



VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum

April 2, 2024

VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum

Housekeeping

- Welcome to the VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum.
- **ASL Interpreters** are designated as “co-hosts”, so they appear at the top of your participant list. If you need ability to “multi-pin” please email Jessica.Outhwaite@state.mn.us .
- **Closed Captioning** is available. A livestream is linked in the chat.
- **Your name:** Please change the name that Zoom displays to your first and last name. An easy way to rename is: 1) go to the participant list and find your name, 2) hover over your name, 3) select “more,” 4) select “rename”.
- **Questions and Comments:** Please submit feedback, questions, and comments via Microsoft Form: [Q&A Microsoft Form](#) .
- **Technical Issues:** If you have technical issues, please contact Jessica.Outhwaite@state.mn.us .
- **Recording:** This session will be recorded and posted to the VRS website along with the agenda, presentation, and transcript.

Agenda

- **Welcome:** Janeen Oien, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Contract Services Review Workgroup update:** Janeen Oien
- **7.1.2024 Contracting Process and Timeline:** Anne Paulson, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **VRS Spending Authority:** Lori Thorpe, Director of Contracts and Partnerships, and VRS Leadership
- **Other Updates:** Sara Sundeen, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Q & A:** Janeen Oien and Lori Thorpe
- **Wrap-Up:** Janeen Oien

2024 VRS Spending Authority

Hitting authorization max

- VRS has been authorizing at a rate 2.5 times greater than the actual amount VRS pays for services.
- VRS has a set authorization limit in place related to each Fiscal Year Budget.
- VRS needs to adjust our current authorization methodology to remain within our authorization limit.

Authorization limit

- VRS is proactively working to maintain continuity of services to VRS participants and students.
- VRS exceeded this authorization limit last year, so this year VRS is working to stay within the limit, with intention.
- *VRS has sufficient funds to pay for services, however, together we need to reduce our open authorizations to stay within our authorization limit.*

VRS RAMS are meeting with their staff each week to review existing authorizations.

VRS teams are actively closing and reducing authorizations that will not be used.

Pre-ETS Authorizations

- If hours remain on a Pre-ETS authorization, VRS will extend the end date rather than create a new authorization.
- New authorizations will be created *if* additional hours are needed *and* requested by providers.
- VRS will:
 - Ensure the provider receives a copy of the authorization
 - Authorize based on the need of the individual
 - Be careful not to over-authorize for services

PBA Authorizations

- Many current authorizations in place relate to VRS' Performance Based Agreements (PBA's) for Job Placement and Retention Services.
- Historically, VRS has authorized all PBA milestones up front.
- VRS has reviewed PBA placement authorizations and identified an attrition rate of roughly 50%.

PBA Milestone Authorizations

- Beginning on 4/2/24 for all new PBA's, VRS will authorize the full amount for Milestones 1 & 2 and authorize \$1 for Milestone 3 and \$1 for the E1MN Milestone as *place holders*.
- All applicable PBA Milestones will appear on one authorization.

PBA Milestone Invoices

- Providers will invoice VRS the full amount of Milestone 3-Successful Placement Closure at \$1,270 and the full amount of the E1MN Milestone at \$1,200, as applicable.
- Providers will submit Monthly Progress Reports for VRS to process payment of any milestone.

PBA Milestone Authorizations

- Beginning on 4/2/24, if a participant has not yet started a job, VRS will reduce PBA Milestone 3 to \$1 and cancel any Job Coaching that is not presently occurring.
- If needed, Job Coaching can be authorized once VRS learns of the job hire and assesses the number of hours that will be authorized for Job Coaching.

Timely Authorizations

- Communication between VRS and providers is essential to create a new authorization for Job Coaching in advance of the service taking place.
- Providers help ensure authorizations are in place by allowing VRS enough time to create the necessary authorization prior to the services beginning.

90-day Invoicing Requirement

Language on DEED-VRS authorizations currently reads:

Invoices must be submitted within 90 days of end date of the work authorization. Invoices not submitted within 90 days of the end date of the work authorization will be considered a material breach of contract. This will result in non-payment of this service.

Starting immediately: VRS will be enforcing a 90-day invoicing requirement on all invoices submitted to VRS.

- Providers must ensure they have an authorization in hand before initiating any service.
- Communication with providers and within VRS teams about which authorizations can be closed or reduced is critical.
- Providers should indicate on each invoice if it is a partial invoice or final invoice.

- VRS will be enforcing the 90-day requirement for submitting all invoices.
- Pre-ETS authorization end dates will be extended for unused service units.
- If additional hours are needed, providers will contact local VRS staff to discuss the need.

Key Messages

- VRS staff will contact providers to determine which authorizations can be closed and a timely response is critical.
- Monthly progress reports should arrive to VRS by the 10th of each month.
- VRS may decide fewer hours are authorized initially, depending on the needs of the individual.

Contracted Services Review Workgroup

CSRWG Update

- Thank you for your recent feedback on OCSS and Social Coaching. Updated definitions and “Best Practices” documents will be submitted to VRS Executive Leadership for review.
- Once approved, the Community Partner Website will be updated to show an updated definition and a “Best Practices” list.
- Any feedback outside the scope of the workgroup will be shared with the appropriate groups and VR staff.

Quarters 2 and 3 topic: Performance Based Agreement

- VRS staff will have opportunities to give feedback to their peers on the workgroup.
 - VRS RAMs will discuss at upcoming regional RAM meetings
 - This April and May Luke and Eric will be reaching out to all VR Counselors in efforts to collect feedback on the definition for the Performance Based Agreement (PBA) services. These efforts will include an online survey with multiple choice and open text response options. In addition, Luke and Eric will be offering virtual discussion forums to provide opportunity for deeper feedback collection. Please look for invites to both from your RAMs.
 - VRS Support Staff should submit questions or suggestions through this form: <https://forms.office.com/g/DCqQFDXwTp> You can also reach out to Felicia Madsen via email or phone if you wish.

CSRWG update, cont.

- Community Partners can join any of or all three upcoming Feedback Sessions:
 - Tuesday, 4.09.2024, at 1:30 pm CST:
<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1613959686?pwd=RkdVQ0NjNHRSam16WFRMQWViREtVZz09>
 - Friday, 4.26.2024, at 9:00 am CST:
<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1619600014?pwd=dSs4eFBXQkpmKzVtTzMvMTRGaGlxZz09>
 - Wednesday, 5.15.2024 at 3:00 pm CST:
<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1608453098?pwd=dGJLaW1oUzdHMkIxSGFVOXdNU3JNQT09>

July 1, 2024 Contracting Process and Timeline

July 1, 2024 Contracting Process and Timeline

All existing P/T contracts are due to expire on 6.30.2024.

There are different processes for a variety of our contracts to be renewed for 7.1.2024

Contracting, cont.

- Community Rehabilitation Partners' contracts are being amended to have a larger budget, negotiated fees for services, and a new end date of 6.30.2027. These amendments will have a start date of 7.1.2024. Program Specialist have met with all of our CRPs as of this week.
- Amendments are in process!

Contracting, cont.

- Limited Use Vendors that began a contract on 7.1.2022 will have an open Request for Proposal and will submit new applications for a contract to begin on 7.1.2024 and end on 6.30.2026.
- Any LUV that wants to continue services on 7.1.2024 and has not yet submitted an application must do so promptly to avoid having a gap in contracts. Agencies can find the open RFP here: [Competitive Grants and Contracts / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](#)

Reminders and Updates

Updates, cont.

- **Community Partner Conversations**

- The VRS Community Partner Conversations sessions are meant to be casual office hours to provide support and community building with VRS Community Partners. VRS Community Partnerships Program Specialists lead the meetings, provide updates, and have ample time for general questions and answers each month.
 - **When:** 1st Wednesday of each month from 8:30 am – 9:30 am. The next session is on April 3rd, 2024.
 - **How to attend:** Here is the recurring zoom link: [CP Conversations Zoom Link](#)

- **VRS Community Learning Connections**

- This training series invites VRS, SSB, and Community Partner staff to join in a shared experience to strengthen skills and grow stronger together in serving Minnesotans with disabilities.
 - **Understanding and Supporting Autistic Individuals on the Job (1 CRC credit)**
 - April 4th, 2024, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
 - **The session will be recorded.**
 - Registration is required for this event: [Learning Connections Registration](#)
 - **Accommodations:** the session will have closed captioning and ASL interpreting. If you need additional accommodations to attend or participate in the event, contact VRS.StaffDevelopment.DEED@state.mn.us.

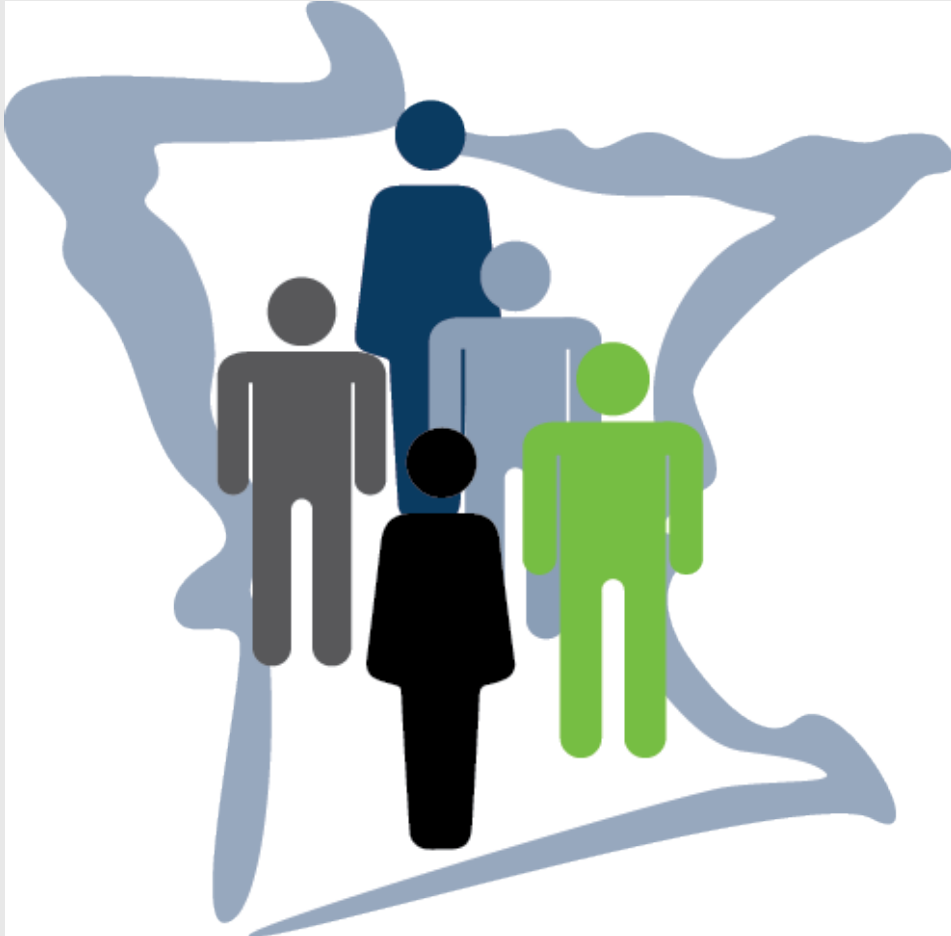
Discussion – Questions and Answers

Please submit questions and comments using the Microsoft Form linked in the chat and listed below.

[MS Form for Q&A](#)



Thank You!



We'd love to hear your feedback on our VRS Community Partner + VRS Staff Forums.

Please provide your thoughts in the Microsoft Form below. The forum feedback questions are at the end of the form.

[MS Form for Q&A and Forum Feedback](#)

Funding Notice

The VR program receives 78.7 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For federal fiscal year 2022, the total amount of grant funds is \$44,081,347. The required state match for these funds is \$11,930,529 (21.3 percent). The state of Minnesota has appropriated \$14.3 million to exceed the matching requirement.