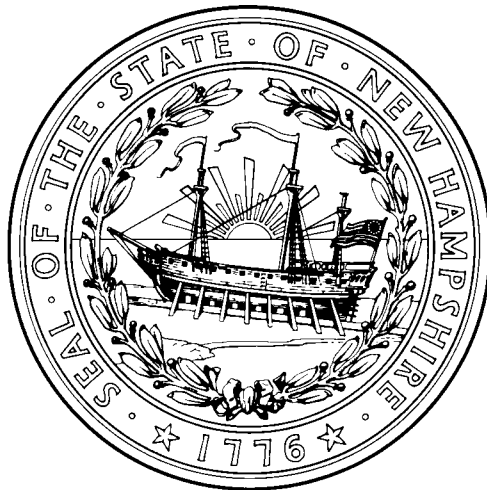


**GUIDE TO NEW HAMPSHIRE
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM**



**BY
THE CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
NOVEMBER 2002**

What is VR?

The vocational rehabilitation (VR) program is one of the Nation's oldest federal programs established by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (the Act). The VR program is also a full partner in the NH Works One-Stop service delivery system.

The mission of VR is to help people with disabilities prepare for, find and keep suitable employment.

You will make "informed choices" during the VR process. VR will give you the information, assistance and support you need to understand how to make informed choice decisions.

The VR choices you make at each step should be based on your informed choice and Vocational Rehabilitation requires your active involvement.

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NEW HAMPSHIRE'S STATE
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Understanding the VR Process

You go through a number of steps in the VR process. VR uses a numbered system to track your progress in this process. This starts when you are referred for services.

Each stage in the process is called a "status" and has a number. Changes to your status should always be documented in your file. You do not need to keep track of status numbers, but you may want to know what they mean. Following is an explanation.

Status 00: Referral

Someone referred to a VR office enters this status. Referrals to VR are placed in status 02 as soon as an application is completed and signed or services are requested.

VR services can be requested verbally, by phone, fax, or e-mail. Whether referring yourself or someone else, try to provide the following information to VR when requesting services:

- **First and last name**
- **Social Security number (if available)**
- **Address**
- **Date of birth**
- **Sex**
- **Disability**
- **Phone number**
- **Name of guardian or legal representative, if applicable**

The School District

VR

Provides special education services

Provides vocational services that are not the responsibility of the school

Pays for educationally related services

May require financial contribution from the family or customer for certain services

Calls the written plan an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP)

Uses a document called an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

Parents usually make decisions for their school-age children

Unless a person under age 18 has a legal guardian, the individual will sign forms and make decisions

Must provide special education services until graduation or until student reaches 21

Services can be initiated at any age, but VR transition services should be in place by age 16

In some school districts, VR counselors are located within the school. In others, VR has developed relationships with Local Education Agencies.

In either case, a vocational rehabilitation counselor is a member of the transition team, along with school personnel and other individuals who are invited to help the student in making the best decisions for his/her future.

If you have any questions or concerns about transition from school to work, contact the Client Assistance Program.

Supported Employment

The Supported Employment process begins when VR identifies you as an applicant who could work in supported employment.

You and your VR counselor will develop your IPE, which describes the Supported Employment services to be provided.

VR will arrange an on-the-job evaluation lasting up to four weeks. The evaluation helps everyone involved decide whether a particular job is appropriate and helps identify your training needs.

The goal of supported employment is to find jobs for people with severe disabilities who have:

- **Not worked in the competitive job market, or**
- **Had sporadic or interrupted employment, or**
- **Chronic mental illness and need ongoing supports to maintain a job**

Extended Supports

VR will pay for services needed for initial job assessment, job development, placement and training.

Typically, Area Agencies or Mental Health Centers provide "ongoing" or "extended" supports.

Extended supports are services an individual needs *indefinitely* to maintain a job.

Independent Living Programs

Not every individual with a disability is able to work. Independent Living (IL) programs provide services to all individuals with disabilities who may need assistance with their daily living at home and/or in the community. The purpose of the IL program is to maximize the independence, productivity, leadership, and empowerment of individuals with disabilities.

Eligibility

You may be eligible for services from the state IL program if you have a significant disability that impedes independence. Some services available are dependent on financial need. In New Hampshire Granite State Independent Living (GSIL) provides the following four core services:

- **Advocacy**
- **Peer Support Counseling**
- **Information & Referral**
- **Independent Living Skills Training**

In addition, GSIL provides the following services to those who are eligible:

- **Home Modification**
- **Accessible Transportation**
- **Adaptive Aids and Equipment (i.e., orthotics, prosthetics, environmental controls)**
- **Interpreters for Individuals who are Deaf**
- **Service Coordination**

Tips for Success

If problems, concerns or questions arise, talk with your counselor, your counselor's supervisor, or other member of your counseling team. If you have additional questions or concerns, you may contact CAP at any time. The follow suggestions may help you as you go through each stage of the VR process.

Be informed

This guide is designed to help you - use it!

You have the right to ask as many questions as you need.

Talk with your counselor to be certain that you both understand and agree on the contents of your IPE.

If your goals or needs change, tell your counselor you want to amend your plan.

Make sure that you know:

- **Your vocational goal**
- **The specific services needed to reach your goal**
- **The time frame needed to complete objectives**
- **Who will provide or pay for each service**

Note any difference of opinion you have with your counselor in the space provided on your IPE.

Be aware that you have a right to appeal any decision; ask for a copy of the appeal process rules.

A Few Words About Money

Financial contribution

Although there is no financial eligibility test to qualify for VR services, you may be required to contribute to the cost of certain services once you have been found eligible.

VR may ask you to provide information about your income, expenses, assets, and debts.

VR must provide the following services at no cost to you:

- **Evaluation of rehabilitation potential**
- **Counseling, guidance and referral services**
- **Placement**
- **On-the-job training and transitional employment training**
- **Interpreter services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing**
- **Reader and mobility services for individuals who are blind**
- **Personal and work adjustment training**

Depending on your financial status, you may be asked to contribute toward the cost of certain services (other than diagnostic evaluations) during extended evaluation.

Any information you provide about your financial circumstances is confidential.

Federal law requires that VR search out "comparable benefits" or other resources such as agencies or groups that can pay for services before using VR funds. An example of a comparable benefit is medical insurance.

Your Right to Appeal

As an applicant for or customer of VR services you have the right to appeal if you disagree with *any decision* made by anyone in the system about providing or denying services.

If you request an appeal, VR is required to provide you with information about the following:

- **Free assistance from the Client Assistance Program**
- **The voluntary mediation process**
- **The Fair Hearing process**

If you need an interpreter, or a reader, or require transportation, VR must pay for these services.

It is best to notify VR of any need for an accommodation when you request an appeal.

You have the right to review your case file. When you have a representative or attorney working for you, he or she can review your file on your behalf by presenting an authorization for release of information, signed by you.

You have the right to choose which appeal option you would like to pursue. The staff of CAP is available to discuss these options with you. CAP can answer your questions about the appeals process and advise you how to proceed.

NOTE: VR will attempt to resolve conflicts informally or through mediation with a third party who is not directly involved with the issue. If you choose this option, you have the right to representation during the appeal process.

