



Consumer Handbook

*A guide to help explain
vocational rehabilitation*

Mission Statement

The mission of the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is to enable eligible individuals with disabilities to achieve an employment outcome consistent with their strengths, priorities, needs, abilities, and capabilities. Its goal is to prepare and place in employment eligible persons with disabilities who, because of the significance of their disabling conditions, would otherwise be unable to secure and/or maintain employment.

Message from the Director

This guide will help explain vocational rehabilitation — how it works, and how you can make it work for you. Keep this booklet handy so you can refer to it at any time. Your rehabilitation counselor will also explain vocational rehabilitation services and answer any questions that you or anyone in your family may have.

Consumer Opportunity for Input

You will be able to fully participate in your rehabilitation plan. This process is a partnership between you and your counselor. Your informed choice is encouraged throughout the rehabilitation process.

Your counselor at the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) will give you information about:

- the cost, accessibility, and length of potential services
- consumer satisfaction with those services (if this information is available)
- qualifications of potential service providers
- types of services offered by the potential provider
- degree to which services are provided in integrated settings, and
- outcomes achieved by others who have worked with service providers (if this information is available).

The Application Process

When you apply to DVRS for help with employment, we will assign a vocational rehabilitation counselor to work with you. Your counselor will meet with you to discuss your disability and how it affects your ability to find a job.

We will explore how DVRS can assist you. With your written consent, your counselor will gather information about your disability as well as your needs, interests, aptitudes, education, work experience, family, and finances. Your counselor will arrange any medical examinations or vocational assessments needed to determine the impact of your disability as well as your vocational strengths and aptitudes. These services are offered at no cost to you.

Eligibility

Your counselor will determine your eligibility based on:

- whether you have a physical, mental or emotional impairment that substantially impedes employment, and that receiving vocational rehabilitation services will improve your ability to get and keep a job; and,
- whether vocational rehabilitation services are required for you to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.

Your counselor will determine if you are eligible within 60 days of the date you apply for services, unless:

- exceptional and unforeseen circumstances prevent us from completing the determination and you agree that an extension is justified, or

- an extended evaluation is required to determine your eligibility.

Confidentiality

We will use any information* you give us only to help you get the services you need to get and keep a suitable job. Information will be released to individuals or organizations you specify only if you give us a release statement signed by you or your parent/guardian.

When we are authorizing or considering authorizing services, and personal information is required for your success, your safety, or your best interest, we may release personal information without a signed release only to doctors, hospitals, clinics, schools, or rehabilitation or training centers.

DVRS may also release personal information without a signed release

- to the Social Security Administration so it can determine your eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits
- in a medical emergency
- if required by federal or state law
- when you (the applicant) request it, or
- for your own safety and protection.

** This information is collected under the authority of Part 34 Code of Federal Regulations 363.52 and 361.*

The Individualized Plan for Employment

Once you are eligible to receive services, you will work with your counselor to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Using information we give you, you'll select an appropriate vocational goal, learn how services will help you reach your goal, and identify resources that provide the services you need.

Your IPE will outline the steps you will take to secure suitable employment. You will get a written copy of this plan. Your counselor will review it with you periodically. If any changes to the plan are needed, your counselor will work with you to modify it.

Services

We offer services that can help you reach your career goal, which may include:

- **Diagnostic evaluations:** We will determine the extent of your disability using already existing records, when available. Additional evaluations may be needed to help us understand your abilities and limitations.
- **Vocational counseling and guidance:** Together, you and your counselor will identify your vocational objective and plan the steps leading to success.
- **Jobseeking skills training and selective job placement:** We provide the tools you need to find a job, and will work with you to find a job within your abilities. We may offer supported employment services, if needed.
- **Follow-up services:** We will monitor your progress to make sure you're doing well in your job.

- **Post-employment services:** You may return to DVRS even after your case is closed, if you need additional services in order to keep your job.
- **Physical restoration:** We may provide services to improve your ability to work, depending on your specific employment-related needs.
- **Job coaching; or vocational, professional or on-the-job training:** We will help you get a job in line with your strengths, priorities, needs, and abilities. If you do not have the skills required to reach your vocational goal, we can provide training (vocational, professional, work adjustment or on-the-job), and/or job coaching.

If you need other goods and services to prepare for employment, we may help you obtain them.

Financial Participation

There is no charge to apply for services. There is no cost for evaluations to determine your eligibility for services. Once you are deemed eligible, we can offer some no-cost services, such as vocational counseling and job placement assistance. You may have to contribute to the cost of services such as training or physical restoration, depending on your income. Your counselor may ask you to provide documents about your income and expenses to determine your contribution. Please tell your counselor if you are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), because this will affect your contribution amount. We cannot pay for any service you received before you applied for services from DVRS, or for service you received before you and your counselor agreed to the service.

Order of Selection for Services

When this agency does not have enough money to provide services to all eligible individuals, the law requires us to provide services according to an Order of Selection for Services. When this happens, all eligible individuals are put into one of three groups:

- Priority 1: individuals considered to be “most significantly disabled”
- Priority 2: individuals considered to be “significantly disabled”
- Priority 3: all remaining eligible individuals

A certain group (or groups) of individuals receive services while others are placed on a waiting list until funds become available.

Appeal Procedure

An appeal process is available to resolve any disagreements or concerns you may have about services this agency provides.

If you are dissatisfied with an action, decision, or services we provide, the first step is to meet with your counselor and your counselor’s supervisor to resolve the matter quickly and informally. If you are not satisfied, you may ask for an administrative review, mediation, or a fair hearing before an impartial hearing officer. You must submit all requests in writing, within 30 days of the disputed agency action.



You may contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to assist you in your appeal. CAP can act as your advocate and explain the rules, regulations and procedures of vocational rehabilitation.

You can contact CAP

- by phone: 1-800-922-7233 or (609) 292-9742 (voice)
- by TTY: (609) 633-7106
- or by mail: Disability Rights New Jersey
210 South Broad Street, 3rd Floor
Trenton, New Jersey 08608

Consumer Rights

In accordance with 34 CFR 76.500, no individual will, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under this State plan.

Consumer Responsibilities

You are in charge of your vocational rehabilitation program. You must actively participate by setting goals and working to achieve them. To successfully complete your vocational rehabilitation program, you must:

- maintain regular contact with your counselor
- keep all appointments that are part of your vocational rehabilitation program
- accept services from any vendor only after you have received written authorization from DVRS

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- maintain satisfactory performance and attendance while you're in training
 - submit your grades as your counselor requires
 - participate financially in your rehabilitation program to the best of your ability
 - apply for and use funds from other sources that could pay for services
 - cooperate in using other community services when they can aid in your rehabilitation program, and
 - go to work when you have completed your vocational rehabilitation plan.

Counselor Responsibilities

Your counselor understands that disabilities can impact your ability to perform certain job functions. Your counselor will help you understand your strengths and how you can overcome obstacles to your employment.

Your counselor will:

- help you choose a career that builds on your strengths
- give you information, guidance, and support, and
- arrange for you to receive the services you need to reach and maintain your career goal.

Closure and Post-Employment Services

After you have started working, you and your counselor will remain in contact to ensure that things are going well and you are comfortable with your job. This follow-up period will last at least 90 days. At that time, if you have adjusted to the job and do not need additional services, your counselor will discuss closing your case.

If you experience any problems on the job after your case is closed, you may contact your DVRS counselor for assistance without re-opening your case.

If you lose your job or if your disability worsens, you may reapply for additional DVRS services at that time.

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Chris Christie
Governor

Harold J. Wirths
Commissioner