# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual B-200: Processing Initial Contacts and Applications

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## B-203: Initial Contact

The first contact with a customer is a critical point in the VR process. The customer not only exchanges information with a VR staff but also forms an impression about the sincerity, concern, and professionalism of VR staff.

Initial contact is the first contact with a customer and may be made in person, by phone, in writing, or by email. If the customer has a legal guardian at the time of the initial contact, the legal guardian may make the initial contact on behalf of the customer, but the customer must be present and involved in the completion of the application for services. For information about working with legal guardians or representatives, see A-200: Customer Rights and Legal Issues.

At initial contact, potentially eligible students must be assigned to a VR counselor as a point of contact. ReHabWorks allows staff to enter the point of contact without case assignment.

Note: TWC-VR only serves individuals who are 14 years of age or older. For specific information about working with students and youth, see C-1300: Transition Services for Students and Youth with Disabilities. For specific information about working with potentially eligible students, see C-1305-6: Providing Pre-Employment Transition Services, Working with Potentially Eligible Students.

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## B-204: Application

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### B-204-2: Customer Identification and Authorization for Employment

At the time that the customer is applying for services, VR staff asks the customer to provide original unexpired documents that prove his or her identity and show that the customer can work legally in the United States. Customers who do not have verification that he or she is able to legally work in the United States are not eligible for VR services.

If a customer says that he or she is legally authorized to work in the United States, but the customer does not have the required unexpired documentation when completing the application for VR services, VR staff:

* allows the customer to complete an application for services;
* explains that the customer must provide documents verifying the customer's identification and authorization for employment before VR can determine the customer's eligibility for VR services; and
* refers the customer to the Department of Homeland Security or other local organizations that can assist the individual in obtaining the required documentation.

State driver’s licenses, federal identification and other valid documents verifying the customer's identification must be current at the time of eligibility. These documents will be considered valid throughout the life of a customer’s case, even if the document expires. However, if a case is closed and re-opened, the customer must provide unexpired verification of their identity.

#### SSI/SSDI Recipients

If the customer has been determined eligible for SSI/SSDI benefits because of his or her disability, he or she must provide proof of identity and current, unexpired authorization for employment documents prior to determination of eligibility for VR services. Once this documentation is received, the customer will be presumed eligible for VR services. For more information about presumption of eligibility requirements for customers who are eligible for SSI or SSDI due to a disability, see [B-300: Determining Eligibility](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-b-300).

#### Maintaining Authorization for Employment Documents

VR customers are responsible for providing and maintaining current employment authorization documents throughout the life of their case in order to maintain eligibility for VR services. The VR counselor must remind the customer of this requirement prior to the expiration of their documents and document this as a counseling and guidance session in a case note in RHW.

DHS maintains lists of documents a customer can use to verify their identity and/or employment authorization. The [DHS Form I-9 Acceptable Documents](https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/acceptable-documents/list-documents/form-i-9-acceptable-documents) webpage shows examples of the various documents:

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#### Expired Employment Authorization Documents

Expired employment authorization documents cannot be used to determine customer eligibility for VR services and unexpired employment authorization documents must be maintained throughout the life of the case to maintain eligibility for VR services.

If employment authorization documents are not expired, but will expire prior to completion of IPE services, VR staff:

* tells the customer that unexpired documents are required by an employer and
* monitors status of documents to ensure that the documents do not expire.

If the customer’s employment authorization documents expire while the customer is participating in VR services, the customer is no longer eligible for VR services and the case must be closed, unless the case is in employment status.

For customers who have completed all VR services and are in employment status, pending case closure, the case should remain open until it is able to be closed successfully; no additional service authorizations should be issued. However, if additional services are needed while in employment status, the employment authorization documents must be updated in RHW prior to the purchase.

#### Expired Identity Documents

Expired identity verification documents cannot be used to determine customer eligibility for VR services.

After eligibility for VR services has been determined, if the customer is a US citizen and their identity verification documents (driver’s license or identification card issued by federal, state or local government agencies or entities) expire, these documents do not need to be updated to continue participation in VR services. The customer should be advised that unexpired documents will be needed by a future employer and they should be encouraged to update these in a timely manner. This can be documented as a counseling and guidance session.

However, if the customer’s case is closed for any reason and the customer reapplies for VR services in the future, they will be required to provide unexpired identify verification documents.

#### Data Corrections

If a customer’s identity or employment authorization documents have expired or the information was entered incorrectly in RHW, a VR Supervisor or VR Manager can update the record in RHW through the data correction request process.

The VR5158 RHW Data Correction Request form is used to request and document all RHW data corrections. A copy of this form is filed in the customer’s paper casefile.

Refer to [ReHabWorks Frequently Asked Questions](https://twcgov.sharepoint.com/sites/ws/vr/VRSRHWSupp/VR%20RHW%20Support%20Resources/RHW%20FAQs.docx) for additional instructions on updating the ID and employment authorization record in RHW.

#### Copies of Documents

A copy of the customer's documents is placed in the customer's paper case file.

If the customer is reluctant to allow the documents to be copied, or if a copier is not immediately available, enter the following information in a case note for each document:

* Document title
* Issuing authority
* Document number
* Expiration date (if any)

If the customer is unable or unwilling to provide identity and employment authorization documents before the customer's eligibility determination is due, or before the customer's IPE is due for SSI or SSDI recipients, the case should be closed. The customer may reapply when he or she has the required documentation. See [B-604: Unsuccessful Closures](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-b-600#b604) and [B-606: Reopening a Closed Case](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-b-600#b606) for more information.