DEED

Uniform Guidance Implementation Procedures

**Rate-Setting Methodology**

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# Overview of Rate-Setting Methodology

State Services for the Blind (SSB) has the authority under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Federal Regulations 34 CFR 361 to develop and implement flexible procurement policies and methods that facilitate the provision of services, and that afford individuals meaningful choices among the methods used to procure services.

Rates for the procurement of vocational rehabilitation goods and services are established through the following methods:

* Public solicitation using Authority for Local Purchase
* Centralized state procurement processes and procedures
* State of Minnesota exclusive contracts
* Negotiated professional and technical contracts
* Fee schedules
* Department of Health and Human Services Medicare rates
* Local minimum wage laws and prevailing wages for occupations

# Laws and Policies Governing Rates

The following laws and policies govern the rates that are set by State Services for the Blind.

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

Sec. 7. Definitions

Title I-Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Part A – General Provisions

Part B – Basic Vocational Rehabilitation Services

**CFR Part 361 – State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program**

34 CFR §361.48 Scope of Vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities

34 CFR §361.49 Scope of vocational rehabilitation services for groups of individuals with disabilities

34 CFR §361.50 Written policies governing the provision of services for individuals with disabilities

34 CFR §361.53 Comparable services and benefits

34 CFR §361.54 Participation of individuals in cost of services based on financial need

**34 CFR Part 397 Limitations on Use Of Subminimum Wage**

**MN Rule 3325**

3325.0110 Definitions

3325.0180 Scope of Services

3325.0420 Conditions of Service

3325.0430 Comparable Services and Benefits; Vocational Rehabilitation

3325.0440 Financial Participation by Eligible Individuals in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

3325.0470 Standards for Community Rehabilitation Programs

**SSB Workforce Development Unit Policy and Procedure**

Chapter. 01 General Requirements

Chapter. 07 Pre-Employment Transition Services

Chapter. 11 Comparable Services and Benefits

Chapter. 12 Customer Financial Participation (CFP)

Chapter. 13 General Service Provision

Chapter. 13A Adjustment to Blindness Training

Chapter. 13B Childcare

Chapter. 13C Customized Employment Services

Chapter. 13D Employment Services

Chapter. 13E Interpretation and Written Translation Services

Chapter. 13F Maintenance

Chapter. 13G Physical and Mental Restoration

Chapter. 13H Personal Assistance Services

Chapter. 13I Person-Centered Practices

Chapter. 13J Post-Secondary Education

Chapter. 13K Reading and Notetaking Services

Chapter. 13L Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology

Chapter. 13M Transportation

Chapter. 13N Vehicle Modifications

Chapter. 14 Transition Services

Chapter. 16 Self-Employment

Chapter. 25 Authorizing and Purchasing

Chapter. 26 Vendor Guidance

# Summary of Services and Rate Setting Methodology

The following is an overview of the procured vocational rehabilitation services, established rates, and the methodologies used with rate setting.

## Adjustment to Blindness Training

Adjustment to Blindness Training (ATB) refers to training opportunities that teach an individual with a vision loss the skills necessary to work competitively and live independently. ATB includes training in assistive technology, rehabilitation teaching, and orientation and mobility. These services are provided in-house by SSB staff, on an itinerant basis by private vendors, or through a comprehensive program with a community rehabilitation provider (CRP).

ATB services provided by CRPs or private vendors have defined rates outlined in SSB’s master contracts.

*Assistive Technology Training*

Assistive technology training services include:

* Using a screen reader via speech or braille output or screen magnification programs to access an operating system, word processing, email, and internet browser applications; and
* Operating other current or emerging electronic aids and devices.

The provision of rehabilitation or assistive technology must be followed by training in the use of such assistive technology by an individual qualified to provide assistive technology services. Assistive technology training services must be provided by a person who has demonstrated a mastery of assistive technology services and the ability to teach assistive technology to blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals.

**Established Rate:** Tiered rates depending on type of assistive technology training provided and the competency of the trainer.

Itinerant Rate 1: $75/hour base rate for trainers who are teaching any of the assistive technology devices or applications in service groups 1 through 7 identified below and are competent in and training core application software (Windows, word processing, email, internet).

1. Screenreaders (JAWS, Window-Eyes, Supernova, System Access, NVDA, Apple VoiceOver/Zoom).
2. Screen magnification software (Zoomtext, MAGic, Zoom).
3. Scanning software and devices (Kurzweil K1000, Open Book, DocuScan Plus, KNFB Reader ).
4. Digital talking book players and digital recorders (Victor Reader Stream, Book Sense, Book Port Plus, Plextor Pocket, Olympus).
5. Notetakers (Braillenote, PacMate, Braille Sense).
6. iOS devices (iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch).
7. Applications (Voice Dream Reader, Amazon Kindle, Bard, Prizmo Go, Seeing AI, iBooks, etc.)

Itinerant Rate 2: $65/hour base rate for trainers who are teaching any of the assistive technology devices or applications identified in service groups 3 through 7 above and are competent in training these devices or applications as stand-alone products not interacting with a computer and where competency in core application software is not required.

Itinerant Rate 3: $75/hour base rate for trainers who are teaching any of the assistive technology devices or applications in service groups 1 through 7 identified below and are competent in and training core application software (word processing, email, internet) for the Apple Macintosh.

1. Screenreaders (JAWS, Window-Eyes, Supernova, System Access, NVDA, Apple VoiceOver/Zoom).
2. Screen magnification software (Zoomtext, MAGicZoom).
3. Scanning software and devices (Kurzweil K1000, Open Book, DocuScan Plus, KNFB Reader ).
4. Digital talking book players and digital recorders (Victor Reader Stream, Book Sense, Book Port Plus, Plextor Pocket, Olympus).
5. Notetakers (Braillenote, PacMate, Braille Sense).
6. iOS devices (iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch).
7. Applications (Voice Dream Reader, Amazon Kindle, Bard, Prizmo Go, Seeing AI, iBooks, etc.)

Itinerant Rate 4: Rate will be adjusted to $85 when the instructor is competent in both Windows core software and Apple Macintosh core software; and when the instructor is competent in either Windows core software or Apple Macintosh core software and any two or more of groups 1 through 7.

**Methodology:** CRP rates are determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and review of CRP costs, and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies.

*Comprehensive ATB Programs*

Comprehensive ATB training is a structured program provided by a Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) that teaches the blindness skills required for an individual to become independent and employable. A comprehensive program is located in a center-based environment with varied blindness-related classes scheduled throughout the day. The skills taught include: braille, home management, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, and industrial arts. As a result of the training, individuals also gain skills in self-advocacy and confidence-building.

Comprehensive programs also have housing options for individuals who are not within commuting distance to the center or who require additional skills in independent living.

**Established Rate:** The comprehensive program and housing rates are by fee schedule for each CRP.

**Methodology:** CRP rates are determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and review of CRP costs, and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies. CRP rates are negotiated directly and separately with each CRP.

*Orientation and Mobility Training*

Orientation and mobility services means the provision of aids and devices and instruction in their use, which enable an individual to travel safely and independently without sight or with impaired sight. These services include the provision of white canes and instruction in cane travel.

**Established Rate:** $75/hour base rate. Rate may be adjusted where the instructor has the personal capacity to interpret the spoken or written instructions to a student, customer satisfaction, and any other factors necessary to assure that quality services are available to individuals statewide.

**Methodology:** Rate determined by analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies.

*Rehabilitation Teaching (Itinerant)*

Rehabilitation teaching services means instruction in the use of alternative techniques other than orientation and mobility and assistive technology services. Rehabilitation teaching includes teaching individuals tasks of daily living and alternative access to print (such as Braille).

Alternative techniques are methods that enable individuals to perform activities of daily living independently without sight or with limited sight. For example, placing bump dots on a kitchen stove dial to identify temperature settings.

**Established Rate:** $75/hour base rate. Rate may be adjusted where the instructor has the personal capacity to interpret the spoken or written instructions to a student, customer satisfaction, and any other factors necessary to assure that quality services are available to individuals statewide.

**Methodology:** Rate determined by analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies.

## Child Care

SSB can only provide child care if it is to support a primary service on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and only for the duration of that primary service. The IPE must include the individual’s responsibilities for arranging ongoing child care and any funding required.

A child care provider must be licensed by the Department of Human Services (DHS), unless the child care provider is caring only for the children of the individual, providing child care for less than 30 days in any 12 month period, or related to the individual and only providing care to relatives of the individual.

**Established Rate:** Payments for childcare must not exceed the [rates](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-6441B-ENG) established by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

**Methodology:** SSB has adopted the established rates and methodology used by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

## Customized Employment Services

Customized employment means competitive integrated employment, for an individual with a significant disability, that is:

* Based on an individualized determination of the unique strengths, needs, and interests of the individual with a significant disability;
* Designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and the business needs of the employer; and
* Carried out through flexible strategies, such as:
	+ Job exploration by the individual; and
	+ Working with an employer to facilitate placement, including –
		- Customizing a job description based on current employer needs or on previously unidentified and unmet employer needs;
		- Developing a set of job duties, a work schedule and job arrangement, and specifics of supervision (including performance evaluation and review), and determining a job location;
		- Using a professional representative chosen by the individual, or if elected self-representation, to work with an employer to facilitate placement; and Providing services and supports at the job location.

**Established Rate:** During the current pilot period, which extends through Federal Fiscal Year 2019, the Discovery portion is paid at the vendor’s established hourly rate. Job Placement and Stabilization is paid under the SSB Performance Based Agreement (PBA) milestone 2 and 3 of $5,000 for Blind and Low Vision customers and $9,000 for DeafBlind customers.

**Methodology:** Rate determined by analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies. Rates to be reviewed after pilot project completion.

## Employment Services

The purpose of employment services is to assist individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in, or regaining competitive integrated employment consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, informed choice, and labor market information.

Employment services include:

* Internships (not for post-secondary credit) and other work experiences
* Job development
* Job placement assistance
* Job readiness training, including work adjustment training
* Job search assistance, including job seeking skills training
* Job shadow
* Job site analysis and accommodations
* Job try-out
* Occupational Communication Specialist (OCS)
* On-the-job supports, both short-term and supported employment
* On-the-job training (OJT)

*Internship (not for post-secondary credit) and Work Experience*

A time-limited opportunity available to individuals in situations where an internship (not for post-secondary credit) or work experience will significantly enhance skill development and future opportunity for competitive integrated employment (e.g. individuals who are ready to begin work but have a gap in work history or need relevant work experience related to their educational training, individuals in a training program, recent post-secondary graduates, or students currently enrolled in a post-secondary training program but who are not receiving college credit for the internship).

**Established Rate:** Wages paid to an individual participating in an internship or work experience can be no less than Minnesota’s legal minimum wage. Vendors assisting individuals in finding internships and work experiences are paid according to a set fee schedule.

**Methodology:** Vendor rates are determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies. Rates are negotiated directly and separately with each vendor.

*Job Development, Job Search Assistance, Job Placement, and Job Stabilization*

Job development involves contacting businesses to develop or identify job opportunities and assisting individuals to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain competitive integrated employment.

Job search activities support and assist an individual in searching for an appropriate job. Job search assistance may include help in resume preparation, identifying appropriate job opportunities, and developing interview skills.

Job placement assistance is a referral to a specific job resulting in an interview, regardless of whether or not the individual obtained the job.

Job stabilization activities ensure the employed individual is stable in their job and could include the development of natural supports or job coaching services.

**Established Rate:** These services are provided under a performance-based agreement. Payment for services is provided at milestones in the progress toward a successful employment outcome; payments are linked to the individual’s employment goals and the individual and employer’s satisfaction. A maximum of $8,000 for individuals who are blind and low vision and $14,000 for individuals who are Deafblind will be paid in the following increments:

| **Milestones for Blind and Low Vision Individuals** | **Fees** |
| --- | --- |
| 1a. Intake and signed placement plan completed | $1,500 |
| 1b. 90-day check in | $1,500 |
| 2. Job hire | $2,500 |
| 3. Successful placement | $2,500 |
| Total | $8,000 |

| **Milestones for DeafBlind Individuals** | **Fees** |
| --- | --- |
| 1a. Intake and signed placement plan completed | $2,500 |
| 1b. 90-day check in | $2,500 |
| 2. Job hire | $4,500 |
| 3. Successful placement | $4,500 |
| Total | $14,000 |

These vendors also have additional fee-for-service rates:

| **Additional Fee-for-Services** | **Rates** |
| --- | --- |
| On-the-job supports/job coaching with Occupational Communication Specialist support (non-English languages) | $86/hour (above 10 hours) |
| On-the-job supports/job coaching; short term | $50/hour (above 10 hours) |
| On-the-job supports/job coaching; supported employment  | $50/hour (above 10 hours) |
| Mileage greater than 70 miles round trip | Mileage - IRS Rate |

**Methodology:** Vendor rates are determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies. Rates are negotiated directly and separately with each vendor.

*Job Shadow*

Contacting businesses to develop opportunities for individuals to observe different jobs and ask businesses questions about the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to perform the tasks involved in the job.

**Established Rate:** Vendors assisting individuals in setting up job shadows are paid according to a set fee schedule.

**Methodology:** Vendor rates are determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies. Rates are negotiated directly and separately with each vendor.

*Job Site Analysis and Accommodations*

Assisting businesses to identify, modify, or eliminate architectural, procedural, instructional, attitudinal, or communication barriers to the competitive integrated employment and advancement of persons with disabilities. Providing on-site job analysis, consultation, and recommendations for work site and job modification, when appropriate.

**Established Rate:** No rate established; provided by SSB staff.

*Job Tryout*

Short-term work experience which allows an individual the opportunity to demonstrate to an employer their capacity to effectively perform in a job related to a specific employment goal on their IPE. The expectation is that the tryout results in a hire if the performance is satisfactory.

**Established Rate:** Wages paid to an individual participating in a job tryout can be no less than Minnesota’s legal minimum wage. Vendors assisting individuals in finding internships and work experiences are paid according to a set fee schedule.

**Methodology:** Vendor rates are determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies. Rates are negotiated directly and separately with each vendor.

*Occupational Communication Specialist*

Communication and Job support services specifically for consumers who use American Sign Language (ASL) or another foreign language and who may experience communication and related comprehension barriers on the job. An OCS must have skills in ASL or be proficient in an identified foreign language. An OCS differs from an interpreter; their role is to assist individuals in understanding and comprehending information and involves the OCS in the planning, development, oversight, and delivery of the individual’s support services.

**Established Rate:** Vendors are paid according to a set fee schedule.

**Methodology:** Vendor rates are determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies. Rates are negotiated directly and separately with each vendor.

*On-the-Job Supports/Job Coaching- Short Term*

Services provided to a consumer who has been placed in employment in order to stabilize the placement and enhance job stabilization. Such services include job support services (beyond the 10 hours as expected in the PBA) for consumers who do not have a supported employment goal.

**Established Rate:** Vendors are paid according to a set fee schedule.

**Methodology:** Vendor rates are determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies. Rates are negotiated directly and separately with each vendor.

*On-the-Job Supports/Job Coaching- Supported Employment*

On-going support services and other appropriate services needed to support and maintain a consumer with a most significant disability in supported employment for a period of time generally not to exceed 24 months.

**Established Rate:** Vendors are paid according to a set fee schedule.

**Methodology:** Vendor rates are determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies. Rates are negotiated directly and separately with each vendor.

*On-the-Job Training (OJT)*

Training that is designed to meet the specific requirements of an employer (including a group of employers) that is conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training. SSB may provide cost reimbursement to the employer for the OJT.

**Established Rate:** Wages paid to an individual participating in OJT can be no less than Minnesota’s legal minimum wage and must be commiserate with the prevailing wage of the position. Vendors assisting individuals with an OJT are paid according to a set fee schedule.

**Methodology:** Vendor rates are determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies. Rates are negotiated directly and separately with each vendor.

## Interpreters

Interpreter services includes both sign language interpretation and foreign language interpretation. Written translation services occur when English documents are translated into a second language.

**Established Rate:** The State of Minnesota has established contracts and rates for [sign language](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/S-884%285%29.PdF) (S-884), [foreign language interpretation and written translation](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/S-885%285%29.PdF) (S-885), and [telephone foreign language interpretation](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/T-640%285%29.PdF) (T-640).

**Methodology:** Public solicitation using Authority for Local Purchase and centralized state procurement processes and procedures.

## Maintenance

Maintenance is the minimum monetary support provided to an individual for expenses (such as shelter and clothing) incurred due to an individual participating in:

* An assessment for determining eligibility;
* An assessment for rehabilitation needs; or
* A planned service.

These expenses must:

* Support a primary service;
* Relate to the job goal on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE);
* Not relate to daily living needs the individual has regardless of participation in vocational rehabilitation; and
* Go beyond the individual’s normal expenses.

*Housing (Post-Secondary Only)*

Post-secondary students may receive housing assistance if housing is not a normal living expense for the individual. Housing assistance will be provided while the student is enrolled, not on academic probation, and participating in their post-secondary program. SSB will not pay relocation costs for students.

**Established Rate:** $3,880.50/semester and $1,940.25/summer for on-campus housing after financial aid and customer financial participation has been applied. Not to exceed $808/month for off-campus housing (prorated for roommates).

**Methodology:** Housing rates are determined by averaging the cost of all Minnesota State Colleges and Universities rates for a double occupancy dorm room.

*Relocation*

Relocation is a permanent, not short-term or temporary, move to a new residence. Relocation expenses include one-time charges such as moving costs, damage deposits, added costs for first month’s rent, and initial utilities installation (but not the utilities themselves).

**Established Rate:** $1,500/program sequence

**Methodology:** Determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies.

*Clothing*

Clothing includes interviewing clothes and winter wear for outdoor travel.

**Established Rate:** $100/program sequence

**Methodology:** Determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies.

## Physical and Mental Restoration

The medical or medically related services provided to correct or substantially modify, within a reasonable time, a physical or mental condition which is stable or slowly progressive. Mental restoration means therapeutic psychological, psychiatric, or counseling intervention in either an individual or group setting due to or as a direct result of the disability or disabilities.

SSB may purchase physical and mental restoration services only from physicians, optometrists, or other health professionals licensed under Minnesota Statutes, chapter [147](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=147) or [148](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=148) and included in the Minnesota Department of Human Services Health Care Programs [Provider Directory](http://mhcpproviderdirectory.dhs.state.mn.us/).

SSB must not pay for experimental medical supplies or procedures.

**Established Rate:** SSB must pay for restoration services in accordance with the rates established by Medicare. Staff are required to use available State of Minnesota contracts. The following physical and mental restoration services are on contract with established rates:

* [Hearing Aids H-59(5)](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/H-59%285%29.PdF)
* [Prescription Eye Glasses G-165(5)](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/G-165%285%29.PdF)
* [Prescription Safety Glasses G-173(5)](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/G-173%285%29.PdF)
* [Medical Supplies M-487(5)](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/M-487%285%29.PdF)
* [Dental Products and Services D-212(5)](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/D-212%285%29.PdF)

**Methodology:** SSB has adopted the established rates and methodology used by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and have established rates through public solicitation using Authority for Local Purchase and centralized state procurement processes and procedures.

## Personal Assistance Services

Personal assistance services includes personal care attendants, sighted guide services, and interveners and support service providers for individuals who are DeafBlind.

**Established Rate:** Base rate of pay is the Minnesota minimum wage. Pay may be negotiated with the provider to align with DeafBlind Services of Minnesota (DBSM), Department of Education, and the Department of Human Services rate of pay.

**Methodology:** Determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies.

## Post-Secondary Education and Vocational Training

Post-secondary education and vocational training means instruction and supplies provided to an individual to help them acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and educational qualifications necessary to achieve a competitive integrated employment outcome.

**Established Rate:** SSB will pay for or reimburse up to three college application fees, not to exceed $20 per application. SSB will pay for up to three housing application fees, not to exceed $25 per application.

*Minnesota State or U of M Tuition and Fees*

If the student is attending a Minnesota State or the University of Minnesota (U of M) for any degree and is not on academic probation, SSB may cover the balance remaining after applying applicable financial aid and financial participation

*Private or Out-of-State Tuition and Fees*

If the student is attending a private or out-of-state post-secondary institution and is not on academic probation, SSB uses the following fee schedule based on Minnesota State’s average tuition and fees per credit rate. Financial aid and financial participation is deducted from SSB’s contribution.

* Associate’s Degree: not to exceed $187.74/credit
* Bachelor’s Degree: not to exceed $270.47/credit
* Graduate Degree: not to exceed $426.63/credit
* Doctoral Degree: not to exceed $752.47/credit

*Seminary*

Seminary is a graduate level program that prepares students to become priests, ministers, or rabbis. SSB’s total amount paid for tuition and fees during an academic year must not exceed $12,210.58. Applicable financial aid and financial participation must be applied according to policy.

*Gallaudet University and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)*

Gallaudet University and NTID are two schools geared specifically to individuals who use American Sign Language (ASL) to access information. These two schools are not subject to the out-of-state fee schedule. SSB may cover the balance remaining after applying applicable financial aid and financial participation.

**Methodology:** Rates are determined by averaging the cost of all Minnesota State Colleges’ and Universities’ rates for each type of degree program. Seminary costs are based on the average yearly cost of the five schools associated with the Minnesota Consortium of Theological Schools.

## Pre-Employment Transition Services

Five activities that may be provided to students with disabilities

* Job Exploration Counseling
* Work-Based Learning Experiences
* Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment
* Workplace Readiness Training
* Instruction in Self-Advocacy

**Established Rate:** Job exploration counseling and counseling on opportunities for enrollment are proved by SSB staff at no cost. Rates for work-based learning experiences utilize the same rate structure and methodology as employment services. Rates for workplace readiness training and instruction in self-advocacy utilize the same rate structure and methodology as adjustment to blindness training and employment services.

**Methodology:** Established under other vocational rehabilitation services as outlined above. Determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies.

## Reading and Notetaking Services

Reading and notetaking services may be provided as a supportive service to an individual until the individual has obtained adjustment to blindness training to access print materials and take notes independently.

**Established Rate:** Base rate of pay is the Minnesota minimum wage. Pay may be negotiated with the provider to meet the needs of the individual.

**Methodology:** Determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies.

## Rehabilitation, Assistive, and Other Technology

Rehabilitation, assistive, and other technology includes assistive technology devices, rehabilitation engineering, low vision aids, and other technology items, such as a computer or iPad.

**Established Rate:** The State of Minnesota has established contracts and rates for some rehabilitation and assistive technology under the [Aids and Devices A-180(5)](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/A-180%285%29.PdF) state contract. Computers and other non-accessibility software and hardware are not on contract and can be solicited using Authority for Local Purchase.

**Methodology:** Public solicitation using Authority for Local Purchase and centralized state procurement processes and procedures.

## Self-Employment Initial Stocks and Supplies

SSB may be able to fund the following types of initial stocks and supplies, based on the individual’s business needs, including but not limited to:

* Purchase of tools and equipment necessary for training or entry level requirements for the occupation
* Obtaining necessary initial stocks and/or supplies
* Assistance with start-up legal costs, including the cost of forming the business entity
* Assistance with start-up marketing including the costs associated with custom web site design, development, maintenance, and E-commerce development
* Assistance with initial accounting costs and financial reviews as indicated by IPE timelines. There should be a minimum of quarterly reviews in the IPE
* Short term (up to six months) rental payment assistance and required security deposits for business startup
* Acquiring licenses, permits, and initial insurance required to lawfully engage in business

**Established Rate:** Up to $5,000 for initial stocks and supplies

**Methodology:** Determined by an analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies. Public solicitation using Authority for Local Purchase and centralized state procurement processes and procedures.

## Transportation and Travel Expenses (Vendors)

Vendors providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals may be reimbursed for travel time and mileage in the course of providing those services.

**Established rate:** Travel time will be authorized (in quarter-hour increments) hourly from a vendor’s home base and compensated at $25 per hour. All travel expenses are subject to the Commissioner’s Plan. For travel that exceeds 3 hours travel time (one way), an overnight stay is allowed. Mileage for any travel will be charged consistent with the Commissioner’s Plan and the Federal IRS rate.

Travel time and mileage billed should be for the most direct and efficient route as provided by MapQuest. SSB will only pay for actual mileage driven and actual time in travel. Contractor may use a taxi cab (including services such as Uber and Lyft). SSB does not cover the costs of tips to drivers. Receipts must be provided.

**Methodology:** Rate determined by analysis of Minnesota market rates and benchmarking with other state rehabilitation agencies, and state travel expense limits. Travel time rates are reviewed periodically. Travel expense limits are modified when the Commissioner’s Plan is adjusted.

# Procedure: Establishing, Reviewing, and Updating Rates (Contracted Services)

This section outlines the procedure for establishing, reviewing, and updating rates provided by contracted vendors to ensure they are reasonable yet flexible to meet the individualized needs.

Contracted services include:

* Adjustment to blindness training
	+ Half-time or greater ATB (including housing)
	+ Itinerant or Component
* Assessment and Evaluation
	+ Vocational evaluation
	+ Benefits analysis
* Employment services
	+ Job seeking skills training
	+ Work experiences
	+ Wage reimbursement
	+ Job search and job placement assistance
	+ Customized employment
	+ On the job supports
* Pre-Employment Transition Services

Rates will be reviewed at the time contracts are to be renewed and amended, which is on a five-year cycle. Rates will also be reviewed as needed if rates have been determined to be so low as to deny the needs of an individual or other factors necessitate a rate adjustment.

*Step 1: Initial Assessment*

SSB will conduct an initial assessment with SSB field staff, the vendor community, and the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind that answers the following questions:

* What is the current makeup of individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation services?
	+ Demographics
	+ Location
	+ Types of services needed
* What is the current vocational rehabilitation provider environment?
	+ Location of vendors
	+ Number of vendors
	+ Types of services available
* What is currently working with the provision of vocational rehabilitation services through vendor contracts?
* What are the gaps and issues?

SSB should also review the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and Customer Satisfaction Surveys as part of the initial assessment.

*Step 2: Analysis of Industry Standards*

SSB will gather fee schedules and industry standards from other agencies within Minnesota and other State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies.

Minnesota agencies that provide comparable services include:

* Department of Employment and Economic Development- Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Disability Determination Services, Employment and Training
* Minnesota Department of Human Services
* Minnesota Department of Education

The State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency complement should include:

* At least two agencies for the blind
* At least two general agencies that do not serve individuals who are blind
* At least two combined agencies

*Step 3: Service and Cost Analysis and Collection*

SSB staff will collect revenue, expenses, and service utilization data from current providers on a cost report tool. The cost report tool includes the following information for each provider:

* Working hours
* Fringe benefits
* Personnel expenses
* Vocational rehabilitation services provided by each employee (number of hours and percentage of time)
* Revenue earned and expenses incurred

*Step 4: Rate Calculation*

SSB will calculate the service rates by determining the average wage costs for providing direct services and then adding in every other component. This results in the recommended rate. Rate calculation is done by type of service and looks at all vendors who provide that type of service. The types of services include:

* Assessment and Evaluation
	+ Vocational assessments
	+ Benefits analysis
* Adjustment to Blindness Training
	+ Hourly/Itinerant
	+ Comprehensive
* Employment Services
	+ Job seeking skills
	+ Work adjustment
	+ Customized employment
	+ Job search
	+ Job placement
	+ Job coaching
* Pre-employment Transition Services
	+ Workplace readiness
	+ Instruction in self-advocacy
	+ Work-based learning experience

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Step** | **Component** | **Rate** |
| 1 | Direct service provision personnel costs | $ \_\_\_ per/hour |
| 2 | Fringe Markup | $ \_\_\_ per/hour |
| 3 | Report Writing Markup | $ \_\_\_ per/hour |
| 4 | Paid time off | $ \_\_\_ per/hour |
| 5 | Average hourly rate for indirect services | $ \_\_\_ per/hour |
| 6 | Supervisor personnel costs | $ \_\_\_ per/hour |
| 7 | Administrative personnel costs | $ \_\_\_ per/hour |
| 8 | Average mileage and travel costs | $ \_\_\_ per/hour |
| 9 | Inflation | $ \_\_\_ per/hour |
|  | Total | $ \_\_\_ per/hour |

*Step 5: Review and Adjust Recommended Rate Calculation*

SSB will establish a rate-setting workgroup to that will review the recommended rate calculation. The workgroup will include the following members:

* SSB Director or Designee
* SSB Vendor Relations Specialist
* SSB Field Staff, including a Counselor, Vocational Rehabilitation Technician, and other specialty staff as needed
* State Rehabilitation Council member not affiliated with a community rehabilitation provider or other vendor
* Client Assistance Project representative
* Advocacy group representatives, including the American Council of the Blind, National Federal of the Blind, and the Minnesota DeafBlind Association
* Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff representative, if applicable

The recommended rates will be compared to the rates of other State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies to ensure reasonableness. In addition, other factors will be considered, including performance-based payments and lack of service availability for underserved regions and populations.

The recommended rate calculation will be adjusted as necessary, and a final rate will be determined.

# Procedure: Establishing, Reviewing, and Updating Rates (Fee Schedules)

This section outlines the procedure for establishing, reviewing, and updating fee schedules to ensure they are reasonable yet flexible to meet the individualized needs.

Fee-scheduled services include:

* Child care
* Maintenance
* Personal care attendants
* Post-secondary
* Readers and note takers
* Self-employment initial stocks and supplies
* Transportation services

Fee-scheduled rates will be reviewed every two years. Fee schedules will also be reviewed as needed if rates have been determined to be so low as to deny the needs of an individual or other factors necessitate a rate adjustment.

*Step 1: Analysis of Industry Standards*

SSB will gather fee schedules and industry standards from other agencies within Minnesota and other State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies for each of the fee-scheduled services.

Minnesota agencies that provide comparable services include:

* Department of Employment and Economic Development- Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Disability Determination Services, Employment and Training
* Minnesota Department of Human Services
* Minnesota Department of Education
* Post-Secondary Institutions

The State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency complement should include:

* At least two agencies for the blind
* At least two general agencies that do not serve individuals who are blind
* At least two combined agencies

*Step 2: Fee Schedule Rate Calculation*

SSB will establish a rate-setting workgroup to that will review the analysis of fee schedules and industry standards. The workgroup will include the following members:

* SSB Director or Designee
* SSB Vendor Relations Specialist
* SSB Field Staff, including a Counselor, Vocational Rehabilitation Technician, and other specialty staff as needed
* State Rehabilitation Council member
* Client Assistance Project representative
* Advocacy group representatives, including the American Council of the Blind, National Federal of the Blind, and the Minnesota DeafBlind Association

The recommended rates will be compared to the rates of other State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies to ensure reasonableness. In addition, other factors will be considered, including performance-based payments and lack of service availability for underserved regions and populations.

*Step 3: Public Comment*

Changes to fee schedules will be published for 30 days for public comment. In addition, there will be a public hearing to present the proposed fee schedules and allow for public input.

Based on public comment and input, the recommended fee schedule rates will be adjusted as necessary, and a final rate will be determined.