

# Working with Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation

## Frequently Asked Questions from Teachers



### Who can be referred for services through VR?

Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a state agency that assists individuals with all types of disabilities in obtaining or maintaining their employment goals. VR can help people identify their vocational interests and abilities. Anyone who has a physical and/or mental impairment that substantially interferes with his/her ability to work can be referred to a local VR office. This includes students with IEPs and 504 plans—students do not necessarily need to be receiving special education services to be eligible. Some examples of students who may be eligible:

- a student who has acquired a brain injury as a result of a car accident
- a student with cerebral palsy who is on the honor roll
- a non-verbal student with autism who uses assistive technology
- a student with an IEP who will be leaving school with a certificate of completion
- a student with limited use of an arm due to a congenital birth defect



### Is the special education director the only person who can refer a student?

No. Anyone can refer a student to VR – a teacher, guidance counselor, or family member. A student of legal age can even refer himself/herself by contacting a local VR office. Find the VR Office Directory at: [https://www.in.gov/fssa/files/VRS\\_Area\\_Offices.pdf](https://www.in.gov/fssa/files/VRS_Area_Offices.pdf)



### Is there a waiting list for VR?

Not everyone who is eligible will receive VR services. In 2017, Indiana VR implemented an order of selection (OOS) procedure. Using this procedure, each eligible person is assigned to a priority category based on the information VR has about the person's disability and impediment to employment. Currently, Indiana VR must serve people with the most significant disabilities prior to serving those with less significant disabilities. If a person is eligible for VR services but does not meet the requirements for the priority category being served (i.e., does not have a most significant disability), the person will be deferred for services.

VR will continue to schedule all new referrals for an intake appointment to complete the application process and to determine level of severity for eligible individuals. If a student does not meet the requirements to receive services now, VR will provide parents and students with information and referrals to other organizations that may be able to help with employment training and supports.



### How does VR provide employment services?

If a student is eligible for services and is in a priority category, VR will provide services on a time-limited basis, depending upon the needs of the individual. A VR



counselor will work with the student to determine an employment goal and what services the student may need to meet the goal. VR will connect some students to a community rehabilitation provider (CRP) for additional services; other students may receive services directly through VR.

The individual's VR case will be closed successfully when he/she achieves his/her employment goal, and maintains the employment outcome for a period of time, but no fewer than 90 days.

An individual can re-enter or re-apply for VR services if he/she encounters barriers to employment, such as being fired or laid off from a job, or has an additional service need related to his/her ability to maintain the job or learn new skills for the job.



### What are Pre-Employment Transition Services?

VR also serves students with disabilities at school, through Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Any student from 14-22 years of age who has an IEP or 504 plan can receive these services, whether or not they have applied for or been found eligible for VR services. These services supplement what the school provides and increase access to career planning, work experience, and training to support seamless movement from high school to employment or postsecondary education and training. Across the state, VR contracts with different providers to offer the following required services:

1. Job exploration counseling
2. Work-based learning experiences
3. Counseling on postsecondary opportunities
4. Workplace readiness training
5. Instruction in self-advocacy

VR provides Pre-ETS in every county in Indiana and is working to make Pre-ETS available to students with disabilities throughout the state. If you are unsure if Pre-ETS is available in your school, please review this listing of counties:

<https://www.in.gov/fssa/files/CountiesbyPreETSProviders.pdf>

If you would like more information on how to correctly incorporate Pre-ETS in the Transition IEP please visit website <https://youtu.be/0Q5GsTEdnIk>.



### Does Order of Selection affect a student's ability to participate in Pre-Employment Transition Services?

In most instances, order of selection will not interfere with a student receiving pre-employment transition services. Based upon federal guidance, if a student with a disability begins one or more of the required Pre-ETS activities *prior to* being determined eligible for VR services, he or she may continue to receive any and all pre-employment transition services even if the student is deferred for services (i.e., is not an individual with a most significant disability). However, if the student did not begin any of the pre-ETS activities prior to being deferred for services, the student may not receive any individualized VR services, *including* pre-employment transition

services, until his or her turn for receipt of VR services comes up.

VR has taken steps to initiate pre-employment transition services during the VR application intake appointment, so that any student who qualifies may be able to receive pre-employment transition services, regardless of their OOS category.



### **What if I refer a student to VR, and she/he can't be served at this time?**

VR will provide information and referrals to other services that provide workforce supports including agencies in each local area, such as WorkOne Centers, Ticket to Work Employment Networks, Independent Living Centers, college and university career centers and disability services offices, the INDATA Assistive Technology project, and other state or local resources. For a list of resources specific to your community, visit: <http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/5435.htm>



### **Should I refer students to VR during high school or wait until they graduate?**

You should refer students to VR as soon as appropriate but no later than the last semester of their projected exit year. It is important to be proactive in preparing students for employment after high school.



### **Should students be referred to VR if they don't know what job they want?**

Yes. VR is a state agency that works with individuals with all types of disabilities to obtain or maintain their employment goals. The VR counselor's responsibility includes helping people identify their career goals and the types of jobs they might want.



### **Do I need to invite VR to the transition case conference?**

Yes. Per Article 7, the counselor is to be invited to the case conference committee meeting that will take place during the school year before the student's projected final year of school, or earlier if appropriate. Case conference members will also identify any individuals and agencies that will implement the transition services. Depending on the student's needs and/or postsecondary goals, schools should invite appropriate adult services, which may include VR. Given adequate notice, the VR counselor may attend a case conference to effectively collaborate with the school in order to assist in the VR referral and application process and identify appropriate VR services available to help a student reach his/her postsecondary goals. Some schools have invited VR counselors to career and family nights to talk with students and parents.



### **What other responsibilities do I have in the process?**

- Talk with students about their career goals and about what they need to do to achieve them.
- Teach students about VR—what VR does, how to access VR services.
- Communicate with VR counselors on an ongoing basis about students who might be eligible for vocational rehabilitation. *(Note: Per Article 7 confidentiality regulations, you must obtain consent from a student/guardian prior to communicating with VR about that student.)*

- Work with the VR counselor to develop a process for the referral and application as well as a follow-up process that works for the student, counselor, and the school.
- Refer students to VR.
- Follow up with VR to see how the referral/application process is progressing.
- Collaborate and coordinate with VR to ensure that the Transition IEP and Individualized Plan for Employment include appropriate coordinated transition activities.



### Are supports available for students planning to attend college out of state?

Yes. The VR program is available in all 50 states. State VR programs can work together to coordinate services for eligible students.



### My student wants to work *and* go to college. Can VR help with both?

VR will work with the student to identify a specific job goal and, together, they will develop an Individualized Plan for Employment to support that specific goal. VR will then provide the services necessary to achieve the goal. The development of the employment outcome and identification of services necessary to achieve the outcome is a very individualized process.



### Can you give me a list of the services VR provides?

VR can't give you a complete list, since services depend on an individual's specific needs, and technologies that support individuals in employment change rapidly. However, VR can give you some examples that may help you explain to students and families how the agency can help and what it is that VR does and doesn't do. Questions? Please contact your VR counselor and ask!

Things VR <u>CANNOT</u> Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A scholarship</li><li>▪ A training program to build "fun" skills</li><li>▪ A quick fix</li></ul>

Things VR <u>CAN</u> Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Tutors, note takers, etc.</li><li>▪ Job placement assistance</li><li>▪ Vocational guidance &amp; counseling</li><li>▪ Training for a job (e.g., vocational school, college/university, and on-the-job training)</li><li>▪ Rehabilitation technology (e.g., assistive devices like speech-to-text software or drivers' training)</li></ul>

*\* Services a VR participant receives will depend upon the individual's needs and employment goals. Not all participants are eligible for all services.*

A publication of

#### Vocational Rehabilitation

A division of the Indiana Bureau of Rehabilitation Services  
<http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2636.htm>

#### Indiana Department of Education

<http://www.doe.in.gov>

Developed by

#### The Center on Community Living and Careers

<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc>