



Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

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What VR Is

- An Employment Network (EN) option for using Ticket to Work
- Support for establishing an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)
- Contractor (i.e. funder) of employment and other services that support the IPE



What VR Is Not

- A direct (employment) service provider
- A long-term rehabilitation service
- A case coordinator, case manager, or community support service



When VR Becomes Involved: Youth (1)

For post-secondary transition age youth

- Caseworkers are specifically assigned to work with those in transition from secondary education



When VR Becomes Involved: Youth (2)

Provides transition services

- Meeting with student to help identify vocational interests and goals
- Collaborating in development of employment aspects of the IEP Transition Plan, including assessment
- Referring to/recommending resources for vocational exploration and work experiences
- Referring to related services and supports (e.g. CWIC for benefits counseling)



When VR Becomes Involved: Adults

For adults

- Caseworkers are specifically assigned to work with adults
- May be part of transition to adult services (i.e. for someone who received transition VR services)
- Provides vocational services to any qualifying adult



What the Research Says (1)

Higher successful VR closures when:

- Services are offered at least 2 years before exit from high school
- Collaboration occurs with education and community partners
 - Summarized from KTDRR Webcast, *Guideposts for Success to Support Employment Transition for Youth with Disabilities*, February 25, 2015,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsMVqdlBn0s>



What the Research Says (2)

Higher likelihood of adult employment when:

- There is work experience prior to exit from high school
- Youth are empowered and families are supported
 - Improves job matches
 - Promotes job tenure
 - Summarized from KTDRR Webcast, *Guideposts for Success to Support Employment Transition for Youth with Disabilities*, February 25, 2015,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsMVqdIBn0s>



Who Qualifies for VR

- Individual
 - With a physical and/or mental condition that impedes (attaining, retaining, advancing in) employment; or
 - Those presumed eligible
 - Home and Community Based Services waiver recipients
 - SSI/DI recipients
- And, who can benefit from VR services to achieve a specific work goal



Deciding Who Can Benefit

- Trial Work
 - A situational assessment
 - Unpaid work at an actual work site
- Extended Evaluation
 - An assessment and written report of a VR counselor
 - Used in lieu of trial work – only when situation assessment is not possible



Keep in Mind

- There is not a financial test for eligibility – parents income is not factored
- Degree of disability/complex conditions does not make someone more or less eligible
- Work experiences do not automatically involve loss of any SSA benefits or Medicaid



Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)

- Has a specific employment goal
- Lists indicators that will demonstrate progress toward the goal
- Indicates VR services needed and the cost, and who will provide and pay for each
- Outlines the client's responsibilities
- Specifies the time frame for meeting the goal and any interim due dates



Specific VR Services (1)

- Vocational evaluation of
 - Interests, skills, abilities
 - Accommodation needs
- Situational assessments
- Vocational counseling and career exploration
- Exploration of and referral to educational/training programs



Specific VR Services (2)

- Coordination of
 - Apprenticeships or internships
 - Unpaid work experiences
- Referrals to employment support providers (e.g. job developers, job coaches)
- Funding for work trials and on-the-job training
- Funding for durable medical equipment or assistive technology



Tips for Involving VR (1)

- Even if a school does not have a VR counselor actively seeking/facilitating referrals, a referral can be coordinated by the school taking the lead
- Consider requesting a data sheet outlining VR services provided and any referrals made, including outcomes and contact information for agencies involved



Tips for Involving VR (2)

- If confusion seems to exist concerning the VR-school relationship/VR referral process, consider requesting that VR be included as part of a teacher in-service day



For More Information

- General
 - <http://www.maine.gov/rehab/dvr/>
- Youth and Transition
 - http://www.maine.gov/rehab/dvr/youth_transition.shtm
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Client Assistance Program (CAP) (1)

- Provided by an independent entity for all VR service recipients
- Assists those needing to resolve an issue related to participating in or accessing VR services



Client Assistance Program (CAP) (2)

- Can provide mediation, or support during an administrative review or hearing process
- A CAP representative can assist in deciding what strategy is needed to resolve an issue
- <http://www.maine.gov/rehab/cap.shtml>