# VR Standards for Providers 20.6 Revisions

**March 15, 2018**

On March 15, 2018, a change to the [Vocational Rehabilitation Standards for Providers (VR-SFP)](http://www.texasworkforce.org/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-standards-providers-manual) manual Chapter 20.6 Travel Premiums went into effect. Corresponding updates were made to SFP 20.9 Fee Cart. This new content was made available for review on the [VR Providers' Resources Page](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-providers-resources) in the February 15, 2018, Notice to Providers and has now been published.

The content in this document has been retired and is no longer in effect as of March 15, 2018. If you have questions about travel premiums and related forms emailed [vr.standards@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:vr.standards@twc.state.tx.us).

# ADDED CONTENT

## VR Standards for Providers 20.6 Travel Premiums

### 20.6.1 Overview of Travel Premiums

Two types of Travel Premiums are available to contracted providers for specific services. There is a Travel Premium for mileage reimbursement that is referred to as a “Mileage Premium” which is a reimbursement to the provider for actual miles traveled to provide a specific service to a VR customer when the provider uses their own vehicle. There is also a Travel Premium for other travel related costs, such as lodging, food, and third-party transportation, which is referred to as the “Highly Specialized Training Premium”.

The Mileage Premium and the Highly Specialized Training Premium can be authorized at the same time when it is determined that this is the most cost-effective means of meeting the VR customer’s needs.

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program does not pay a Travel Premium:

* to transport customers; or
* if the customer does not show up for a scheduled service (also referred to as a “no show”).

Travel Premiums must be authorized by the VR counselor in advance with a service authorization.

If a Travel Premium is necessary for any other reasons in order to meet the individualized needs of a customer, but does not meet the requirements listed in the service description, process and procedure or outcomes required for payment, a [DARS3472, Contracted Service Modification Request](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/forms/DARS3472.docx) must be completed by the VR counselor and the modification must be approved by the state VR Division Director prior to the travel.

#### 20.6.1.1 Travel Premiums Terminology

To ensure consistent application of the Travel Premiums, the following terms are defined in this section:

* Multiple Trips
* 50-mile Radius
* Provider Location

##### Multiple Trips

When a provider chooses to make multiple trips in the same day serving one or more customers eligible for a Travel Premium, VR only allows the provider to invoice for one trip; trips that the provider may make returning the identified provider location between customer visits are not reimbursed.

##### Fifty-Mile Radius

To calculate whether the contracted provider is outside of the 50-mile radius and eligible for a Travel Premium, VR staff determines the round-trip mileage from the provider’s location to the location where the service will be provided using the route with the lowest mileage according to MapQuest. If the round-trip mileage is more than a total of 100 miles, then the provider may be eligible for one or both Travel Premiums if all other conditions are met and the premium is approved in advance with a service. authorization.

The VR counselor must consult with the regional quality assurance specialist or the regional program support specialist to confirm that there is not another provider that will meet the customer’s needs within 50 miles of the customer’s service location.

##### Provider Location

The provider’s location is defined as the provider’s headquarters, as stated in the provider’s contract, or the physical location of the provider’s staff that is providing the service, whichever is closest to the location where the service will be provided.

For example, if the provider’s headquarters is 75 miles one way from the location where the service will be provided, but the staff providing the service is located (either their residence or a satellite location) is 35 miles one way from where the service will be provided, then the provider is not eligible for a Travel Premium. If the same provider’s headquarters is 75 miles one way from where the service will be provided, but the staff providing the service is located 100 miles one way from where the service will be provided, then the providers headquarters, as stated on the providers contract, will be used to calculate the mileage premium since this is the shortest distance.

### 20.6.2. Mileage Premium

This premium is for mileage reimbursement and no other expenses.

#### 20.6.2.1 Service Description

The Mileage Premium may be available to providers serving VR customers receiving the services or assessments under a contract with TWC-VR in the following chapters:

* Chapter 4: Employment Assessments
* Chapter 5: Orientation and Mobility Services
* Chapter 7: Diabetes Self-Management Education Services
* Chapter 9: Assistive Technology for Sight-Related Disabilities
* Chapter 10: Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind
* Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services
* Chapter 14: Work Experience Services
* Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services
* Chapter 18: Supported Employment

The Mileage Premium may be available to providers serving VR customers:

* who require contracted services to achieve the long-term goals as identified on the customer’s individualized plan for employment (IPE) or independent living goals established under the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind program;
* when there is not a qualified contracted provider available within a 50-mile radius of the location where the authorized service is to be provided; and
* who require at least two hours of a contracted service (one or more customers) during a single trip, (travel time to and from service location is not included in this two hours).

The Mileage Premium amount is based on direct, round-trip travel for each mile traveled over 100 miles. Travel within the customer's community is not allowed to be counted when the Mileage Premium payment is calculated.

When a provider sees more than one customer within the area that the provider travels to:

* the provider can only be reimbursed for travel for one customer, and
* the round-trip mileage is based on the travel to the furthest location of the customers served during the visit.

To calculate the amount to pay for the Mileage Premium, VR staff:

1. determines the round-trip mileage from the provider’s location to the service location using MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance and round-trip options selected;
2. subtracts 100 miles from the round-trip total; then
3. multiplies the total by the state-approved mileage rate.

The amount calculated is the Mileage Premium amount that is paid to the contracted provider if all other conditions are met and the premium is approved in advance with a service authorization.

All State of Texas travel rules for employees must be adhered to by providers.

#### 20.6.2.2 Process and Procedures

1. After all appropriate approvals are in place, the provider receives multiple service authorizations from TWC-VR for all approved services and premium fees. The service authorization for the Mileage Premium must include the anticipated distance and number of trips to be traveled.
2. The provider schedules the services with the customer and makes travel arrangements.
3. The provider travels from the defined provider locationto the location of the service.
4. The provider provides the service and completes the DARS3435, Mileage Premium Report to document all required information.
5. The provider submits the required documentation for payment.
6. VR staff reviews documentation, verifies mileage on MapQuest Route Planner with shortest distance, and round-trip options selected and authorizes payment if all requirements are met.

#### 20.6.2.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The service provider is eligible for the Mileage Premium when:

* The customer(s) receives at least two hours of services (one or more customers), excluding travel time;
* There is no provider for the service within a 50-mile radius of the customer's location, or the staff of the provider within the 50-mile radius do not meet the qualifications necessary to provide the service; and
* All information required on DARS3435, Mileage Premium Report, is provided.

The information required on the DARS3435, Mileage Premium Report, includes the:

* Case ID for all customers served during the round trip;
* Date(s) the service was provided;
* Length of the customer’s training;
* The provider’s location at which the mileage was initiated;
* Each customer’s location where the services were provided during the round trip;
* Shortest round-trip mileage, for each segment of the round-trip travel according to MapQuest;
* Total mileage for the round trip, according to MapQuest;
* When more than one customer is served in a single trip, include the name of the customer for whom an invoice will be submitted and a Travel Mileage Premium claimed.

Payment for the Mileage Premium is made when the VR counselor verifies the mileage for the trip and approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* DARS3435, Mileage Premium Report; and
* invoice.

#### 20.6.2.4 Mileage Premium Fee

For more information, see 20.9.5 Travel Premium.

### 20.6.3 Highly Specialized Training Premium

This premium is used for reimbursement of approved travel expenses, excluding mileage.

#### 20.6.3.1 Service Description

The Highly Specialized Training Premium may be available to providers serving VR customers receiving the highly specialized services or assessments under a contract with TWC-VR in the following chapters:

* Chapter 4: Employment Assessments;
* Chapter 5: Orientation and Mobility Services;
* Chapter 7: Diabetes Self-Management Education Services;
* Chapter 9: Assistive Technology for Sight-Related Disabilities; and
* Chapter 10: Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind.

The Highly Specialized Training Premium may be available to providers serving customers:

* who require contracted services to achieve the long-term goals as identified on the customer’s individualized plan for employment (IPE) or independent living goals established under the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind program;
* when there is not a qualified contracted provider to provide the services available within a 50-mile radius of the location where the service is to be provide the services outlined in the customer's IPE or ILP; and
* who require at least two hours of a contracted service (one or more customers) during a single trip, (travel time to and from service location is not included in this two hours).

The Highly Specialized Training Premium reimbursement includes lodging, per diem, airfare (if necessary), and transportation by taxi, bus, other mode of mass transit, or network transportation driver.

The provider must submit a DARS3434, Provider Travel Plan and Report, which includes the projected cost of travel for the trip before travel. VR Manager approval in advance is required to reimburse costs identified in the provider’s travel plan and is only authorized when a service authorization is issued.

The provider must submit DARS3434, Provider Travel Plan and Report and copies of all receipts for all costs to be reimbursed following the guidelines below:

##### Lodging

The lodging expense may only be reimbursed if it is incurred at a commercial lodging establishment. The customer uses hotels that are approved and listed in [Contract Hotel Directory Listings](https://portal.cpa.state.tx.us/hotel/hotel_directory/index.cfm) unless less expensive lodging is available than allowed as published in the US General Services Administration’s (GSA) Federal [Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem). If the city is not listed but the county is listed, use the daily rate of the county.

##### Meals

Meals are only reimbursed if the provider is away from the identified provider location for at least six consecutive hours and overnight travel is required for the trip. All meals to be reimbursed must have a receipt. No gratuity is reimbursed. No taxes are reimbursed. To identify the allowed per diem rate, refer to the GSA’s Federal [Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem). If the city is not listed but the county is listed, the VR counselor uses the daily rate of the county.

##### Air Transportation

A copy of a complete passenger receipt issued by a commercial airline company or an itinerary issued by the company or a travel agency is required for a provider to be reimbursed for a commercial air transportation expense.

The commercial air transportation expense receipt or itinerary must include the following:

* The name of the provider and airline
* The ticket number
* The class of transportation
* The travel dates
* The amount of the airfare
* The origin and destination of each flight
* Proof of payment

The airfare reimbursement may not exceed the cost of the lowest available airfare between the airport closest to the identified provider location and the city where services will be provided.

##### Ground Transportation

A provider is may be reimbursed for the actual cost of transportation by bus, other mode of mass transit, taxi, or network transportation driver (for example, Uber, Lyft) if required for the provider to travel to the location where the service will be provided to the customer. The most cost-effective mode of transportation available must be used. Receipts of all travel must be provided.

All State of Texas travel rules for employees must be adhered to by providers. Providers do not qualify for state tax exemption.

#### 20.6.3.2 Process and Procedures

1. The provider submits submit the DARS3434, Provider Travel Plan and Report, to the VR counselor.
2. The VR counselor and VR Manager review the DARS3434, Provider Travel Plan and Report.
3. VR Manager approves allowable expenses.
4. VR counselor notifies provider of outcome of review
5. After all appropriate approvals are in place, the provider receives multiple service authorizations from TWC-VR for all approved services and premium fees. The service authorization for the Highly Specialized Training Premium must include separate line items for each of the allowable expenses.

NOTE: The Highly Specialized Training Premium requires VR Manager review and approval.

1. The provider schedules the services with the customer.
2. The provider travels from the defined provider location to the location of the service.
3. The provider completes the report section of the DARS3434, Provider Travel Plan and Report documenting the actual expenses after providing the service.
4. The provider submits the required documentation and receipts for allowable expenses for payment.
5. VR staff reviews documentation, verifies allowable expenses, and authorizes payment if all requirements are met.

#### 20.6.3.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The service provider is eligible for the travel premium for highly specialized training when all requirements in the service description have been achieved and the provider’s DARS3434, Provider Travel Plan and Report, is complete, accurate, and approved by the VR counselor and VR Manager.

The information required on the DARS3434, Provider Travel Plan and Report includes the:

* Case ID for all customers served during the round-trip
* Projected cost of all reimbursements that apply to the trip
* Preapprovals from the VR counselor and VR Manager related to the travel plan
* Actual cost being submitted for reimbursements
* Required supporting documentation, such as receipts
* Date the service was provided to each customer
* Each customer’s location where the services were provided during the trip
* When multiple customers are included in the trip travel, the name of the customer for whom an invoice will be submitted and a travel premium for highly specialized training claimed

The travel premium for highly specialized training may not be paid if one or more customers) does not receive a minimum of two hours of service or the travel by the provider is not approved prior to the trip with a service authorization.

Payment for the travel premium for highly specialized training is made when the VR counselor verifies the travel reimbursement and approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* DARS3434, Provider Travel Plan and Report;
* required supporting documents, such as receipts; and
* invoice.

#### 20.6.3.4 Highly Specialized Training Premium Fee

For more information, see 20.9.5 Travel Premium.

# RETIRED CONTENT

## VR Standards for Providers 20.6 Travel Premium

### 20.6.1 Service Description

The Travel Premium may be available to providers whose customers:

* who has no alternative option is available to address needs outlined in their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or independent living plan (ILP) that is within a reasonable distance;
* require contracted services to achieve the long-term goal of competitive integrated employment or the independent living goals established under the Independent Living for Older Individuals Who Are Blind program; and
* require at least two hours of service, not including travel time.

The Travel Premium is authorized when:

* no contracted provider within a 50-mile radius of the customer's location is available to provide the services outlined in the customer's IPE or ILP; or
* the contracted provider staff members who are available within the 50-mile radius do not meet the qualifications for providing the services.

The Travel Premium must be authorized in advance—before the travel occurs—using a service authorization. VR does not pay a travel premium to transport customers.

The Travel Premium is based on the distance traveled between:

* the city or town listed as the provider's physical location on the provider's contract; and
* the city or town where the customer lives or the site of the training session or visit.

The Travel Premium is based on direct, round-trip travel only. Travel within the customer's community is not allowed. When a provider sees more than one customer, the provider is paid for the direct, round trip to the furthest city or town.

The distance traveled is determined using the route with the lowest mileage according to [MapQuest](http://www.mapquest.com/).

The Travel Premium may be available for the services discussed in:

* Chapter 4: Employment Assessments;
* Chapter 5: Orientation and Mobility Services;
* Chapter 7: Diabetes Self-Management Education Services;
* Chapter 9: Assistive Technology for Sight-Related Disabilities;
* Chapter 10: Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind;
* Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services;
* Chapter 14: Work Experience Services;
* Chapter 17: Basic Employment Services; and
* Chapter 18: Supported Employment.

### 20.6.2 Process and Procedures

The provider receives two service authorizations—one that approves the services to be provided and the other that approves the Travel Premium. The service authorization for the Travel Premium includes the anticipated distance and number of trips.

The provider schedules the services with the customer.

The provider travels from the contractor's physical location identified in the contract to the city or town where the customer lives (or other site of the training session or visit).

The provider provides the service. The length of time needed to provide the service must be a minimum of two hours, not including travel time. Travel within the customer's city or town is not counted when determining the amount of the Travel Premium.

When multiple customers are seen during the trip and the location of one or more customers requires the provider to travel more than 50 miles from the first stop, the mileage used to determine the Travel Premium for the trip is the mileage to the furthest customer's city or town or other site of the training session or visit.

Stops made during the round trip are not included when calculating the Travel Premium.

The provider uses [MapQuest's Route Planner](https://www.mapquest.com/routeplanner) to determine the shortest round trip from the contractor's physical location identified on the contract to the city or town where the customer lives (or other site of the training or visit). Only direct mileage is used to calculate the Travel Premium.

For example:

* 123 provider headquarters, Lubbock, Texas; to
* 456 Main Street Snyder, Texas; for
* Mileage calculates to 171 miles using MapQuest Route Finder with the shortest distance and round-trip options.

To receive a Travel Premium, the provider must submit DARS3433, Travel Premium Report.

### 20.6.3 Outcomes Required for Payment

The services provider is eligible for the Travel Premium when:

* the customer receives at least two hours of services, excluding travel time;
* there is no provider for the service within a 50-mile radius of the customer's city or town, or the staff of the providers within the 50-mile radius do not meet the qualifications necessary to provide the service; and
* all information required on DARS3433, Travel Premium Report, is provided.

The information required on DARS3433, Travel Premium Report, includes the:

* case ID for all customers served during the round trip;
* date of the training;
* city or town where the contractor is located, as listed in the contract (departure city);
* city/town of each customer served on the round trip;
* city or town used for the midpoint of the round trip;
* shortest round-trip mileage, according to MapQuest;
* total mileage for the round trip, according to MapQuest;
* number of round trips for which the premium is being claimed;
* name of the customer for whom an invoice will be submitted and a Travel Premium claimed; and
* name of the customer for whom an invoice will not be submitted and for whom a Travel Premium will not be claimed.

Travel Premiums are not paid if a customer does not receive a minimum of two hours of service delivery, excluding travel time—unless the provider requests a modification by submitting a DARS3472, Contracted Service Modification Request, and the modification is approved by the VR director.

If multiple customers are served during a round trip, the provider may be eligible to receive a Travel Premium for each customer who received at least two hours of service.

Payment for the Travel Premium is made when the VR counselor verifies the travel and approves a complete, accurate, signed, and dated:

* DARS3433, Travel Premium Report; and
* invoice.

### 20.6.4 Fee

See the fees listed in the chapter associated with base services.