

Vocational Rehabilitation: Understanding Service Options

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Tip Sheet

Prior to reading this information it is recommended to first read
[Vocational Rehabilitation: An Introduction](#).

Overview

At the nucleus of every successful vocational rehabilitation (VR) employment goal is a well-delineated individual plan for employment (IPE), often referred to as a roadmap of services that lead to employment. By better understanding the myriad services offered by VR, deaf individuals are better positioned to make informed and self-determined choices about their employment future.

VR includes a wide range of services. Some services are tangible, such as an alarm clock, uniform for work, or hearing aid. Other services are intangible, such as counseling, soft-skills training, or career guidance.

Who provides VR services?

The VR counselor serves as the primary point of contact for deaf individuals as they access the VR system. The counselor works closely with the individual to create the IPE and coordinate the services needed to carry out the plan. In some states, VR counselors manage caseloads of more than 100 consumers.

VR includes numerous other service providers, both VR employees and independent contractors. In-house personnel often include employment coaches, job-placement specialists, and testing and assessment specialists. Independent contractors may include psychologists, audiologists, physicians, and community rehabilitation providers. Depending on the state, interpreters may be in-house personnel or independent contractors.

How are services determined?

The process of determining the services needed to achieve an employment goal begins with the development of an IPE. As a team, the counselor and consumer engage in career exploration and identify a battery of assessments and/or evaluations to guide the decision-making process. There are two primary purposes for conducting assessments and evaluations. First, they are an objective mechanism to gather information about an individual's strengths, abilities, interests, resources, and concerns at the time of the evaluation. Second, they help to identify products, such as hearing aids or assistive technology, consistent with the employment goal. Common assessments and evaluations include vocational interest batteries, psychological evaluations, and audiological examinations.

What are some of the more common VR services?

Counseling and guidance: Throughout the VR process, the VR counselor provides counseling and guidance to identify and develop strategies to resolve any barriers to successful employment. The topics typically addressed during counseling and guidance include personal adjustment, social and family issues, and vocational goals.

Training: Training is a formalized process that expands understanding of a subject or improves ability to do a specific



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task. VR can include many different types of training. Training may be as simple as learning how to use assistive technology. Training may focus on job readiness or mobility or include specific on-the-job knowledge. In this type of training, users learn explicit sets of skills specific to obtaining or maintaining employment.

Training can also be more long term and focus on the development of a set of vocational skills that improve an individual's ability to be hired in a particular field. This type of training is often vocational or occupational in nature or results in a postsecondary degree.

Technology: A VR counselor may recommend that deaf individuals purchase technology that supports their employment goals. Such technology can include hearing aids, vibrating alarm clocks, computers, assistive listening devices, and other adaptive equipment.

Job placement: The goal of VR is gainful employment. As such, many VR services focus on job readiness, job seeking, job placement, and on-the-job support services. This category of services often involves working one-on-one with a professional who has specialized experience in helping deaf individuals obtain and maintain employment. Activities often include learning how to identify employment opportunities, developing a résumé, practicing interviews, and coaching once a job is obtained.

Other: When individuals prepare for and seek employment, they may encounter the need for other services or tangible products, such as transportation assistance, textbooks, uniforms, and assistive technology. In some instances, VR agencies can provide these services.

In terms of paying for services, VR is often considered the “payer of last resort.” For some services, a VR agency will consider an individual's financial resources. But VR is just one potential resource for assisting in a student's college education. Funding through a VR agency is not intended to replace other forms of financial assistance, such as grants, loans, and scholarships.

Related Resources

- Vocational Rehabilitation: An Introduction:
www.nationaldeafcenter.org/vrintro
- National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers: Interpreting in the VR Setting:
www.tinyurl.com/nciecVRinterpreting

Additional resources on this subject may be available at www.nationaldeafcenter.org/resources



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Additional resources can be found at www.nationaldeafcenter.org