

Chapter 201: Referral and Application Process

Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Policy and Procedures Manual

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Section 1: Referral

- A) Anyone present in Vermont who is referred to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) as an individual who may benefit from its services will be given the opportunity to inquire about and apply for its services promptly and equitably. An initial attempt to contact individuals referred by other organizations will be made within two (2) working days of the referral. The individual will be offered an opportunity to meet with a DVR representative to learn more about possible services and how to apply.
- B) Anyone who is referred to or applies for DVR services, will be scheduled to meet in person or remotely with a counselor or other representative within ten (10) working days unless:
- 1) The referred individual cannot meet within that timeframe; or
 - 2) The referred individual requests a later meeting date.
- C) Although an in-person meeting is preferred, contact by other means is acceptable including remote videoconference. The counselor or other representative shall make reasonable attempts to contact the referred individual. The term “reasonable attempts” is defined as at least three (3) attempts. Contact may be made by any combination of communication methods, including by mail, email, telephone, and/or another mode of communication available to the individual. At least one contact must be by mail.
- D) Division efforts to contact a referred individual may cease if:
- 1) The individual cannot be located;
 - 2) The individual does not respond after reasonable attempts to contact; or
 - 3) The individual has declined services after initial contact.

The counselor shall confirm in writing the failure to respond to contacts or the individual’s decision to decline services. This confirmation shall be by mail if an address is known.

Guidance – Initial contact.

Any DVR representative may initially contact a referred individual, generally by telephone. However, other means of communication (e.g., text or email) are permissible if contact information is known to the DVR.

During the initial contact, the counselor or representative will:

- Make sure the individual knows they have been referred for possible services;
- Explain the Division’s employment-related mission; and
- Encourage the individual to meet with a counselor or other representative for more information and to apply for services.

If the referred individual is not responsive to initial contact and the counselor believes the individual's disability may be a factor (e.g., the disability may be resulting in fear or misunderstanding, or the individual has mobility impairments which interfere with traveling almost anywhere), additional effort to encourage the individual's participation should be explored, including contacting the referral source (e.g., state agency, school, or community organization).

If the individual is interested in DVR services, it is recommended that the counselor or other representative schedule an appointment for the individual to complete the application and begin the eligibility determination process. It is recommended that the referred individual receive written (e.g., text, email, or mail) confirmation of that appointment. A DVR brochure may be provided to the individual at that time if they desire one.

Given the diversity of communication tools currently available to and used by individuals in our society, the counselor and/or representative should ask the individual about their preferred means of communication going forward.

If the office offers group orientation or information sessions, the individual may choose to attend a group session or an individualized one.

The Division does not provide questionnaires to a referred individual prior to contact with a counselor or prior to receipt of an application for services.

An application form for services, however, may be provided prior to such contact.

End Guidance.

- E) When an individual identifies as transgender, gender non-conforming, gender expansive and/or non-binary and indicates a preference for a name or pronoun other than their legal name or gender assigned at birth, counselors and staff shall take the following actions:
 - 1) If the individual has not legally transitioned, staff shall enter the individual's name and gender assigned at birth to match government identification, in the Division's case management system; and they shall use the individual's preferred name and pronoun when working with them.
 - 2) If the individual has legally changed their name and this is reflected in government identification, staff shall enter the individual's identified name and pronoun in Division's case management system.

Section 2: Application

- A) Application for services confirms an individual's desire and willingness to participate in employment. An individual is considered to have applied when they or their representative:
 - 1) Have completed and signed the application form or have otherwise requested services;

- 2) Have provided information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility and priority for services (at least name, address, and mention of a disability); and
 - 3) Are available to complete the assessment process.
- B) Application forms shall be available in every DVR office and widely distributed statewide in pertinent places such as the VT Department of Labor, other government entities, community rehabilitation programs, schools, hospitals, and other community organizations.

Guidance: – Non-traditional methods of applying for VR services.

If an application is filed in a "non-traditional" way, e.g., other than by using the DVR's form:

- The data collected on the application form must still be collected; and
- Information regarding the individual's rights, responsibilities, availability of the Client Assistance Program, etc., must be provided in writing in the applicant's native language, if applicable, or other method of communication understandable to the applicant or their representative.

A way to assure that these activities are fulfilled is to subsequently complete the standard application form using the date of the non-traditional application as the date of application.

End Guidance.

Guidance: – Deaf and hard of hearing referral procedures.

All applicants who are deaf or hard of hearing (including all types of hearing loss) as their primary disability will be assigned initially to the local Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf (RCD). The RCD will review the applicant's case record, particularly the medical and audiological information. Based on the applicant's informed choice, the RCD may then coordinate with the local DVR staff to determine whether to continue working with the applicant or to transfer the case to the area's general DVR counselor.

To assure quality services, general counselors will consult with the local RCD regarding anyone with any type of hearing loss whenever the need arises.

Suggested consultation times include:

- Upon application;
- When the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is written;
- Prior to case closure.

The RCDs will be available to provide periodic information and training about hearing loss and deafness.

End Guidance.