTO differs from OJT in that it is not tied to specific formal training for a position. A WTO can be authorized for any employer willing and able to try-out and hire the individual except where the employer is an immediate relative of the individual (spouse, parent, stepparent, grandparent, foster parent, child, sibling or in-law).

Development of WTOs

The WTO can be developed through a variety of strategies including: cold calling prospective employers who hire in the individual's desired area of employment; following up on job leads; or working in collaboration with a local Career Center. The individual should work closely with the counselor during this development and play an active role in identifying potential employment sites.

Determining the Length of Training

Once it has been determined that there is a viable position and that the individual is an appropriate candidate for a WTO, length of time required for the WTO should be discussed. The complexity or uniqueness of the job duties as well as the skill level and experience of the individual should be considered in determining the length of training.

WTO is generally limited to a maximum of three months or 480 hours. WTOs beyond this period may be developed with district manager approval when specialized, complex or unique training requires more training time.

WTO Wage Reimbursement

NYSCB reimburses the business 100% of the employee's wages only. The business is expected to place the individual on the pay roll and assure that the individual is covered under Worker's Compensation, Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, Minimum Wage Law, IRS withholding and any other usual employee benefits.

The WTO Agreement

The NYSCB counselor must complete the WTO agreement in CIS. The agreement includes the following:

1. Start date, title, salary and hours
2. An assurance by the employer that the participant will be covered under Workers' Compensation, Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, Minimum Wage Law, IRS Withholding and any other usual employee benefits
3. Duration of training and the schedule for the NYSCB and employer contributions to the training costs
4. Reporting requirements for progress and payment

Follow-up

The counselor is responsible for maintaining close contact with the individual, the job developer and the employer during the WTO to provide assistance and promote the individual to successfully complete the WTO.

Impact on Social Security Benefits

Earnings from an WTO typically have an impact on an individual's Social Security Disability (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Earnings from a WTO will count toward a trial work period and toward a determination by SSA of whether the individual is earning at the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level. Individuals should be advised to inform Social Security that the monies received during WTO include a subsidy (contributions by NYSCB).

Each determination made by SSA is made on an individual case basis. Counselors should assist in determining the impact of the WTO on benefits through contact with the Social Security Administration (web address www.SSA.gov) or through benefits advisement services provided by independent living centers, career centers, and other community resources.

Moving to Status 22

An individual's case should be moved into Status 22 at the end of the established WTO period if all criteria for Status 22 are met. (See Chapter 2.00, VR Process.)

Introduction

Job coaching refers to the training of an employee by an approved job coach who uses structured intervention techniques to support the employee to learn job tasks to the employer's specifications and to learn the interpersonal skills necessary to interact appropriately with co-workers and supervisors. Job coaches can reinforce skills learned during orientation and mobility training and vision rehabilitation therapy and make recommendations to the VR counselor if there is a need for further training.

Family members (as defined in Section 9.12, Services to Family Members) may not be used as job coaches.

Benefits of Job Coaching

Through job coaching, a qualified job coach works directly with an individual with a disability in a training or placement site to help them learn

1. the specific requirements of the job,
2. work-related activities and requirements such as time and attendance rules, and
3. appropriate work-related (including social) behaviors when dealing with supervisors and co-workers.

Placing an individual directly in a job with the hands-on assistance of a job coach ensures that

1. vocational and interpersonal skills can be evaluated early in the placement process and are based on actual, not projected or simulated experience,
2. the individual is able to receive immediate feedback, assistance, and follow-up from the job coach, and
3. an employer is able to take on and observe the progress of the individual without a full commitment of personnel resources.

Job Coaching as a Support Service

While job coaching is often associated with supported employment, it can be provided as a VR service to participants who do not have a goal of supported employment, e.g., for a participant who requires some coaching for a particular job but does not require coaching throughout their entire work life.

Participants who do require job coaching for their entire work life should be considered for supported employment services.

JOB COACHING

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When the VR counselor can document specific services that the job coach will provide that will be different from those by the training provider, job coaching may also be provided in conjunction with the following:

1. On-the-job training (OJT)
2. Work experience training
3. Work try-out (WTO)
4. Paid internship

Job coaching may not be provided in conjunction with a vocational assessment or vocational training purchased through a community rehabilitation program.

Job Coaching During On-the-Job Training

To justify the provision of job coaching in support of OJT, a clear distinction must be made between

1. the training the employer will provide (usually specific job skill training provided to any new employee), and
2. the activities of the job coach such as
 - a. advocacy,
 - b. task analysis,
 - c. developing necessary job accommodations, and
 - d. teaching appropriate work behaviors and interpersonal skills.

When job coaching is provided in support of OJT, this factor should be considered in negotiating the employer contribution. It is anticipated that provision of job coaching services will result in a shorter period of OJT or a greater employer contribution early in the training period.

Job Coach Rate

Job coach services should be authorized to community rehabilitation programs and private vendors in accordance with the current Comprehensive Services Contract (CSC) and rates in CIS.

A job coach provided by an ACCES-VR approved vendor will be paid according to ACCES-VR established rates.

Job Coach Resources

VR counselors can locate job coaches through contacts within their offices and/or through private agencies for the blind. VR counselors can also contact the local ACCES-VR, OPWDD and OMH offices to identify job coaches.

Duration of Job Coaching Services

Job coaching is not intended to be a long-term intervention. The duration should be determined on a case by case basis based on the needs of the participant and their goal. The need for job coaching services will be reduced as the participant gains skills and independence. If job coaching is needed for more than three months, district manager approval is required.

Consideration should always be given to whether job coaching is required to enable the participant to be successful; it should **not** be provided routinely.

Authorizations

Authorizations for job coaching should be issued directly to the community rehabilitation program providing the job coach services.

When using private vendors, authorizations are issued directly to the job coach.

When a job coach is used for more than one participant, the job coach cannot be paid for more hours than the actual number of hours worked. VR counselors should coordinate with each other to verify that the coach is only paid for the total number of hours they work.

Each participant's authorization should be billed proportionately to the number of hours of individual job coaching directly received. If this cannot be determined, billing should be based upon the average number of hours provided to each participant (e.g., a participant in a work crew of six persons can be expected to receive 1/6 of the total hours of coaching provided to the crew).

VR Counselor Responsibility

It is the VR counselor's responsibility to do the following:

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1. Determine where a job coach may be effective in providing training or in helping a participant achieve competitive employment.
2. Review each employment opportunity and determine the appropriateness of the job and the use of the job coach.

Consideration should include the:

- a. type of work,
 - b. location,
 - c. hours,
 - d. potential intensity of support needed,
 - e. employer's willingness to have a job coach on-site,
 - f. individual's willingness to have a job coach,
 - g. employer's willingness to accept increased supervisory role as the job coach fades, and
 - h. the potential the experience offers for direct placement or transferable skills.
3. Determine if a job coach is available.
 4. Meet with the job coach and schedule times for the VR counselor and the job coach to meet with the participant, visit the job site and speak with the employer, or representative.
 5. Monitor progress through scheduled reports from the job coach and regular contact with the job coach, the participant and the employer.

Job Coach Responsibilities

The job coach is responsible for intensive on-site training. When a compatible job match is made between the employer and the participant, the job coach performs several activities before the participant starts at the job site including the following:

1. Learning about specific job requirements and duties by spending as much time as necessary at the job site
2. Preparing detailed job and task analyses, for the VR counselor, to serve as the basis for developing training strategies

JOB COACHING

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Once the participant begins the job, the job coach uses structured training techniques for teaching the following:

- a. Job-performance skills such as sequence, quality and quantity
- b. Job-related skills such as grooming, socializing with co-workers, accepting supervision or managing one's paycheck

The job coach promotes success of the placement by

- a. providing advocacy at the work site,
- b. providing advocacy in the participant's residence or community,
- c. assisting in travel training by reinforcing travel skills taught by an O&M instructor,
- d. continually evaluating and monitoring the participant's performance and progress, and
- e. fading as the participant becomes more proficient and requires less job coaching.

Monitoring and Reporting

The VR counselor is responsible for monitoring the provision and adequacy of the job coaching services. To accomplish this, the VR counselor should have direct contact with the participant, job coach and employer.

To assist in the monitoring activity, the job coach is required to submit a report to the CRP and/or VR counselor (see recommended report format in this section, ACCES-VR approved report can also be used).

Post-Employment Services

Job coaching services as described above may be conducted on a time-limited basis (up to 50 hours) under Post Employment Services.

JOB COACHING SERVICES REPORT

Participant's Name: _____ **Start Date:** _____

Job Site: _____ **Report Date:** _____

Position: _____ **Work Schedule:** _____

Job Coach: _____

Number of Job Coaching hours provided this report period: _____

1. Training objectives for this period:

2. Progress on training objectives:

3. Objectives for the next training period:

Job Coach/Community Employment Specialist

Introduction

Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) is a comprehensive service that involves the provision of training to assist the individual to achieve their maximum level of functioning in the areas of: manual dexterity; communication; orientation to home or work environment; home management; personal management and use of low vision aids and other adaptive devices. These services are customarily provided in the individual's home, at a private agency serving individuals who are blind, in a school setting or other community setting.

See the *Comprehensive Services Contract (CSC) Guidelines* for additional information about the provision of VRT services.

Scope of Services

Communication training may include braille and or large print or other preferred communication mode; the ability to use the telephone, including number retrieval; skills in such functions as note-taking, message retrieval, record keeping, typing, labeling, and organizing information; and the ability to use communication devices, including but not limited to, keyboard, recording/playback devices, calculator, or electronic notetaking devices.

Home management will include training in meal planning and preparation, use of appliances and utensils, food storage and organization, and home cleaning, organization and safety.

Personal management includes training in personal grooming, clothing selection and care, child care, medication management and the use and care of non-optical and prescribed optical devices.

Financial Management includes training in the use of appropriate financial institutions, personal budgeting and money management.

Determining the Scope of Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Services

The scope of VRT services provided is determined based on a baseline evaluation of the participant's needs relative to their vocational goal. The VR counselor will receive a written report of the evaluation findings including recommendations. The VR counselor will discuss the evaluation findings and recommendations with the participant and determine the services to be provided to meet their VR needs.

Who Provides Vision Rehabilitation Therapy

Vision rehabilitation therapy is provided by professional vision rehabilitation therapists/rehabilitation teachers who meet the qualifications established by NYSCB. They may be provided through a private agency, by a NYSCB rehabilitation teacher or by a private vendor.

Priority of Service Provider

When choosing a service provider, the following priority order should be used:

1. Comprehensive Services Contract agency personnel, when available
2. NYSCB rehabilitation teacher
3. Independent rehabilitation teacher who is approved by NYSCB as a private vendor. Private vendors are to be used when priorities 1 and 2 are not available.

Economic Need

Vision rehabilitation therapy is not contingent on a participant's economic need status. See Chapter 5.00, Economic Need, for additional information.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Services

O&M is the teaching of concepts, skills and techniques necessary for a person who is blind to travel safely, efficiently and confidently through any environment and under all environmental conditions and situations.

O&M services may include: basic orientation concepts of body awareness and geometric shapes; use of reference systems to increase safety, independence and confidence; a primary travel system using residual vision, sighted guide, long cane, prescribed low vision aids or a combination of the above. Where appropriate, the system may integrate the use of a guide dog and electronic vision enhancement systems; effective indoor travel techniques, including self-protective techniques, trailing and room or building familiarization; safe and effective negotiation of outdoor areas including street crossings at various traffic-controlled intersections and the use of public transportation.

See the *Comprehensive Services Contract (CSC) Guidelines* for additional information about the provision of O&M services.

Determining the Scope of Orientation and Mobility Services

The scope of O&M services provided is determined based on a baseline evaluation of the participant's needs relative to their vocational goal. The VR counselor will receive a written report of the evaluation findings including recommendations. The VR counselor will discuss the evaluation findings and recommendations with the participant to determine the services to be provided to meet their vocational needs.

Who Provides Orientation and Mobility Training

O&M training is provided by professional orientation and mobility instructors who meet the qualifications established by NYSCB. They may be provided through a private agency, by a NYSCB orientation and mobility instructor or by a private vendor.

Priority of Service Provider

When choosing a service provider, the following priority order should be used:

1. Private agency personnel, when available

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2. NYSCB orientation and mobility instructor
3. Independent orientation and mobility instructor who is approved by NYSCB as a private vendor.

Private vendors are to be used when priorities 1 and 2 are not available.

Economic Need

Orientation and mobility training is not contingent on a participant's economic need status. See Chapter 5.00, Economic Need for additional information.

Introduction

Community rehabilitation programs provide a wide array of services for individuals with disabilities. NYSCB purchases services from both private agencies serving the blind, and from general agencies.

Agencies Serving the Blind

A private agency for the blind is an agency which states in its Articles of Incorporation that one of its organizational purposes is to provide rehabilitation services to people who are blind.

General Agency

A general agency is a community rehabilitation program that provides rehabilitation services to individuals with a variety of disabilities. Services are not commonly designed for individuals who are blind, however, individuals who are blind may benefit from and may choose to receive services from a general agency.

Establishing Rates and/or Fees

Rates and/or fees for services purchased from community rehabilitation programs are established by

1. NYSCB (for private agencies serving the blind), and
2. for general agencies, the NYS Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)

Contracts with Private Agencies for the Blind

NYSCB has entered into outcome-based contracts with the private agencies for the blind in New York State through the Comprehensive Services Contract. Many but not all private agencies for the blind also participate in the Placement Contract. Refer to the Comprehensive Services Contract and *Placement Contract Guidelines* for current information about the services provided through these contracts.

TRAINING IN COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

10.10.02

Agreements with General Agencies

Training and services through general agencies are based on current contracts with NYS ACCES-VR. All additions of general agencies and services to the NYSCB case management system must be approved by NYSCB senior management.