

Working with Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation

Information for Students and Families: Choosing a Career and Finding a Job

We all go to work—some of us right out of high school, and some after further education and training. Need some support to do that? Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) may be able to help!



What is Vocational Rehabilitation?

Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is an employment services program for high school students and adults with disabilities. A VR counselor can help eligible students with an identified disability (that means those with an IEP or a 504 plan or with other physical, mental health, or learning concerns) gain skills, find a job, and start a career.



How does VR provide services?

There are two ways VR provides services to students with disabilities.

VR helps students with disabilities at school through Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). If you are between 14 and 22 years old, and have an IEP or a 504 plan, you are eligible to participate in Pre-ETS. You don't have to apply to VR to receive these services. VR is working with schools and community service providers to offer Pre-ETS in every county across Indiana. If your school doesn't have Pre-ETS yet, hopefully it will soon! Check to see if Pre-ETS is available in your school by clicking on this link: <https://www.in.gov/fssa/files/CountiesbyPreETSProviders.pdf>

VR offers Pre-ETS in addition to what your teacher and school provide. These services can help you with career planning, getting more work experience, or other training. Services you may receive through Pre-ETS include:

1. Job exploration counseling
2. Work-based learning experiences
3. Counseling on postsecondary opportunities
4. Workplace readiness training
5. Instruction in self-advocacy

The second way VR provides services requires a **Referral** to VR so they know you're interested. Next, you'll meet with a VR counselor to complete an **Application** to see if you are **Eligible**. (If the counselor needs more information, he/she may ask you to participate in some other assessments.)

If VR determines you are eligible to receive services right now, you'll work with the VR counselor to develop an **Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)**. Your IPE will list a variety of services, approved by VR, and steps you'll take in order to achieve your employment goal.





Who can receive services through VR?

Indiana VR is operating under an “order of selection,” which means VR must first serve people who need help the most—they have priority. Each person who applies to VR is assessed for eligibility and assigned to a priority category based on the information VR has about the person’s disability. If VR cannot help you now, you will be “deferred for services,” which means you may need to wait for services. When VR is able, they will serve as many people as possible in the order of the date they applied. Even if you are not sure if you will get VR services, you should still apply. If you are not eligible for VR, or are deferred for services, VR can connect you to other organizations that help people find work. They can also find out if Pre-ETS will be coming to your school soon.



How will VR know that I need services?

Anyone can refer you to VR (e.g., parent, teacher, case manager). You can even refer yourself by contacting your local VR office. A VR Office Directory is available at http://www.indiana.gov/fssa/files/VRS_Area_Offices.pdf.



What does VR actually do for me?

VR offers many different services, all of them designed to help you set your own employment goals and achieve them. VR might help you understand your interests and abilities or help you explore a career. Your plan might call for a degree program at a two-year or four-year college or other training opportunities. Depending on your particular needs and job requirements, VR can help you explore your options. VR provides the assistance you need to prepare for work and to find and keep a job.



How much does it cost?

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).



Do I have a choice?

VR will provide you with assistance, but the whole idea is for you to choose your own job goals, 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 need to agree on your plan.

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