

*Monthly tips and resources featured in **What's Next?** are created for young adults, their families, and supporters who are exploring options for life after high school in Indiana.*

## Working with Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation on Jobs and Careers

Issue No. 12, August 4, 2021

In the June issue of *What's Next?*, you learned about Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), and, as promised, with this issue, we want to follow-up with what might be the next step in your employment journey.

To begin, ask yourself these questions:



### Do I need help...

- finding my first job?
- preparing now for future employment?
- exploring my employment interests and skills?
- locating assistive technology or other services to help me get or keep a job?
- obtaining a training certificate or college degree for my career?
- getting services necessary for career advancement?
- returning to work (if, for instance, you've been laid off, fired, or took time off to focus on college or training)?

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If you answered yes to any of these questions, consider applying for assistance from [Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation](#) (VR), an employment program for high school students and adults with disabilities. As a “VR participant” (someone who uses VR services), you will be a part of a team focused on achieving your employment goals. VR can provide the services you will need to find and keep a job in the community, including getting training to prepare you for employment.

But first, contact [your local VR office](#) to apply for services and discuss your employment needs. VR can't help you if they don't know you need their assistance. If VR decides that you are eligible for services, you'll meet with a VR counselor to determine how they can best meet your employment needs.

## So, how does this work?

The process includes **referral, application, determination of eligibility, an individualized plan for services, and case closure**. The easy-to-understand video [“Working with Indiana VR,”](#) explains the who, when, what, why, and how of receiving VR support.



**Referral:** You, your family members, your teachers, or your health care professionals may make a referral by calling, writing, or visiting any Vocational Rehabilitation office or facility. Find the office nearest you, using the [map of the VR region and area office locations](#).

**Application:** Once VR gets your referral, they will schedule an appointment for you to complete an application requesting vocational rehabilitation services. Take all information regarding your disability, including any records you may have from the Social Security Administration or your doctor and your Individualized Education Plan (IEP) from your school, with you to your first meeting with the VR counselor.

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If you don't have records of your disability, don't worry. The counselor will ask for your consent to gather and evaluate any medical, educational, vocational, and other information to determine eligibility. VR will pay for any evaluations it needs to determine your eligibility.

**Special note:** If you're not 18 yet, you'll need to have your parent or legal guardian present at your first meeting with VR to sign the paperwork. If you are already 18 and you don't have a legal guardian, you can apply on your own.

**Eligibility Determination:** To determine eligibility for their services, VR needs to know that:

1. an applicant has a physical or mental disability;
2. the physical or mental disability makes it difficult to get or keep a job. (VR calls this a "substantial impediment.")
3. the individual needs vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or keep a job that is consistent with the applicant's capabilities, preferences, or career interests, and that job is something they choose to do (VR refers to this as "informed choice").

VR will *usually* determine eligibility within 60 days of when you apply. If they can't make a determination because they need to do further evaluation or something happens that is beyond VR's control, the VR counselor will let you know.

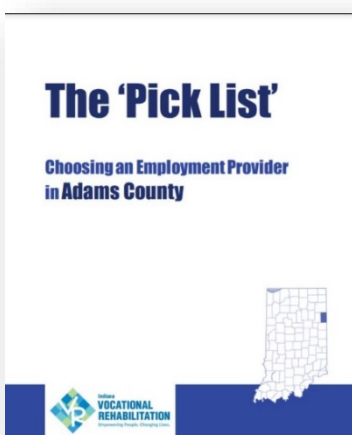
**Another special note:** For the past several years, VR has been operating under an Order of Selection, which is a waiting list, of sorts. Under Order of Selection, individuals with the most significant disabilities will be served first, and other applicants may need to wait. Applying now, though, is a smart thing to do.

VR will notify you about your eligibility status, and they will contact you to set up your employment goal and a plan for services.

**Planning Services for Successful Employment:** When you meet with the VR counselor, together you will explore what employment supports you need to become successfully employed. Services may include vocational counseling and guidance to set goals and a plan to find a job, job placement assistance

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supported employment, job-skills training, postsecondary education or training, assistive technology, medical services and more. The services you need will depend on your goals, so you may not need all the services that VR can offer.



If you and your VR counselor decide that you will need the support of an employment consultant, the counselor will give you a [“VR Pick List.”](#) Pick Lists contain the employment providers in your county along with their contact information and a list of services they offer.

After calling them and doing a little research, you’ll choose the employment provider in your area that you want to work with. Providers can help you achieve your goals by giving you the supports and services you need—things like help with writing a resume, filling out applications, or on-the-job coaching.

Once you’ve chosen an employment provider, tell VR. Your VR counselor will get things started for you. The employment provider will select a job coach or employment consultant to work with you and help you find a job. This may take several weeks or months depending on the services and supports you need.

When you get a job, talk to your employment consultant and your new employer about how to prepare for your first day on the job. It is important to plan for transportation, the work schedule, and what you will need to wear. Your employment consultant will continue to support you. Together, you and your employment consultant will determine what that support will be.

**Closure:** After you’ve completed 90 days on the job and you and your VR counselor decide that you are “stable on the job,” you’ll be ready for case closure. Even after closure, you can still contact your employment consultant or VR counselor if you have any concerns or difficulties on the job. And, of course, if you lose or leave your job, don’t give up! Return to VR to discover what went wrong and to find a new job.

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## Resources

- [Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation](#)
- [Vocational Rehabilitation Area Offices Contact Information](#)
- [The VR Pick Lists by County](#)
- [Working with Indiana VR](#) or [Trabajando con la rehabilitación vocacional de Indiana](#)

## **Bonus tip:** Fall Opportunities for Family Employment Awareness Training

Haven't had a chance to participate in Family Employment Awareness Training (FEAT) yet? This fall, IN\*SOURCE and the Center on Community Living and Careers are offering virtual FEAT, September 14-28, and in-person FEAT October 7-8, in Fort Wayne at the offices of AWS Foundation. **Working parents:** There are evening opportunities to listen and learn during the September FEAT sessions. For more information about FEAT and to register now for September, see the [IN\\*SOURCE FEAT flyer](#). More information coming soon for October FEAT.

**What's Next?** is a project of the Center on Community Living and Careers and the Indiana Department of Education.

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