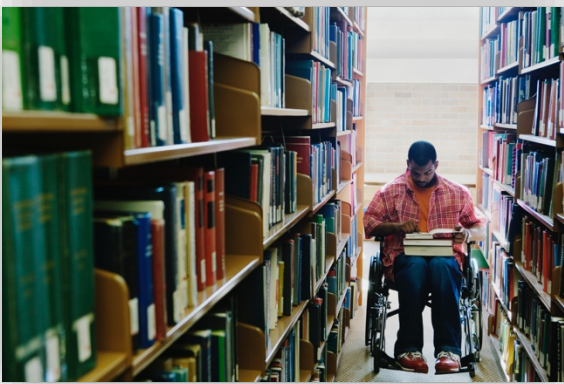


Monthly tips and resources featured in **What's Next?** are created for young adults, their families, and supporters who are exploring options for life after high school in Indiana.

Is Vocational Rehabilitation for me?

Issue No. 20, April 6, 2022



You probably already know Pre-Employment Transition Services help students in high school with things like job exploration, work-based learning, workplace readiness, self-advocacy instruction, and info about postsecondary training options.

While Pre-ETS provide a needed start to transition to adulthood, students with disabilities should also apply for Vocational Rehabilitation services because it provides many services for students *after high school*.

How do I access VR services?

The first step in accessing VR services is to call the [local VR Office](#) and let them know you want to apply. They will schedule an intake interview with you (and your parent if you're under 18 or a legal guardian if you have one). If possible, bring any documentation that you have about your disability to this meeting, such as your latest Individualized Education Program and any assessments. Don't worry if you don't have these documents, VR can obtain them from the school with your permission and/or get updated testing done if needed.

When should I apply?

The general recommendation is to apply no later than the last semester of the year you will exit high school. Sometimes, it makes sense to apply before that time if you will need services from VR while you're still in high school. Don't wait until the last minute! Apply as soon as possible during your last semester because it will take some time to process your application.

What Does the Process Look Like?

After you meet with a VR counselor and they have the documentation about your disability, they will determine your eligibility and notify you within at least 60 days.

Sometimes VR notifies people that they are eligible and defers their services. That is because VR is operating under an "order of selection," which means VR must first serve people who need help the most—they have priority. If VR cannot help you now, you will be "deferred for

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services,” which means you may need to wait. In the meantime, VR will help you find other resources to help you with employment or training.

If you are eligible to receive services right now, you’ll work with a counselor to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment that will list a variety of approved services and the steps you’ll take to achieve your employment goal.

VR will provide you with assistance, but the whole idea is for you to choose your own job goal, based on your interests and abilities. You can decide to develop a plan on your own, or with someone’s assistance. If you wish to receive services from VR, you and your counselor will work together to agree on your plan.

Does VR cost money?

VR is a publicly funded program available in all 50 states. There is no charge for VR. However, some services require VR to explore other funding options. For some postsecondary expenses, for example, students and their parents are first required to file a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Students are expected to use any federal student aid they may be eligible for to help pay for certain costs (e.g., tuition and books).

What is case closure?

Once you’ve obtained the services in your plan, obtained employment in the area identified in your plan, and maintained employment for at least 90 days, VR will close your case. However, you can contact them in the future should you need assistance because of your disability to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment.

VR is focused on your long-term employment goals and helping you maximize your potential. For further information, check out the resources below.

Resources

- [Working with Indiana VR video](#)
 - [Working with Indiana VR Fact Sheets in English and Spanish](#)
 - [Local VR Offices Directory](#)
 - [Listing of Pre-ETS Providers by County](#)
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What’s Next? is a project of the Center on Community Living and Careers and the Indiana Department of Education.

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