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**COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive defines the policy regarding the operation of Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Supported Employment (SE) Services Program, which is to be implemented according to Public Law (Pub. L.) 108-70, Section 104 (see Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1718(d).

2. BACKGROUND

a. The CWT Program is a recovery-oriented model in the continuum of the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) work restoration services. The mission of CWT-SE treatment model is to assist veterans with disabilities obtain competitive employment in the community, working in jobs they choose, while receiving the support they need.

b. With the enactment of Pub. L. 108-170, Section 104, the authority of 38 U.S.C. Section 1718 has been enhanced to include the provision of work skills training and development services, job development and placement services, and employment support services.

c. CWT is to be provided to veterans with mental illness, substance use disorders, homelessness, physical disabilities and other disabilities that contribute to occupational dysfunction. There is no exclusion from treatment or participation in CWT based on diagnosis, limitations of disability, vocational treatment goals, or entitlement eligibility for Veterans Benefits Administration service connected or non-service connected benefits, Supplemental Security Disability Income (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or similar programs.

d. CWT programs may implement SE, including work skills training and development services, job development and placement services, and employment support immediately. SE is designed to supplement, but not replace existing CWT clinical treatment modalities. The addition of SE to CWT's transitional work modalities will provide clinical staff with expanded clinical approaches, and veterans with increased opportunities for competitive employment and community reintegration.

e. The primary focus of the CWT-SE implementation is to provide services to veterans diagnosed with Serious Mental Illness (SMI), who, because of the severity of their disabilities, would not be able to function independently in employment without intensive ongoing support services. Therefore, it is expected that SMI veterans with psychosis will constitute the majority of participants in these programs.

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(1) These veterans have been identified through the National Psychosis Registry of the Serious Mental Illness Treatment, Research and Evaluation Center (SMITREC).

(2) Their participation in CWT will be tracked by North East Program Evaluation Center (NEPEC). Participation in CWT by veterans with psychosis will become a critical monitor in the NEPEC annual program evaluation of CWT.

(3) Subsequent to the period of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Central Office funding, it is expected that the implementation of both CWT and SE will be sufficiently integrated into most VHA facilities in each Veteran Integrated Service Network (VISN), so that veterans with the most serious and catastrophic physical and emotional disabilities will be able to access CWT and SE.

f. Veterans participating in SE are also eligible for admission to the CWT-Transitional Residence Program (CWT-TR). **NOTE:** *For veterans who are unable to participate in CWT-SE due to treatment demands, CWT programs should focus their efforts in developing full and part-time customized employment opportunities, and/or community-based transitional work as the primary vocational model.* Veterans in SE may also participate in transitional work while undergoing job searches, between competitive employment jobs in SE, and/or when competitive employment is not an immediate goal. Participants in transitional work receive treatment through work opportunities arranged by the CWT Program through agreements with local companies or Federal agencies including VA, for a time-limited, transitional basis. **NOTE:** *Placement of CWT participants in transitional work at VA Medical Centers must be in compliance with VHA privacy policy regarding restriction of access to patient information or any system of records containing patient information. Veterans in transitional work receive their earnings through the VA fiscal payment process from the CWT Account 36X0160X4, and are not considered employees of participating companies or agencies.*

g. Therapeutic and SE Programs of the Office of Mental Health Services (OMHS), Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Services (PSR&RS) consist of Incentive Therapy (IT) and CWT, and the CWT-TR Program operated in collaboration with OMHS Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Services. Primary work restoration services in the CWT program consist of three clinical models: Workshop Evaluation, Transitional Work Experience (TWE), and SE.

(1) VHA has operated work restoration programs, including CWT and IT, that emphasized work therapy to assist veterans to normalize their lives as part of their treatment process. However, these approaches have historically been restricted to sheltered and transitional work at VA medical centers or in the community, through which no employer-employee relationship existed, and provided only limited opportunity for the veteran to return to competitive employment.

(2) The enactment of Pub. L. 108-170, the Veterans Health Care, Capital Asset, and Business Improvement Act of 2003, amended the authority for CWT programs under 38 U.S.C. 1718 to permit the provision of skills training, job placement, and support services. SE is a well-

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defined approach that has been demonstrated to substantially increase competitive employment outcomes for people who have severe disabilities and a demonstrated inability to gain and/or maintain competitive employment. SE is a service model that assists veterans to obtain paid, competitive employment and provide necessary on-going support.

h. The Under Secretary for Health has approved the Mental Health Strategic Plan, which requires the implementation of evidence-based interventions including SE. In addition to existing transitional work experience models, the CWT Program must fully implement SE in which veterans are paid directly by the employing entity. By providing community-based employment through work skills training and development services, job development and placement services, and employment support to CWT Program participants, SE implements the concept of the recovery model by helping veterans lead normal, healthy lives that allow them to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities.

i. Participation in CWT transitional or supported employment cannot be used to reduce, deny, or discontinue VA compensation or pension. Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1718(g), a veteran's participation in or receipt of a distribution as a result of participation in an activity carried out under 38 U.S.C. 1718 may not be considered as a basis for denial or discontinuance of a rating of total disability for the purposes of compensation or pension based on the veteran's inability to secure or follow a substantially gainful occupation as a result of disability. Pursuant to Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3.343(c)(1), and 38 CFR 3.342(b)(4)(ii), neither participation in, nor the receipt of remuneration as a result of participation in, a therapeutic or rehabilitation activity under 38 U.S.C. 1718 shall be considered evidence of employability. For the purposes of 38 U.S.C. Chapter 15, Pension For Non-Service-Connected Disability, a distribution of funds and a payment made to a veteran under a program of rehabilitative services authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1718, are considered to be a donation from a public or private relief or welfare organization, and are not included in determining annual income.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that each VA medical center, with a CWT Program, must implement SE services under the CWT Program. **NOTE:** *See Attachment A and Attachment B for further direction.*

4. ACTION

a. Medical Center Director. The Medical Center Director with established CWT programs, or those seeking to establish CWT Programs, is responsible for ensuring:

(1) Staff is designated to ensure the implementation of the policy and procedures for establishing and operating a CWT Program as outlined in Attachment A and Attachment B.

(2) A CWT service delivery model for SE is implemented adhering to this Directive's operational guidelines.

(3) CWT has the authority to develop SE positions in both public entities and private sector businesses. Veterans in SE may require work accommodation and job support services to obtain and maintain competitive employment. Individuals are not precluded because of the lack of

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prior work history or vocational goal. The SE goal is competitive employment in integrated work settings, rather than prevocational, sheltered, or segregated work experiences. Job search starts as soon as possible after a veteran expresses interest in work.

(a) Vocational rehabilitation is considered an integral component of treatment and rehabilitation for mental and physical disabilities. The Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist (VRS), or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC,) functions as an Employment Specialist (ES). The ES is not the primary clinician or a case manager, rather the key treatment team member focused on employment issues. Typically, 65 to 75 percent of the ES's time is spent in the community providing employment services, engaging with veterans, developing jobs, and supporting employers and veterans. The ES helps veterans find jobs appropriate for their interest and abilities as quickly as possible, identifies and addresses employment barriers and facilitates work place accommodations, and provides ongoing community support as needed. The ES interacts with businesses for competitive job development, job matching and employment services and communicates with employers, the community, treatment staff, and veterans and their families. The ES is typically a full-time employee with an active caseload of 20 to 25 veterans at any time.

(b) Vocational development is continuous and based in competitive work experiences, rather than in artificial or sheltered settings.

(4) An integrated interdisciplinary team approach is used to promote the integration of vocational, clinical, and support services and produces better employment outcomes.

(5) Job choice, disclosure, and supports are based on veterans' preferences and choices.

(6) Job supports continue for a time that fits the individual's needs, rather than terminating at a set point after becoming employed.

(7) Services are provided in the community, rather than in clinical settings.

(8) The CWT Account 36X0160X4 remains separate and distinct within the "Medical Services" 0160 account. CWT Programs may use the CWT Account (36X0160X4) funds to promote the following SE job support services.

(a) Work skills training and development services.

(b) Job development and placement services.

(c) Employment support services.

NOTE: *The Special Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Activities Fund (STRAF) (36X4048) was previously authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1718(c)(1). Public Law 108-447, Division I, Title I, Sec 115 (a)-(c) abolished the Fund as a separate legal entity. Funds in the STRAF were transferred to the Compensated Work Therapy Account 36X0160X4.*

(9) Non-VA personnel, including CWT veteran graduates, perform job support functions only on a contractual basis. Utilization of non-VA personnel in job development, support functions, and follow-up activities is governed by VA Acquisition Regulations (VAAR), and requires a close working relationship with Acquisition and Materiel Management (A&MM) Service. In addition to their currently accepted usage as defined in VHA Program Guide 1103.1, CWT Account 36X0160X4 monies can be utilized to contract with vendors to provide the job support functions (see Att. B).

(10) The CWT Program participates in Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) accreditation. **NOTE:** *Since fidelity of program implementation is critical for successfully implementing evidence-based practices, and programs that have high-model fidelity have the best outcomes for their participants, adherence to the principles of the SE model will be monitored by NEPEC.*

(11) For all patients participating in either CWT-TWE or SE, orders are entered into the each patient's record by a staff member authorized by clinical privileges or practicing within a scope of practice permitting the signing of orders. **NOTE:** *Program referrals are commonly made in the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) using the Standard Form (SF) 513, Consultation Sheet.*

(12) The new stop code changes in DSS are used for reporting of Encounters and Non-Count Clinics clinical activity in IT, or CWT-TWE and SE. CWT programs are to utilize Coding Guidelines and DSS identifiers to distinguish TWE and SE activities. Programs must provide NEPEC monitoring information and the CWT Report Control Number (RCN) 10-0656, PSR Annual Report.

(13) The need for continued participation in CWT is reviewed at least every 90 days and complies with VHA Handbook 1907.1.

(14) Care plan goals are documented and the patient's response to care is evaluated when there is significant change in condition, or at least every 90 days for extended care patients.

b. **NEPEC.** NEPEC is responsible for implementing the following online monitoring procedures:

(1) **Baseline Intake Form (BIF).** The BIF must be administered to all new admissions to CWT. It documents referral sources, working clinical diagnoses, recent and past work history, and the level of functional impairment.

(2) **Quarterly Status Reports (QSR).** The QSR must be completed quarterly during the period of CWT Program participation. It documents participation during the prior 90 days across the entire CWT vocational continuum: competitive, transitional, and volunteer employment; vocational training under the auspices of the CWT Program; the duration of employment; number of job changes; and average earnings, all of which are important to demonstrating effective use of the full continuum of TWE and SE opportunities.

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(3) **Discharge Summary (DS).** The DS documents the date and reasons for discharge, employment status, housing status, perceived clinical improvement, and plans for clinical follow-up.

5. REFERENCES

- a. Pub. L. 108-170 §104.
- b. Title 38 U.S.C. § 1718 as amended by Pub. L. 108-107 § 104.
- c. Pub. L. 108-199.
- d. Pub. L. 108-447.
- e. Pub. L. 102-54.
- f. Title 38 CFR 3.342.
- g. Title 38 CFR 3.343.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Office of Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Services, Office of Mental Health Services (116) is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be referred to (978) 446-0214.

7. RESCISSION: None. This VHA Directive expires December 31, 2011.

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ATTACHMENT A**USE OF THE COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY ACCOUNT
IN SUPPORT OF CWT AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

This Attachment delineates the properties and usage of the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Account, 36X0160X4 in conjunction with the provision of Supported Employment.

1. Background

a. The Special Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Activities Fund (STRAF) (36X4048) was previously authorized by Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1718 (c) (1). The Fund was abolished as a legal entity by Public Law (Pub. L.) 108-447. Receipts that previously were credited to the STRAF account are now being deposited in the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Account of the "Medical Services" account, account number 36X0160X4. The CWT account (36X0160X4) must remain separate and distinct within the "Medical services" 0160 account.

b. Funds placed in this account represent the proceeds from agreements between the CWT Program and both public and private entities for the performance of hourly work (generally resulting from transitional job assignments).

2. Psychosocial Rehabilitation Vocational Program Changes. Work restoration services authorized under 38 U.S.C. §1718 now consist of the following clinical models:

a. Incentive Therapy (IT).

b. CWT

(1) CWT - Workshop Evaluation.

(2) CWT- Transitional Work Experience (TWE).

(3) CWT-Supported Employment (SE). SE services entail assessment, job development, job matching, job placement, employer contacts, and on the job support, as well as crisis management by Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Specialists and mental health support teams.

3. Compensated Work Therapy Account 36X0160X4. The CWT Account 36X0160X4, is a special no-year account comprised of funds billed to, and collected from, participating companies and governmental organizations for the value of work performed by veterans participating in CWT activities, to be utilized only for the purpose of the operation of CWT-TWE and support of CWT-SE services. This account is located under the Medical Services account in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Central Office, but is separate for all operational purposes to be used solely for the operation of CWT. The CWT Program Coordinator, Manager, or Supervisor is designated responsibility for the use of these funds,

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subject to any fiscal and acquisition regulations that may apply. Fiscal Service monitors this account, performing monthly reconciliations, and annual audits.

a. The following operational expenses represent appropriate uses of CWT Account 36X0160X4 for the CWT Program:

(1) Veteran Earnings (payroll) in CWT-TWE.

(2) Purchase of supplies; tools; transportation services; information technology, including internet access for CWT participants; and office equipment necessary to operate therapeutic rehabilitation activities in the CWT Program.

(3) Contracted activities such as job developers, contract procurement services, employment, and other contracted vendor services for sheltered and transitional work and SE services.

(4) Staff education for CWT and CWT-TR staff and related travel and per diem expenses.

(5) Purchase of subscriptions, books, videos, etc.

b. The following operational expenses represent appropriate uses of CWT account 36X0160X4 for contracted services to the CWT-SE Program (see Att. B):

(1) Job development,

(2) Job placement,

(3) Job support, and

(4) Skills training. Before initiating specialized skills training through CWT, service-connected disabled veterans participating in CWT need be referred first to the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service (VR&E) to determine whether they meet the criteria for entitlement to benefits under 38 U.S.C. 17, Chapter 31, Training and Rehabilitation for Veterans with Service Connected Disabilities.

4. Sample Contract. Attachment B contains sample solicitation provisions developed in conjunction with the Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management (OAMM). It details some definitions, duties, and sample contract provisions that may be used for contracting for any, or all, of the SE services: job development, job placement, job support, and/or skills training.

5. CWT Account Staff Educational Related Requests. Use of the CWT account 36X0160X4 for staff travel and per diem expenses, and educational expenses is closely regulated. Requests for the use of CWT account 36X0160X4 funds for this purpose may be emailed to the Office of Rehabilitation Planning for CWT at the VA Medical Center, Hampton, VA, or faxed to 757-728-3143. Requests must contain the following information:

a. A description of educational endeavor and itemized cost.

- b. A justification of need.
- c. The names and positions of staff attendees (exceptions to this policy may be addressed by contacting the Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) office in Hampton, VA, at 757-722-9961, extension 3624).
- d. The present balance in CWT account 36X0160X4.
- e. Any significant upcoming expenses which would negatively impact the program.

NOTE: For further assistance with CWT account 36X0160X4 issues, contact the Rehabilitation Planning Specialist for CWT at the VA Medical Center, Hampton, VA, at 757-722-9961 extension 3624.

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ATTACHMENT B**COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY ACQUISITION AND MATERIEL
MANAGEMENT (A&MM) CONTRACTOR SERVICE CONTRACT GUIDELINES**

***NOTE:** The following paragraph is not to be included in the solicitation.*

The following provides a basis for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Office of Mental Health Services, Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) and Recovery Section, Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) programs to supplement and complement the work of CWT staff by securing procurement of contractor services to facilitate transitional work experiences (TWE) and Supported Employment (SE) placements for participating veterans in the form of job development, job placement, job support on a non-personal services type contract, and guidance on procuring specialized skills training for participating veterans. The options within must be carefully reviewed prior to solicitation of proposals. The aforementioned service contract must be developed, negotiated, awarded, and managed through appropriate VA Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) contracting staff. It is understood that the individual or individuals providing CWT-SE contractor services, through an Acquisition and Materiel Management (OAMM) service contract, for VA's CWT Program will not be considered a VA employee(s), and as such will not be eligible for normal employee benefits. The individuals providing services under this contract will not work under VA direction or supervision or any VA employee; will not have a regular work schedule, and will not be required to work specific hours. All materials, supplies, and expenses including bonding, licensure, insurance, transportation, telephone, fax, printing, business cards, letter head and envelopes, office space, meals and lodging, living expenses, and any other business-related cost is the responsibility of, and is exclusively borne by the contractor. While different aspects of the full scope of CWT services are described, the Statement of Work (SOW) needs to be tailored to the specific situation and used in its entirety only when adequate staff is not available to perform the functions. Contractor services are to be paid from the CWT Account (36X0160X4), previously known as the CWT Special Therapeutic Rehabilitation Activity Fund (36X4048 STRAF), whereby SE programs may use CWT Account funds to promote SE job support services. Non-VA personnel as contractors may perform job support functions. Utilization of non-VA personnel in job development, support functions, and follow-up activities is governed by VA Acquisition Regulations (VAAR), and require a close working relationship with A&MM. In addition to their usage defined in current VHA policy, CWT Account (36X0160X4) monies can be utilized to contract with contractors to provide job support functions as defined in Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1718, to include: work skills training and development services, job development and placement services, and employment support services.

**1. INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRACTING OFFICERS, CONTRACTING OFFICERS
TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVE (COTR), AND CWT PROGRAM OFFICIALS**

a. **Term.** A VA CWT-SE job development, job placement, support services and/or job skills contract must be for a term not to exceed 1 year, with up to 4 renewable option years.

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b. **Contracting Suggestions.** Contracting officers are encouraged (but not required) to issue solicitations for CWT services as Request for Quote (RFQ) Commercial Procurements utilizing Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 12 and 13 forms, standard clauses, and procedures. Estimated quantities must be provided by the program office for the contracting officer to include in the solicitation where indicated. The contracting officer decides if a Requirements Contract (see FAR 15.503) or an Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) (see FAR 15.504) contract is more suited to the program officials needs. If Requirements is chosen, FAR clause 52.216-21, Requirements, and VA Acquisition Regulations (VAAR) clause 852.216-70, Estimated Quantities for Requirements Contracts, must be included. If an IDIQ contract is chosen, FAR clause 52.216-22, Indefinite Quantity, must be included. For IDIQ contracts, a guaranteed minimum amount (expressed in dollars or quantities ordered) must also be included. In addition, for IDIQ contracts the solicitation needs to specifically state that the estimated quantities in the schedule are for evaluation purposes only, and that the government is only obligated to the extent of the minimum guarantee. The sample solicitation provisions provided in paragraph 2 are geared toward solicitations resulting in a single award. If multiple awards are desired significant revisions in the line items may be necessary. If assistance on revising the solicitation for multiple awards is needed the contracting officer may seek advice from technical review.

c. **Evaluation Factors.** Following is an explanation of the Evaluation Scheme used in the sample solicitation provisions for CWT procurements. Price and past performance, where it can be ascertained, must be used in evaluating proposals for award. Additional evaluation factors may be used or substituted for those listed; however, the method of evaluating proposals must be evident from the solicitation. Percentages indicate relative importance, but should not be shown in solicitation. List in order of priority in the solicitation, listing the most important first.

(1) **Price.** Suggested weight. (30 percent)

(2) **Method of Approach.** Full credit should be given to those technical offers that define a logical, thorough, innovative, well thought out method of accomplishing the work in a way that achieves the best results possible. Partial or minimal credit is assigned to a method of approach that involves minimal effort, little, or no creativity or innovation, and is likely be less effective in achieving the desired result. Suggested weight. (30 percent)

(3) **Experience of Principal Proposed Staff.** Full credit should be given to those technical offers indicating, "All staff have demonstrated experience in performing at least one of the requirements of the Statement of Work." Partial credit would be assigned for "several staff have demonstrated experience in at least one of the requirements of the Statement of Work and the rest have suitable education for performing the requirements of the Statement of Work." Minimal credit would be assigned to proposals where "staff had education required to perform the requirements, but little or no work experience." Experience need not be gained with current employer. Suggested weight (20 percent)

(4) **Past Performance on Similar Contracts.** Obtain from each offeror, with the submission of their proposal, the three most similar contracts they have performed, that would

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demonstrate their capability and experience to perform under this proposed contract. The offeror must provide the name and telephone number for an individual to serve as point of contact for each of those contracts. The contracting officer and at least one member of the evaluation team must then contact the individuals and evaluate the companies past performance on the contracts. Full credit is given to those offerors that, based on their references, have “performed all contract work in an exceptional manner, corrected any noted deficiency promptly, and kept the awarding entity informed of anything that needed to be addressed.” Partial credit is assigned when “all work performed as acceptable” and minimal credit is given when it was barely acceptable. Suggested weight – 20 percent

d. **Measures.** The CWT COTR is responsible for monitoring the contractor performance on this contract. Any deficiencies noted during the contract period must be reduced to writing, and the contractor provided a copy of the note within 10 business days. Ninety days prior to the anniversary date of the contract, the COTR must inform the contracting officer, in writing, of the number of referrals, placements, and successful placements (those lasting more than 6 months), along with a recommendation for retaining the contractor, or not renewing the contract.

e. **Procuring Specialized Skills Training**

(1) CWT is authorized to provide specialized skills training for skills specifically related to, and provided during, a veteran’s CWT assignment to transitional or supported work. Specialized skills training refers to the provision of training in job-specific skills necessary to successfully perform the CWT work assignment. Specialized skills training is beyond the scope of job support services normally provided by VA staff to veterans in CWT. **NOTE:** *Authorization to procure limited Skills Training during treatment in CWT is provided under Pub. L.108-170 section 104, and 38 USC 1718.*

(a) Before initiating specialized skills training through CWT, service-connected disabled veterans participating in CWT, should first be referred to VBA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service (VR&E) to determine whether they meet the criteria for entitlement to benefits under Chapter 31- Training and Rehabilitation for Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities.

(b) When appropriate skills training services are available in the community, veterans not eligible for VR&E services may decide to utilize state vocational rehabilitation, the state employment service, or other community-based providers rather than VA’s CWT. If the veteran chooses non-VA services, these services cannot be paid for from the CWT account and do not require or establish a contractual relationship between VA and the non-VA provider.

(c) When specialized skills training is to be funded by the CWT account in conjunction with a CWT-TWE or SE work assignment, it is required that this training be procured separately by an RFQ through A&MM Service, as described in this Service Contract Guideline.

(d) CWT must utilize a place and train model of skills training, in which training is provided only in conjunction with remunerated work performance during the treatment period. Training

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through CWT needs to be time limited and documented in veteran's vocational treatment plan, delineating objectives of training and how they relate to obtaining or maintaining employment.

(e) Such CWT skills training in conjunction with TWE or SE include the provision of on-the-job skills training, some examples of which are: floor refinishing, commercial custodial training, plumbing, air conditioning and heating, carpentry or any of the building trades, horticulture oversight as utilized in the landscaping industry, computer operations, or other job-related skills training appropriate to the remunerated TWE or SE position.

(f) A tailored statement of work outlining the required training objectives must be developed and provided by the local CWT program staff to the Contracting Officer.

(2) The awarded contractor(s) must provide veterans specific job skill training designed to meet the requirements of the participating organization or employer, at the location of the veteran's work assignment. Work-site based training is training by a contractor that is provided to a CWT participant while the participant is actively engaged in a paid transitional or supported work assignment that is clinically and vocationally appropriate. Training is provided under CWT clinical supervision, and must be training for occupational skills relevant to the work in which the veteran is engaged. The training may combine workplace experience with related instruction, such as a cooperative education model integrating an instructional strategy with the transitional or SE position. The training must:

(a) Be limited in duration to the period of participation in CWT; and

(b) Provide knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job and to the requirements of the occupation for which the participant is being trained, taking into account the content of the training, prior work experience of the participant, and the service delivery strategy of the CWT Program, as appropriate.

(3) Solicitations for specialized skills training require prospective vendors to submit detailed information on the training programs they propose to provide, show evidence of appropriate licensure, bonding, insurance, and other requirements necessary to provide the specific skills training. The solicitations may request that quotes, which include a description of the training methodology and how it integrates into the CWT work assignment; a description of materials to be used; approximate duration of instruction; measures used to measure successful mastery of the skills; and any certifications or licensure that results from completion of the training. Vendors submitting a quote need to be instructed to demonstrate in their submission that they have successfully trained similar clients. They are required to submit a list of at least three references attesting to that success. Suggested evaluation factors for a specialized skills training solicitation include "price," "quality and appropriateness of training," and "past performance."

2. SAMPLE SOLICITATION PROVISIONS FOR JOB DEVELOPMENT, JOB PLACEMENT, AND/OR JOB SUPPORT SERVICES

The awarded contract is based on the offeror's proposal for accomplishing the work, offeror's previous experience with similar work, offeror's proven success with similar work, and

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proposed price. The award can be made to individuals, as well as companies. If the offeror is a company, they may present evidence of the company's experience, and the company's success, but each offeror must also identify the individuals who will perform on this contract and show evidence of their capability and experience. The successful offeror must demonstrate (choose appropriate ones for SOW) knowledge of Department of Labor requirements for SE, demonstrate knowledge of OSHA standards for workplace safety, and demonstrate knowledge of job skills training.

- a. **Option 1** *NOTE: Use this option if only job development service are sought.*

(1) **Line Item**

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Price per Unit</u>	<u>Estimated Quantity</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
Suitable Job Opportunities Developed	\$_____	_____	\$_____

(2) **Statement of Work - Job Development**

(a) The awarded contractor(s) must identify community-based vocational opportunities in the form of TWE assignments and/or competitive SE placements for veteran participants in the CWT Program. The contractor must meet with prospective company officials to query interest and discuss potential transitional work agreements or competitive SE jobs. Facts to be determined include: type of work and work conditions, hours worked per shift, skill sets needed, hourly rate charged, dress code, standard company rules, eliminating factors, and other vital information necessary for veteran screening. It is necessary for the contractor to conduct an on-site review of the proposed TWE assignment or SE placement, with a report of same to CWT staff, to examine the site for work place safety, and to become familiar with work place culture. Final inspection and oversight, for purposes of ensuring work place safety, remain the ultimate responsibility of the VA medical center Safety Officer and/or CWT program staff. Consideration of available transportation is a critical element in identifying an appropriate site. The contractor must evaluate transportation availability to and from a company prior to determining site eligibility and/or making a recommendation for a TWE assignment, or SE placement. "When transportation is unavailable, but the opportunity is otherwise good, the VA CWT, may, at its option, accept the referral and pay the contractor for the referral." If VA is unable to arrange the transportation, then it shall not be considered an opportunity within the meaning of the contract and the VA does not pay for the opportunity.

(b) Once a potential job opportunity is identified and developed, the contractor must present findings on the identified company to local CWT management, providing critical elements necessary to determine the clinical suitability for a potential TWE assignment or SE placement; specific worker requirements; general working conditions, etc. VHA CWT staff determine the suitability of the worksite, the work experience, and assign the appropriate veteran to those opportunities deemed suitable. Decisions of the VHA CWT staff regarding suitability of the job

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opportunities are final. **NOTE:** *The contractor will channel necessary assessment information on the status of the additional types of job placements with the company.*

b. **Option 2** **NOTE:** *Use this option if both Job Development and Job Placement services are desired.*

(1) Line Items

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Price per Unit</u>	<u>Estimated Quantity</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
(a) Suitable Job Opportunities Developed	\$_____	_____	\$_____
(b) *Veterans Successfully Placed in Developed Job Opportunities	\$_____	_____	\$_____
(c) Total for All Line Items			\$_____

* The Contractor may invoice for 50 percent of the unit price in line item (b), once the veteran is hired. The contractor may invoice for the second 50 percent of the unit price when the veteran has been employed by participating employer for 90 consecutive days.

(2) Statement of Work**(a) Job Development**

1. The awarded contractor(s) must identify community-based vocational opportunities in the form of TWE assignments and/or competitive SE placements for veteran participants in the CWT Program. The contractor must meet with prospective company officials to query interest and discuss potential TWE agreements or competitive SE jobs. Facts to be determined include: type of work and work conditions, hours worked per shift, skill sets needed, hourly rate charged, dress code, standard company rules, eliminating factors, and other vital information necessary for veteran screening. It is necessary for the contractor to conduct an on-site review of the proposed transitional work assignment or SE placement, with a report of same to CWT staff, and to examine the site for work place safety and to become familiar with work place culture. Final inspection and oversight, for purposes of ensuring work place safety, remain the ultimate responsibility of the VA medical center Safety Officer and/or CWT program staff. Consideration of available transportation is a critical element in identifying an appropriate site. The contractor must evaluate transportation availability to and from a company prior to determining site eligibility and/or making a recommendation for a TWE assignment, or SE placement. "When transportation is unavailable, but the opportunity is otherwise good, the VA CWT, may, at its option, accept the referral and pay the contractor for the referral. If VA is

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unable to arrange the transportation, then it shall not be considered an opportunity within the meaning of the contract and the VA will not pay for the opportunity.

2. Once a potential job opportunity is identified and developed, the contractor must present findings on the identified company to local CWT management, providing the critical elements necessary to determine the clinical suitability for a potential TWE assignment or SE placement; specific worker requirements, general working conditions, etc. VHA CWT staff determines the suitability of the worksite, the work experience, and assign the appropriate veteran to those opportunities deemed suitable. Decisions of the VHA CWT staff regarding suitability of the job opportunities are final. The contractor must channel the necessary assessment information on the status of the additional types of job placements with the company.

(b) Job Placement. The contractor must be available, as necessary, to assist the veteran during the interview process; ensuring that the veteran has a sample application and is appropriately dressed. The contractor must meet with the interviewer to obtain information that will be helpful to the CWT veteran in interviewing in the future. The contractor must also meet with the CWT veteran participants, after the TWE or SE interview, to provide post interview feedback by assessing with the veteran the portions of the interview that were successful, and the difficulties the veteran had during the interview. In such feedback, identifying lessons learned is essential to the continued development of the veteran's ability to succeed in a work situation. In the report to CWT program staff, the contractor must include the lessons learned and an assessment of further developmental experiences that will assist the veteran. If the veteran is offered a job, VHA CWT staff will again review the suitability of the worksite, the work experience, and the veteran's skills to ensure they are compatible, and to assess whether the veteran has a reasonable opportunity for success in this work experience. Decisions of the VHA CWT staff on these issues are final. The contractor acts as a liaison between the participating company and the CWT Program staff to channel necessary assessment information on the status of the placed veteran for appropriate CWT action, if action is needed. If the veteran is hired by the participating company, the contractor may invoice for 50 percent of the price agreed to in line item (b). If the veteran remains employed by the participating company for 90 consecutive days without interruption, the contractor may invoice for the remaining 50 percent of the unit price in line item (b).

c. **Option 3** *NOTE: Use this option if Job Development, Job Placement, and Job Support are needed.*

(1) **Line Items**

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Price per Unit</u>	<u>Estimated Quantity</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
(a) Suitable Job Opportunities Developed	\$_____	_____	\$_____

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<u>Unit</u>	<u>Price per Unit</u>	<u>Estimated Quantity</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
(b) *Veterans Successfully Placed in Developed Job Opportunities	\$_____	_____	\$_____
(c) Month of Job Support Services under Individual Placement Model	\$_____	_____	\$_____
(d) Month of Job Support Services under Enclave Model	\$_____	_____	\$_____
(e) Total for All Line Items			\$_____

* The Contractor may invoice for 50 percent of the unit price in line item (b) once veteran is hired. The Contractor may invoice for the second 50 percent of the unit price when the veteran has been employed by participating employer for 90 consecutive days.

(2) Statement of Work

(a) Job Development

1. The awarded contractor(s) must identify vocational opportunities in the form of TWE assignments and/or competitive SE placements for veteran participants in the CWT Program. The contractor must meet with prospective company officials to query interest and discuss potential TWE agreements or competitive SE jobs. Facts to be determined include: type of work and work conditions, hours worked per shift, skill sets needed, hourly rate charged, dress code, standard company rules, eliminating factors, assistive technology, specialized job training, individually-tailored supervision, and other vital information necessary for veteran screening. It is necessary for the contractor to conduct on site review of the proposed TWE assignment or SE placement, with a report of same to CWT staff, and to examine the site for work place safety and to become familiar with work place culture. Final inspection and oversight, for purposes of ensuring work place safety, remain the ultimate responsibility of the VA medical center Safety Officer and/or CWT Program staff. Consideration of available transportation is a critical element in identifying an appropriate site. The contractor must evaluate transportation availability to and from a company prior to determining site eligibility and/or making a recommendation for a TWE assignment, or SE placement. When transportation is unavailable, but the opportunity is otherwise good, the VA CWT, may, at its option, accept the referral and pay the contractor for the referral. If VA is unable to arrange the transportation, then it is not to be considered an opportunity within the meaning of the contract and VA will not pay for the opportunity.

2. Once a potential job opportunity is identified and developed, the contractor must present findings on the identified company to local CWT management, providing critical elements necessary to determine the clinical suitability for a potential TWE assignment or SE placement; which includes the specific worker requirements, general working conditions, etc. VHA CWT staff determines the suitability of the worksite, the work experience, and assigns the appropriate veteran to those opportunities deemed suitable. Decisions of the VHA CWT staff regarding suitability of the job opportunities are final. The contractor must channel necessary assessment information on the status of the additional types of job placements with the company.

(b) Job Placement. The contractor must be available, as necessary, to assist the veteran during the interview process; ensuring that the veteran has a sample application and is appropriately dressed. The contractor must meet with the interviewer to obtain information that will be helpful to the CWT veteran in interviewing in the future. The contractor must meet with the CWT veteran participants, after the TWE or SE interview, to provide post interview feedback by assessing with the veteran the portions of the interview that were successful, and the difficulties the veteran had during the interview. In such feedback, identifying lessons learned is essential to the continued development of the veteran's ability to succeed in a work situation. In the report to CWT Program staff, the contractor must include lessons learned, and an assessment of further developmental experiences that will assist the veteran. If the veteran is offered a job, VHA CWT staff will again review the suitability of the worksite, the work experience, and the veteran's skills to ensure they are compatible, and to assess whether the veteran has a reasonable opportunity for success in this work experience. Decisions of the VHA CWT staff on these issues are final. The contractor acts as a liaison between the participating company and the CWT program staff to channel necessary assessment information on the status of the placed veteran for appropriate CWT action, if action is needed. If the veteran is hired by the participating company, the contractor may invoice for 50 percent of the price agreed to in line item (b). If the veteran remains employed by the participating company for 90 consecutive days without interruption, the contractor may invoice for the remaining 50 percent of the unit price in line item (b).

(c) Job Support

1. SE services need to achieve the following outcomes: opportunity to earn equitable wages and other employment-related benefits, development of new skills, increased community participation, enhanced self-esteem, increased consumer empowerment, and improved quality of life. The contractor is the liaison between the veteran and the participating company in providing suitable work settings, and must be available, as a job coach, to support the veteran in their relationship with the participating company. Such availability will be not less than once per week for the first 2 months, and as often as needed thereafter, until VA CWT deem the veteran to be independent. At a minimum, during this time, the contractor must meet with the company supervisor to encourage, assess, and discuss the natural supports needed for the veteran's successful integration into the workplace; to discuss and monitor appropriateness and success of any on the job training provided; to determine ongoing appropriateness of the work experience; and to identify any problems that might prematurely damage, or even terminate the relationship. The contractor also acts as a liaison between the participating company and the CWT Program

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staff to channel necessary assessment information on the status of the placed veteran. If any difficulties are experienced by the veteran, or if the participating company feels the need for any intervention, the contractor must inform the CWT COTR immediately and discuss with appropriate CWT staff the intervention the contractor is to take. The contractor proceeds only when the CWT COTR has agreed to the planned actions.

2. SE facilitates competitive work in integrated work settings for individuals with the most severe disabilities (i.e., psychiatric, mental retardation, learning disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and other catastrophic physical and emotional disabilities) for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, and who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need ongoing support services in order to perform their job. The contractor must provide SE assistance including, but not limited to: job coaches, assistive technology, specialized job training, and individually-tailored supervision. The contractor is responsible for ensuring the natural supports are in place in the work place during the job support period and for securing and monitoring any necessary on the job training that may be needed.

3. SE is a way to move people from dependence on a service delivery system to independence via competitive employment. Recent studies indicate that the provision of ongoing support services for people with severe disabilities significantly increases their rates for employment retention. SE encourages people to work within their communities and encourages work, social interaction, and integration.

(3) Definition of Job Support Terms

(a) Job Coach. A job coach is a person who is hired by the contractor, to provide specialized on-site training to assist the veteran employee with a disability, in learning and performing the job, and adjusting to the work environment. Job coaching services are time limited based on the veteran's performance on the job and/or CWT clinical concurrence by the treatment team.

(b) Natural Supports. Natural supports are supports from supervisors and co-workers, such as: mentoring, friendships, socializing at breaks and/or after work, providing feedback on job performance, or learning a new skill together at the invitation of a supervisor or co-workers. These natural supports are particularly effective because they enhance the social integration between the employee with a disability and the employee's co-workers and supervisor. In addition, natural supports may be more permanent, consistently and readily available, thereby facilitating long-term job-retention. The contractor is responsible for ensuring that these natural supports are in place. The contractor must monitor their use and effectiveness throughout the job support period.

(c) On-the-Job Training (OJT). OJT is training provided by an employer that results in payment to the participant while the participant is engaged in productive work in a job that provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job. This training is limited in duration as appropriate to the occupation for which the participant is being trained, taking into account the content of the training, prior work experience of the participant, and the service strategy of the participant as appropriate. When this type of job support is appropriate, the contractor is responsible for ensuring that the training is properly geared towards

the veteran's skill levels and needs. The contractor needs to monitor the effectiveness of this training throughout the job support period.

d. **Acceptable Supported Employment Models**

(1) **Individual Placement Model:** A person with a disability is placed in a job in a community business which best suits the person's abilities and preferences. Training is provided on the job site in job skills and work related behaviors, including social skills, by a job coach. As the employee gains skills and confidence, the job coach gradually spends less time at the worksite. Support is never completely removed. The private or public vocational rehabilitation entity furnishing the job coach is always available to the employer for retraining for new assignments, assisting in dealing with challenging behaviors, supplying periodic consultations with co-workers and employer, and giving orientation and training for co-workers.

(2) **Enclave Model**

(a) A small group of people with disabilities (generally five to eight) is trained and supervised among employees who are not disabled at the host company's work site. Persons in the enclave, work as a team at a single work site in a community business or industry. Initial training, supervision, and support are provided by a specially-trained on-site supervisor, who may work for the host company or the placement agency. Another variation of the enclave approach is called the "dispersed enclave." This model is used in service industries (e.g., universities, restaurants, and hotels). Each person works on a separate job, and the group is dispersed throughout the company.

(b) It is understood that the individual or individuals providing services under this contract, will not be considered VA employees for any reason. They will not work under the direction or supervision of VA or any VA employee. All materials, supplies and expenses including bonding, licensure, insurance, transportation, telephone, fax, printing, business cards, letter head and envelopes, office space, meals and lodging, living expenses, and any other business-related cost are included in the prices specified in this contract.

e. **Key Personnel and Temporary Emergency Substitutions.** The Contractor must assign to this contract the following key personnel to cover contract in emergency situation including vacation coverage:

(1) During the first 90 days (this may change if contract time frame less than 3 months or 90 days) of performance, the Contractor shall make **no** substitutions of key personnel unless the substitution is necessitated by illness, death, or termination of employment. The contractor must notify the Contracting Officer, in writing, within 15 calendar days after the occurrence of any of these events and provide the information required by following subparagraph 2e(2). After the initial 90-day period of the contract, the Contractor must submit the information required by subparagraph 2e(2) to the Contracting Officer at least 15 days prior to making any permanent substitutions.

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(2) The Contractor must provide a detailed explanation of the circumstances necessitating the proposed substitutions, complete resumes for the proposed substitutes, and any additional information requested by the Contracting Officer. Proposed substitutes must have comparable qualifications to those of the persons being replaced. The Contracting Office must notify the Contractor within 15 calendar days after receipt of all required information of the decision on the proposed substitutes. The contract will be modified to reflect any approved changes of key personnel.

(3) For temporary substitutions where the key person will not be reporting to work for 3 consecutive work days or more, the contractor must provide a qualified replacement for the key person. This substitute must have comparable qualifications to the key person. Any period exceeding 2 weeks requires the procedure stated in subparagraph 2e(2).

f. **Billing.** Invoices must be submitted to: (insert the Billing Office information). VA retains the right of billing any third-party payers; therefore the contractor is not to bill anyone other than VA, in accordance with the preceding instructions. Veterans are never to be billed.

g. **Instructions for Submitting Technical Offers.** In addition to a price for each line item, offerors must submit the following documents with their offers.

(1) A description of the offeror's method of approach for achieving the outcomes desired in statement of work.

(2) A resume for each member of the proposed staff indicating work experience, education, and other significant accomplishments considered pertinent to the work contemplated in this solicitation.

(3) At least three references from previous clients in which similar work to that contemplated in this solicitation was performed.

(4) Contractor hours of operation.

h. **Evaluation Factors For Award.** These factors are listed in descending order of importance. Technical factors (factors other than price) when combined are significantly more important than price.

(1) Price,

(2) Method of approach,

(3) Experience of principal proposed staff, and

(4) Past performance on similar contracts.

i. **Other Requirements.** Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) must be verified when required by VHA security screening regulations.