

People with Disabilities - Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation provides quality, individualized services *to enhance and support people with disabilities* to prepare for, obtain or retain employment. Through active participation in their rehabilitation, *people with disabilities achieve a greater level of independence* in their work place and living environments.

Vocational/Habilitation Options

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) - provides comprehensive, coordinated, effective, efficient and accountable services needed by eligible individuals with disabilities to prepare for, enter, engage in and retain employment consistent with each individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and informed choice.
- Supported Employment (SE) - individuals with the most severe disabilities are placed in competitive jobs with qualified job coaches/trainers to provide individualized, ongoing support services needed for each individual to retain employment. The employers is contacted monthly and the employee is visited twice monthly, either at or away from the workplace, to address any issues that may threaten the individual's ability to remain on the job.
- Independent Living (IL) Services - promotes a philosophy of independent living including consumer control, peer support, self help, self determination, equal access and individual and system advocacy, to maximize the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities in community leadership, empowerment, independence and productivity.

Independent Living Centers in Indiana.

- Assistive Technology through Awareness in Indiana (ATTAIN) - creates systems change by developing a comprehensive, customer-responsive, statewide program that promotes community-based, technology-related services through training and outreach activities, empowerment and advocacy, technical assistance and policy review and development.

Eligibility

Persons eligible for vocational rehabilitation services include

- persons who have a physical or mental impairment;
- persons whose impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment;
- persons who can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services and
- persons who require services to help prepare for gainful employment

The Vocational Rehabilitation Process

Referral - Individuals may be self referred, or the referral may be made by family members, physicians or medical institutions, educational institutions, or others by calling, writing, or visiting any Vocational Rehabilitation Services office or facility.

The referred individual must submit a written application requesting vocational rehabilitation services.

Application - The VRS counselor gathers and evaluates medical, educational, vocational, and other information to determine eligibility. An applicant is eligible if a determination is made that:

- (1) he or she has a ***physical or mental impairment***;
- (2) the physical or mental ***impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment***; and
- (3) the individual ***requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain an employment outcome*** consistent with his or her abilities, capacities, career interests, and informed choice.

The eligibility determination must be made ***within 60 days*** of the date on which the individual applies, unless unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the agency necessitate, and the individual agrees to, an extension of the assessment period for a specified additional period, or an extended evaluation is necessary.

Extended Evaluation - If additional information is needed to establish whether or not the person can be presumed to be able to benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of his or her disability, actual vocational rehabilitation services can be provided for up to 18 months before eligibility must be finally decided.

Rehabilitation Program Development

The counselor and consumer jointly determine the job the consumer is ultimately to be placed in and plan the services necessary to reach that job goal. The job goal, intermediate objectives, services, and service providers are specified in an ***Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP)***.

Provision of Services - Services are provided in accordance with the IWRP. The specific services provided may include:

- vocational counseling and guidance;
- medical treatment to correct or modify the physical or mental impairment;
- training (including vocational school, college or university, on-the-job, and other training);
- rehabilitation technology (assistive devices and services);
- placement assistance and follow-up (including supported employment) and
- other planned goods and services determined to be necessary to address an identified substantial impediment to employment and to be required to enable the individual to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain an employment outcome.

Job Placement - Placement of the consumer into employment that is consistent with the individual's abilities, capacities, career interests, and informed choice is the goal of the vocational rehabilitation program. It is to this end that all prior services have been directed.

Case Closure - A person is "rehabilitated," and the consumer's case is closed, when: (1) the vocational rehabilitation services provided under the IWRP have contributed substantially to the achievement of the employment outcome; (2) the employment outcome is consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice; (3) the employment outcome is in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the individual's informed choice; (4)

the individual has maintained the job for a period of at least 90 days; and (5) the individual and the VRS counselor consider the employment outcome to be satisfactory and agree that the individual is performing well on the job.

Post Employment Services - Limited services may be provided after case closure as "rehabilitated," if required to enable the individual maintain, regain, or advance in employment.

Sometimes the entire vocational rehabilitation process can be completed in four to six months when just a few services are required to achieve the client's vocational goal. In other instances the process may take four to five years or more to complete when the client's vocational goal requires a college degree. The average time required to successfully complete vocational rehabilitation programs by all Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1997 rehabilitants was 25.3 months.