



Your Guide to Vocational Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation Services
Vocational Rehabilitation Services



Department for Children
and Families

Kansas Rehabilitation Services

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The purpose of this booklet is to help explain vocational rehabilitation services (VR) — how it works and how you can make it work for you. Keep this booklet handy so you can refer to it at any time. Your VR Counselor will explain these services and answer any questions you and your family members may have.

VR Counselor's Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No.: _____

Email Address: _____

Mission Statement: Working in partnership with Kansans with disabilities to achieve their goals for employment and independence.

What is Vocational Rehabilitation?

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a program that helps persons with disabilities obtain the skills and other resources they need to get a job, keep a job, and develop a long-term career.

Should I apply for VR?

You should apply if you have a disability and your disability causes you problems in preparing for, finding, or keeping employment.

Who will help me?

When you apply, a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff member is assigned to assist you. VR Counselors and Program Specialists are specifically trained to support individuals with disabilities and play a crucial role in your rehabilitation program.

What should I do?

- Be open and honest about your disability, your needs, and your feelings.
- Ask questions if you do not understand something.
- Follow medical or other professional instructions.
- Inform your VR Counselor of any changes in your situation.
- Keep all appointments and be on time. Call your VR Counselor if you cannot keep an appointment

Basic Steps to Vocational Rehabilitation

1. Referral & Application
2. Initial Interview
3. Evaluation/Assessment
4. Eligibility
5. Planning
6. Services
7. Employment
8. Successful Rehabilitation (Employed)

Step 1 – Referral & Application

To apply for VR services, contact the Department for Children and Families (DCF) office nearest to where you live. This document includes multiple ways to contact us on page 15.

You should be prepared to give the following information:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| • Name | • Address |
| • Disability | • Date of Birth |
| • Telephone Number | • Social Security Number |

A VR Counselor will then contact you either by phone or in writing to schedule an initial interview. Prior to your interview, you should notify your VR Counselor of any special accommodations you may need. Appointments are usually within 30 days of receiving your request for services.

Step 2 – Initial Interview

During your initial interview, your VR Counselor will review and/or complete your application for VR services with you. Your VR Counselor will ask you many questions about your disability, education, family, and work history to determine your eligibility for services. To speed up the eligibility process, bring the following with you to the Initial Interview:

- Medical reports regarding your disability.
- Transcripts and/or grades from high school and college/vocational technical school.
- Reports from other professionals who have provided services to you.
- A description or résumé of your work history if you have work experience.

Sometimes additional medical exams are needed. Your VR Counselor may arrange additional examinations for you, including a general physical/specialist evaluation, psychological, and/or a vocational evaluation. All evaluations — medical, psychological, and vocational — are provided at **no cost to you**.

Please note: In order for KRS to pay for any services, including diagnostic services, the VR Counselor must give written approval **BEFORE** the service is provided or purchased. This requirement applies to all services or purchases.

You and your VR Counselor may also discuss your career plans and possible VR services you may be eligible for that would help you reach your goal of employment.

Step 3 – Evaluation/Assessment

Your VR Counselor uses the information gathered to understand how your disability affects your ability to prepare for, find, and keep a job. They may use a vocational evaluation, which includes tests, activities, and interest inventories, to learn more about your abilities, skills, interests, and the types of jobs that would be best for you. All this information helps your VR Counselor decide if you qualify for VR services and what services will help you reach your employment goal.

Step 4 – Eligibility

Your VR Counselor will determine if you are eligible for services. A decision should be reached as soon as possible but no later than 60 days from the application received date for VR services.

If a decision cannot be made within 60 days, your VR Counselor will explain the reason(s). You will be provided with the option of:

- Allowing for an agreed specific extension of time so that additional information may be gathered; or
- If you do not agree you can request an administrative review with the Program Administrator.

Eligibility for VR Services is made if:

- You have a physical, mental, learning, or emotional disability; and
- You have a problem getting or keeping a job because of your disability; and
- You need VR services to help you prepare for, get, and/or keep a job.

The determination of eligibility is based on a thorough review of information by your VR counselor.

If you have a significant disability and there are concerns about your employability, you have the opportunity to participate in a trial work period. During the trial work period, you and your VR Counselor will decide which vocational rehabilitation services you will need to evaluate your ability to get or keep a job. At any time during the trial work period your VR Counselor can make a decision to determine your eligibility for VR services.

The VR Counselor can find an SSDI or an SSI recipient ineligible for services if the VR Counselor can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence through the use of trial work experiences that the severity of the individual's disability prohibits the individual from benefiting from VR services in terms of an employment outcome.

KRS follows an "Order of Selection" for providing vocational rehabilitation services. This means that eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities are given first priority for services. If managing access to services becomes

necessary, a waiting list will be maintained based on the date your application was received within each closed category. Individuals on the waiting list will be notified when services can be provided. The order of selection procedures will not affect individuals who already have finalized Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs). If you are found ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services, your VR Counselor will provide a detailed explanation and offer referrals to other community resources that may better meet your needs.

Step 5 – Planning

Once determined eligible for services, you and your VR Counselor work together to plan and develop a vocational rehabilitation program designed just for you! Deciding on your career goals and the VR services you need in order to reach this goal is the most important part of your VR program. You should be prepared to give a great deal of thought and planning into making this decision.

When deciding on your career goals, you have the choice to develop your own plan or collaborate with your VR Counselor to create one. This plan, known as the 'Individualized Plan for Employment' or 'IPE,' outlines your employment goal, the timeframe for services, and the approved service providers needed to achieve your goal. It's an important document, and the services listed in the plan depend on your and your counselor's approval, as well as the availability of funds.

You and your VR Counselor will review the IPE at least once a year. If your situation changes, the plan will be updated accordingly.

Step 6 – Services

VR services are provided to help individuals with disabilities prepare for, enter, and/or keep employment. You and your VR Counselor determine the specific kind and number of services you might need. Services are based on your individual needs therefore the types of services you receive may differ from services that other individuals receive. It is individualized and not everyone requires the same or every service.

To achieve your employment goals, VR can provide a wide range of services:

- Medical examinations (general physical, psychological, or other specialist examinations).
- Vocational evaluation of interests, skills, and abilities for future work.
- Vocational Guidance.
- Career Counseling.
- Physical or mental restoration services that could include mental health counseling, speech therapy, physical therapy, etc.
- Training – universities, colleges, technical schools, apprenticeship programs, on-the-job training, supported employment, etc.
- Rehabilitation devices – medical equipment necessary for employment (wheelchairs, prosthesis, glasses, etc.)
- Rehabilitation engineering – assistance with job site modifications (changing lighting, adapting a telephone, a computer, or a tool, etc.); and training on the use of the modified equipment.
- Job Placement.
- Follow up after employment to ensure job success.

This is only a partial list of services. If you would like to know more about the services KRS offers, ask your VR Counselor. KRS is committed to delivering high-quality services while also ensuring cost-effectiveness. You and your VR Counselor will explore available resources to enhance the quality and cost-effectiveness of your vocational rehabilitation program.

Please remember that KRS cannot pay for past bills, or for services and purchases that are not included on your Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE). KRS must approve payment of services listed on your IPE before the services are provided or purchased. The approval must be in writing from your VR Counselor. Some equipment can be purchased only through State bidding procedures.

Step 7 – Employment

All VR services, including employment services, are designed to prepare you for a job throughout the entire VR process. After successfully completing your planned

services, you are considered ready for employment. However, finding a job requires ongoing effort. Your VR Counselor will continue to work with you to match your skills with job opportunities. This is often the most challenging part of the process, so it's important to stay actively engaged in your job search.

Your VR Counselor and/or a Rehabilitation Services Provider will help you with your job search. These are some examples of how they can help you:

- Complete application forms.
- Develop a résumé.
- Prepare for an interview.
- Conduct your job search.
- Find job leads.

Step 8 – Successful Rehabilitation (Employed)

Once you are employed, your VR Counselor will continue to work with you for an additional 90 days. During this 90-day period, your VR Counselor will meet with you and, if you approve, your employer to determine your job satisfaction. Sometimes, unforeseen problems can occur that put you at risk of losing your job. If this happens, contact your VR Counselor immediately for assistance. Often, your VR Counselor can help you work out the problem and/or provide services you might need to maintain your job.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

If you are a student between the ages of 14 and 21 in a recognized education program, you might be working with a Pre-ETS Transition Specialist. This specialist, along with your VR counselor, will collaborate to support you. If you fall within this age range and are not yet working with Pre-ETS, please speak with your VR counselor for more information.

Your rights

You have the right to:

- Apply for services.

- Receive a fair and complete assessment to determine if you are eligible and, if eligible, to receive other VR services without regard to your disability, race, creed, color, religion, age, or sex.
- Expect that all information you give your VR Counselor, or information your VR Counselor learns about you from other sources, will be kept confidential and used only for your plan for employment.
- Take an active part in planning your IPE and be involved in any change in that plan before it goes into effect.
- Request an administrative review or fair hearing if you are not satisfied with KRS services. Contact your VR Counselor or the Client Assistance Program to learn about this appeal process.

Your responsibilities

You have the responsibility to:

- Be open and honest with your VR Counselor in talking about your disability, your education, experience, and ability to help in your own rehabilitation.

- Follow medical or other professional guidance.
- Take an active part in developing your IPE with your VR Counselor so that both of you agree on what is needed.
- Use family funds, insurance, Social Security, PELL Grants, scholarships, or any other funds you know about and may be eligible for to help pay for any services you can afford.
- Get written approval before you buy anything listed on your IPE that you want KRS to pay for.
- Contact your VR Counselor when anything important has happened which may change your plan, and if your address, income, or employment have changed.
- Attend planned activities and make acceptable grades or ratings if your plan includes training.
- Actively seek employment and let your VR Counselor know if you get a job or if there are any other important changes in your employment.
- Keep all appointments. Contact your VR Counselor if you need to change an appointment time or reschedule a missed appointment. This contact will help prevent service delays and show that you are interested in completing your plan and achieving employment.

Confidentiality

Throughout the VR process, you will be asked to provide personal information that will help your VR Counselor understand your disability; determine whether you are eligible for services; and assist you in developing and monitoring your plan for employment. Only information that is needed to carry out your plan will be

requested.

Your VR Counselor and other rehabilitation service providers will keep information about you confidential. You may look at or copy information in your file upon written request. Medical, psychological, or other information that may be harmful if released directly to you will only be made available to your representative, a physician, or a licensed/certified psychologist. If your file contains copies of reports or records originally developed by another agency, this information may be released only under the conditions established by the other agency.

In most circumstances, we will get your written permission before we release any information about you. However, there are some exceptions when we will release information directly without your written permission. These exceptions are:

- Required by federal law.
- Required for law enforcement, fraud, or abuse investigations.
- Required by the Child Support Enforcement program.
- Required by a court order.
- Required to protect you or others from a threat to safety.
- Required for administration of the VR program.
- Required to coordinate services for you with other programs in the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)

Your VR Counselor can discuss this policy with you if you have any questions.

Client Assistance Program

You can request help from the Client Assistance Program (CAP) at any time to resolve problems or misunderstandings that occur during your vocational rehabilitation program. CAP is independent of KRS and provides advocacy and information free of charge.

In order to access services from the CAP, you must contact their office.

How to contact the Client Assistance Program

Disability Rights Center of Kansas

214 SW 6th, Suite 100, Topeka, KS 66603

Toll-free 1-877-776-1541

785-273-9661

Email: info@drckansas.org

Website: www.drckansas.org

Appeal Process

Your VR Counselor will work hard to make sure you are satisfied with KRS services. However, if you do not agree with a decision or have a problem, there are several ways to address your concerns. Any of the appeal options below are available to you at any time, in no particular order.

- Discuss the problem with your VR Counselor. Sometimes problems are caused by a misunderstanding. If your problem can't be worked out by talking to your VR Counselor, you may contact the VR Counselor's supervisor.
- You may request mediation by contacting the Director of Rehabilitation Services. The address is 555 S. Kansas, 3rd Floor, Topeka KS 66603. The toll-free phone number is 1-866-213-9079.
- You may file a written request for a formal fair hearing by contacting the Office of Administrative Hearings within 30 days of the notice of our decision in question. The Office of Administrative Hearings is located at 1020 S. Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66612-1327. The phone number is 785-296-2433. More information is available at this website:
<https://www.oah.ks.gov/>
- If your concerns are not resolved after a fair hearing, you have the right to request a review by the State Appeals Committee. Following review by this Committee, you may pursue judicial review if you still are dissatisfied.

At any time, you may contact the Client Assistance Program at the Disability Rights Center by calling 785-273-9661, toll-free 1-877-776-1541, The address 214 SW 6th Ave., Suite 100, Topeka, KS 66603.

If you want to learn more about these options, or request assistance that would be most effective for your situation, please contact your VR Counselor or the KRS supervisor in your area, or you may contact the Client Assistance Program.

How to contact us

- Contact your nearest DCF Office by calling toll-free 1-888-369-4777.
- To find the name of the VR Counselor and office location serving your county please visit: <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/Pages/mapvr.aspx>
- You may call toll-free 1-866-213-9079 for a referral to the office serving

your community.

- For more information, please visit us at <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/RS/>

To request a copy of this publication in Braille, large print, or other media of choice, please call (785) 368-7471.

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, military or veteran status, or disability in acceptance for services or employment. For more information on this policy, please contact KRS at the address listed above.

Services listed in this Handbook are provided under the authority of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. If you have any questions about these services or your rehabilitation program, please contact your VR Counselor toll-free at 1-888-213-9079.

Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired also can reach out to the KS Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing by calling 1-800-432-0698.

