# **Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual B-500: Individualized Plan for Employment and Post-Employment**

Revised October 2, 2023

## **B-504: Content of the IPE**

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### B-504-9: Frequency of Contact for an IPE or IPE Amendment

Contact with a VR customer is defined as interaction with the customer or representative through direct face-to-face communication, phone calls, written correspondence, or electronic communications, such as email. All communications with customers must be confidential and secure. For instructions on encrypting electronic communications, refer to the VR Program Operations Intranet page under VR Covid-19 Updates and Resources.

Note: VR staff must comply with all policies and procedures in the TWC Privacy Manual (PDF). Text messages and emails sent from the Semi- Autonomous Research Assistant (SARA) are considered secure; however, VR staff must not communicate sensitive information such as personal identifying information (PII) with VR customers through non-secure means. Text messaging, even from an agency device, is not a secure means of communication.

The frequency that the VR office maintains contact with a VR customer, also referred to as "FOC", varies based on the customer's individual circumstances and needs. For example, one customer who is attending college may only need periodic contacts throughout the semester or at the beginning and end of each semester. A customer that is actively engaged in more intensive services, such as Project Search or Supported Employment, may require monthly contacts.

FOC can change as needed throughout the life of the case. If FOC changes from a lower number of days to a higher (less frequent) number of days, an IPE amendment is required. If FOC changes from a higher number of days to a lower (more frequent) number of days, an IPE amendment is not required.

For example, if the FOC on the IPE is identified as 60 days, but the customer needs weekly FOC for a period of time, then FOC can be provided weekly and the IPE does not need to be changed since this is within the minimum threshold of the timeframe selected on the IPE.

The minimum FOC with the customer should be clearly stated on the customer's IPE.

Substantive customer contact may be made by a VR counselor, Rehabilitation Assistant, or other VR staff, and occurs as often as necessary. Each of these contacts will count towards meeting the required FOC that is identified on the IPE.

When VR staff initiate contact with the customer or representative with no response, it is documented as an attempted contact. When the customer is not able to be contacted prior to closing the case, refer to [B-605: Customer Notification](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-b-600#b605). For information on documentation, refer to [E-300: Case Notes Requirements](https://twc.texas.gov/files/partners/vrsm-e-300-case-note-requirements-twc.docx).

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