

MAINTENANCE, TRANSPORTATION AND VEHICLE REPAIR

AUTHORIZATION

The Vocational Rehabilitation Policy on Maintenance, Transportation, and Vehicle Repair is developed in accordance with Title IV of WIOA, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (Public Law 111-256) and by the Rules and Regulations pertaining to the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program (34 CFR 361). In the implementation of this policy, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) will follow the state or federal law whichever is the most stringent.

PURPOSE

The mission of VR is to provide opportunities for eligible participants with disabilities to achieve integrated, competitive employment and increased independence through rehabilitation services.

The policy addresses supplemental services such as maintenance, transportation, and vehicle repair. These services may be provided in addition to services that address the disability and related barriers. All supplemental services should be reasonable and necessary to obtain training or be successful in meeting their employment outcome. The policy is intended to increase consistency and efficiency across the State, while at the same time assisting participants to achieve their individual employment goal.

PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS REGARDING MAINTENANCE

Federal Regulations at 34 CFR 361 define Maintenance as: "... monetary support provided to an individual for expenses such as food, shelter, and clothing that are in excess of the normal expenses of the individual and that are necessitated by the individual's participation in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or the individual's receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)."

Maintenance services must be consistent with the purpose of the VR program, in accord with the IPE, as required to determine eligibility, or as required to develop the IPE. When using the maintenance service code, a description of what is being purchased must be documented on the IPE and further justification in the case notes when needed.

The following criteria should be met prior to providing maintenance services:

1. The expense is in excess of the normal expenses of the participant and is necessary for the participant's participation in VR services.

2. The expense is due to the participant's participation in the IPE or is necessary for determining eligibility for VR services and VR needs.
3. If the service is identified as a service on a developed IPE, the participant is actively working towards their employment goal.
4. The participant and counselor have reviewed the participant's budget and available resources and there are no comparable benefits available to meet the participant's need for assistance with maintenance expenses.
5. The expense is an initial, one-time cost due to training or employment; is short-term and necessary to participate in assessment, training, employment, or other services on the IPE; or is necessary as a result of the participant requiring a second residence due to their participation in services identified on the IPE. This may include a one-time administrative fee that is necessary to enter into or participate in a service.
6. Maintenance services are not the only service being provided; rather maintenance services are being provided in order for them to participate in other services identified on the IPE.
7. The continued provision of maintenance services should be reviewed by the counselor with the participant on a regular basis to determine if a need for maintenance services continues to exist in order for the participant to complete the services on the IPE.
8. The counselor should consider customary housing costs and local guidelines when negotiating the amount that VR may contribute towards the participant's maintenance expenses.
9. When relocation is necessary in order for them to participate in services identified on the IPE, the counselor and the participant should consider the customary housing costs and anticipated expenses for available relocation options which satisfy the services identified on the IPE. This could include an application fee and/or a deposit fee up to first and last month rent.
10. If the expenses appear exorbitant, or if any of the above criteria are not met, the counselor will review the participant's need and request for maintenance services with the Regional Administrator (RA) and if necessary, with the Central Office.

PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION AND MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR

Federal Regulations at 34 CFR 361 defines Transportation as: ". . . travel and related expenses that are necessary to enable an applicant or eligible individual to participate in a vocational rehabilitation service, including expenses for training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems."

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Transportation and motor vehicle repair services must be consistent with the purpose of the VR program, in accord with the IPE, as required to determine eligibility, or as required to develop the IPE.

The following criteria should be met prior to providing transportation or motor vehicle repair services:

1. The expense is due to their participation in the IPE or is necessary for determining eligibility for VR services and VR needs.
2. The participant and counselor have reviewed the participant's budget and available resources including alternative transportation options and there are no comparable benefits available to meet the participant's need for assistance with transportation or vehicle repair.
3. The continued provision of ongoing transportation services should be reviewed by the counselor with the participant on a regular basis to determine if the need continues to exist in order for the participant to complete the services on the IPE.

The amount that VR may contribute towards the participant's transportation expenses will be negotiated based on the most cost-effective price as determined by available resources such as online fuel calculation tools (Example: gasbuddy.com). VR will not purchase gas cards, gift cards, or money orders. VR will instead utilize a payment authorization.

4. The amount that VR may contribute towards a participant's motor vehicle repair expenses will be negotiated based on the following:
 - a. The participant has provided adequate information (including make, model, and general condition) to indicate the actual value of the vehicle.
 - b. The participant has provided adequate information to indicate the necessity of having access to a vehicle for participation in IPE services and no alternative transportation options exist.
 - c. The repair is not actually a routine vehicle maintenance cost, but rather is a one-time expense needed to restore the vehicle to working condition.
 - d. The participant or designated driver has provided documentation of their legal ability to own and operate a vehicle including a driver's license, auto insurance, and proof of ownership and vehicle registration.
 - e. The participant has provided documentation of an estimate for the repair from a reputable repair facility and the repair facility recommends that the repair is of value to the participant considering the vehicle's overall condition and value.
 - f. The life-time total of VR's assistance towards vehicle repairs for the participant has not exceeded the amount identified by VR as identified in VR Standardized Procedures.

If any of the above criteria are not met, the counselor will review the participant's need and request for maintenance services with the RA.

Summary of Changes from Prior Procedure

Below is a brief summary of changes, please review the procedure above for complete details on these changes.

1/14/2025:

Updated language.

Added language clarifying support services.

Added language regarding allowable fees.