



# VR Advantage



Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Services



# Discover Your Possibilities



**North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) assists individuals with disabilities with obtaining, retaining or maintaining employment.**

A disability can cause a person to be less hopeful about living a productive life.

When you become a vocational rehabilitation consumer, your rehabilitation plan will focus on your abilities and your new possibilities, the process of which is outlined in this booklet. The goal is gainful employment. Applying for vocational rehabilitation services may be your own idea, recommended by family members or by:

- Teachers or school counselors
- Doctors or other health professionals
- Mental health professionals
- Counselors or professionals in the judicial system

If you ever wondered how you could benefit from a vocational rehabilitation program and what your employment options are, remember the VR staff is ready to answer questions and assist in the application process.

**VR services are available in every NC county through our network of local offices. If you don't see your location on the final page of this booklet, please check our website for a complete listing:**

**<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/dvrs/vr-local-offices>**

## Who Is Eligible?

You are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services:

If you have a physical, mental, or emotional disability that affects your ability to find or keep a job; and

You require the services that VR provides to get ready for, find, or keep a job; or

If you have a disability and receive SSDI or SSI benefits and you intend to get or keep a job.





# Getting Started With Your Vocational Rehabilitation Services

## Your First VR APPOINTMENT

You will meet with a VR staff member who will get to know you, and learn about your needs, desires and challenges. You will learn about the vocational rehabilitation program and, if you choose, complete an application. To meet your needs, a VR counselor will request some information about your disability. You may be asked to:

- Provide medical records. If you have been referred to VR by a doctor or other professional, you may have been given these records and asked to bring them to your interview.
- Sign a release form so your counselor may obtain medical, educational, psychological or other information.
- Have a medical, psychological, vocational or other type of evaluation that will be arranged by your counselor.
- Verify your SSI/SSDI eligibility.

Your counselor will:

- Guide you through each phase of the process.
- Explain the eligibility requirements for VR services.
- Help you plan for and obtain your job choice whenever possible.

Once you and your parent or guardian (if necessary) have signed the application, the rehabilitation process begins.

**Your counselor will review your information and make a determination on eligibility. You and your counselor form a partnership to explore your options.**

## Determining Your ELIGIBILITY

The first step in the process is to gather information to assist you and your counselor with making a decision about your eligibility for services. If you are eligible, your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) may be developed immediately. In some cases, after you are determined eligible, additional information or evaluations may be needed before your IPE is developed. This information will assist in choosing an appropriate employment goal and the services needed.

### If More Information Is Needed

If there is uncertainty about VR services being able to help you gain employment, we may arrange for you to have a "trial work experience" to explore your abilities, capabilities and capacity to perform in realistic work settings. These experiences will be an important way for you and your counselor to decide if you are able to work. If you are not, you may not be eligible to receive VR services.

### Determining Your Rehabilitation Needs

You and your counselor will identify how you think and learn, as well as your needs, interests, and skills to determine your vocational goal and necessary services. The services listed on the next page are available as needed to help complete your rehabilitation plan. They may be provided by VR staff or by other agencies in your community.



# Services to Help You Get Ready to Work or Stay On the Job



**Your plan will identify the services you need to achieve your goal of successful employment.**

## **Making Use Of All RESOURCES**

## **VR Services**

The length of time you receive services will depend on your individual needs. Service providers can include:

- Your VR counselor and other VR staff
- Community rehabilitation programs
- Community colleges and universities
- Vocational training programs or schools
- Treatment centers
- Mental health centers
- Employers (community based-work experience participants)

The following are offered, at no cost to you, if needed to reach your goals:

- Testing, evaluations and assessments
- Guidance and counseling
- Work-adjustment job-coaching
- Rehabilitation engineering services
- Interpreter services
- Supported-employment services
- Job-seeking skills training
- Job placement and follow-up

Your plan will outline how best to use all available resources. VR funds are not used when resources, such as insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, and educational grants and contributions, are available. Your Counselor will gather financial information from you to determine whether VR can contribute to the cost of:

- Medical services, such as hospital care or psychiatric treatment
- Community rehabilitation program training
- Education or training
- Services for family members while you are in training
- Telecommunication, sensory and other technological aids and devices
- Personal assistance services, tools, equipment and licenses
- Other related goods and services

You and your counselor will explore and identify other community and financial resources that will help meet your rehabilitation goals.

# Developing Your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to Work or Stay on the Job

## The Goal

If you have never worked or cannot return to the kind of work you have done in the past, you may benefit from help identifying different types of jobs related to your abilities.

Your counselor will make recommendations based on the evaluations or tests you have taken and the interests you have expressed.

You may change your goal later, but it is best to have a good idea from the start if possible.

## Your IPE Includes:

- Job choice
- Services, service providers and comparable benefits
- Evaluation criteria for services received
- Your and VR's responsibilities
- Your input, ideas, preferences
- The IPE handbook

## Your Job Choice

This is the type of work or job that you and your counselor have agreed upon and plan to obtain.

## The Services

You and your counselor will determine who provides your rehabilitation services and how long these services should continue. VR's major services include:

- Guidance and counseling
- Physical and mental restoration
- Training, education
- Rehabilitation technology
- Job-related services, such as job placement and follow-up

**You and your counselor will plan what to do in order for you to successfully find a job.**

## Evaluation Criteria

For each service that you and your counselor plan, there will be an agreed-upon way to evaluate how and whether that service is assisting with your goal of going to work. These evaluations include grade reports, medical reports, a self-assessment of your progress as well as your counselor's assessment and observations.

## VR's Responsibilities

VR's responsibilities to provide or coordinate services will be clearly identified in your plan.

## Your Responsibilities

The part you play in completing your plan is important and will be clearly identified. Your counselor will ensure that you understand your responsibilities and how to meet your goals.

## The IPE Handbook

Your counselor will review the handbook with you and answer any questions you have. You may also be asked to sign a statement that you received the book, understand its contents and helped develop your plan.





**It is your responsibility to express concerns and satisfaction, and participate during the VR process.**

## **Client Assistance Program**

At any time during the VR process, if an issue arises that you are unable to resolve with your counselor, you may contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP). CAP staff will help you understand the advocacy and rehabilitation services available to you, and work with you to resolve problems and disagreements with VR.

Contact CAP at 919-855-3600 (voice or TTY) or 1-800-215-7227.

CAP staff can answer questions about VR, investigate concerns and work with you and your counselor to resolve any problems. CAP staff can also advise you on how to appeal decisions that remain unresolved, and direct you to other resources as necessary.

## **PARTNERSHIP**

You and your VR counselor will be partners throughout the rehabilitation process.

It is your responsibility to work with your counselor in planning and completing your rehabilitation plan. Your counselor will assist you in making informed choices related to your job goals, the services you will receive, service providers, employment settings and the methods for obtaining services.

- If you move anywhere in North Carolina, you can request that your counselor transfer your records to the office closest to your new residence.
- If you move out of state, your counselor may not always have to close your case record but, if necessary, can give you information about contacting a vocational rehabilitation program in the state where you move.
- If you decide to take a job without the assistance of VR, please contact your counselor.
- If you cannot complete your plan for other reasons, please call or meet with your counselor to discuss your situation.

<b>Office</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Toll-Free</b>
Albemarle	(704) 982-8124	1-877-699-7579
Asheville	(828) 670-3377	1-877-832-3832
Boone	(828) 265-5396	1-888-521-5054
Burlington	(336) 570-6855	1-800-570-7668
Chapel Hill	(919) 969-7350	1-888-359-3695
Charlotte	(704) 568-8804	1-888-521-5484
Dunn	(910) 892-7040	1-888-877-8745
Durham	(919) 560-6810	1-888-666-4916
Elizabeth City	(252) 331-4768	1-877-699-7576
Fayetteville	(910) 486-1101	1-888-258-1473
Forest City	(828) 245-1223	1-877-282-0760
Gastonia	(704) 853-5358	1-877-282-0757
Goldsboro	(919) 778-3795	1-877-858-8465
Greensboro	(336) 487-0500	1-877-727-4506
Greenville	(252) 830-8560	1-877-858-8461
Henderson	(252) 492-3141	1-800-495-8220
Hickory	(828) 322-2921	1-877-699-7580
Jacksonville	(910) 455-1445	1-877-858-8471
Lexington	(336) 249-0241	1-877-727-4508
Lumberton	(910) 618-5513	1-888-231-8259
Morganton	(828) 433-2423	1-877-472-2729
New Bern	(252) 514-4727	1-877-858-8470
Pinehurst	(910) 295-1530	1-888-445-9218
Raleigh	(919) 859-8301	
Rocky Mount	(252) 977-2112	1-877-699-7573
Salisbury	(704) 639-7575	1-866-760-8282
Sylva	(828) 586-4032	1-877-282-0753
Washington	(252) 946-0051	1-877-242-6177
Whiteville	(910) 642-5406	1-877-699-7575
Wilmington	(910) 251-5710	1-877-832-3831
Wilson	(252) 237-7161	1-877-832-3837
Winston-Salem	(336) 784-2700	1-877-699-7578

# NCSRC

## N.C. State Rehabilitation Council

c/o North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
2801 Mail Service Center | Raleigh, NC 27699-2801  
(919)855-3500 | 1-800-689-9090 | TTY (919)855-3579  
Fax (919)733-7968 | [www.ncdhhs.gov/dvrs](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dvrs)

State of North Carolina | Pat McCrory, Governor  
Department of Health and Human Services | Richard O. Brajer, Secretary  
[www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov)

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