

READER SERVICES

I. LEGAL AUTHORITY:

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112), as amended through P.L. 105 – 220, Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Section 103 (a) (10), 34 CFR361.48(k), 34 CFR 361.49(a)(3); and 29USC 723(a)(10).

II. POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE:

Reader services are provided to insure that individuals who have been determined to have a diagnosis of blindness or have a severe visual impairment after an examination by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws, and who have been determined eligible for VR services have equal access to information necessary to prepare for, secure, retain or regain an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of the individual.

A. Definitions

A reader is an individual who speaks aloud the words of written or printed material. A reader must be able to speak and pronounce words and terminology clearly and correctly, as well as follow written and oral directions. A reader should be able to look up data in unfamiliar books or records. A reader may also be asked to write notes and/or transcribe reports. A reader may read to the customer or read onto a tape recorder.

III. PROCEDURES:

A. Eligibility:

1. Individuals with blindness or visual impairment that precludes the individual from accessing printed and handwritten information may be eligible for reader services.
2. ORS may provide reader services that an eligible individual needs if reader assistance is essential to support training or placement as established on the approved Individualized Plan for Employment, (See policy section 115.3) and there is no viable alternative such as magnification devices, scanners, Braille, large print resources, or other technology.

B. Reader Services are Available to Eligible Individuals:

1. Engaged in training at a college or university;
2. Attending vocational, technical, and business schools;

3. In other training situations where significant amounts of reading are essential to the completion of the training program;
 4. Individuals who have obtained employment where reader services are essential to support the placement (time-limited); or
 5. Individuals with blindness, visual impairments or other applicable conditions.
- C. Reader Costs:
1. Reader costs are not subject to the Needs Test. (See Section 115.8, II A. g.)
 2. The hourly rate for readers is to be negotiated between the customer and the reader not to exceed 50% over the current minimum wage. Any exception must be approved by the counselor's supervisor.
 3. In accordance with the memorandum of understanding between ORS and the three public institutions of higher education (University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and Community College of Rhode Island), ORS will reimburse the college for one half the cost of reader services as a support service to customers attending college when essential for completing their coursework and listed in their Individualized Plan for Employment. Students must apply directly to the college or university for each semester for which reader's aid is desired.
 4. No other comparable benefits exist at this time for this service.
- D. Customer's Responsibilities*:
1. Locating readers
 2. Directing the reader
 3. Utilizing the reader in a way to increase self sufficiency
 4. Utilizing readers to relay the text verbatim and not to interpret written information
 5. Maintaining time sheets required by ORS and/or the institution of higher education
 6. Budgeting their reader time

* ORS may assist clients in fulfilling their responsibilities through Counseling and Guidance.

E. Restrictions:

1. Readers and note takers cannot be members of the individual's immediate family without requesting and justifying the need for the same in writing and receiving supervisory approval.