# **Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual Section C-300**

Revised January 16, 2024

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## **C-309: Reader Services**

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### **C-309-2: Reader Services for Students in an Academic Setting**

#### **Eligibility for Reader Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

Customers who are blind or visually impaired are eligible for reader services if reader services are needed to support successful achievement of the customers' vocational goal.

Customer participation in the cost of services, also referred to as "BLR," does not apply to providing reader services.

#### **Comparable Benefits**

When a comparable benefit is available, it must be used instead of reader services. For example, an academic institution may provide reader services.

The customer must use reader services that are provided through a volunteer whenever possible, including services that are offered by certain public training programs or community service agencies.

For more information on Comparable Benefits, refer to VRSM D-203-3: Use of Comparable Services and Benefits. Also refer to Counselor Desk Reference Chapter C2: Blind and Visual Impairments.

#### **Purchasing Reader Services**

Reader services are purchased as follows:

* The VR counselor and customer agree on an hourly rate when planning for reader services in the individualized plan for employment (IPE). The rate must be documented in the IPE or in an IPE amendment and in the Form VR2011, Reader Services Log.
* The customer secures a reader to provide reader services. The VR counselor may provide guidance on this; however, it is the customer's responsibility to find and secure his or her own reader.
* VR staff issues a service authorization (SA) to the reader(s) before reader services are provided. The SA is based on the number of credit hours in which the customer is enrolled and needing reader services for that training period (semester, term, or class). VR staff will then issue an SA each month for the remainder of the training period. For more information, refer to VRSM D-213-1: Periodic Payments.
* The customer completes and submits Form VR2011 Reader Services Log to the VR counselor each month.
* Upon receipt of the Form VR2011 and a valid invoice, the VR counselor:
	+ verifies that the Form VR2011 includes the number of hours, the agreed hourly rate, and the student's and reader's signatures;
	+ verifies the invoice includes all of the required elements per VRSM D-208-2: Elements of an Invoice;
	+ authorizes payment; and
	+ places a copy of the Form VR2011 and invoice in the case folder.

Note: Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR) does not pay for reader services rendered by a member of the customer's family or another VR customer.

#### **Customer's Responsibilities**

It is the customer's responsibility to:

* use all other reading-related resources to every extent possible before requesting reader services from TWC-VR;
* comply with TWC-VR policies that prohibit payment of reader services when rendered by an immediate family member or another VR customer; and
* submit the Form VR2011 Reader Services Log, and invoice to the VR counselor by the 15th day of the month that follows the service dates.

The customer has sole responsibility for:

* interviewing and hiring the reader at the agreed hourly rate;
* determining the scope of work, including the materials to be read and the date, time, duration, and location of the services;
* establishing and enforcing all terms and conditions of employment; and
* terminating the agreement, when necessary.

#### **VR Counselor's Responsibilities**

The VR counselor must:

* evaluate the number of hours of reader services that the customer needs;
* issue an SA in a timely manner;
* ensure that the customer understands that TWC-VR does not reimburse any self-paid payments for reader services;
* authorize payment; and
* ensure that a copy of the Form VR2011, Reader Services Log, and invoice is placed in the customer's case file.

Note: If reader services are not approved contracted services offered through the training program, or if comparable benefits are not available, the provider must be set up as a vendor in ReHabWorks (RHW) and paid directly.

Follow the process outlined in VRSM D-211: Setting Up and Paying Providers to set up an individual as an established provider in RHW.

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