

To learn more about these and other programs, contact Indiana Family to Family. We will assist you as you navigate health care systems and services, especially those available to individuals with special health care needs.
1-844-F2F-INFO
1-844-323-4636
inf2f.org

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

We all go to work at some point—some of us right out of high school, and some after further education and training. If you are a person with a disability who wants to work or return to work, Vocational Rehabilitative Services may be able to help. You could get a job, reduce your dependence on public assistance programs, and achieve greater self-direction.

What is vocational rehabilitation?

Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services (or VR) provides eligible individuals with disabilities assistance to achieve greater independence through employment.

Who is eligible for VR?

If you are an individual with a disability (intellectual/developmental, physical, mental health, vision and/or hearing impairment, etc.) and want to find a job, you may be eligible for VR. You are eligible for VR if you 1) have a physical or mental condition which creates a substantial impediment to employment *and* 2) demonstrate that you need and could benefit from VR services to help you prepare for, find, or keep a job. Call 1- 800-545-7763 or click this link for a statewide map https://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/files/VRS_Area_Offices.pdf.

What are the steps in the VR process?

1. Referral: The process begins when you, a family member, teacher, etc. contacts VR. Anyone can make a referral at any point, but a good time to start is the junior or senior year of high school.
2. Application: You will meet with a VR counselor to complete an application to see if you are eligible. At this appointment, the counselor will gather information on your medical, psychological, academic, and employment history. You will sign release forms so that the counselor may request additional information as needed. If necessary, new diagnostic tests/evaluations will be scheduled.
3. Eligibility Determination: You will be notified, in most cases, within 60 days from the application appointment whether or not you are eligible for VR services.
4. Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE): If you are determined eligible, you will complete an assessment to explore your interests, strengths, limitations, resources, etc., as they relate to your job goals. You and your counselor will together to develop the IPE—a signed agreement of what services VR will provide to help you achieve your employment goal, including a timeline.
5. Service Implementation: VR will deliver services based on the IPE. See below for a list of possible services.
6. Employment: VR places those with the most significant disabilities in competitive jobs or jobs leading to competitive work. Qualified job coaches provide training at the job site and follow-up services are provided to help the individual maintain employment.
7. Case Closure: Your case may be closed if: you reach your vocational goals, if you are determined ineligible, if you request case closure, if you become ineligible for services, if your counselor is unable to contact you after multiple attempts, and/or if you fail to cooperate. You have the right to reapply to the VR program at a future date.

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If I am eligible, what services could VR provide?

VR services may include but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- Assessment to determine eligibility and VR needs
- Vocational guidance and counseling
- Physical and mental restoration necessary services to become employed
- Assistive technology, including devices like speech-to-text software, telecommunications, etc.
- On-the-job training or other training to improve job skills, including assistance with post-secondary training
- Rehabilitation services technology and devices
- Assistance with obtaining equipment and/or licenses for a job
- Reimbursement for additional basic living and/or transportation costs resulting from program participation
- Transition services to help make the transition from school to work
- Job placement and follow-up on the job to assure success
- Supported employment services
- Personal assistance service
- Maintenance for additional basic living costs

What are my responsibilities in the process?

You will work closely with a VR counselor and are expected to become a full partner in the process. You will be responsible to make informed choices about your vocational (job) goals, select appropriate services, and follow through on work-related preparation and tasks—all with the ongoing support of your VR counselor. You have the right to seek support from family members, friends, and other advocates during the process.

How much does it cost?

There is no charge. 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 (the Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Students will use any federal student aid they may be eligible for to help pay for certain costs (e.g., tuition and books).

What if I don't know what job I want?

Feeling uncertain about entering the workforce? Not sure which job is right for you? VR now provides a service called Discovery that can assist you with exploring employment options. For further assistance, contact VR at 1-800-545-7763.

Information adapted from IN Vocational Rehabilitation website, Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Manual of Employment Services, and fact sheet, "Working," a publication of VRS, IN Department of Education, and The Center on Community Living and Careers.

Programs and systems change often. It is important to ensure that you are using the most current information. This fact sheet was updated October 2022. Please check <https://www.inf2f.org/fact-sheets.html> for the most recent edition.

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