



TX VRC Resource Tools

4. Self-Employment and the IPE

VR Counselors need to allow interested customers to explore self-employment to make an informed choice regarding employment goals. Typical starting points are around business concept development and/or business feasibility depending on if the customer already has a specific business concept in mind. At this point, you are not committing to funding a business but rather providing support to allow the customer to:

1. brainstorm business ideas and define a business concept; and
2. gather initial market research to ensure self-employment is a viable path.

You will need to get customers into an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to provide support through these two very critical steps in business planning!

Type of Self-Employment

Once the business concept has been determined, VR counselors will determine the self-employment type (Simple, Comprehensive, or Supported Self-Employment) based on the customer's significance of disability and need. See the attached handout which specifies the forms/process required for each type of self-employment.

Counselors will also want to discuss the need for support in the business exploration and planning process. For Supported Self-Employment, contracting with a Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant (CBTAC) is required. Supported self-employment is for those who meet the requirements as having the most significant disability (see VR Services Manual, Part C, Chapter 9.1: Self-Employment Services, Section L, Eligibility for Supported Self-Employment) and require the services of a CBTAC. A current list of CBTACs can be found at <https://griffinhammistraining.com/cbtac/tx/search/>. Note – you will need to check the TWC ReHabWorks portal to make sure the provider has an active self-employment contract.

For those Simple or Comprehensive self-employment cases, using a CBTAC is optional and will depend on how much assistance VRCs can provide directly. All business owners are encouraged to build and use a business planning team that includes someone with expertise in business planning, such as the local Small Business Development Center, www.griffinhammis.com

Women's Business Center, or SCORE representative. If possible, a team member with expertise in the specific industry is also recommended.

IPE Goals & Services

TX VR requires that counselors identify a vocational goal based on the type of work the customer would like to pursue (the occupational title and SOC code). Self-employment would not be listed as the employment goal in the IPE but rather a strategy for reaching the work goal. For example, someone interested in a career as an Aesthetician could potentially work as a wage employee, as a contracted employee out of a larger spa, or own a business. Initially, the IPE would not specify wage or self-employment. Only after a completed business plan has been approved will the IPE be amended to specify self-employment.

The initial IPE will not include business start-up expenses, but rather services and supports the customer will need in defining the business concept and conducting market research to ensure feasibility.

“VR customers...must be active and full partners in the vocational rehabilitation process.”

Example:

A VRC works with a customer interested in jewelry repair and design. In order to provide services and support they need to develop an IPE. The IPE identifies the following:

Employment Goal:

Jewelry Repair and Design, full time.

Objectives:

Maintain physical and emotional stability

Obtain and Maintain employment

Progress Review Criteria:

Demonstrates new learning and applies to daily or work routines

Customer Responsibilities:

Apply for comparable services/benefits identified to assist reaching your goal

General-apply for any medical benefits you qualify for such as Medicaid, Medicare, SSDI or SSI

General-contact staff if any changes occur with your disability, medical/health, address, interest, living arrangements, phone #, income.

Agency Responsibilities:

Encourage and facilitate confidence building

Provide the necessary information to allow for informed choice.

Comparable Benefits:

Veteran Administration – Veteran Entrepreneur Program

Small Business Development Center

Self-Employment: No

Occupational code and title: 51-9071.00 Jewelers and Precious Stone and Metal Workers

Participate in Counseling and Guidance with VRC every (days): 30-60

Maintain contact with VR Staff every (days): 30-60

Customer Pin: XXXX

Customer/Parent/Guardian/Representative Sign Date: 09-13-2022

CCS Sign Date: 09-13-2022

Plan Services

Description	Plan Service Category	Vendor Name	Payment Method	Start Date	End Date	Previous Plan Service
Customer will be provided with counseling and guidance to assist customer throughout the VRC process and to provide him with the necessary information to make informed choices and obtain/maintain employment. VRC will monitor customer's case progress.	Counseling and Guidance	TWC-VRS	Provided	09-13-2022	09-13-2023	No
Customer will meet with assigned VA counselor to assist with comparable benefit for entrepreneur program, business plan assistance.	Other	Veteran Administration – Veteran Entrepreneur Program	Arranged	09-13-2022	09-13-2023	No
Customer will meet with the local SBDC office to discuss any self-employment plan options, and courses to help start potential business.	Other	Small Business Development Center	Arranged	09-13-2022	09-13-2023	No

In this example, services authorized at this point include vocational counseling and guidance, networking support through the Veteran Entrepreneur program, and classes and support through the Small Business Development Center.

When developing the IPE, consider what the customer might need to explore self-employment options and make an informed choice:

- Will the customer require the support of a CBTAC provider?
- Will the customer need training in the occupational area or in business development or management?
- Will the customer need materials to make sample products?

- Will the customer need funding to support test marketing to sell a few products/services, conduct surveys, or advertise the business in to determine customer demand?

These types of services and support can be provided under federal law as Technical Assistance or Other Consultation Services, defined as:

“Technical assistance or other consultation services to conduct market analyses, develop business plans or other resources to support developing a small business operation.” [34 CFR 361.48\(b\)19](#)

Once a business plan is approved, the IPE should be amended to reflect self-employment and address additional items and services that the prospective business owner will need to start and operate the business. Additional services that can be authorized include:

“Occupational licenses, business training, tools, equipment, initial stocks and supplies in accordance with the approved plan.” [34 CFR 361.48\(b\)20](#)

Self-Employment Forms and Process

The definition of each strategy and the forms required for each are listed in the chart below:

Type of Self-Employment	Forms to be Completed
<p>Simple Self-Employment is for individuals who are working as independent contractors or sub-contractors working for a business that handles some of the marketing and other business aspects and have already established the feasibility of the business concept. Examples might include real estate agents working for a larger real estate agency, hairdressers or massage therapists renting a chair or room in a salon, an accountant working under contract with H&R Block, an Uber Driver or other gig workers.</p>	<p>VR-1800 Self-Employment Referral VR-1801 Customer Profile and Self-Employment Exploration VR-1802 Career Development and Feasibility Study VR-1803 Simple Business Plan VR-1805 Business Financial Projections VR-1806 Business Financial Actuals VR-1815 Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant (CBTAC) Support Summary Report</p>
<p>Comprehensive Self-Employment is for individuals who do not meet the criteria for Simple or Supported Self-Employment criteria. Note that many businesses may appear “simple” in that they are easy to establish and run but they may still require a Comprehensive</p>	<p>VR-1800 Self-Employment Referral VR-1801 Customer Profile and Self-Employment Exploration VR-1802 Career Development and Feasibility Study VR-1804 Comprehensive Business Plan VR-1805 Business Financial Projections</p>

<p>strategy. For example, a customer may propose starting a lawn mowing service. While this seems “simple” enough it does not meet the criteria above. A comprehensive business plan will be required.</p>	<p>VR-1806 Business Financial Actuals VR-1815 Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant (CBTAC) Support Summary Report</p>
<p>Supported Self-Employment (requires use of CBTAC) is for customers who meet the definition of “the most significant disability” (C-1104-1) who require extended services and supports necessary to maintain the self-employment outcome once VR closes their case. Necessary support can come from another individual, organization, or other resource after support from VR-funded services are complete.</p>	<p>VR-1800 Self-Employment Referral Form VR-1801 Customer Profile and Self-Employment Exploration VR-1808 Supported Self-Employment Assessment (SSEA) VR-1809 Supported Self-Employment Concept Development VR-1810 Supported Self-Employment Feasibility Study VR-1811 Supported Self-Employment Services Plan (SSESP) and Benchmark Report VR-1813 Supported Self-Employment Business Plan VR-1805 Business Financial Projections VR-1812 Supported Self-Employment Business Plan Support Summary Report VR-1814 Supported Self-Employment Support Summary (SSE-SS)</p>