

Chapter 307

SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION

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Section I. Definitions

As defined in the Federal Rehabilitation Act, **“Transition services”** means a coordinated set of activities for a student designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities must be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and must include instruction, community experiences, related services and the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. Transition services must promote or facilitate the accomplishment of long-term rehabilitation goals and any intermediate rehabilitation objectives identified in the student's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Federal Special Education law (IDEA) also addresses transition services which need to be included in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Section II. Early Identification and Follow-Along

- A. A VR staff member will maintain frequent contact with school personnel in area schools and alternative educational sites to ensure early identification of students who may require vocational rehabilitation services. These students may or may not be receiving Special Education services. VR brochures may be provided to schools to be shared with students with disabilities and their families.

Local Core Transition Teams (key members from the school, adult agencies, and the community who are involved/concerned with the transition of students from school to adult life) may provide the VR Transition Counselor with a forum to discuss projections of numbers of students who will be needing transition services from VR. If a Local Core Transition Team is in place in the VR region a VR counselor must participate and represent DVR. If no Local Core Team is in place, the VR Transition Counselor will take a lead role in establishing a team.

- B. Outreach activities should include ways to identify out-of-school youth and students at risk for dropping out of school. Outreach activities may also include meeting with families and students at the local VR office or other settings as mutually agreed upon by the counselor, the student and the family.
- C. Early identification of students by Vocational Rehabilitation should occur up to four years prior to high school graduation or by age 16 and should include involvement in IEP/Transition Team meetings.
- D. The Counselor's role in early identification is primarily that of counseling and providing guidance and assistance during the IEP/Transition planning process. The Counselor, thereby, can assist the individual, family members, and school transition team members in long-term planning for adult life. This planning may focus on employment, post-secondary education, a place to live after graduation, and participation in the community.
- E. Consultation should intensify when a student is two years from graduation. Formal intake should be initiated by Vocational Rehabilitation at least eighteen months before the student is scheduled to graduate or exit from high school. Students at risk for dropping out or students with complex needs may be considered for earlier intake.

Section III. Referrals to VR and IPE Development

- A. VR will not serve persons under age 18 without the written consent of a parent, guardian, or legal representative. In exceptional circumstances, it maybe necessary to provide a **one time** service for a youth in crisis without securing written consent. In such circumstances, the VR staff person must consult with his/her regional manager and the DVR Field Services Manager before providing a service.
- B. Services for in school youth may include counseling, assessment and consultation around the development of the IPE that is coordinated with the IEP/Transition Plan.
- C. The IPE must be developed, written and signed before the student leaves school.

Section IV. Paid Services for In School Youth

- A. The VR Counselor shall make the IEP/Transition Team aware of the scope of VR services available for in school youth.
- B. Paid services (including payment of Employment Specialists' salaries for work experiences) are the school system's responsibility through the student's Transition Year (nine months before graduation or aging out of school services).
- C. An exception to Section IV, B can include the following: During the student's Transition Year, VR may support Employment Specialist services on a job site which is expected to continue post-graduation. VR may pay for an Employment Specialist for up to twelve (12) months if ongoing supports have been negotiated with a long-term services provider (i.e., mental health agency, Division of Disability and Aging Services, private provider, or through the use of natural supports).
- D. As determined by the VR Counselor, the Regional Manager and/or the Division's Field Services Manager, services may be provided prior to the last year in school if essential to the IPE goals and/or their development and there are no other funding options. As determined by the VR Counselor and VR Regional Manager and/or the Division's Field Service Manager, other time-limited services may be purchased. Examples include on-site job assessments, vehicle modifications to support out of school driver's education, or physical restoration services, keeping in mind the use of comparable services and benefits as available.
- E. As determined on an individual basis, VR may provide for assistive technology (AT), services and devices for a VR-eligible student within 12 months of exiting school. The AT services must meet all of the following criteria: a) they are part of an IEP with coordinated transition goals, b) they are part of an approved IPE, and c) they are necessary to accomplish a successful transition to employment, post-secondary education or training.

Section V. Supported Employment Services

- A. The student (or representative, if appropriate), the VR Counselor, and the IEP/Transition Team will make a determination as to the need for supported employment services.
- B. Once this determination has been made, the Counselor may be a resource for the IEP/Transition Team, the student, and the family in identifying long term support resources. The student and his/her family should be given information and support that allows them to make an informed choice as to the selection of a supported employment provider. VR may assist in negotiating with a variety of state and local agencies or individuals for the provision of long-term supports and/or to seek other sources for follow-up.
- C. With assistance from the VR Counselor, the student and the family may choose an appropriate supported employment service for assessment, job development, on-site training, long-term support, and advocacy.
- D. Once a long-term support provider is identified, an IPE can be developed and supported employment services initiated.

Section VI. Additional Guidelines and Support

GUIDANCE: For additional information about best practices please refer to “Nothing But The Best”, the Vermont DVR Guide to Best Practices for Transition Counselors.