

THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FACT SHEET

State of Illinois • Department of Human Services • Office of Rehabilitation Services
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Description: The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) can be thought of as the port of entry or gatekeeper to a wide range of vocational services for adults with disabilities. Typically, DRS can open a case for a high school student with a disability at age 16 years. Within H.S. D211, DRS supports a Secondary Transition Experience Program (STEP) which is a specialized program for high school students. The Transition Specialist (DRS representative) monitors the student's progress in their academic and vocational programs during the last high school years. If necessary and appropriate, and during the last semester, DRS can begin to purchase vocational services and programs as the student transitions into adult services.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is designed to assess, plan, develop and provide the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to eligible individuals with disabilities, consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. By providing services in this way, DRS enables individuals with disabilities to prepare for and engage in gainful employment.

Application for Services: High school staff usually initiates a referral to DRS for high school students who have the potential to work in the competitive work force post high school with limited to no supports. These students may need vocational support during and after high school to meet the goal of independent and competitive employment. Transition Specialists are often invited to attend the student's annual review and meet with the parents and the student soon after the referral to discuss DRS services and complete the application paperwork. Parents or students can also initiate a referral to DRS as well. DRS should determine eligibility within 60 days of the application. Documentation of the disability(s) is necessary before DRS can open a case and the person can receive services.

Receiving Services: The counselor gathers as much information as possible about the individual's work history, education and training, abilities and interests, rehabilitation needs, and possible career goals. In gathering the information, the counselor will first look at existing information, so it is important for an individual to bring copies of medical, educational and similar documentation.

Based on the information gathered in this assessment phase of the VR process, an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) that identifies the individual's desired employment outcome is developed. The IPE also lists, among other things, the steps necessary to achieve the individual's employment outcome, the services needed to help the individual achieve that outcome, and criteria used to determine progress toward the employment services directly to the eligible individual and arranges for other services from providers in the community.

Eligible Services: VR services are those services that an individual may need in order to achieve his/her employment outcome. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Guidance and career counseling
- Information and referral
- Opportunities for career exploration and work experiences
- Job training and placement
- Supported Employment Services
- Coordination of post-secondary education and training