

Chapter 104: Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Policy and Procedures Manual

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Section I. Definitions

A. **“Legal blindness”** means:

1. Central acuity does not exceed 20/200 in the better eye with corrections; or
2. The field of vision is restricted to 20 degrees or less — i.e., there is little peripheral vision.

B. **“Visually impaired”** means that the eye condition is not so severe as to be legally blind, but vision in the better eye with best correction is not better than 20/50, or the condition is of a progressive nature which, if untreated, can reasonably be expected to lead to blindness.

Section II. Purpose

A. In general, the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) is responsible for the vocational rehabilitation of persons who meet the definitions of legal blindness or visually impaired and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is responsible for the vocational rehabilitation of persons with all other disabilities who meet the DVR eligibility criteria. However, in some cases it might be appropriate for an individual to be served concurrently by both DVR and DBVI. **To be served concurrently by both DBVI and DVR, the individual must meet the eligibility criteria for both agencies.** This chapter will outline DVR and DBVI policy regarding concurrent DVR and DBVI cases.

Section III. General Policy

- A. Any visually impaired or legally blind person who expresses interest in vocational rehabilitation will be referred to DBVI unless, in the opinion of counseling staff from both agencies, the person may be better served by DVR, or served concurrently by both agencies. DVR and DBVI will take into account the following considerations when determining if an individual should be served by DVR, DBVI or both agencies concurrently:
1. Which disability is the primary barrier to employment?
 2. What set of services and expertise best meet the needs of the individual to help them achieve their employment goal?
 3. Which other community service providers may be involved in supporting the individual to achieve their employment goal?

In most cases, an individual will be served by either DVR or DBVI only. In cases where a legally blind or visually impaired person is being served by DVR, consultation regarding services can be made with DBVI regarding community resources, adaptive aids, services, and plan development, **without necessarily opening a concurrent DBVI case.** A concurrent case would only be necessary if the individual required a combination of services and expertise from both DVR and DBVI in order to achieve their employment goal. **The DVR counselor must always consult with their Regional Manager prior to opening a concurrent DVR case with DBVI.**

Examples of Cases Where a Concurrent DVR and DBVI Case Might Be Necessary

Example A: A youth in transition is legally blind and requires mobility training in order to be successful in a job. DBVI has the specific expertise and program to provide these services. However, the young person also has a developmental disability and is eligible for supported employment services through the Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD). Because DVR funds DDSD supported employment services and has an ongoing relationship with the provider, it might be beneficial for DVR to have a concurrent case to oversee that set of services.

Example B: An adult with a significant psychiatric disability becomes legally blind in his mid-forties. Because the individual has become legally blind in later life, it is likely he will need DBVI services to gain or retain employment. However, the individual might also need specific services and supports related to their psychiatric disability that may be better provided by DVR in order to achieve their employment goal.

Section IV. Managing Concurrent Cases

Sharing of Case Information

- A. The DVR counselor will seek the consumer's consent to share information (see Chapter 101, Confidentiality) and coordinate services with the DBVI counselor. If the consumer refuses to provide consent to share information, the DVR counselor cannot compel them to do so. If the consumer refuses consent, the DVR counselor must manage the case with no coordination with DBVI.

Case Management and Coordination

- B. If the consumer provides consent to share information, it will be most effective if the DVR counselor and the DBVI counselor coordinate their efforts. To this end the DVR counselor will work with the DBVI counselor to:
 - 1. Identify either the DVR counselor or the DBVI counselor as the case lead and primary contact for the consumer.
 - 2. Hold at least one three-way meeting with the DVR counselor, DBVI counselor and consumer to establish protocols for managing the case.
 - 3. Coordinate development of the DVR IPE to ensure the employment goal and planned services are aligned with the DBVI IPE.

Provision of Services

- C. The fact that the consumer has a concurrent case with DBVI would not affect what services or supports could be provided by DVR. All of the DVR policies, procedures and spending guidelines would apply to the DVR case. However, DBVI services are considered a comparable benefit (see Chapter 103, Comparable Services and Benefits).