

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING
AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
Division of Rehabilitative Services**

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) - COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES (CSS)

I. Policy.

Since challenges in non-vocational areas of life may adversely affect an individual’s ability to gain and/or maintain employment, it is the policy of the Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) that Community Support Services (CSS) may be provided to consumers who require these services to establish eligibility, assess rehabilitation and career needs, or achieve an employment outcome. CSS should not be used for the sole purpose of eligibility determination, but may be used in Application status if necessary to accompany other services required to determine eligibility. CSS are provided to consumers individually by community-based vendors. CSS may include education, life skills training (which may include self-advocacy), assessment, and instruction related to the use of assistive technology, as well as the development and implementation of strategies that allow an individual to live and participate successfully in community settings. Areas targeted for CSS may include household and financial management, personal care/hygiene, coping and social skills, using transportation, and other similar skills and tasks. Service areas should align with, and address consumer needs related to DRS functional limitations. CSS do not include clinical, therapeutic, and behavioral health interventions or services provided by non- Employment Service Organization (ESO) vendors. CSS is subject to comparable benefits and financial eligibility policy, in accordance with federal regulation.

II. Definition.

- A.** CSS involves the provision of intensive one-to-one services that assist individuals with disabilities to live and participate as independently and effectively as possible in their home, work, and community settings of choice. CSS provided through the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program within the Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) typically focus on the development and implementation of strategies that enable the consumer to function effectively and independently, despite their impairments. CSS are ideally provided in the environment in which the skills and abilities will be used, i.e., the consumer’s home or community, and are individualized to meet the consumer’s specific needs with the goal of addressing impediments so that the consumer may obtain competitive integrated employment.

- B.** Services should include an initial comprehensive **Community Support Assessment** and development of an individualized **CSS Plan** (*Section V*) that includes a description of methods, strategies, and approaches to be used. CSS are intended to be provided on a short-term basis, with frequency and intensity of services decreasing gradually as the CSS provider fades his/her presence and the consumer becomes more independent in carrying out the specific tasks or activities (similar to the provision of job coaching services). The **CSS Plan** should focus on supporting on-going success and sustainability. The CSS Plan should be saved in DocFinity.

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- C. CSS may include education, as well as the development and implementation of strategies and techniques that allow the consumer to live, work, and participate successfully in community settings. Areas to be addressed by the provision of CSS should be related to serious functional limitations such as: communication, interpersonal skills, mobility, self-care, self-direction, work skills, and work tolerance.

III. Service Provision.

- A. **Support Team Approach.** When a DRS consumer receiving CSS has challenging behaviors that affect the ability to function productively and independently in the community and on the job, the VR Counselor is strongly encouraged to provide leadership in developing “support teams” and to serve as an active team member when working with a consumer’s support team. VR Counselors are encouraged to provide CSS in a collaborative, team approach-- integrating services provided by case managers, residential providers, counselors, behavioral support providers, etc. VR Counselors should refer to the **DRS Services Reference Manual** for the maximum allowable rate reimbursement and to the **DRS AWARE System** for vendor information. Information on potential wrap-around service providers is found in the *Behavioral Health Services, Special Therapeutic Services, and Other Services/Other* sections of the **DRS Services Reference Manual**.
- B. **Quality Characteristics.** The provision of CSS should be subject to DRS informed choice policy and provided in community-based settings that are age-appropriate and which include a diversity of people in naturally occurring proportions, including people with and without identified disabilities. Settings should be accessible to allow for the maximum participation of the consumer. Service delivery and supports should be natural, non-intrusive, non-stigmatizing, and non-punitive.

IV. Role of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

The VR Counselor should consider CSS like any other service purchased for a DRS consumer. In partnership with the consumer, their legal representative if appropriate, and chosen CSS team members, the VR Counselor determines whether the consumer has a need for, and would benefit from CSS to establish eligibility, assess rehabilitation and career needs, or achieve and maintain an employment goal as established on their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). After authorizing an initial assessment (*Section V*), and based on a CSS plan (*Section V*) developed by a qualified provider, the VR Counselor coordinates the provision of services by working with the consumer to:

- select a provider;
- obtain written consent for CSS team members;
- complete a CSS Assessment;
- conduct a team meeting to discuss assessment findings, and finalizing the CSS Plan which includes:
 - specific intervention strategies, desired outcomes, and strategy for skill retention
- monitor the provision of services; and
- coordinate routine team meetings to monitor progress.

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An exception to completing a full CSS Assessment (*Section V*) can be given with supervisor/manager approval when:

- a previous CSS Assessment has been completed and targeted barriers need to be readdressed; and
- VR Counselor, consumer, and CSS team members agree that a full CSS Assessment is not warranted to address a specific need.

Supervisor/manager approval of an exception to completing a full CSS Assessment shall be documented by an Actual Service Note (ASN).

V. Community Support Assessment / Service Plan.

- A. *Authorization of Referral.*** The VR Counselor may initially authorize two (2) hours for the service provider to have an initial meeting with the client, complete necessary paperwork, and discuss roles, expectations, and how services will be provided. Referral services should be authorized and billed under ***DRS Service Item Code: A1205Ref - Community Support Services - Initial Consult and Referral - For services provided through and Employment Service Organization (ESO).***
- B. *Authorization of Assessment / Plan.*** The VR Counselor initially authorizes up to ten (10) hours for the service provider to conduct a comprehensive Community Support Assessment and to prepare a written CSS Plan. The initial authorization for assessment and development of a written plan is considered a direct service and is authorized and billed under ***DRS Service Item Code: A1205Plan - Community Support Services - Assessment and Plan Development - For services provided through and Employment Service Organization (ESO).*** Requests for more than ten (10) hours should be approved by the supervisor and documented with an ASN.
- C. *Authorization of Services.*** Once the VR Counselor, the provider, and the consumer have approved the CSS Plan, additional CSS hours can be authorized based on the plan. Implementation of planned services is considered a direct service and is authorized and billed under ***DRS Service Item Code: A1205Svc - Community Support Services - Service Implementation - For services provided through and Employment Service Organization (ESO).*** While CSS are individualized to each consumer's needs, duration of services generally should not exceed six (6) months. Service providers who propose a plan exceeding this timeframe, or who request an authorization for additional hours after the end of a six (6) month period, should include written justification for the continued need for service provision. Requests for more than six (6) months of service should be approved by the supervisor and documented with an ASN.
- D. The *CSS Plan* should include the following:**
1. Identification of needs, desired outcomes, and interventions related to each functional limitation:
 - the staff responsible for the provision of CSS (i.e., the ESO Provider);
 - the method(s) of instruction/intervention used in the provision of specific skills training;
 - final outcomes based on interventions, strategies, and summary of skills at the

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- conclusion of services; and
- specific techniques for skill retention after initial CSS intervention.

E. **Quality Characteristics.** The CSS Plan should be consumer-centered and directed towards obtaining the goals established in the individualized plan for employment (IPE). The plan should entail the provision of supports and services in community-based settings that are age-appropriate, and which include a diversity of people in naturally occurring proportions, including people with and without identified disabilities.

VI. Modifying / Ending Services.

A. The VR Counselor should monitor services through ongoing communication and reports from the service provider to determine if the consumer's functional skills and abilities are improving measurably as the result of services. If a consumer's ability to function successfully does not appear to be improving, the VR Counselor will schedule an appointment with the consumer and discuss modifying or ending the CSS service.

B. CSS Plan may be amended at any time during the course of service provision.

C. CSS should be ended when:

- the consumer has met the goals established in the CSS Plan (e.g., the consumer has learned or implemented skills or strategies to achieve or maintain employment or to enter vocational training), and the consumer has been informed of and understands the recommended strategies for maintaining skills gains; or
- after a specified period of time, and following appropriate modifications to the CSS Plan, it is clear that the consumer is unable to meet the intermediate and/or long-term objectives in the IPE for VR services or Trial Work; or
- the consumer does not comply with the basic requirements of the CSS Plan of Services and appropriate counseling/guidance from the VR Counselor, other agency staff, or the provider do not improve compliance; or
- the consumer chooses to no longer participate in CSS.

D. **Review of CSS Assessment and Plan Document.** At the completion of CSS provision, the service provider should enter post ratings, final outcomes, and steps for sustaining skills on the original CSS Assessment and Plan form. This should be completed even in instances where services are ended without the successful attainment of desired goals. The VR Counselor should save this completed document to DocFinity, along with monthly ESO reports.