



SERVICE PROVIDER MANUAL

Form DVR-SPM-2024
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Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to provide uniform guidelines to ensure Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) participants receive quality employment services. VR developed this manual with input from our Provider partners.

Collaboration

Both VR and its contracted service providers share responsibility in assisting VR participants. Collaboration between all partners, including the participant, is critical to achieving a successful outcome. Effective collaboration and teamwork is the direct result of relationship building. We expect all partners to communicate respectfully, openly and frequently.

Definitions

1. **Competitive Integrated Employment** – to meet the requirements of Competitive Integrated Employment a position must:
 - a. Be performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment);
 - b. Compensate the individual at or above Florida’s minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage paid for similar work by the employer to individuals who have similar training, experience, and skills;
 - c. Offer the same benefits as for similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled;
 - d. Be at a location, typically found in the community; and the level of interaction with others (e.g. participants, vendors and co-workers) is the same as non-disabled persons within that individual’s entire worksite and work unit;
 - e. Offer opportunities for advancement similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.

2. **Employer** – the person or business for which a VR participant performs a service as an employee, including an on-the-job training placement, trial work or work exploration.
3. **Employment Specialist** – an employee of the provider who has been approved to assist VR participants seeking employment to choose, prepare for, obtain, and retain competitive integrated employment.
- 4.
5. **Individual with a disability** – an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment and who can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.
6. **Individual with a most significant disability** – an individual with a disability which seriously limits three (3) or more functional capacities in terms of work and requires three (3) or more primary services that must be provided over an extended period of time (at least twelve (12) months) and is not likely to be corrected through surgical intervention and/or other treatment modes.
7. **Job Carving** – a supported employment strategy designed to provide additional employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Job carving involves creating, modifying, or customizing a job so that it can be successfully performed by the individual.
8. **Job Developer** – a professional who works with a person with a disability to find or develop a job for him or her, based on skills and interests.
9. **Job Placement** – services organized to assist persons to choose, obtain and maintain consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. Job placement occurs when the participant begins working in an integrated community-based setting where most of the employees do not have disabilities, the participant interacts on a regular basis with employees and others who do not have disabilities, and the participant receives compensation as outlined in the definition for Competitive Integrated Employment.
10. **Aware Vendor Portal** – Division of Vocational Rehabilitation electronic case management system.
11. **“Ticket to Work” Program (TTW)** – a voluntary Social Security Administration (SSA) program available to Floridians. Those determined to be eligible are issued a “Ticket,” which may be taken to Employment Network (EN) participants, such as VR, who offer access to employment and rehabilitation services necessary to help a person secure and retain employment.

12. **VR Counselor (VRC)** – an employee of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or staff acting in this role for a privatized unit who works with people who have physical or mental disabilities to prepare them for employment.
13. **VR Counselor Analyst** – an employee of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation consultation and approval on all participant services for VR privatized units.

Fee-for-Service Provider Employment Specialist:

The Fee-for-Service Provider Employment Specialist (ES) works in partnership with the VRC and the participant to meet the participant's identified needs. The specific needs of the participant dictate the provider's role in the process. Provider ES responsibilities include:

- ❖ Reviewing the information provided by the VRC to determine whether appropriate services can be provided to meet the participant's needs;
- ❖ Providing opportunities for the participant to share their personal interests and talents;
- ❖ Providing opportunities for the participant to discover occupations of interest and skill match, in accordance with the IPE;
- ❖ Using local labor market information to assess the participant's interests, aptitudes, and transferable skills to provide an appropriate job recommendation;
- ❖ Increasing participant employability skills through training and coaching opportunities;
- ❖ Initiating business contacts and relationships to obtain information appropriate to inform the placement process;
- ❖ Advising the participant and VR counselor if a different job goal seems appropriate and securing approval from both parties to pursue that goal (after the VRC and participant complete an approved IPE amendment);
- ❖ Providing follow-up to determine the participant's stabilization on the job;
- ❖ Providing job coaching at the level identified and agreed upon with the VRC;
- ❖ Marketing the participant to employers;
- ❖ Documenting interaction with the participant and keeping the VRC informed of the participant's progress;
- ❖ Encouraging the participant's success at work;
- ❖ Providing and/or coordinating training, as identified; and

- ❖ Monitoring the participant's job performance.

Confidentiality and Protected Information

In an effort to facilitate the vocational rehabilitation process, VR will share confidential information about our participants with approved contracted Fee-for-Service Providers. VRCs will share only what is necessary to secure needed services. Providers must ensure that any confidential information provided by VR or obtained by the provider during service delivery remains confidential. The provider must store any participant information or documentation maintained outside of Aware Vendor Portal in a secure, locked location to protect the integrity of the records and ensure participant confidentiality.

Confidential information includes any information that may lead to the identification of a specific individual. Examples of protected information include, but are not limited to:

- Participant's name
- Parent's/Legal guardian's name
- Social Security Number
- Participant's physical address
- Medical/Psychological information

Providers must have internal confidentiality policies and procedures in place. Policies must address, at a minimum, methods for ensuring:

- Discussions with participants are kept confidential;
- Confidential records are protected when transported outside the office;
- Secure storage of confidential information, both hardcopy and in electronic format, when not in use; and
- Confidential records are returned from individual staff upon separation from employment.

The provider may not use or disclose any information concerning a VR participant for any purpose not in conformity with s. 413.341, Florida Statutes, without the express prior written consent of the participant or the responsible parent or guardian and VR notification and approval.

Providers must notify VR of any potential breaches or loss of confidential information within one (1) business day of discovery. Notification should be made in writing to the assigned provider manager and must include the name of the individual(s) impacted, the nature of the breach or loss, and the corrective actions undertaken.

All VR participant related files and documentation, including confidentiality policies and procedures, are subject to VR inspection and must be made available for review upon written request. Failure to produce such records within the timeframe stated in the request may result in suspension or termination of registration status.

Marketing

We encourage our Provider partners to make VR staff aware of the services they can offer to our participants. Marketing activities can be coordinated through your provider manager and area liaison. Providers should not make contact to individual VR staff or participants in an attempt to solicit referrals.

Data Collection & Dissemination

VR will collect data through Aware and related systems on, at a minimum, provider application, both accepted and declined, services provided, and payments made to the provider. Data collected may be compiled into reports and shared with the provider, VR counselors, participants and other stakeholders.

Other Special Provisions

- Once the provider has accepted the service request of a particular participant, the provider may offer a participant a financial incentive (such as a gift card, clothing allowance) to encourage participant cooperation and participation in service delivery. However, the provider may not use a financial incentive in any manner that affects a participant's informed choice of providers.
- The provider shall participate in training offered by VR at the direction of the VR provider manager.
- The provider shall not have a participant's "Ticket" reassigned to the provider while the participant is receiving services under an IPE. A participant's "Ticket" may be assigned to an Employment Network (EN), based on the participant's choice, any time before a participant enters into an IPE with VR or after the participant has reached "Successfully Rehabilitated."
- VR reserves the right to suspend provider registration if, by way of routine monitoring or receipt of stakeholder complaint, VR suspects the provider has engaged in fraudulent activity.
- The provider shall report to VR and the Florida Abuse Hotline any reasonable suspicion of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child, aged person, or adult with a disability. The Florida Abuse Hotline's statewide toll-free telephone number is 1-800-962-2873.
- The provider shall notify VR immediately if it is or becomes a party to any contract with a State of Florida Career Source Center.

Provider Qualifications

VR adopts the standards for provider qualifications as those established by Florida Statutes, Florida Administrative Code, national certification boards and industries that are applicable.

If you have any difficulty regarding accessibility of this form or any data fields, contact Vocational Rehabilitation: Vremploymentserviceproviders@vr.fldoe.org

The Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is an equal opportunity employer. It is against the law for VR as a recipient of Federal financial assistance to discriminate against any individual in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief. The application process used by VR to determine eligibility for services, any subsequent services and the entire VR process are subject to these non-discrimination requirements. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. VR program receives 78.7 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2021 Federal fiscal year, the total amount of grant funds awarded were \$176,836,896. The remaining 21.3 percent of the costs (\$47,860,557) were funded by Florida State Appropriations. Revised October 2021