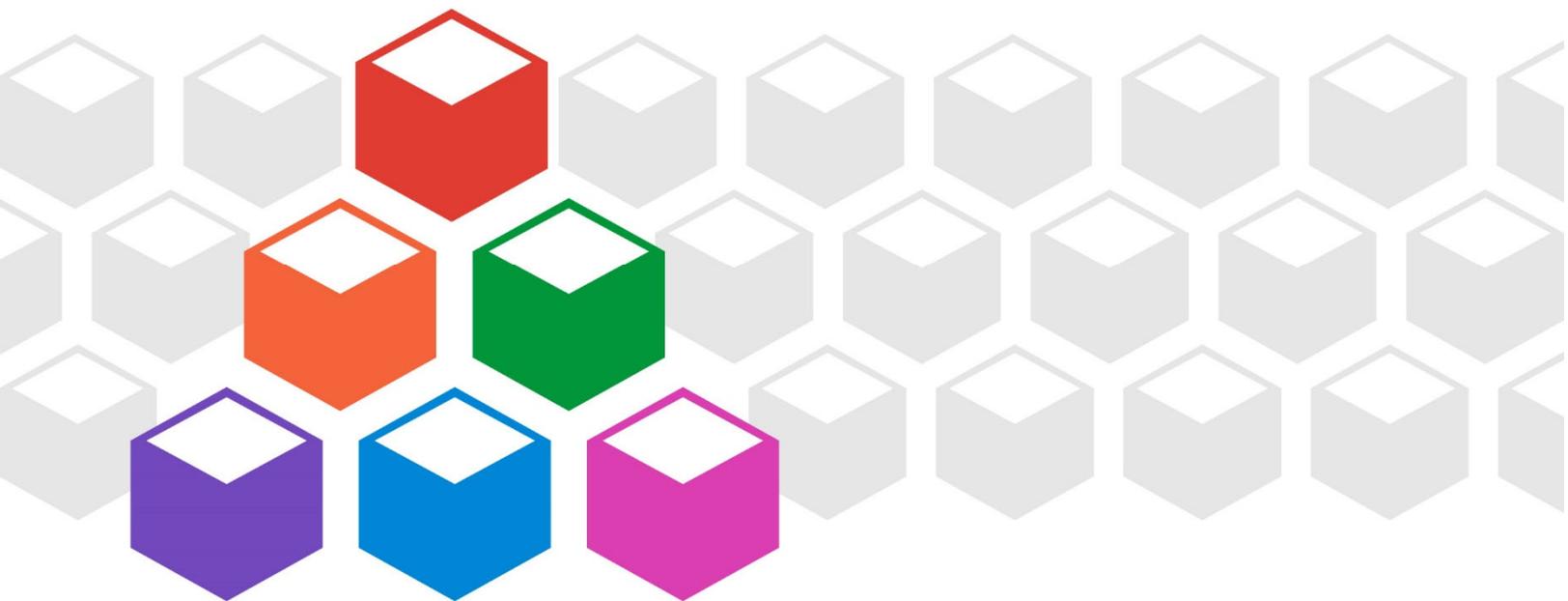




**NTACT**

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition



# **TRANSITION RESOURCES FOR VR COUNSELORS**

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This document describes what state vocational rehabilitation counselors who work with students with disabilities need to know to provide effective vocational rehabilitation services to the students they serve. The document outlines critical knowledge and skills that VR Counselors need to assist these students with transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education or competitive integrated employment.

The document links to resources and follows a timeline beginning with initial contact with a student through the first year after the he/she has achieved his/her employment goal as outlined on the IPE.

# Referral/Application

*The student has expressed an interest in pre-employment transition services and/or vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and may or may not have completed a VR program referral or application or attended an orientation held at their school. Vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) also collaborate with local educational agency (LEA) staff and special education teachers to identify students potentially eligible for VR services.*

## **Have knowledge of transition-related legislation in fields of special and vocational education, rehabilitation, labor, and civil rights**

1. Work with LEA staff and special education teachers to identify students who may potentially be eligible for pre-employment transition services and/or VR services
2. Provide students and families with referral and application procedures, discuss eligibility requirements, and explain the purpose and scope of VR services
3. Gather referral information, applications, disability documentation, and other relevant information in order to assist with and eligibility determination

After all relevant/required materials are collected, the VRC has **60 days** from the date of application to make an eligibility determination (34 C.F.R. 361.41).

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## **Related Resources**

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- [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) 2004: Improving Transition Planning and Results](#) from the National Center for Learning Disabilities
- A collection of articles regarding [legal requirements for transition](#) from Wrightslaw
- Information on the [Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)
- [34 CFR 361 - Scope of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities](#) (discusses regulatory requirements related to providing vocational rehabilitation services)
- [“A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment For Students and Youth with Disabilities”](#) from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

- [Information on the American with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) provided by the US Department of Education
- [Title II of the ADA](#)
- [Final ruling regarding State vocational rehabilitation programs \(PDF\)](#) under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- [“A Factsheet on Transition Services for Students and Youth with Disabilities” \(PDF\)](#) from the US Department of Education
- [34 CFR 361.41: Requirements for processing referrals and applications](#)
- [The Randolph-Sheppard Act, P.L. 74-732](#) (discusses federal vending contract preference for blind individuals)
- **Chapter 3: The American with Disabilities Act: Major Mandates and Ambiguities in the Foundations of the Vocational Rehabilitation Process** in the book Foundations of the Vocational Rehabilitation Process describes ADA in practice<sup>1</sup>
- **Chapter 2: Transition Legislation And Models (pp.29-53)** in the book Transition Planning for Secondary Students with Disabilities is a resource for details of transition legislation<sup>2</sup>
- **Chapter 2: Transition Legislation and Policy: Past and Present (pp. 24-53)** in the book Beyond High School: Preparing Adolescents for Tomorrow’s Challenges provides helpful information on transition legislation and policy<sup>3</sup>

## Engage parents/guardians in the VR process

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### Related Resources

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- [“A Parent’s Guide to Transition Planning”](#) from George Washington University
- [“Parent and Family Involvement Annotated Bibliography” \(PDF\)](#) from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)
- [Information on family and community involvement](#) from the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth

- [A training module on family involvement and transition](#) provided by the Transition Coalition
- [“Getting the Most from the Public Vocational Rehabilitation System”](#) an article presented by the Institute for Community Inclusion
- [“The Family as a Critical Partner in the Achievement of a Successful Employment Outcome” \(PDF\)](#) from the 26th Institute on Rehabilitation Issues
- Knowledge and strategies for [engaging Culturally and Linguistically Diverse \(CLD\) families \(PDF\)](#)
- [Parent Involvement and Engagement with Families from Diverse Communities Literature Review](#) from the PACER Center
- [A guide for enhancing CLD families in counseling \(PDF\)](#) from the University of South Florida
- The Institute for Community Inclusion Publication [“Beyond Training: Engaging Families in the Transition to Employment”](#)
- The journal article [“The “Empowered Client” in Vocational Rehabilitation: The Excluding Impact of Inclusive Strategies”](#)
- “Working with Parents: Using Strategies to Promote Planning and Preparation, Placement, and Support” on pages 110 through 133 of the book *Beyond High School: Preparing Adolescents for Tomorrow’s Challenges*.<sup>4</sup>

## Eligibility & Order of Selection

*A student must meet all three of the following criteria to be determined eligible for VR services: (1) have a physical or mental impairment, (2) experience a substantial impediment to employment as a result of or constituted by that impairment, and (3) be able to benefit from VR services in achieving an employment outcome in a competitive integrated setting.*

*A VR agency is required to implement an order of selection when it anticipates that it will not have sufficient fiscal and/or personnel resources to fully serve all eligible individuals (Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Act) and 34 CFR 361.36(a)(1)).*

## Review disability documentation and assess functional limitations using information gathered to make an eligibility determination for VR services

1. VRC has 60 days from date of application to determine eligibility for services. During this time, the VRC works closely with the student, family, and LEA staff to obtain any information relevant to determining eligibility for VR services. Eligibility determination should be inclusive of medical records, education assessments, and IEPs. If additional information/assessments are needed, VRC may refer student to a qualified professional (medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).
2. An order of selection consists of priority categories to which eligible individuals are assigned based on the significance of their disability (34 CFR 361.36(d)(1)). Under an order of selection, individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected first for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services (Section 101(a)(5)(C) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.36(a)(3)(iv)(A)).
3. If the designated State unit is operating under an order of selection for services, as provided in 361.36, the State unit must base its priority assignments on a review of the data developed in accordance with federal regulations in order to make the eligibility determination and an assessment of additional data, to the extent necessary.

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### Related Resources

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- [34 CFR 361.42 - Assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services](#) provides federal guidelines for order of selection
- [A timeline for VR services \(PDF\)](#)
- [Eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation Services \(DOC\)](#) as defined by Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- [Frequently Asked Questions about the RSA-911 report](#) from the US Department of Education
  - The RSA-911 requires VR agencies to report a unique identifier for each individual, thereby enabling ED to report an unduplicated count of individuals receiving services in accordance with the Joint WIOA Performance ICR.
  - Although VR agencies are not required to report SSNs, the collection of SSNs by VR agencies will enable them to comply with the employment-related primary indicators of performance required by section 116(b)(2)(A)(i) of WIOA.
- [Order of Selection Factsheet \(PDF\)](#) from the Rehabilitation Services Administration

- [Policy and Practice Brief on Order of Selection \(PDF\)](#) from The Work Incentives Support Center

## IPE Development (34 C.F.R. 361.45 and 361.46)

*Once a student is determined eligible for VR services, VRCs have 90 days from the date of eligibility determination to develop the student's IPE.*

**Once eligibility is determined, administer comprehensive needs assessment utilizing a variety of methods, both formal and informal, in order to determine student's VR needs and areas for rehabilitation (i.e. medical records, IEP, psychological evaluation, counselor observation)**

1. Utilize formal and informal approaches for identifying students' interest and preferences and related to long-term competitive integrative employment
2. Determine if comparable services or benefits are available, or if services are exempt from determination of comparable benefits and services (34 C.F.R. 361.53). VRC will review the policies that govern the rates of payment for all purchased vocational rehabilitation services (34 CFR 361.50). Some States may establish financial needs test and require a family contribution towards services.

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### Related Resources

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- [The three level of assessment \(PDF\)](#) provided by the Vocational Evaluation and Career Assessment Professionals Association (VECAP)
- Suggested transition activities, student and family member interview questionnaires, and transition assessment tools can be found in this [Quickbook of Transition Assessments \(PDF\)](#)
- A journal article detailing [vocational assessment models for students with disabilities \(PDF\)](#)
- A journal article discussing [preparation for school-to-work transition and postschool life for students with disabilities \(PDF\)](#)
- [Guidelines on Comprehensive Assessment](#) from the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC)

- [Transition Assessment Toolkit](#) from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)
- [“Transition Assessment and Planning for Youth with Severe Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities”](#) from the Journal of Special Education
- [“Factors Considered by Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals in Employability and Earning Capacity Assessment”](#) from the Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin
- **Chapter 9: The Vocational Rehabilitation Process: Evaluation Phase** in Foundations of the Vocational Rehabilitation Process

## Develop Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

1. IPE goal is consistent with student’s capabilities, interests, skills, abilities, etc.
2. Services and supports indicated on IPE align with student’s functional limitations
3. These services may include transition and VR services necessary to achieve the employment goal on the IPE, such as postsecondary education, vocational occupational training, or trade/professional program

The IPE must also include: a) timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of services, b) the entity or entities chosen by the eligible individual to provide the VR service, c) description of the criteria to evaluate progress toward the achievement of the employment outcome, d) responsibilities of the VR agencies, the individual and, if applicable, the extent of the individual’s participation in paying for the cost of services, and the responsibility of the individual to apply for and secure comparable benefits

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## Related Resources

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- [34 CFR 361.45 - Development of the individualized plan for employment](#)
- [34 CFR 361.46 - Content of the individualized plan for employment](#)
- [A guide on developing the IPE \(RTF\)](#) from Florida Vocational Rehabilitation
- Labor market surveys, resume development resources, and transferable skills identification materials are available at the following websites:
  - [Dictionary of Occupational Titles](#)
  - [Occupational Information Network Numerical Index](#)

- [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
  - [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)
  - [Job Accommodation Network](#)
- Helpful information can be found in **Chapter 10: Planning the Rehabilitation Program** in Foundations of the Vocational Rehabilitation
  - The textbook The Handbook of Rehabilitation Counseling from Springer Publishing Company provides helpful information regarding IPE development

## IPE Implementation

*After VRC develops IPE in collaboration with student and family, consistent with student's capabilities, interests, skills, etc., services in the IPE are implemented by identified provider(s) and monitored by VRC.*

### Ensure services on IPE are implemented and evaluates achievement of goals

1. If student is in postsecondary education or training program, VRC monitors student academic progress each semester/quarter
2. If student is in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE), VRC facilitates coordination of necessary services/supports to maintain CIE as indicated on IPE
3. VRC maintains contact with all service providers and participates in multidimensional team as indicated on student's IPE, inclusive of postsecondary or trade school and natural and community support

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### Related Resources

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- US Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) guidelines on [Promising Practices for Basic VR Agencies Helping Transition Age Youth](#)
  - The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) monitored 23 state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies in FY 2007 as authorized by Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. These agencies, their stakeholders, and RSA identified promising practices that provide useful samples of programs and services that promote youth with disabilities transitioning from school to employment. These promising practices are unique to the VR agencies providing the programs and contact information is provided for each practice.

- [National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials \(NCRTM\)](#) is sponsored by the RSA and hosted by Utah State University. They serve the profession of vocational rehabilitation as a centralized resource for the development, collection, dissemination, and utilization of training materials; as a forum for advancing knowledge through applied research and open dialog; and as a marketplace for career and staff development.
- [34 CFR 361.46 - Content of the individualized plan for employment](#)
- [34 CFR 361.22 - Coordination with education officials](#)

### **Continue to work collaboratively with student, parents/guardians, and service providers (inclusive of service providers and training programs)**

1. Monitor student academic progress
2. Monitor students' progress with employment if CIE is immediate goal
3. Assist with connecting student with necessary services/supports to maintain CIE and facilitates access to said services/supports.

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### **Related Resources**

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- [Rehabilitation Counseling Scope of Practice \(PDF\)](#) provided by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC)
- [34 CFR 361, Subpart E - Performance Accountability Under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (outlines state VR agency requirements)
- [34 CFR 361.235 -What are the reporting requirements for individual records for core Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) title I programs; the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment...the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA title IV?](#)
- [34 CFR 361.56 - Requirements for closing the record of services of an individual who has achieved an employment outcome](#)
- [34 CFR 361.55 - Semi-annual and annual review of individuals in extended employment and other employment under special certificate provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act](#)
- **Chapter 8: The Role and function of the Rehabilitation Counselor and Chapter 11: Utilizing Rehabilitation Facilities and Support Services** in Foundations of the Vocational Rehabilitation Process<sup>5</sup>

# In Employment

*Once student is placed in competitive integrated employment, the VRC monitors progress and provides necessary supports. 90 days after the individual is stabilized in employment, VRC successfully closes student's case as achieving competitive integrated employment; VRC maintains contact with students' supports at least quarterly to monitor progress*

## **Maintain contact with student's natural supports as well as employers to monitor progress in employment setting to ensure:**

1. Employment is consistent with student's IPE goal
2. Student has all necessary accommodations needed to be successful in employment setting

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## **Related Resources**

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- [NTACT's Competitive Integrated Toolkit](#) was developed as a framework to assist State and local teams in collaboratively implementing transition services to improve post school employment outcomes for students with disabilities
- [Bridges to Work](#) helps more than a thousand young people, each year, most of whom are transitioning out of high school special education to prepare for the workplace and find a job with an employer in need of qualified, entry-level applicants. Creating and supporting mutually beneficial competitive employment relationships, the program creates opportunities for employment for youth while driving bottom-line results for business
- The [Searchable Online Accommodation Resource \(SOAR\)](#) provided by the Job Access Network (JAN) lets users explore various accommodation options for people with disabilities in work and educational settings

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<sup>1,5</sup> Rubin, S. E., Roessler, R., & Rumrill, P. D. (2016). Foundations of the vocational rehabilitation process. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Flexer, R. W. (2013). Transition planning for secondary students with disabilities. Boston: Pearson.

<sup>3,4</sup> Rusch, F. R. (2008). Beyond high school: Preparing adolescents for tomorrow's challenges. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.