

Purchase of goods and services:

The good or service is required for eligibility, assessment or participation in the VR Plan.

Authorization

An authorization must be completed in QE2 prior to the time the goods or services are provided and meet the requirements of Rule 72. Goods or services that are determined to be an audit exception will require VR to use state funds for the cost of those goods and services. Using state funds for audit exceptions reduces the amount of state funds available for federal match.

VRIS – Case Services – Procurement – Authorization Policy - Policy

Informed Choice

The client is an equal partner in deciding on the range of team and community supports needed to achieve the IPE Job Goal. VR staff are responsible for assisting persons with disabilities in making informed choices about services, service providers, procurement methods, reason for any “sole source” determinations, and with their pending financial obligations and responsibilities. Consideration should also be given to any cost of maintaining the purchase.

VRIS – Case Services - Procurement - Case Services and Team & Community Supports– Policy and Rule 72

Client contribution

All individuals will be asked if they are willing and able to participate prior to authorizing VR funds for any other service. Participating in the cost of services is voluntary. Participation by the individual can lead to increased ownership by the client in his/her rehabilitation plan. It also results in savings in VR funds allowing more individuals with disabilities to be served.

Exception: Individuals will not be asked to participate in the cost of:

- any service necessary for determining their eligibility for the program; or
- post-secondary training allowance described in the chapter on postsecondary training.

VRIS – Case Services - Procurement – Client Participation in the Cost of Services- Policy

Comparable Services and Benefits

VR staff must seek out and utilize all comparable services and benefits to meet, in whole or part, the costs of required and necessary services. Comparable services and benefits includes services and benefits that are provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other Federal, State, or local public agencies, by health insurance, or by employee benefits. Clients are required to apply for and use comparable benefits.

Exceptions:

- The benefit must be available to the individual at the time needed to ensure the progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome in the individual's individualized plan for employment. If the benefit is not available when needed use of the benefit is not required;
- Comparable benefits do not include awards and scholarships based on merit; and
- An SSA approved Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS) does not constitute a comparable benefit or service.

VRIS - Case Services – Procurement – Client Participation in Cost of Services and Rule 72

Cost Estimates

Cost estimates are required for services, goods and supports that are not subject to an established fee or specified amount in Rule 72. All cost estimate must be documented in the case service record.

- Case Advance – one cost estimate must be obtained for \$1,999.99 or less.
- Two documented estimates must be obtained for individual items \$2,000 - \$4,999.99.
- Three documented estimates must be obtained individual items \$5,000.

VRIS – Case Services - Procurement - Case Services – Policy and Rule 72

Least Cost Option

Considering all available alternatives, Vocational Rehabilitation will procure the least cost option for VR specified services, goods and supports, which meet the needs of the individual and provide adequate quality and available serviceability. The recipient must take the responsibility to pay for the excess cost incurred if they choose a higher cost item.

VRIS – Case Services - Procurement - Case Services – Policy and Rule 72

High Cost Approval

Individual item \$2,000.00 and above requires High Cost approval. Post-Secondary and Supported Employment are exempt from the High Cost policy.

VRIS – Case Services – Procurement – High Cost – Policy

Rule 72 Fee Schedule

The purpose of the Rule 72 fee schedule for services, goods, and supports is to contain costs and to assure the availability of program services to the largest number of individuals with significant disabilities. The intent of the schedule is to assure costs are the lowest reasonable cost, while allowing for sufficient flexibility to meet an applicant's or recipient's needs.

Rule 72 Cost Exception Authority – Only an Office Director or the appropriate Program Director can make a decision to exceed Rule 72 Fee Schedules. No exceptions can be made to how VR will pay or the actual regulations. When considering requesting a cost exception, the VR Specialist must answer the critical case questions:

- Is purchase necessary to achieve goal
- No other options available to address the need
- Select least costly option
- Search for available comparable benefits & services
- Addressed client's ability to contribute
- Determine ability of client to maintain, repair and replace purchased goods

VRIS – Case Services – Procurement – Rule 72 Exceptions and Case Services

Client Accountability

VR has a responsibility to ensure that state and federal funds used for case services are spent appropriately and as identified on the rehabilitation plan. VR staff are responsible for informing consumers of the policies surrounding the use of cash advances and vendor authorizations for purchases of goods and services. Clients must be held accountable for using the cash advance and/or vendor authorizations to purchase what is authorized and agreed upon in their rehabilitation plan. VR Staff are responsible for informing the clients of the consequences of misusing funds.

VRIS – Case Services-General Client Services Policy – Client Accountability – Policy