Rehabilitation Services Handbook

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Tom Corbett, Governor
Julia K. Heartney, Secretary

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Stephen H. Survice, Executive Director

WHAT IS OVR?
The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) serves people who have disabilities that present a substantial impediment to employment. Services are provided to individuals to prepare for, enter into, engage in, or retain employment. OVR has 23 District Offices located around the State. Our counselors work every year with thousands of persons who have physical, vocational, and emotional disabilities.

SHOULD I APPLY TO OVR?
You should apply if:
• You have a disability
• Your disability causes you substantial problems in getting, maintaining or keeping a job
• You want to work.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?
For more information about services, call or write the OVR District Office listed on the back of this brochure that is nearest to where you live.

WILL I BE ELIGIBLE?
When you apply to OVR for help with employment, a counselor will be assigned to work with you. The counselor will meet with you face-to-face to get to know you in order to decide how OVR can best assist you to help yourself. Your written consent, your counselor will gather information about your needs, interests, aptitudes, education, work experience, family and finances. Your counselor will arrange any needed medical and psychological exams and tests to cost you. You will be eligible for OVR services if:
• You have a disability, that is a physical, mental or emotional impairment which results in a substantial impediment to employment and you can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from services provided to include a career goal, the services needed to assist you help yourself to get started in or maintain your job skills, chances for employment in your local area, potential earnings, family responsibilities, training, or other matters of importance to you and your family.

WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?
Some services can help you overcome or lessen your disability; others can directly help you prepare for a career. The services you receive will be arranged to meet your individual needs. Not everyone will need every service.
• Diagnostic Services include medical, psychological, and vocational evaluations and tests used to better understand your disability and your needs for specific types of services. Vocational Evaluation includes testing such as aptitude, interest, general ability, academic exams, work tolerance and "hands-on" job experience
• Rehabilitation counseling services are required for you to prepare for, enter, engage in or retain gainful employment.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO DETERMINE IF I AM ELIGIBLE?
You will know if you are eligible for OVR services within 60 days of the date you apply for OVR services, unless:
• Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond your control preclude us from completing the determination and you agree an extension is warranted
• An extended evaluation is required to determine your eligibility

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR OVR?
When your counselor will work together to make informed choices regarding a cooperative plan of action to include a career goal, the services needed to assist you to get started in or maintain your career, and your responsibilities. This plan of action is called the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Deciding on your goal usually takes time. During this time you will receive information and options to assist you in developing a successful program. You will have the opportunity to consider different types of careers, your job skills, chances for employment in your local area, potential earnings, family responsibilities, training, or other matters of importance to you and your family.

Your counselor wants you to pick a career, one that you will still want and at which you will still be able to work for years from now. Your IPE outlines the steps you will take to obtain a job and can be changed if your needs change. You and your counselor will work together to make any necessary changes.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

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Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

OVR-05 (Rev. 10/11)

This guide will help explain vocational rehabilitation -- how it works and how you can make it work for you. Your counselor will advise you of vocational rehabilitation services and answer any questions that you or anyone in your family may have.
• Training Services include education to prepare you for a job including but not limited to basic academic, vocational/technical, college, on-the-job, independent living skills and personal and work adjustment training. It may be necessary for you to leave home to get the training you want and need.

• Placement Services include counseling, job-seeking programs, job club and job development used to increase your ability to obtain a job. You will receive ideas, practice and advice on finding job leads, filling out applications, getting interviews for a job and how to interview. Your counselor may also give you job leads or explain to employers about tax credits they can receive when hiring you. The more contacts with employers you make, the better your chances are of starting your career.

Support services are provided if they are necessary for you to start your career. Services may include:

• Room, board and transportation costs during your evaluation or while you are completing a rehabilitation program.
• Occupational, educational or licensing fees or equipment.
• Home modifications, adaptive or special household equipment related to obtaining or maintaining a job.
• Van or car modifications, including special driving aids and interpreter services may be provided to help you communicate if needed to participate in a vocational rehabilitation program.

• Job site modifications that will enable you to obtain and maintain a job.

• Personal care assistance provided to help you with your daily needs in order to enable you to participate in a vocational rehabilitation program.

• Job site modifications that will enable you to obtain and maintain a job.

• Independent living training to provide the means for you to become more self-sufficient and thereby make it possible for you to participate fully in the vocational rehabilitation program.

• Text Telephone (TTY), signaling devices, hearing aids and interpreter services may be provided to help you communicate if needed to participate in the vocational rehabilitation program.

HOW WILL I BE TREATED?

It does not cost you anything to apply for services. There is no charge for diagnostic services, vocational evaluation, counseling or services provided. If you are eligible for services, your counselor may ask you to provide documents about your income and expenses. Depending upon your income, you may have to contribute to the cost of OVR services. OVR cannot pay for any services you received before you applied to OVR. Even after you apply, you may include those services approved in advance by your counselor.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

You are in charge of your rehabilitation program and whether you will be provided services or not. Under an Order of Selection, a certain group (or groups) of individuals receive services while others are placed on a waiting list. OVR’s Order of Selection places all individuals on an indefinite waiting list for when sufficient funds become available. OVR’s Order of Selection places all eligible individuals into one of three groups as follows:

• Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities
• Individuals with Significant Disabilities
• All remaining eligible individuals

Should you be eligible for OVR services, your counselor will inform you if OVR is on an Order of Selection and whether you will be provided services or placed on a waiting list.

OVR’S NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

OVR prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, ancestry, HIV/AIDS status and age. Any application for services or the belief you believe discrimination is being discriminated against may contact OVR at the following address:

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
1521 North Sixth Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102

1-800-622-2842* Toll Free within Pennsylvania

* Toll free within Pennsylvania

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

You are in charge of your rehabilitation program and must be willing to help yourself. You must participate actively in setting your vocational goals and work hard to achieve them. You should talk with your counselor about your needs, your deadlines and anything else that could speed up, slow down or stop you from starting and maintaining a career. Rehabilitation will work better if you:

• Keep all appointments, or call if you can’t be there.
• Ask questions if you do not understand something.
• Be honest about your needs and feelings.
• Help yourself.

WHAT ARE MY COUNSELOR’S RESPONSIBILITIES?

Your counselor understands how disabilities can get in the way of a career. It is your counselor’s responsibility to help you build on your strengths and the resources you need to overcome your substantial impediment to employment. Your counselor can help you decide whether you have a career that builds on your strengths; give you information about tax credits they can receive when hiring a person with a disability; obtain ideas, practice and advice on finding a job; support for individual advocacy and community involvement.