# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual Section C-1500

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## Notes on the Manual

On October 1, 2017, Texas Workforce Commission’s Blind Services Division and Rehabilitation Services Division combined to create a single designated state unit (DSU) to administer the vocational rehabilitation program for Texans with disabilities.

The combined Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual (VRSM) was initially published on October 1, 2017. The latest update to this manual is reflected in the chapters below.

Please note that VRSM includes links to information that is intended to provide additional decision-making supports to VR staff. Some of this information may not be available to individuals who are accessing the VRSM outside of TWC's firewall. Copies of materials that cannot be accessed directly through links can be made available upon request.

Substantive revisions to the content are noted in the VRSM List of Revisions. Any printed versions may not contain the latest policy changes.

If you have any questions about VRSM content, please contact the TWC Vocational Rehabilitation Division Policy Team at state office by sending an email message to vrsm.support@twc.texas.gov.

## Manual Overview

The VR Services Manual:

* helps ensure VR customers receive quality services to assist them in achieving successful competitive integrated employment outcomes as a result of their participation in vocational rehabilitation services.;
* helps to ensure taxpayer funds are spent wisely and each purchase paid for with public funds represents full value to the taxpayer; and
* provides published policies and procedures for maintaining compliance with federal and state laws, statutes, and rules or regulations.

The latest update to this manual is reflected in the chapters below. Any printed versions may not contain the latest policy changes.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-1500: Business Enterprises of Texas

## Introduction

The Business Enterprises of Texas (BET) program provides opportunities for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) customers who are legally blind to manage food service and vending facilities on public and private properties throughout Texas. BET is federally sponsored and state-administered. BET supports the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) VR goals of independent living and employment.

## C-1501: Legal Authorization

BET was developed from federal legislation enacted in 1936 by the Randolph-Sheppard Act. Under this law, individuals who are blind must be given an opportunity to operate vending facilities on federal properties. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, also supports BET.

Operation of BET facilities in Texas is provided by state legislation called "The Little Randolph-Sheppard Act" (Texas Labor Code, Chapter 355), which parallels the federal act. The State law appoints the Texas Workforce Commission as the state licensing agency to administer the program.

## C-1502: Mandatory Requirements

The VR counselor and BET staff must verify that a customer is qualified to operate a vending facility.

To fulfill the mandatory prerequisites for BET certification, a customer must:

* be legally blind (that is, "having not more than 20/200 visual acuity in the better eye with correcting lenses or visual acuity greater than 20/200 but with a limitation in the field of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees," as stated in Texas Labor Code §355.001(1));
* be at least 18 years old;
* reside or be physically present in Texas;
* be a US citizen; and
* successfully complete all BET assessment and training requirements to become a licensed BET manager.

## C-1503: Curriculum

The BET curriculum includes coursework on college-level business practices, BET standard accounting procedures and forms, cost management practices, customer service practices, BET operations and procedures, and other business management training.

## C-1504: Training

BET training for VR customers is provided by a BET training specialist at a training site in Austin.

## C-1505: On-Site Training

On-site training to work at a BET facility is provided by the licensed manager of the BET facility.

## C-1506: Role of the VR Counselor in the BET Process

### C-1506-1: Determining Appropriate Candidates for BET

The food service and vending industry is a challenging environment. It is not a fitting occupation for every VR customer. Successful BET candidates will operate their own businesses, which can be much more challenging than other forms of employment.

BET candidates must demonstrate that they are:

* self-starters;
* self-disciplined;
* willing and capable of working at least 60 hours per week;
* organized;
* confident in their basic skills, as related to their blindness;
* emotionally adjusted to blindness; and
* able to be flexible and adapt to change, as needed.

BET candidates also must have:

* excellent problem-solving skills;
* independent orientation and mobility skills;
* demonstrated independent living skills;
* high school-level math and accounting skills (completed coursework);
* effective money management skills;
* demonstrated use of adaptive technology;
* good oral communication skills;
* good print or braille communication skills; and
* a general knowledge of customer service techniques.

### C-1506-2: Diagnostics

The VR counselor obtains comprehensive diagnostics before referring a customer to the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center's (CCRC) general training program with a BET focus. All diagnostic findings must indicate that the customer is capable of participating in the BET program.

The required diagnostics are as follows:

* A consultation with an employment assistance specialist
* An assessment made by the Vocational Diagnostic Unit (VDU). (VDU staff members understand BET requirements better than psychologists, who are not BET staff.)
* A minimum of two informational interviews with successful, licensed BET managers. (The VR counselor contacts the BET Training Specialist in Austin for a list of BET managers available for interviewing in the VR counselor's area).
* An orientation and mobility assessment

All VDU recommendations must be addressed before BET training begins.

In addition to the comprehensive diagnostics listed above, the following assessments are recommended:

* An assessment by the Assistive Technology Unit
* An assessment by a VR teacher
* A low-vision evaluation, if applicable
* An assessment of the customer's physical capability

If these assessments cannot be completed in the field, the VR counselor makes appropriate arrangements to have the assessments completed at CCRC.

### C-1506-3: Referring the Customer to CCRC

If the VR counselor and the customer agree that the individual has the potential to be an appropriate BET candidate, but the customer requires comprehensive blindness training, the VR counselor refers the customer to CCRC for evaluation and training through CCRC's Basic Blindness Skills program, a general training program with a BET focus. For more information on referring customers to CCRC, see VRSM C-503-2: Referrals to the Training Program.

## C-1507: Role of the CCRC VR Counselor in the BET Process

The first benchmark of the BET program is to pass the BET math test with a score of 80 percent or higher.

The BET candidate must attend orientation and work as a trainee in the CCRC cafeteria for at least two weeks, depending on the customer's training needs.

After the customer completes the orientation and training, the CCRC VR counselor arranges for the customer to attend a two-week work evaluation at a BET facility with a licensed BET manager.

### C-1507-1: BET Facility Evaluation

The CCRC VR counselor must ensure that the customer's general training program with a BET focus includes a two-week work experience at a BET facility. The facility evaluation allows the customer to experience the work environment of a licensed manager and decide whether to participate in the program.

The licensed BET manager selected to conduct the customer's evaluation:

* instructs, assists, and observes the customer in all phases of the facility's operation;
* forwards weekly assessments of the customer's performance to the CCRC VR counselor; and
* reviews with the customer the results of the two-week assessment.

The BET manager is paid for providing the instruction and evaluation after:

* the CCRC VR counselor encumbers the funds; and
* the BET manager submits the assessment to the VR counselor.

If necessary, more than one location and more than one licensed manager is used for the customer's evaluation at the BET facility.

The evaluation may be terminated or extended after consultation with the CCRC VR counselor and approval from the BET training specialist.

A score of three or better on a scale of five is required to participate in the BET training program.

It is the responsibility of the counselor to review the application and determine if the applicant should be recommended for the BET program.

Once the customer has passed the final BET assessment and has successfully passed the selection panel interview, the VR counselor must ensure that the BET candidate has the appropriate equipment to participate in the BET training program prior to the training start date.

## C-1508: Applying for the BET Program

The determination to allow a customer to apply for the BET program is based on:

* the customer's successful completion of BET-focused training at CCRC;
* the customer's evaluation score, earned over the course of the BET-facility evaluation (a score of three or better on a scale of five is required); and
* the recommendation of the CCRC VR counselor for BET training.

The CCRC VR counselor helps qualified candidates who are participating in BET-focused training complete a VR2201, Business Enterprises of Texas Application for Training.

The following must be attached to each customer's application:

* The results of an ophthalmologic exam (Interagency Eye Examination Report), completed by a medical doctor no later than 12 months before the application deadline
* The results of a physical exam (General Physical Examination Report), completed by a medical doctor no later than 12 months before the application deadline
* The results of a facility BET assessment
* Proof of successful completion of BET skills training at CCRC
* A birth certificate or other appropriate proof of US citizenship
* Information on the customer's work experience and goals
* A high school diploma, General Educational Development (GED) credential, or college transcript
* The results of a VDU evaluation, completed no later than 12 months before the application deadline

The CCRC VR counselor delivers the customer's application packet to the BET training specialist in Austin.

Based on the customer's individualized needs, required equipment is listed below. The CCRC VR counselor should note that some customers will already have some of the listed items. The CCRC VR counselor carefully reviews the following list with each BET candidate to be sure that the customer has the equipment and supplies needed to successfully complete the BET training:

* A VR standard computer with adaptive software and a removable USB drive, as recommended based on the customer's evaluation by the Assistive Technology Unit
* Closed-circuit television, if applicable
* Low-vision devices appropriate to the customer's needs, such as reading glasses, low-vision aids, and magnifiers
* An accessible calculator (large-print display or talking), with an ear piece
* An accessible thermometer
* Note-taking equipment and supplies appropriate to the customer's needs, such as a Perkins brailler, a slate and stylus, electronic notetaking device, paper for a Perkins brailler or large-line paper, and 20/20 bold-writing pens
* Appropriate training attire (the required uniform for the customer's on-site training is black pants, a white shirt, and black nonslip shoes)
* Other items needed by the customer for training, mobility, or health maintenance while participating in BET training, such as a bill reader, a white cane, or talking scales

## C-1509: Other Required Training

In addition to the BET-facility evaluation, the CCRC VR counselor must ensure that the customer successfully completes the following training:

* BET-focused technology training, including training in Microsoft's Windows operating system, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel
* A course in BET-preparatory career guidance, including training in budgeting assessments, finance, interviewing, business plan writing, résumé development, and related business skills
* Additional training in notetaking
* Calculation

## C-1510: BET Panel Interview

Upon receiving a complete application packet and proof of completed CCRC training, a BET staff member schedules and conducts an assessment to determine the skill level of the applicant.

The assessment may include computer navigation, math proficiency, note-taking, reading and comprehension, and/or assessments of other skills necessary for successful participation in the BET program.

All skills assessments are timed.

Candidates must score 70 percent or higher on each assessment to proceed.

If the customer successfully completes the skills assessment, the VR counselor schedules a panel interview to assess the customer's personal interview skills, appearance, interests, and applicable business knowledge.

The CCRC VR counselor arranges the customer's round-trip transportation to panel interview.

## C-1511: Acceptance into the BET Program

The BET training specialist closely monitors all aspects of the customer's training and considers all recommendations from the CCRC VR counselor to confirm that the customer has met all criteria to enter the BET program.

If the customer meets the criteria to enter the program, the customer participates in the BET assessment process.

If the customer passes all sections of the assessment, the customer proceeds to the selection part of the process.

### C-1511-1: When a Customer Is Accepted

Once a customer is accepted into the BET training program, the customer's VR counselor arranges transportation, with the exception of Austin residents.

For customers who live outside of Austin, the CCVR counselor schedules transportation:

* to and from BET training; and
* for incidental needs relating to the customer's BET training.

The regional VR counselor then encumbers funds for:

* transportation to and from BET training sites;
* fees for BET on-site training; and
* incidental needs relating to the customer's BET training.

### C-1511-2: When a Customer Is Not Accepted

If a customer is not accepted into BET training, the customer, the CCRC VR counselor, and the VR counselor must discuss other employment opportunities.

## C-1512: Upon Completion of Training

After a customer completes BET training, the CCRC VR counselor will assist the customer with transportation arrangements back to the customer's region.

## C-1513: Once the Applicant Has Been Licensed

Customers who successfully complete BET training program and receive a BET license remain on the VR rolls until 90 days after the customer has been assigned a BET facility to manage.

VR counselors and customers should be aware that immediate assignment to a BET facility is not always possible.

## C-1514: Reasons for Justifiable Termination of BET Training

A customer's participation in BET training may be terminated because of the following:

* Medical reasons, after confirmation of the medical condition, if terminating participation is deemed to be in the best interest of the trainee's safety
* Inappropriate behavior, including, but not limited to, belligerent behavior, shouting, use of foul language, or fighting
* Inability to remain actively involved either in the classroom or in the BET facility during on-the-job training for example, but are not limited to, sleeping in class or not being able to work a full day's schedule
* Inability to comprehend materials and/or show proficiency at the pace required by the curriculum
* Refusal to cooperate or refusal and/or inability to complete assignments
* Missing five or more days of class or BET on-site training
* Consuming alcohol, consuming illegal or controlled substances, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal or controlled substances on state property, during class, or while attending BET on-site training
* Any other behavior considered harmful or potentially harmful, either physically or otherwise, to the trainee, other trainees, the instructor, a licensed BET manager, BET staff, VR staff, or the program in general
* Failure to adhere to the CCRC Standards of Conduct published in the CCRC handbook
* Refusal to sign the On-Site Training evaluation form