



Consumer Guide

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1. Purpose

What is the purpose of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation?

The Office provides vocational rehabilitation opportunities and services to eligible individuals with disabilities to assist with entry or re-entry into employment and becoming more independent and productive in the community and workplace.

2. Role of the Counselor

What is the role of my rehabilitation counselor?

Your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor has specialized training and experience in the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and understands how this relates to your life, the community and the workplace. Your counselor can assist you in building relationships, aligning resources and making informed choices concerning your vocational goals.

Your Counselor will act as a facilitator to assist you in determining your strengths and potential so that your Individualized Plan for Employment will incorporate the services that can lead to a successful job and career.

In the event that your counselor resigns, transfers, or is no longer available to assist you, the manager will provide appropriate assistance to you and assign you to another counselor.

3. Your Responsibilities

What are my responsibilities?

In order to be successful, you must actively participate in the development of your work plan and achievement of your employment goal. Throughout the process, you will need to work closely with your

counselor in choosing an employment goal, types of services, service providers, and seeking employment opportunities. You can aid in your vocational rehabilitation by keeping scheduled appointments, staying in touch with your counselor, and working hard toward achieving your employment goal. If your counselor is unable to contact you, or you do not respond to your counselor, your case will be closed.

4. Assessment

What information is needed to determine my eligibility and the services I will need?

Whenever possible, your counselor will rely on existing information about your disability to determine eligibility. Often educational assessments, social security evaluations, eye exams by Ophthalmologist or Optometrist and other records you provide will supply enough information. Your input on employment related needs is vital to this process. Sometimes additional information may be necessary to determine eligibility or to explore what services you need to become employed. In these cases, other appropriate medical, vocational, technical, and education assessments will be arranged and provided at no cost to you.

5. Eligibility

How will my eligibility for services be determined?

- You must have a physical, mental or visual impairment.
- Your impairment must result in a substantial impediment to employment.
- You must require vocational rehabilitation services in order to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment.
- You must achieve competitive, integrated employment.
- You must be able to benefit in terms of employment.

If you meet the criteria above, you will be determined eligible unless there is clear and convincing evidence that you cannot benefit from vocational rehabilitation services.

If you receive Social Security disability benefits and you intend to achieve competitive, integrated employment, you are considered an individual with a significant disability and are presumed to be eligible for services.

An eligibility decision will be made within 60 days unless exceptional and unforeseen circumstances cause a delay. If the eligibility cannot be determined in 60 days, you and the counselor must agree to a one-time extension. This extension must be signed and returned to the counselor prior to the end of the 60-day timeline or your case will be closed.

6. Order of Selection

What is an Order of Selection and what impact will it have on my services?

Eligible individuals are assigned a priority category by their counselor to ensure that those with the most significant disabilities are provided services first. If the Office lacks available funds to serve everyone who is eligible, we must first serve individuals with the most significant disabilities.

If you have a less significant disability and fall within a category we cannot currently serve, you may request to have your case placed on a waiting list. Should funds become available you will be contacted to assess your interest in services. Even if funds are not available to serve you, the Office will provide information and referrals to other agencies that may assist you in meeting your employment needs.

7. Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

What is an Individualized Plan for Employment?

After your counselor has determined that you are eligible, they will talk with you about your job interests and the best way to reach your employment goal. Your Individualized Plan for Employment will list the services you are going to receive, the providers of the services, any similar benefits available, and a plan to evaluate your progress towards your goal. Your Individualized Plan for Employment will be consistent with your strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest and informed choice. Things to consider in writing your IPE should include the local job market, wage expectations, financial needs, your ability to travel to work, academic abilities, and relevant experience.

Your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) must be developed within 90 days of you being determined eligible for services. If the IPE cannot be completed in 90 days, you and the counselor must agree to an extension signed by all parties. This extension must be signed and returned to the counselor prior to the end of the 90-day timeline or your case will be closed. During this planning phase, you have the option of developing and writing all or part of your IPE with the assistance of your counselor; by yourself or with the assistance of your representative; or you may request your counselor write the IPE for you. Regardless of the option you choose, the IPE must be mutually agreed upon and signed by you and your counselor. The IPE must be on Office approved forms. Technical assistance is available through the Client Assistance Program (see page 12).

Changes to your plan can be made at any time as long as you are working towards becoming employed. Counselors are required to review your plan annually with you. If you and your counselor determine you are not able to achieve your vocational goal or an appropriate employment outcome, even after looking at other alternatives, then services may be discontinued. It is important to contact your counselor immediately if you are not able to complete

services or there has been a major life change impacting your ability to obtain or maintain employment.

8. Vocational Rehabilitation Services

What kinds of services may the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation provide?

The Office may provide vocational rehabilitation services needed to reach your vocational goal. Some examples are as follows:

- Assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs
- Counseling and guidance
- Physical and Mental Restoration
- Personal skill development
- Vocational and other training services
- Supported employment
- Personal assistance services
- Low vision aids
- Interpreter and notetaking services
- Rehabilitation technology and equipment training
- Job placement and job retention services
- On-the-job training
- Employment follow-up and post-employment services
- Information and Referral
- Pre-Employment Transition Services

Independent Living Services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired:

To achieve your employment goal, you may need Independent Living Services. This program provides a range of independent living skills training and other services to assist individuals with blindness/low-vision to improve and/or maintain the ability to function independently in the home, workplace, and community. Training may involve instruction in the use of adaptive methods and devices designed to enhance independence. If you are interested in Independent Living Services, you may ask your VR counselor about a referral.

9. Your Obligation to Pay for Services

Will I have to pay for any services?

Many services are provided regardless of your financial situation. You and your counselor will discuss the income and resources of your household. In some cases, you may be asked to participate in the cost of your program.

10. Purchases of Services

How are services purchased?

All services purchased must be approved in advance by your counselor and a written payment authorization sent to each service provider. The Office has established fees and rates of payment for services. In most cases, a service provider will accept these fees as total payment.

11. Services and Benefits from other Agencies

If I am eligible for similar services or benefits from other agencies, do I have to use them?

Federal law requires that you use any other benefits for which you are eligible to cover the cost of some services. These benefits may include

training grants, Medicare, Medicaid, Workers' Compensation, and insurance. If you refuse to apply for and use other benefits for which you are eligible, the Office may not be able to pay for the planned service.

12. SSI/SSDI Recipients/Ticket to Work

What if I receive SSI or SSDI or have a Ticket to Work?

If you receive a disability benefit from Social Security (SSI or SSDI), you may have concerns about how working affects your benefits. Basic information is available for Kentucky residents at <https://ky.db101.org/>. In addition, your counselor can refer you for a more in-depth benefits analysis with a qualified work incentive counselor.

Most Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability beneficiaries are eligible for a Ticket to Work to obtain vocational rehabilitation, employment, or other support services from an approved provider of their choice. Your Ticket to Work is considered "in-use" while you are working with us. Once you have signed your Individualized Plan for Employment, we will submit your information to the Ticket Program Manager for assignment. If you are still eligible for Ticket to Work when your case is closed, you may want to assign it to another agency for ongoing support. For further information about Ticket to Work, you can call toll-free at 1-866-968-7842 (TTY 1-866-833-2967) or visit the website at <https://choosework.ssa.gov/>. Further information is also available from Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) or <https://www.ssa.gov/work/>.

13. Residential Facility

Does the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation have a residential facility that provides services to individuals with significant disabilities?

Yes. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation operates two residential facilities:

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center, located at Thelma, KY, helps individuals with disabilities obtain employment and improve independent living functioning through education, medical, technology, and related programs. The following vocational and support services are available: vocational assessment, work adjustment, vocational training, rehabilitation counseling, comprehensive medical rehabilitation services, psychological services, recreational activities, speech and language communication services, and medical and student dormitories. To obtain admission information contact your local vocational rehabilitation counselor or call: (606) 788-7080 (V/TTY) or 1-800-443-2187.

kcc.ky.gov/Vocational-Rehabilitation/seeking-services/cdpvtc

The Charles W. McDowell Rehabilitation Center

The Charles W. McDowell Rehabilitation Center in Louisville provides specialized services to Kentuckians with visual disabilities in a comprehensive setting for those who want to gain skills to function independently and become employed.

The programs are geared toward development of independence and employment outcomes. The staff and instructors are available to evaluate skills and provide training in the following areas: Career and Vocational services, Independent Living Services, and Orientation and Mobility Services. In addition, during summer months the McDowell Center provides skills training to transition age students in preparation beyond high school. To obtain admission information contact your local vocational rehabilitation counselor or call: (502) 429-4460 or (800) 346-2115.

kcc.ky.gov/Vocational-Rehabilitation/seeking-services/CharlesMcDowellCenter

14. Kentucky Business Enterprises

What is Kentucky Business Enterprises?

Kentucky Business Enterprises (KBE) is one of the nation's leading vending and food service programs operated by people who are visually impaired or blind. The program trains and places individuals as self-employed operators of snack bars, dining facilities, and automated vending facilities in public and private buildings across the state.

Administered by the Blind Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, KBE trains and certifies Kentuckians who are legally blind in food service and licenses them to operate snack bars, dining facilities, and automated vending facilities in public and private locations.

The program provides full-time employment and career opportunities for Kentuckians who are legally blind, while providing high-quality vending and food service for government and business.

15. Confidentiality of Information/Privacy Policy

Will personal information about me in possession of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation be held confidential?

Yes. The Office cannot release information about you unless:

- It is necessary to carry out your vocational rehabilitation program,
- We have written consent to do so,
- It is required by law, or
- It is necessary to protect your safety or the safety of others.

Some of your personal information will be shared with other Kentucky state government agencies as well as the Social Security Administration in order to coordinate services and provide required

federal reporting requirements. Outside entities assisting the Office with satisfaction surveys may also utilize some of your personal information. Your written consent is not required to share this information. (Information that may be shared includes wages, name, address, phone number, email, age, education level, etc.) OVR will not release sensitive medical/psychological information without your written consent unless court ordered to do so.

*****Communication via email or fax is welcomed but may not be a secured method of communication and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.***

16. Your Rights to Case Record

May I obtain personal information about me in possession of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation?

Yes. You will need to request in writing the specific information in your case record you want. If the information was provided to us by another agency or if it is sensitive information provided to us by a physician or psychologist, we will tell you about the information and refer you to the source for release to you.

17. Your Appeal Rights

What if I am dissatisfied and want to file a complaint?

We have found that almost all dissatisfaction can be resolved on an informal basis. If you have a complaint, we encourage you to first contact your counselor, your counselor's supervisor and/or the Regional Program Manager. If the complaint is still not resolved, you may contact the Director or Assistant Director of Field Services within 14 days of the disputed decision. The Office may offer mediation services through an impartial party to resolve disputes between consumers and staff and are available at any stage of the rehabilitation process. You may also request a hearing. If you are

dissatisfied with the provision or denial of services and you wish to pursue the appeals process, contact by letter or telephone:

Director or Assistant Director of Field Services

Mayo-Underwood Building
500 Mero Street, 4NE
Frankfort, KY 40601
1-800-372-7172 (Voice)
502-542-6042 (Videophone)

18. Help With Your Appeal

What is the Client Assistance Program?

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) at Kentucky Protection and Advocacy is available to assist you in your relationship with OVR. CAP can help you to understand services available from the Office, advise you on other benefits available from State and Federal agencies, help you to pursue appropriate remedies to ensure the protection of your rights, and help to resolve any dissatisfaction that you may have with the Office regarding the provision or denial of services. To contact CAP, visit their website at <http://www.kypa.net/intake-form.html> or call 1-800-372-2988.

19. Case Closure

When may my case with vocational rehabilitation be closed?

Your case may be closed for many reasons. Some examples include:

- You have completed services planned in your Individualized Plan for Employment and have successfully maintained competitive integrated employment for 90 consecutive days.
- You are no longer interested in services.
- It has been determined you can no longer benefit from services in terms of employment.

- We are unable to contact you.

20. Re-applying for Services

May I re-apply for services after my case has been closed?

Yes. However, your eligibility will have to be determined at the time you re-apply.

21. Voter Registration

What is the National Voter Registration Act?

The National Voter Registration Act is a law that makes it easier for individuals to register to vote. Your counselor will ask if you are registered to vote. If you are not registered, your counselor will explain to you how the registration process works and, upon request, will assist you in completing forms.

22. Information on the Internet

Is there information about the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation on the Internet?

The Office maintains a Web page, which contains a variety of information. The Web page also contains links to other pertinent web pages. The Internet address is <https://kcc.ky.gov/Vocational-Rehabilitation>

23. For More Information

What if I still have questions about the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation?

You may contact your counselor. If one has not been assigned to you, contact an office close to you or call toll-free 1-800-372-7172 (Voice) or 502-542-6042 (Videophone). The Office general delivery e-mail address is wfd.vocrehab@ky.gov.

My Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor is:

The District Supervisor in my area is:

Central Office

Mayo-Underwood Building
500 Mero Street 4NE
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
(800)372-7172