

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Vendor Training Process

This is the process for VR agencies to sponsor vendors to attend the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) and Community Partner Work Incentives Counselor (CPWIC) Initial Training.

Steps for State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Vendor Staff Participation:

We will only train potential Community Partner VR vendors who state VR agencies sponsor. To sponsor individuals for the initial training, VR agencies must:

1. Recruit the person or work with existing VR vendors who want to add staff for this purpose.
2. Ensure any potential training participant has:
 - A. Requested and received a favorable suitability determination from Social Security under the State VR agency's contract with Social Security (See instructions later in this document.).
 - B. Created a [myNTC account](https://vcu-ntdc.org/myntc/index.cfm) on the VCU NTDC website <https://vcu-ntdc.org/myntc/index.cfm> (The sponsored individual should select "Community Partner" as their role and select "VR Sponsored" as the Community Partner sub-category.)
 - C. Completed the [**Introduction to Social Security Disability Benefits, Work Incentives, and Employment Support Programs Web Course.**](#)
3. Once the participant has completed these requirements, the State VR agency must notify SSA at WIPA@ssa.gov, with the following information:
 - VR Agency name
 - Sponsored training participant's name
 - Copy of Suitability letter
- Brief statement indicating that the VR agency is sponsoring the person to attend the CWIC and CPWIC initial training and engage in the certification process.

Requesting Suitability:

Each state and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation agency has suitable staff who interact with the SSA portal to see reimbursement or Ticket payments, depending on their structure. We require potential vendors to follow the same process. Send the complete Suitability packet to Bashiru Kamara at Bashiru.Kamara@ssa.gov and Linda Custis at Linda.Custis@ssa.gov via your secure partner email address. The complete packet includes:

- a. Electronic Application Applicant listing
- b. The Optional Form (OF) 306, [**Declaration for Federal Employment**](#) – revised; and
- c. Work authorization for non-United States (U.S.) born applicants, when appropriate.

Please direct any additional questions about the Suitability process to Bashiru.Kamara@ssa.gov and Linda Custis at Linda.Custis@ssa.gov. For general questions about the VR sponsorship process, please email WIPA@ssa.gov

Additional Requirements:

- Ensure the aspiring CPWIC can attend all the webinars by reviewing the dates and times of upcoming training on this link: <https://vcu-ntdc.org/training/initial/calendar.cfm>.
- The participant must commit to completing the two-part certification.
 - Part I of the certification process takes place over the eight-week period immediately following the Initial Training. The Part I assessment process takes, on average, 25-45 hours over the eight-week period. **2023 Part I Assessment and Certification Instructions: [Word Version](#), [PDF Version](#)**
 - To achieve full certification and receive ongoing technical assistance from the VCU-NTDC, participants must complete Part II of the certification requirements. The participant achieves Part II certification once three Benefits Summary and Analysis reports created for beneficiaries have passed review, and the participant has completed a course on federal benefits other than Social Security. At that point VR Sponsored Community Partners will achieve full CPWIC Certification. **2023 Part II Assessment and Certification Instructions: [Word Version](#), [PDF Version](#)**
- Successful participants must renew their certification annually by earning 18 continuing certification credits per year. CPWICs earn these credits by attending free online supplemental trainings SSA offers via the Virginia Commonwealth University National Training and Data Center (VCU-NTDC).
- Sponsored participants must have the technology needed to participate in webinars on the Zoom platform **and** must Complete reading before and during the training.

Note: Participants attend initial training at no cost. Not all registrants will be able to participate in any given training, due to class size limitations.