

1355.00 Transportation Services Policy

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Policy

ACCES-VR will assist consumers with transportation expenses to participate in vocational rehabilitation (VR) services in accordance with this policy. Consumers are expected to provide their own transportation whenever possible.

Definition

Transportation services are necessary travel for transporting persons with disabilities (and their attendants) for assessment and diagnostic services and/or, other vocational rehabilitation services described in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Planning Considerations

When to Provide Transportation Services

A consumer's need for transportation services - while participating in VR services and after the completion of services - must be considered and discussed by the ACCES-VR counselor with the consumer (and his or her family or guardian) during the eligibility determination and vocational rehabilitation planning process. A consumer's prospective capability to get to and from work may influence that consumer's ability to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services. All alternative means of transportation should be explored and the least expensive option that meets the needs of the consumer should be selected.

ACCES-VR will provide transportation services determined to be the most appropriate in consideration of the consumer's disability, functional limitations, mobility, independence, travel time, cost of the service and anticipated mode of transportation after case closure.

The vocational rehabilitation counselor must document in the consumer's record of services the reasons for choosing a particular type of transportation service.

ACCES-VR cannot pay for transportation once a consumer's case is closed.

Special Transportation

Special transportation services are provided to consumers when significant functional limitations preclude the use of public transportation. Special transportation may be provided by ambulette, paratransit, community rehabilitation program vehicles, taxis or other types of transportation.

Proper quote and bidding procedures are to be followed when required according to the current ACCES-VR process. State Finance Law and the Comptroller's purchasing guidelines require that we obtain bids and/or quotes for purchasing commodities and services based on certain dollar limits.

Transportation by Community Rehabilitation Programs

When public transportation is unavailable or not cost-effective, ACCES-VR may purchase transportation from community rehabilitation programs.

Economic Need

Transportation services are based on economic need except for the following:

1. Transportation provided for assessment, diagnostic and evaluation services;
2. Special transportation; and,
3. Transportation to attend an administrative review or fair hearing.

Benefits Counseling

When planning for transportation during and after vocational rehabilitation services, the VR counselor may want to refer the individual for benefits advisement and counseling. For these circumstances or when serving individuals who are on SSDI/SSI, please refer to "Provision of Benefits Counseling" section of ACCES-VR Policy 210.00 "Serving Individuals who are SSDI/SSI Participants".

Documentation

When the most appropriate mode of transportation is determined, document in the record of services (e.g. IPE case note) the reasons for the decision.

Types of Transportation

The following transportation services will be considered:

1. Public Transportation
2. Personal Vehicle (Mileage Rate)
3. Taxicabs or Private Car Service
4. Ambulettes or other Specialized Vehicles
5. paratransit

Public Transportation

ACCES-VR will provide funding for public transportation if it is available and the consumer's disability does not prevent his or her using a bus, subway or other common carrier. The basis for ACCES-VR reimbursement shall be the actual cost of bus or subway fares to and from the service location only. Reduced fare packages must be used whenever available. e.g. half-fare cards or discount bus passes.

If a consumer chooses an alternate method of transportation, the consumer shall be financially responsible for the difference in cost.

Personal Vehicle

ACCES-VR will pay for the cost of using a personally owned vehicle which is available to transport the consumer if:

1. public transportation is not available (e.g. bus system; schedule or routes are not adequate); and/or
2. the consumer's disability prevents his/her using public transportation.

The consumer may use a vehicle that he/she personally owns or that is made available to the consumer or is driven by a family member or friend.

Mileage Rate: The mileage allowance for all consumers using a personally owned motor vehicle shall be 50% of the current "NYS Maximum Mileage Reimbursement Rate for Personal Car Mileage (PCM)" (rounded-up to the nearest whole cent), at the time the service is authorized.

Note - The following link provides current mileage rates:

<http://osc.state.ny.us/agencies/travel/mileage.htm>

ACCES-VR can pay exact toll charges in addition to the mileage allowance. The counselor should be certain that the mileage provided is accurate and reflects the actual distances. If a consumer uses his/her personal vehicle when he/she is able to use public transportation, reimbursement will be limited to the public transportation rate.

ACCES-VR's mileage reimbursement rate is not intended to cover the entire operating cost of a vehicle (e.g. insurance, maintenance, depreciation or interest on car loans).

ACCES-VR does not purchase or lease vehicles for consumer transportation.

Taxicabs and Private Car Services

ACCES-VR will pay for the cost of using taxicabs to transport consumers if:

1. public transportation is not available; and/or
2. the consumer's disability prevents him/her from using public transportation;
3. a personal vehicle is not available.

Rates for Taxi Service - Amounts authorized for taxi service must be based on counselor's documentation of the vendor's estimate of the cost. The vendor's estimate will include metered or other rates, any service charge, plus charges for tolls and extra stops if applicable. However, payment for services must be based on receipts for the actual cost of metered fee service or fees. All payments must be the exact fare plus any applicable service charge for each trip and other applicable fees for waiting time, additional stops and tolls. However, current ACCES-VR quote/bid process must be followed when appropriate.

Ambulettes and Other Specialized Vehicles

Ambulettes are vehicles designed and equipped to safely transport persons with disabilities. The vendor should use all appropriate safety devices, including but not limited to lockdown devices and safety belts or harnesses.

Actual fees for the service can be paid. However, current ACCES-VR quote/bid process must be followed when appropriate.

Paratransit

Paratransit is an alternative mode of passenger transportation that does not follow fixed routes or schedules, like a bus line. Typically vans or mini-buses are used to provide paratransit service. Paratransit services vary on the degree of flexibility they provide their customers. The most flexible paratransit system offers door-to-door service from any origin to any destination in a service area. Paratransit services are operated by public transit agencies, not-for-profit corporations, and for-profit private companies or operators.

Actual fees for the service can be paid. However, the current ACCES-VR quote/bid process should be followed when appropriate.

Cost of Services

If the cost of transportation to ACCES-VR, after comparable benefits have been applied, is expected to exceed:

1. \$200 per week, then the Regional Coordinator, District Office Manager or designated supervisor must approve.
2. \$7,000 per year or \$15,000 for the anticipated life of the case, then the Central Office waiver review committee must approve.

For approval, the counselor must document the necessity, projected costs, alternatives considered and plans for transportation after VR services.