

Q&A Follow-up from VR100 Webinar on 04/20/20

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Mississippi

1. For Mississippi, SARA but is that program specific to Mississippi or how can I find out more about this? Sorry if I did not understand correctly

No, SARA is not specific to Mississippi. SARA is a virtual multi-lingual, artificial intelligence assistant that engages clients and staff by two-way email and text messaging. The two-way email and text messaging communication automatically generates structured case notes that can easily uploaded to your case management system. SARA acts as an active, intelligent interface between clients and staff and the agency case management system. Staff can control a variety of ways they use SARA to interact with their clients. In 2018, MDRS requested prior approval from RSA to purchase SARA. SARA's primary role is to increase communication between Counselors and clients. For more information the WINTAC Team can provide you the contact information. If you are familiar with TCI Plus – The Career Index Plus, you can go to their website to read more about SARA

2. Mississippi - the pen process - is that a pin number or a stylus

PIN Number. This signature process is primarily used by VRB. The client is either assigned a PIN or selects their own PIN to represent their signature. To help select the PIN, it is suggested that a random number generator be used and you can go to <http://www.random.org/>. The client will email the Counselor confirming that they are using PIN:XXXXXX as their signature, so that the Counselors have a document confirming the decided information. The PIN is confirmed with their Manager, so that people know for a fact that it is the correct person. The same PIN selected on day one will last until we return to normal services.

Missouri

1. For Missouri-what is your backup plan for Summer WET?

As of today, we are planning to push forward with the summer work experience. We are exploring ways to increase flexibility to accommodate safety and community employer needs/demands. Our backup, consists of possibly pushing the summer work experience beyond the summer into the beginning of the school year. If, even with flexible start dates we find that some students are unable to participate due to employer unavailability, we will also consider providing remote-access services in other Pre-ETS categories.

2. Where can we get more info on the Next Up curriculum and how much does it cost approx. Can other states use it

www.transitioncurriculum.com

I am not sure how much it costs, but if anyone has specific questions after exploring the website I can connect them with our local users who can answer specific questions.

Pre-ETS

1. Is there pre-ETS services for summer employment that may provide a virtual work experience?

There are a number of resources that can help you to navigate the provision of work based learning experiences this summer. Go to Wintac.org [Resources for Distance Service Delivery](#). Under this page you will find two sections with resources that can help you as you tackle this subject

- How VR Agencies are Responding-Effective Practices-Service Provision Vendors/Staff
 - There are a number of nice resources here that can be reviewed to help you including #3,4, 6,7, 8, 10, and 12.
- Remote delivery of services by Topic Area-Pre-employment transition services
 - Many of these resources cover all five required activities and others are zeroed in on Work Based Learning Experiences.
 - We suggest looking at GCFLearnFree.org, T-Folio, Career Clusters Interest Survey, Job Shadow Feedback, Photo Career Quiz, Career exploration and job analysis O*NET, CareerOneStop, Promising Tomorrows, and many more. Please do look through this list.
- States have reported looking at occupations where you can do the work virtually. In some instances, students are able to work in a high demand occupation/service area with proper protective equipment, and other states are focusing on the other aspects of

WBLEs including job shadowing, career mentorship, informational interviews, and virtual workplace tours.

- We have had agencies ask questions about paying students for virtual WBLEs. We want to remind agencies that paying students must be based on allowable costs. If it is for wages, it must be for work performed, not simulated work.

2. How accessible are your Pre-ETS activities to deaf and hard of hearing students? Many various technologies are out there with various degrees of success. Any top notch models out there?

Again, if you go to [Wintac.org Resources for Distance Service Delivery](https://www.wintac.org/resources-for-distance-service-delivery). Remote delivery of services by Topic area-Pre-employment transition services, there are a couple of resources to highlight specific to working with deaf and hard of hearing students.

- National Deaf Center-Top 10 Tips for VR professionals. This has links to resources that can be used by staff and customers including decision making, self-determination skills, self-advocacy skills, and other pre-ets.
- TransitionTN Curriculum Database-This is a tool newly developed in Tennessee that allows you to search pre-ets curriculum and filter by accessibility for hearing impairments.

Additionally, [Wintac.org COVID-19 Resources-COVID-19 Resources for Individuals with Disabilities](https://www.wintac.org/resources-for-individuals-with-disabilities) Scroll down to the section titled COVID-19 Resources for Individuals with Disabilities.

- Items 20-25 all link to resources and entities connected with deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

3. Since schools are closed and unable to provide Pre ETS services onsite, will VR Pre ETS be able to provide those services to students? There will be no doubling up of service provision now.

VR should coordinate with the schools on service provision. If schools have contracts to provide Pre-ETS, VR needs to see if the schools have the ability to still deliver those activities. Go to [Wintac.org Resources for Distance Service Delivery](https://www.wintac.org/resources-for-distance-service-delivery). In the event that the school or a provider cannot deliver the Pre-ets activities, VR can do so in a manner that ensures equitable access for SWD to participate. VR should still ensure that they (or the school/provider) are tracking and reporting in accordance with federal reporting requirements.

4. Who provides supports for students who do summer work?

This will depend on a number of factors dependent upon the unique situation of each WBLE and student in receipt of that service. Factors to consider include: how the work-based learning is set up, who is funding the work-based learning experience, if the student is potentially eligible or if they are eligible and receiving services in accordance with an approved IPE. Since there are so many factors, we would encourage you to reach out and contact the WINTAC Pre-ETS team directly or your RSA State liaison.

5. How do get VR services for high school students with an IPE to start virtually in a state? Do we contact the school first or the VR counselor? Or both? We're having some challenges with this in Hawaii.

For high school students with an IPE that would like to access pre-employment transition services virtually you would want to first connect with their VR counselor who can verify how the VR agency has adapted services during this time.

6. Has anyone identified best practices for providing students with remote paid work experiences?

States are seeking out opportunities for students to participate in work experiences that can be accomplished remotely. This may include customer service/support, podcasting, blogging, accessibility reviews, web design/programming, virtual assistant, and others. The important thing to note here is that in order to provide a paid work experience, it must be for actual work performed and not simulated experiences.

7. Are there any state/federal guidance for providing equipment and internet access for clients in training? Schools, colleges and Pre-ETS programs are mostly only accessible remotely. Would this count under Pre-ETS funding as auxiliary aids and services?

The [Notice of Interpretation](#) (NOI) published February 28th, 2020 has a discussion on the use of the reserve for auxiliary aids and services and rehabilitation technology. 28 CFR 35.104 Definitions *Auxiliary aids and services* includes - (1) Qualified interpreters on-site or through video remote interpreting (VRI) services; notetakers; real-time computer-aided transcription services; written materials; exchange of written notes; telephone handset amplifiers; assistive listening devices; assistive listening systems; telephones compatible with hearing aids; closed caption decoders; open and closed captioning, including real-time captioning; voice, text, and video-based telecommunications products and systems, including text telephones (TTYs), videophones, and captioned telephones, or equally effective telecommunications devices; videotext displays; accessible electronic and information technology; or other effective

methods of making aurally delivered information available to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing;

(2) Qualified readers; taped texts; audio recordings; Brailled materials and displays; screen reader software; magnification software; optical readers; secondary auditory programs (SAP); large print materials; accessible electronic and information technology; or other effective methods of making visually delivered materials available to individuals who are blind or have low vision;

(3) Acquisition or modification of equipment or devices; and

(4) Other similar services and actions.

Internet services in and of themselves are not considered an auxiliary aid and service as stated above.

On the other hand, if services are necessary for an eligible student with a disability to participate in pre-employment transition services, they can be provided and paid for under an approved IPE. In the case of rehabilitation technology, this is addressed on page 11854 of the NOI. States will still need to follow Uniform Guidance under 2 CFR 200 (ie. Reasonable, Allowable, Allocable, and Necessary) and should contact their RSA state liaison with questions.

8. Can we extend eligibility for Pre-ETS for graduating students to offer them a little more time for Pre-ETS services?

This question has previously been submitted to RSA for consideration and is under their review. We will post their response on the pre-ets FAQ page of the WINTAC website as soon as they are able to respond. In the meantime, we suggest you reach out to your RSA State Liaison.

9. Can some more detail be given in regards to how and what kinds of temporary exceptions have been given in the VR Services Manual? Is this just on a state-by-state basis for VR offices?

Each VR agency has to determine what temporary exceptions are to be followed during this time [and create temporary policies and procedures that outline these exceptions and how they will be implemented](#). We encourage you to work with your RSA state liaison in this process.

RSA is working on providing more information and guidance and their responses are currently going through a clearance process.

10. Using Pre-ETS funds, can we buy a CRP a program to provide the service? Can we buy technology for students to access those programs with the CRP?

Each agency will have to ensure that any expenditure charged to the reserve is necessary, allowable, reasonable, and allocable. A VR agency may determine that it wants to deliver some or all of the required pre-ets services through a particular curriculum for consistency across the state that all providers will access. In this instance, if the curriculum is only being used for the benefit of students with disabilities and solely to deliver one or more of the required pre-ets services, then this may be an allowable cost to be charged to the reserve. Each situation can be unique to the state agency, how the agreements and contracts are set up in that state, and in accordance with any state procurement regulations. This is why we would encourage you to consult with your RSA fiscal liaison. With regard to the second part of your question related to the purchase of equipment to access pre-ets services. For a student with a disability that is determined eligible, it is possible that rehabilitation technology can be purchased and allocated to the reserve to allow them to participate in pre-employment transition services when determined necessary and documented in an approved IPE. Page 11854 of the [Notice of Interpretation](#) (NOI) discusses rehabilitation technology. States will still need to follow Uniform Guidance under 2 CFR 200 (ie. Reasonable, Allowable, Allocable, and Necessary) and should contact their RSA state liaison with questions.