

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM (VR)

Division of Vocational Services

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

PURPOSE

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program is designed to assist eligible individuals with disabilities in becoming employed. There is a general presumption that an individual with a disability is capable of engaging in gainful work unless proven otherwise and that the provision of VR services can improve his or her ability to become gainfully employed. An Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed with each eligible individual. The IPE outlines the individual's program for attaining his or her employment goal. Services provided by VR may include counseling, guidance, job placement, vocational training, rehabilitation technology, interpreting services for persons who are deaf, personal assistance and other services that will assist the person in attaining his/her employment goal.

CONTACT

Syedeh Islam, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator
 Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
 3535 NW 58th St, Ste 500
 Oklahoma City, OK 73112
 (405) 951-3400 (TDD)
 (800) 845-8476 (TDD)
 FAX: (405) 951-3529
www.okrehab.org

See Appendix B for Vocational Services Field Offices.

ELIGIBILITY

- An individual is eligible for VR services under the Rehab Act through DRS if he or she:
 - 1) has a physical or mental impairment which constitutes or results in a impediment to employment;
 - 2) can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from VR services; and
 - 3) requires VR services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.
- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998, stipulates that an individual who has a disability or is blind and is a Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) beneficiary or a Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipient is presumed to meet eligibility criteria if that individual intends to achieve an employment outcome.
- Persons may be required to participate in the cost of some services, including AT, depending on their income level.

AT SERVICES PROVIDED/COVERED

- Assessments & Evaluations
- Information & Referral
- Case Management
- Locating Alternate Funding
- Fabrication of Devices
- Maintenance & Repairs
- Training for Consumer & Family
- Supporting Software
- Advocacy/Other

AT DEVICES PROVIDED/COVERED

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Aids for Daily Living | Home Modifications |
| Aids for Hearing Impaired | Hospital Beds |
| Aids for Vision Impaired | Prosthetics & Orthotics |
| Augmentative Communication | Seating & Positioning Equipment |
| Computer Applications | Vehicle Modifications |
| Educational Devices & Adaptations | Wheelchairs & Mobility Aids |
| Environmental Controls | Worksite & Office Modifications |

Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Program, cont. . .

CONTACT

Steven Stokes, Director
Office of Handicapped
Concerns
2401 NW 23rd Ste 90
Oklahoma City, OK 73107-
2423
(405) 521-3756 (OKC, V)
(405) 522-6706 (TDD)
(800) 522-8224 (statewide,
V/TDD)
FAX: (405) 522-6695
[www.ohc.state.ok.us/
cap.htm](http://www.ohc.state.ok.us/cap.htm)

FINANCIAL CRITERIA

- See "Eligibility".

APPLICATION PROCESS

- DRS has Rehabilitation Counselors in local VR offices throughout the state. Contact the DRS office nearest you to apply for services. Referrals are considered applicants as soon as the counselor has a document signed by the individual requesting VR services. This may be a formal application or a letter signed by the applicant, applicant's parent, guardian, or other representative, which provides the minimum basic information and requests VR services.
- In application status, the counselor will secure sufficient information to make a determination of eligibility or ineligibility for VR services, determine a priority group assignment, or make a decision to put the client into extended evaluation. The information needed by the counselor may include the results of a physical examination, an assistive technology evaluation, or an extended evaluation of vocational potential, to determine potential for gainful employment.
- If a person is determined to be eligible for services based on evaluation information, the counselor and the individual will develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to promote competitive employment for the individual.
- Unless extended evaluation is required, the counselor will make the eligibility determination decision within 60 days of application.

APPEALS PROCESS

1. Consumers who disagree with a VR Program decision are encouraged to contact the local District Supervisor to attempt an effective resolution of the issue. In the event of a reduction, suspension or cessation of VR services, individuals have a right to a case review by an impartial hearing officer, mediation, and/or assistance from the Client Assistance Program (CAP).
2. A request for a fair hearing should be made in writing to your VR Counselor within 30 days of DRS informing you of the decision with which you disagree. The fair hearing will be conducted by a hearing officer within 45 days of the written "Request for a Fair Hearing" by the consumer.
3. Individuals filing a "Request for a Fair Hearing" may request a confidential mediation session to resolve grievances. In the event mediation sessions do not resolve the grievance, individuals retain their right to a fair hearing.
4. After filing a "Request for a Fair Hearing," the administrative review must be conducted by the district supervisor and concluded within the same 45 days, with the results of the review provided in a written letter. If the review resolves the grievance, the Withdrawal of Request for Hearing Form must be completed; otherwise, the hearing will continue.
5. The written decision of the hearing officer including findings and grounds for the decision will be made to the consumer, hearings coordinator and the director of DRS within 30 days of the completion of the hearing.
6. Individuals may request a review of the hearing officer's decision by the Cabinet Secretary within 20 days of the decision.
7. In the event an individual brings civil action regarding the decision, the final decision either by the hearing officer or the Cabinet Secretary will be implemented pending court review.



Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Program, cont. . .

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED FOR APPEALS

- The Client Assistance Program (CAP) assists persons with disabilities who are seeking or receiving services from any program funded by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. CAP can:
 - a) advise clients of their rights and responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act;
 - b) assist clients in communicating their concerns to DRS; and
 - c) represent the individual in the fair hearing process when appropriate and/or needed.
- Additional information concerning vocational rehabilitation and the appeals process can be obtained from the CAP at (405) 521-3756 or (800) 522-8224 statewide.

PIECES OF THE PUZZLE

- The IPE is an individualized program of services based around a core of comprehensive evaluation, vocational counseling, and job placement that are needed to assist the person in attaining his or her employment goal. Any assistive technology the person needs for employment must be included in this plan. However, AT devices and services may be essential to help the person demonstrate vocational capabilities and are an essential part of a comprehensive evaluation.
- The DRS counselor will assist in accessing necessary AT devices and services to meet employment needs.
- Once a decision has been made to supply an eligible client with assistive technology, it may be possible to provide a wide range of devices if they are vocationally relevant. However, DRS cannot buy devices that other sources can buy or that ADA requires other sources to provide.
- The primary purpose of assistive technology devices and services provided by the regular VR program is to enable a person to obtain and maintain gainful employment.
- Vocational Rehabilitation is an eligibility, not an entitlement program.
- The DRS State Plan has provisions, during times of limited resources, to serve clients under an order of selection which means some eligible applicants may be placed on waiting lists until funds are available to pay for services. Consumers are encouraged to apply for services during an order of selection because those on waiting lists will be served on a first-come, first-served basis.
- DRS has the authority to purchase consumer equipment and services through an agency-adopted bid process rather than going through the state bid process, thus allowing greater consumer choice and faster delivery.
- Individuals may choose instead to purchase equipment through the Access-to-Telework Fund (ATF) and thus coordinate needed services in the IPE. (See BancFirst Alternative Financing Program, Page 93)