

TEXAS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS- VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES



GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

What can I expect?

How does it work?

What part do I play?



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Vocational Rehabilitation services help people with disabilities prepare for, find, keep and advance in employment.



Texas Workforce Solutions comprises the Texas Workforce Commission, 28 local workforce development boards and our service-providing partners. Together we provide workforce education, training and support services, including vocational rehabilitation assistance for the people of Texas.

What are vocational rehabilitation services?

Vocational rehabilitation (VR) services help people with disabilities prepare for, find, keep and advance in competitive integrated employment. Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) delivers these services in Texas. You may be eligible for services, depending upon how your disability interferes with work. TWS-VRS counselors will work with you to ensure that you have the opportunity to make informed choices when you select an employment goal, services and service providers that will help you reach that goal.

How do I apply?

To apply for services, call, write or visit the office nearest you and request an appointment to meet with a TWS-VRS counselor. If you need help locating an office in your area, call 800-628-5115 or visit the website <https://twc.texas.gov/offices/vr-general-services.html>. When you contact the local office, please let us know if you need translator services or other accommodations for your appointment.

Do I need to bring documents with me when I apply for services?

When you meet with your counselor, it is helpful if you have photo identification (for example, driver's license, state-issued ID, school ID, passport or military ID) and your Social Security card. If you do not have these, you can still apply for services. However, you must provide documentation verifying that you can legally work in the United States before you can be determined eligible for TWS-VRS services.

If you have any of the following additional information, bring it to your meeting:

- Your home address, as well as your mailing address
- Names and addresses of any doctors you have seen recently
- Names and addresses of any schools you have attended
- Medical insurance cards or other documents to verify coverage
- A list of places you have worked, including type of job, dates, the reason you left and salary
- Proof of income for you and your spouse or your parents if they claim you as a dependent on their income tax (for example, a copy of your latest pay stub, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) award letter, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) award letter, workers compensation notice of payment or latest income tax return)
- Proof of expenses related to monthly mortgage/rental payments, debts imposed by court order, personal medical costs and other disability-related expenses
- Names, addresses and phone numbers of two people who will always know how to contact you



- Any reports of recent medical exams, school records or other information that you feel may help the counselor understand your disability

During your appointment, your TWS-VRS counselor will explain the services available through TWS-VRS and will ask you:

- To explain how your disability affects your ability to work and,
- What kind of help do you need to prepare for, get, keep, or advance in your career.

If you choose to proceed with applying for VR services, the information gathered during the meeting will be used to complete your application for services.

All records and information gathered by TWS-VRS are strictly confidential.

What happens after I complete my application?

Your counselor may want to learn more about you by:

- Getting information from your doctors and schools;
- Sending you to a new doctor to find out about your current medical condition; and
- Having you take tests to find out more about your interests, abilities and skills.

Your counselor will make the appointments for you. You won't have to pay for these appointments.

TWS-VRS provides services to help bridge the gap between you and meaningful employment.





It is important that you keep all appointments. Please let your TWS-VRS counselor know if you cannot attend a scheduled appointment. If you miss an appointment, it may take longer for you to receive VR services.

Does everyone who applies receive services?

No. To receive services, you must

- Be present in the state of Texas;
- Have a physical and/or mental condition that affects your ability to work;
- Need vocational rehabilitation (VR) services in order to help you get and/or keep a job; and
- Be able to get, keep or advance in a job after receiving services.

If you are a SSI or SSDI recipient because of your disability, you are presumed eligible for VR services.

Who decides if I can get services?

After reviewing all of the facts, your TWS-VRS counselor will decide if you are eligible for VR services. If you are determined to be eligible, you will become a TWS-VRS customer. As a VRS customer you play an important role in helping us to help you reach your goal. However, if your counselor tells you that you are not eligible for VR services, your case file will be closed and you will receive a letter telling you why and what actions you can take if you don't agree. You may be referred to other programs or agencies that may be able to help you.

What kind of services are available?

TWS-VRS provides services to help bridge the gap between you and meaningful employment. Some examples of services are training, counseling, medical services, artificial arms and legs, hearing aids, transportation, sign language interpreters, Braille instructions, orientation and mobility instruction for individuals who have visual impairments, on-the-job supports, and help finding a job. You probably won't need all of these services, and there may be other services that you do need that are not on this list. You will receive only those services that will help you reach your employment goal.

Your counselor will provide you with information about available options and alternatives in selecting the services you need for successful employment.

What is the plan?

If you are eligible for VR services, the next step will be to develop a plan for reaching your goals, which is your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Your IPE will include your employment goal, the services you need to reach your employment goal, and your agreed participation in these services.

TWS-VRS will not pay to help develop the IPE, but you do have the option of developing your IPE by yourself or with assistance from:

- Your TWS-VRS counselor;
- A qualified VR counselor not employed by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC); or
- Another resource outside of TWC.



Whichever option you choose, the information for the IPE must be reviewed and approved by the TWS-VRS counselor, entered into the TWS-VRS computer system and signed by you or your representative. You or your representative will receive a printed copy of the IPE for your records.

When determining if an IPE can be approved, the TWC-VRS counselor must consider the following:

- Is the goal consistent with your abilities, capabilities and interests?
- Are the services necessary to achieve your employment goals?
- Will the services result in competitive integrated employment?
- Are the services cost-effective? For example, TWS-VRS may not pay for a high cost service or item when a lower cost option is available that will meet the same need.



*Eligibility for TWS-VRS services
does not depend on your income.*



What are the components of my IPE?

- The employment goal;
- A list of steps needed to achieve the employment goal;
- A schedule of how often you and your counselor will contact each other; for example, every 60 days;
- Criteria that will be used to evaluate your progress; for example, medical reports;
- A description of services you need to achieve your employment goal, including the start and end dates of each service, the service providers and how services will be obtained;
- A statement about how you were involved in choosing the employment goal, services, service providers and methods for providing the services;
- Your responsibilities in achieving the employment goal; for example, applying for financial aid;
- A list of other organizations that you will be responsible for applying to, and for using their services; for example, a VA hospital;
- The amount that you may be required to contribute toward the cost of services if your net income and/or assets exceed TWS-VRS basic living requirements; for more information or a copy of the current Basic Living Requirement (BLR) contact your counselor;
- Statements about the terms and conditions for services from TWS-VRS and your right to appeal decisions made by your counselor; and
- Signatures from you or your representative and your TWS-VRS counselor.

Will I be required to pay for the services?

Yes, all services are subject to required participation in the cost of services except:

- Services paid or reimbursed by a source other than TWS-VRS;
- Assessments for determining eligibility and determining vocational needs, including any associated maintenance and transportation;
- Counseling, guidance and referral provided by TWS-VRS;
- Job-related services;
- Personal assistant services; and
- Auxiliary aids or services; for example, interpreter services, reader services and translator services.

If you are receiving Social Security disability benefits, you are not required to help pay for any services.

What happens after I reach my employment goal?

When you have been working for a while, and you and your counselor agree that things are going well, you will receive a letter letting you know that your case has been closed. You are an important part of the workforce and can be proud of what you have accomplished. If you run into any problems after your case has been closed, let your TWS-VRS counselor know.

What if I have a problem?

If you have trouble at work, let your counselor know immediately so that he or she can help you work it out.

There may be times when you don't understand or agree with the decisions your counselor makes about your case. If you have a concern about the types of services that you are getting or think you should be able to get services when you've been told that you can't, the best thing to do is to discuss your concerns with your counselor.

What can I do if I disagree with my counselor's decision?

If you talk with your counselor and you still don't agree, you may ask to talk to the TWS-VRS counselor's supervisor.

We hope you will attempt to resolve your disagreement through your TWS-VRS counselor. However, if you have talked to your counselor and are still not satisfied, you may request a review by a hearing officer or a mediator to help reach an agreement. Your counselor also can provide a copy of the brochure "Can We Talk? Appeal procedures to follow if you and your counselor disagree." The brochure explains the appeal process.

Are there other places I can go to ask questions?

There is a lot of information available on the TWC-VRS website at <https://twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-services> that may answer your questions.

For more information you can also

- Contact your local TWS-VRS office;
- Call the TWC Information line at 800-628-5115; or
- Contact the Disability Rights Texas at 800-252-9108.

For more information about supports available through Disability Rights Texas and their Client Assistance Program (CAP), please refer to the “Can We Talk” brochure, which you will receive when you apply for VR services.

Your TWS-VRS Office

To locate your Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) office, visit: www.twc.texas.gov/find-locations



Texas Workforce Solutions-
Vocational Rehabilitation Services
101 East 15th Street
Austin, Texas 78778-0001
800-628-5115

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request
to individuals with disabilities.

Relay Texas: 800-735-2989 (TTY) and 711 (Voice)

The Texas Workforce Commission accepts calls
made through any relay service provider.

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For purposes of the VR program, the Federal VR grant paid 78.7 percent of the total costs of the program.

In Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2019, the VR agency received \$221,936,258 in Federal VR funds. Funds appropriated by the State paid 21.3 percent of the total costs (\$60,066,611) under the VR program.

For purposes of the Supported Employment program, Federal funds paid 90 percent of the total costs. In FFY 2019, the VR agency received \$1,446,266 in Federal Supported Employment funds. State appropriated funds paid 10 percent (\$80,348) of the total costs under the Supported Employment program.

For purposes of the OIB program, Federal funds paid 90 percent of the total costs incurred under the program. In FFY 2019, the agency received \$2,159,283 in Federal grant funds for this program. Funds appropriated by the State paid 10 percent (\$239,920) of the total costs incurred under the OIB program.

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