

Chapter 301: Counseling and Guidance, Referral to Other Services, and Other Goods and Services

Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Policy and Procedures Manual

Revision Date: March 2015

Table of Contents

Section I.	Definitions	2
Section II.	Counseling and Guidance	2
Section III.	Referral to Other Service Providers	3
Section IV.	Other Goods and Services.....	4

Section I. Definitions

- A. **“Counseling and guidance”** is the process in which the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) counselor and the consumer form a working partnership to assist him/her to achieve an employment goal that is consistent with his/her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests and informed choices.
- B. **“Referral to other service providers”** refers to the process by which a DVR counselor may refer a person to another DVR staff person (benefits counselor, vocational evaluator) or external provider (community rehabilitation providers, supported employment or other workforce development partner) for specialized services.
- C. **“Other goods and services”** refers to any other services necessary for a person to achieve an employment goal that have not otherwise been defined and described in the DVR Policy and Procedures Manual.

Section II. Counseling and Guidance

- A. Vermont DVR recognizes that counseling and guidance is a core vocational rehabilitation service. DVR also recognizes that the DVR counselor should provide counseling and guidance services throughout the rehabilitation process. DVR counselors will use a strength-based approach to guidance and counseling that focuses on the consumers' abilities, assets and potential rather than their limitations.
- B. Guidance and counseling may include but is not limited to:
 - 1. Establishing a relationship of mutual respect, through which the DVR counselor can encourage, support and challenge the consumer to achieve an employment goal.
 - 2. Assisting the individual to gain a comprehensive understanding and awareness of his/her unique abilities, interests, strengths, resources, priorities and concerns, in order to identify the factors that will be critical to the achievement of his/her vocational goal.
 - 3. Facilitating the individual's understanding and awareness of his/her disability. In particular help the person find ways to work around and/or accommodate any disability related barriers to their employment goal.
 - 4. Ensuring the consumer has adequate information to make fully informed choices (See Chapter 102, Informed Choice) about his/her employment goals and vocational services.
 - 5. Helping the consumer address and work around any personal, health, economic, benefits-related, or social issues that may be an impediment to achieving their vocational goal.
 - 6. Involving significant others (with the consumer's consent) such as family members, relatives, and friends in the community who can support the individual and at times provide valuable resources towards the vocational goal.
 - 7. Providing follow along services that are not intrusive but continue to support the achievement of a long-term vocational outcome.

8. Encouraging self-reliance by teaching the consumer how to find information about and access available community resources. Provide guidance to the individual about how to tap into natural workplace supports and/or other community networks to promote independence beyond the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

Section III. Referral to Other Service Providers

- A. During the rehabilitation process, when appropriate, the DVR counselor will refer a consumer to other specialized services to assist the individual to achieve the vocational goal. Such services may be provided internally by DVR staff (benefits counseling, vocational assessment) and/or by external organizations such as community rehabilitation providers or supported employment providers. All such services must be listed on the IPE and meet the requirements outlined in Section III of Chapter 203, Individualized Plan for Employment, of the DVR Policy and Procedure Manual. When making referrals to external providers, DVR staff will abide by all the confidentiality requirements outlined in Chapter 101, Confidentiality, of the DVR Policy and Procedure Manual.
- B. To ensure the best possible outcome it is very important that specialized services are well coordinated between the DVR counselor and the other service providers. To accomplish this, the DVR counselor will have frequent and ongoing communication with the other service providers. The DVR counselor will work in collaboration with partnering service providers and work to ensure all the professional staff involved with the individual are aligned and working together effectively.
- C. The following are requirements for referral and collaboration with other service providers included in the plan for employment. The DVR counselor, with consumer consent, will provide to the service provider:
 1. Consumer's contact information
 2. Detailed information on the purpose of the referral as it relates to the person's employment goal
 3. As appropriate, any information regarding the individual's interests, strengths, priorities, resources, and concerns as necessary for the service provider to assist the person achieve his/her employment goal.
 4. As appropriate, any medical or diagnostic information that may be important for the service provider to know prior to providing services.
- D. In many circumstances, it may be a best practice for the consumer, DVR counselor and service provider to meet as a support team to outline the purpose of the services, and describe the respective roles of the DVR counselor and service provider. This will ensure the consumer understands the respective roles and has clear expectations about what each party will provide.
- E. The DVR counselor is encouraged to, or as needed, maintain regular contact with the service provider(s) to monitor progress and facilitate ongoing communication.

- F. The DVR counselor is encouraged to, or as needed, integrate information and expertise provided by the other service providers into the rehabilitation counseling process. The following are some case examples:

Example one: An individual who is an SSI beneficiary may initially limit his or her employment and earnings goal, based on concerns about loss of cash and healthcare benefits. Consultation with a benefits counselor may reveal that these concerns are based on inaccurate information and the individual may be eligible for work incentives that will improve their overall financial circumstances. As a result, the DVR counselor may encourage the consumer to adjust his/her employment goal.

Example two: A VR consumer may have an employment goal that requires significant interaction with the clients of a particular business. However, consultation with a community rehabilitation provider's job developer may reveal the individual experiences significant anxiety when interacting with business clients. The DVR counselor may use such feedback to help the consumer reconsider their employment goal.

Section IV. Other Goods and Services

- A. The DVR counselor can provide or purchase any other goods or services necessary for a person to achieve an employment goal that has not otherwise been defined, and described in the DVR Policy and Procedures manual. The DVR counselor must describe in the IPE why the goods or services are necessary for the individual to achieve an employment outcome. The DVR counselor must ensure the cost of goods and services are reasonable and typical. Purchases provided under this section that exceed \$250 must be approved by the Regional Manager or the Division Director or their designee prior to the purchase.