



**Utah Parent Center**  
Special needs, extraordinary potential

## What is Vocational Rehabilitation

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## What is Vocational Rehabilitation

Does your youth with disabilities know what job he or she wants after high school? How about how to get that job? Or does your youth know what job skills are needed before applying for a job? The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, otherwise known as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), provides a wide variety of individualized services to people with disabilities who need assistance getting a job or going back to work.

### Services Offered to Students in Transition

Vocational Rehabilitation services can offer a variety of services to students with disabilities to help them explore, choose, prepare for, and enter a career. Getting a VR Transition Counselor involved in transition planning as early as age 14 helps youth and parents learn of services that are available to them through VR, so they can identify their needs and challenges and have a plan in place to prepare themselves for employment before they ever leave high school.

### The VR Transition Counselor can:

- Give youth information about careers and job opportunities to help them decide on a job goal.
- Suggest ways to find out about his or her abilities, interests and needs for help through a career assessment.
- Help choose a work goal that fits the youth's choices, needs and abilities.
- Make recommendations on how the school program can help youth develop job skills.
- Help the youth find the training to prepare for his or her goal, whether it is college, trade school or on-the-job training.
- Help a youth find a job and follow up to make sure it is the right job for him or her.
- Attend the IEP or Section 504 planning meetings, which can be a helpful resource in transitioning into adult services, training, or employment.

### Who is eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services?

To be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services, an individual must have a physical or mental disability that makes it difficult for them to get or keep a job. This may include youth who have IEPs, Section 504 Plans or Health Care Plans. The counselor will work with the youth to find out if he or she is eligible and what types of services are needed to prepare for work. If a youth is eligible, his or her counselor will help the youth plan an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to help them prepare for employment.

## **Order of Selection Waiting List**

VR has recently instituted an order of selection waiting list for individuals who are not already receiving VR services. At this time it is unknown how long the wait will be; however, all individuals who believe they will benefit from VR services are highly encouraged to apply! After application, they will be placed in one of three categories: 1. Most Significantly Disabled (MSD), 2. Significantly Disabled (SD), or 3. Disabled (D). Individuals in the MSD category will be taken off of the waiting list first, followed by SD and D when funds become available, and by date of application. Since they will be taken off of the list in order of when they applied, it is important to start the application process at age 14 or as soon as it is identified that they may benefit from VR services. Although it is unknown how long the wait for services will be, it is not anticipated that it will be a very long wait.

## **If a Youth Is Eligible For Services, What Happens Next?**

VR does not have one program that fits everyone. Instead, services are individualized according to personal need. The youth (and parents, if the youth is under age 18) will meet with their VR counselor and together write an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). It will show the youth each step to take to get the job he or she wants. In order for a youth to develop an IPE, he or she will use "informed choice." Informed choice is the process of making a decision after considering relevant facts and weighing the pros and cons of the decision.

## **How Does a Youth Apply for VR Services?**

- Inform the IEP team that you would like a VR counselor to attend the IEP meeting. Parents need to sign a school form giving their school permission to contact VR. Make sure the request is given three to four weeks before the meeting to give the counselor time to plan to attend.
- Watch the Student Orientation Video online: [www.youtube.com/user/USORVideos](http://www.youtube.com/user/USORVideos)
- Make an appointment to see a VR counselor at your local VR office. To find the counselor who is assigned to your school, please go to the following link: [www.usor.utah.gov/transition](http://www.usor.utah.gov/transition). If your youth is still in middle school, their counselor will be the one who is at the high school they will attend. You can also find the location of your local office by calling 801-538-7530 or toll free at 1-800-473-7530.
- Bring in any records or information about the youth's disability to his or her appointment. Records can include information from their doctor, psychologist or the school. If you do not have information, the counselor will arrange for an evaluation.
- Know that youth can bring someone with them to appointments.

## **What Types of Services Does VR offer?**

A youth may receive a variety of through VR. The services are based on the youth's individual job goals and personal needs. All services provided must be included in the IPE and approved in advance in partnership with his or her VR counselor.

Some examples of possible services are:

### **Counseling and Guidance**

- The VR counselor will meet with the youth one on one to set a career goal and help him or her reach the goal they have set. The counselor is a specialist who is trained to understand the challenges and opportunities surrounding disability and employment.

### **Restoration Services**

- These are services that a youth would need to help them alleviate the effects of their disability that are causing impediments to employment. This could be: medication management, physical therapy, individual therapy, etc., or any other restorative service needed to reach their employment goal.

### **Assistive Technology (AT)**

- AT is special equipment or software that will help a youth to reach his or her job goal.

### **Training and Education**

- This may include vocational training, on-the-job training, supported employment, self-employment or a college or university education.

### **Job Placement**

- When the youth is ready for work, his or her counselor will decide what help is needed to find a job. Help like a job coach, on-the-job training, or a referral to an employment service may be needed.

### **Follow-up Services**

- After at least 90 days of working, the youth and his or her counselor will decide whether or not to close the youth's VR case. Even if the case is closed, individuals can still get post-employment services if needed to keep the job.

### **Other Services**

- Other services may include interpreters, readers, transportation for job training, licenses and fees, tools, equipment, and other services an individual and his or her counselor agree are needed to reach employment goals.

For further information about transition or vocational rehabilitation call the Utah Parent Center at 801-272-1051 or toll free at 1-800-468-1160.