

Authorizations and Billings		
<b>Manual:</b> RSB Policy & Procedures	<b>Document Number:</b> 709	<b>Section:</b> Other Policies and Procedures
<b>IMPACT Review:</b> 1/15/25	<b>SRC Review:</b> 1/28/25	<b>Finalized Date:</b> 2/17/25

#### SCOPE OF SERVICES

IVRS requires prior written approval before case services begin. For auditing purposes, prior approval for services supported by IVRS must be documented in the case management system. This requirement is typically met with the completion of an R-450, or by email or letter to the vendor when an R-450 will not be completed prior to the start of the service.

Some medical providers do not charge for copies of medical records, therefore, IVRS considers the Authority for Release of Information (R-407) the prior written approval for these purchases. The Medical Records letter outlines IVRS's terms and conditions for payment. IVRS staff are required to send a copy of the Medical Records Letter with all requests for medical records. Authorizations are created after the records are received for those vendors who charge for this service.

PCards: With the approval of a supervisor, staff may apply for and receive a purchasing card (PCard) to purchase goods or services for job candidates. All applicable policies apply to these purchases including requirements for the competitive bidding process. Consult the financial services [Purchasing and Purchasing Card Procedures](#) policy for requirements and responsibilities associated with use of a PCard. The [PCard Application](#) form is available in PowerDMS. Contact the Data Resource Manager for more information on how to apply for a PCard. [P-Card Purchasing Guidelines](#) outline the allowable and unallowable uses of PCards.

Wright Express (WEX) Cards: Case Services WEX cards are used for fuel purchases for job candidates. These cards are separate from the WEX cards assigned to state cars used by IVRS staff for work-related travel. Staff who use the Case Services WEX card must be assigned a PIN number separate from the PIN number used for state vehicles. Requests for a Case Services WEX card PIN number are directed to the IVRS staff member's office supervisor.

#### AGENCY EXPECTATIONS

Authorizations:

Authorizations are completed in the IRSS case management system prior to the start of the service. IVRS requires staff to follow procurement and purchasing guidelines for goods and services outlined in the [Purchase Principles](#) and the [Procurement Policy](#).

To the maximum extent possible, it is IVRS's preference that services are authorized directly to the vendor. It is also IVRS's preference that clerical support staff create and process authorizations to maintain checks and balances between the staff agreeing to the service with the job candidate and the staff authorizing the service in the case management system. Applying this separation of duties affords the agency multiple opportunities to verify that the service is allowable, allocable, reasonable, necessary and follows agency policies and procedures prior to creating the legal obligation to fund the service.

When a vendor requests pre-payment for a service, IVRS staff must email [ivrsasbfinancial@iowa.gov](mailto:ivrsasbfinancial@iowa.gov), providing the details of the pre-payment. Financial staff will follow up to receive approval for the exception to statewide policy. The authorization is completed when financial staff communicate that approval has been received.

If an authorization cannot be completed in the IRSS system prior to the start of the service, IVRS staff provides prior written approval by email or letter to the vendor and the authorization is completed in IRSS as soon as possible after the start of the service. The email or letter must contain the necessary information outlining the service including the start date and end date of the service, and a description outlining the cost, terms, conditions and specifications of the service. The email or letter is uploaded to the IRSS system.

Changes to authorizations (i.e. cancellations or amendments) are also completed in IRSS, or may be provided to the vendor by email or letter as previously outlined in this policy, meeting the same requirements as the original authorization.

The job candidate, or parent/guardian, as appropriate, are sent copies of authorizations, including amendments and cancellations, for services authorized on their behalf, unless they have opted out of this requirement. IVRS staff are not required to send the job candidate a copy of authorizations for medical records.

#### Billings:

Billings are completed and processed to the financial department within 10 working days of receipt from the vendor. Receipts or other documentation that support the expense are date stamped upon arrival, and are attached to the billing.

Faxed or emailed copies of an invoice are acceptable for payment if it is the vendor's normal business practice for billing.

When the job candidate is the payee, there are two options available:

- The job candidate may sign the billing in addition to providing supporting documentation. Supporting documentation must identify the good or service that was purchased as well as payment details, or
- The job candidate signs the supporting documentation. If this option is used, the job candidate must sign and date the supporting document, and a statement must be included on the receipt from the job candidate that outlines that the job candidate is requesting reimbursement.

An authorized IVRS staff person must indicate that the service has been provided and meets the standards outlined in the authorization.

### **PROCEDURES FOR AUTHORIZATIONS**

Before authorizing for a service, staff should check the case file to assure:

- The service is appropriate for the status the job candidate is in based on policy,
- There is a current R-406 Financial Inventory Form, if required, for the service being authorized, and
- All necessary paperwork required by policy has been completed.

Authorizing to 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendors, providing reimbursement to the job candidate, or using agency-issued P-cards are allowable options to purchase services as long as prior written approval has been completed as outlined in this policy. Regardless of the method of authorization or payment used (i.e. R-450 authorization, 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor, PCard or WEX) all IVRS purchasing rules must be followed during the purchasing process.

The [Pre-IPE Services](#) and [IPE Services](#) reports on the IVRS Staff Site are used to determine the appropriate service category and service line when authorizing for services.

Services provided after development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) should never be authorized using Pre-IPE service categories in IRSS. If the service is not included in the IPE, the plan must be amended to add the service category prior to starting the service.

Period of Performance (POP) refers to the time when the agency incurs new obligations to carry out the work authorized under the federal grant award. POP determines which federal fiscal year funds are used to pay for each authorization. Refer to the [Fiscal Year Determination of VR Case Service Expenditures policy](#) for more information on period of performance rules and fiscal year determination.

#### AUTHORIZATION GUIDANCE:

- Dates of service need to be accurate and realistic; only authorize what is going to be provided in the immediate future
- Dates of service may be up to 4 months
  - Used for reporting to RSA that service is provided
- End date of service should typically not go beyond December 31st when the authorization was created prior to 10/1 of the same calendar year
- Menu of Services should be authorized:
  - One service at a time (except when paying a stipend in addition to the service)
  - Up to 4 months at a time
  - Not always the maximum dollar amount allowed for the service (determined by team)

The job candidate's full Social Security number is never shared as part of the authorization description nor included in any part of an email message. Only the last 4 digits of a Social Security number may be noted when required by a vendor.

The authorization, or letter/email outlining prior written consent, is sent to the vendor, and the job candidate or parent/guardian, as appropriate, by US mail, fax, or email based on the preferences communicated by the vendor and job candidate.

The authorization form is considered confidential under the Iowa Open Records Law because it contains job candidate personal identifiable information. Therefore, when emailing authorizations, they must be sent using an encryption method to protect the job candidate's confidential information. This is accomplished in the State of Iowa email system by entering "SecureMail" at the beginning of the email subject line. The recipient will receive a message indicating they have a secure email from the State of Iowa. The recipient will be required to set up an account to retrieve the secure email. Encrypted email messages are kept on the system for 14 calendar days and then are deleted by the system automatically.

When the job candidate is not the vendor, the job candidate, or parent/guardian, as appropriate, may be carbon copied in the email to the vendor so they receive their client copy outlining the authorized service.

IVRS staff utilize case management practices to monitor unliquidated authorizations. When the end date is nearing, the counselor determines the appropriate next steps. The authorization may be amended to provide more time for service delivery, to increase the amount authorized if the amendment occurs within the same federal fiscal year, or to decrease the amount authorized. If it is determined that a service is no longer needed, the authorization is cancelled.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR BILLINGS**

After a service is delivered and documentation is received to substantiate service delivery, the billing is entered in IRSS. The billing and necessary supporting documents are emailed to the financial department for payment.

If the job candidate hires a Personal Assistant and the job candidate is the employer of record, the job candidate may be paid for the cost of those services prior to paying the provider. A time sheet showing the hours worked and expenses, as applicable, signed by the Personal Assistant and the job candidate is used as the supporting documentation for the Personal Assistant expenses.

#### **BILLS/INVOICES GUIDANCE:**

IVRS staff show their approval for payment of a claim by initialing and dating the “For IVRS use only” box on the R-450 Authorization form. After entering the billing information in IRSS, upload copies of the signed R-450 form and invoice (if one was received) into IRSS using the appropriate [IRSS Document Naming Standards](#) to name each document. Email the R-450 billing form with payee signature to the financial department for payment processing. If there is no payee signature on the billing, email the R-450 billing form with the invoice attached, to the financial department. List the corresponding authorization number in the subject line or the body of the email.

When the job candidate is seeking reimbursement, acceptable supporting documentation for reimbursement must include:

- Itemized listing of specific items or services purchased
- Cost per item or service
- Name of vendor
- Date of purchase
- Payment details such as cash, check, or credit card, or indicates 'paid' or shows '\$0 balance due'

If a job candidate is not able to provide documentation showing all of the required details, a [Declaration in Place of Receipts form](#) must be completed and submitted with the available documentation.

#### **APPLICABLE FORMS, DOCUMENTS, LINKS**

- a. [Fiscal Year Determination for VR Case Service Expenditures](#)
- b. [Purchase Principles Policy](#)
- c. [Procurement Policy](#)
- d. [Purchasing and Purchasing Card Procedures](#)
- e. [P-Card Purchasing Guidelines](#)

f. [Declaration in Place of Receipts](#)