



Working

with Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Info for Students About Choosing a Career and Finding a Job

We all go to work—some of us right out of high school, and some after further education and training. Need some support to do that? Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services may be able to help!



What is vocational rehabilitation?

Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS, sometimes referred to as just “VR”) is an employment services program for high school students and adults with disabilities. A VR counselor can help students who have an identified disability (that means those with an IEP or a 504 plan or with other physical, mental health, or learning concerns) gain skills, find a job, and start a career. By helping you find a job, a VR counselor can also help you take control of your future so that you can live as independently as possible.



How does the VRS process work?

First, you need to be **Referred** to VRS so they know you’re interested in their services. Next, you’ll meet with a VR counselor to complete an **Application** to see if you are **Eligible**. (If the counselor needs more information, he/she may ask you to participate in other assessments, such as medical, psychiatric, psychological or other types of evaluations.) If VRS determines you’re eligible, you’ll work with the VR counselor to develop an **Individualized Plan for Employment** (an IPE). Your IPE will list a variety of services, approved through VRS, and steps you’ll take in order to achieve your employment goal. After you’ve gotten a job and your VR counselor and you think things are going well, you’ll have achieved and maintained your employment goal, and your VRS case will be closed.



Who is eligible for VRS?

You are eligible if you:

- 1) have a physical or mental condition that makes it hard for you to work *and*
- 2) demonstrate that you need and could benefit from VR services to help you prepare for, find, or keep a job.



How will VRS know that I need services?

Anyone can refer you to VRS. You can even refer yourself by contacting your local VRS office. A VRS Office Directory is available at http://www.indiana.gov/fssa/files/VRS_Area_Offices.pdf.



If I am eligible, what services could VRS provide?

VR services may include but are not necessarily limited to:

- Vocational guidance and counseling;

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- Job placement assistance, including supported employment;
- Training for a job, including vocational school, college/university, and on-the-job training;
- Medical treatment to correct or modify a physical or mental health challenge;
- Assistive technology, including devices like speech-to-text software.



What does VR actually do for me?

VRS offers many different services, all of them designed to help you set your own employment goals and figure out how to achieve them. It's all about meeting your particular needs. VRS might help you understand your interests and abilities or arrange for informational interviewing and career exploration. Your plan might call for a degree program at a two-year or four-year college or other training opportunities. Depending on your particular needs and job requirements, VRS can help you explore your options. Bottom line: VRS provides the assistance you need to prepare for work and to find and keep a job.



How much does it cost?

There is no charge for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. However, some services require VRS to explore other funding options. For some postsecondary expenses, for example, students and their parents are first required to file a FAFSA (the Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Students will use any federal student aid they may be eligible for to help pay for certain costs (e.g., tuition and books).



Do I have a choice?

VRS will provide you with assistance, but the whole idea is for you to choose your own job goals, based on your interests and abilities, and decide how to achieve them. You can decide to develop plans on your own, or with someone else's assistance. If you wish to receive services from Vocational Rehabilitation Services, your VR counselor and you will need to agree on your plan.



What are my responsibilities in the VRS process?

- Talk with your VR counselor about your employment goals, interests, strengths, and needs.
- Be an active participant in the planning process.
- Work toward the goals you have written in your Individualized Plan for Employment.