

NC DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND POLICIES AND PROCEDURES VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Section:	F
Title:	Fees for Services and Vendors
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Combined: Payment Policy (Policy), Miscellaneous (Policy) and Fees (Procedures)

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor shall make every effort to ensure timely authorization of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors shall not approve vendor payment until necessary vendor reports have been received when required by policy and procedures for the VR Service provided.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor may verbally authorize a purchase for an eligible individual that, in the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor's judgment, is needed to deal with the emergency. The individual must meet Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) Eligibility criteria for the particular VR Service. Depending on the nature of the emergency, the purchase may be exempt from a determination of comparable benefits utilizing the Financial Responsibilities/Economic Need Requirements (On-Line DSB-4040-VR Economic Need Survey with instructions). However, if comparable benefit exists but is not readily available at the time needed, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor shall provide the VR Service until the comparable benefit becomes available.

GENERAL PROVISION OF SERVICES (STANDARDS)

It will be the policy of DSB to maintain written minimum standards for the various facilities and providers of services used by the State Agency as well as the provision of rehabilitation services. This includes the nature and scope of each of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services specified in the Scope of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the criteria under which each service is provided. The policies must ensure that the provision of services is based on the rehabilitation needs of each individual's Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) (On-Line DSB-4005b-VR Individual Plan for Employment with instructions) and is consistent with the individual's Informed Choice (IC). The written policies may not establish any arbitrary limits on the nature and Scope of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to be provided to the individual to achieve an employment outcome.

1. **Out-of-State Services** - Out-of-state services are not prohibited, although there is a preference for in-state services if this preference does not deny a necessary service.
2. **Payment for Services** - Rates of payment for all purchased VR services is maintained. A schedule for each service is maintained in order to ensure a reasonable cost to the Rehabilitation Program. These fee schedules are not so low as to effectively deny a necessary service, are not absolute, and permit exceptions. There are no dollar limits on specified service categories.
3. **Duration of Services** - DSB maintains reasonable time periods for services, provided that the time periods are not so short as to effectively deny an individual a necessary service, are not absolute, and permit exceptions so that individual needs can be addressed.

4. **Authorization of Services** - DSB policy requires the timely authorization of services, including verbal authorizations. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor may verbally authorize a purchase for an individual that, in the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor's judgment, is needed to deal with the emergency. The individual must meet DSB eligibility criteria for the particular service.

GENERAL FACILITIES AND PROVIDERS (STANDARDS)

DSB maintains written standards for the various types of facilities and providers of services used by the Agency in providing services. These standards ensure the following requirements:

1. **Accessibility of Facilities** - Facilities in which services are provided must be accessible.
2. **Personnel** - Personnel used by service providers must be qualified in accordance with an applicable national, state, or recognized certification, licensing, or registration requirements or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession/discipline of the personnel providing services.
3. **Affirmative Action** - Service providers must take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities.
4. **Special Communication Needs Personnel** - Service providers must obtain the services of individuals who are able to communicate in the native languages of applicants/eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability and must ensure that appropriate modes of communication for all applicants/eligible individuals are used.
5. **Fraud, Waste, and Abuse** - Service providers must have adequate and appropriate policies and procedures to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse.

Check Cashing Fee

Under some circumstances, a check cashing fee may be included in a revolving fund check to a DSB consumer when paying for other agency-provided services. Check cashing fees may only be paid under the below circumstances. Exceptions to these circumstances must be approved by the Chief, Rehabilitation Field Services.

- The individual does not have a personal checking account
- The individual is attending the Rehabilitation Center and is otherwise unable to access funds in the time frame required for Center-related travel

Check cashing fees must be itemized on the authorization with a statement of justification. According to G.S. 53-280, DSB may pay a maximum of 3% of the face amount of the check or five dollars (\$5.00), whichever is greater. Consumers must provide a receipt for the check cashing fee.

College and University Tuition and Maintenance

DSB will provide funding toward the cost of tuition from a college or university approved or accredited by an appropriate state or national accreditation agency. DSB financial assistance for tuition, required fees and maintenance is limited to the conditions outlined in Post-Secondary Training.

Eligible Individual Equipment

Purchase of all eligible individual equipment will be through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Purchasing Section utilizing Assistive Devices/Equipment. Where possible, items are bought from State Contract. If the equipment requested has special features which are required by the visually impaired individual or which are needed for an effective job placement, then it is critical that the following steps be noted in writing a specification:

1. Each and every detail and feature that is needed to describe the minimum acceptable requirement of the product or service. This would include the special features needed to accommodate the individual's needs or to match with the employer's equipment.
2. Simple and clear language that will help identify precisely what is needed.
3. A realistic time frame needed to make the purchase.
4. Brand names and model numbers of acceptable products. If pictures are available, please include.
5. Special requirements such as warranty, training, or service required.
6. Specific delivery address.
7. Equipment purchased for use by the individual as part of the individual's VR program will be recovered at any time the equipment becomes unnecessary to his/her program or employment.

The purchase of Low Vision Aids such as closed circuit televisions must include the evaluation form (On-Line DSB-2007 Evaluation with Video Magnification (CCTV) with instructions) which shows that an individual has tried three different units, and the one being requested is the one best suited for the individual.

Equipment purchased by DSB for use by the individual as part of the individual's rehabilitation program will be recovered at any time the equipment becomes unnecessary to his/her program or employment.

Dental Services

Dental evaluation and treatment services are sponsored for those eligible individuals who require these services to complete the VR program. Treatment of such conditions will be considered if dental impairment, chronic dental caries, or orthodontic conditions producing pain or other challenges to one's health interfere with an individual's ability to complete the essential functions of their VR goal.

In rare cases, dental services may be required due to cosmetic appearance that may interfere with one's employment potential.

Evaluation of the dental condition must be provided by the dentist of the eligible individual's choice or, in certain cases (e.g., orthodontics or oral surgery), by a specialist for the problem under consideration. The dentist or other physician must document that treatment is required due to a chronic dental impairment or cosmetic appearance caused by a dental condition that will interfere with

employability. Services will consist of the most conservative or less costly treatment available, and furnished in a manner not primarily intended for the convenience of the individual or the provider. When orthodontic appliances are indicated, the teeth on which they are to be used should be in good condition, and restoration of those teeth may be necessary.

The dentist and eligible individual must be notified prior to the examination that the Division will sponsor only that portion of the dental restoration essential to relieve the impairment resulting in the impediment to employment and that the eligible individual is responsible for any additional services and for any prophylactic care.

DSB will follow the North Carolina Medicaid Dental Fee Schedule for reimbursement to vendors for these services [34 CFR 361.42 (a) (16)].

Case documentation for these services must show how the service or procedures will correct, improve, or maintain the individual's health, prevent worsening, prevent additional health problems, and/or improve the individual's appearance that is required for the individual's chosen vocational goal.

All requests for dental services must be approved by the appropriate area vocational rehabilitation supervisor. If questions arise regarding medical necessity, the recommendation needs to be approved through the chief of vocational rehabilitation field services.

Eyeglass Purchase

The State of North Carolina contracts with one specific vendor for the purchase of eyeglasses utilizing Eye Surgery and Treatment Guideline. This contract is renegotiated periodically. DSB, VR, and the Division of Medical Assistance (Medicaid) are required to purchase from this contract. In very special circumstances, the Area and District Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor may approve a purchase from another vendor.

Hearing Aids

Hearing aid vendors must sign an agreement (On-Line DSB-4048-VR Hearing Aid Agreement with instructions) with DSB stating that they will accept Agency rates as the full fee for hearing aids, accessories and services. Hearing Aids will be priced at the manufacturer's invoice cost to the dispenser plus a dispensing fee. Service fees must not exceed those agreed upon in Hearing Aid Rate Schedule.

Interpreter Services

DSB must use interpreters on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Sign Language Interpreter/Transliterators Vendors List. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor should utilize an interpreter with the highest level certification with priority given to interpreters with national certification or State Classification A. It is also best to use an interpreter with whom the individual is familiar.

Medical Services

DSB utilizes the published fees for all types and levels of training and other services where these fees exist. Service fees that are not published are negotiated on an individual basis. Medicaid reimbursement rates are used for all other medial and medically related services and for other services not specifically mentioned.

Orthotic and Prosthetic Services

DSB will follow the Orthotic Fee Schedule and Prosthetic Fee Schedule, both of which were developed by Division of Medical Assistance (DMA).

Prescription Legend Drugs

Individuals may have a free choice of pharmacies that have signed a Pharmacy Agreement (On-Line DSB-4020 Pharmacy Agreement) with DSB to provide pharmaceutical services to individuals of the Agency utilizing Pharmacy Purchasing and Billing. Prescription legend drugs and insulin will be billed at the Medicaid rate plus an approved professional dispensing fee in effect at the time the prescription is dispensed. Generic substitutions should be used whenever a generic equivalent is available unless the prescriber specially orders the brand name drug.

Psychological Services

DSB has established fees for psychological services which are outlined in Psychological Services. All service providers must be licensed or certified to practice in this state.

Reader Services

Generally, DSB will follow the work study rate at the college or university where the individual is attending. For other types of Reader Services (reader services), we utilize the State minimum wage.

Stand Training

The tuition rate paid to the trainer is established as a weekly rate based upon the level of the stand. Stands can be Level I through Level IV in the Business Enterprise (BEP).

Supported Employment

Supported Employment Services (SE) (SES) are provided through contracts with private Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) throughout the state. The funding for this program is from Federal Title VI, Part B and extended services are provided through separate funding. Payments are made to the CRP based on performance through established milestones reached in the job placement process.

Transportation

When an individual requires the use of a private vehicle for Transportation (transportation), VR shall pay the vendor the prevailing State approved mileage rate for employees who do not have access to Motor Pool vehicles. Mileage reimbursement is measured from point of departure to point of destination. Refer to DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Program Manual

Tuition Rates for Community Rehabilitation Programs

Rates for the Community Rehabilitation Programs will be based upon their level of performance. Payment should be negotiated with the facility for the individual service following the guidelines under Work Experience.

Vehicle Purchase Participation

Some individuals may be placed in occupations which require the use of a vehicle. DSB can assist in Vehicle Purchases, insurance, and license.