



Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Services Guide

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1. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) helps people with disabilities obtain and/or maintain employment to be independent in their work communities.

2. My OVR Counselor

Your OVR counselor helps you reach your employment goals. First, they will gather information to see if you qualify for OVR services. If you do, they will help you set an employment goal and work with you to create a plan to reach it. Then, they will arrange the services you need to succeed.

3. My Responsibilities

You must want to find employment and be willing to work towards your employment goals. You will need to take an active role in the process. This means going to appointments, filling out and returning forms, sharing any needed documents, and staying in contact with your OVR counselor and service providers.

4. Behavior Expectations

For You:

When working with OVR staff and service providers, you are expected to behave appropriately. Inappropriate behavior such as abusive language, discrimination, intimidation, harassment, or any form of disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.

Should inappropriate behavior occur, staff will provide a warning and may stop the meeting. The meeting may resume if inappropriate behavior is corrected or it may be rescheduled for another time when the meeting can safely continue.

For Staff:

OVR staff and service providers are expected to treat you professionally. Abusive language, discrimination, intimidation, harassment, or any form of disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.

In the event you feel that you are not being treated professionally by OVR staff or service providers, please contact one of the individuals listed on the last page of this guide.

5. Communicating with OVR

Throughout the process, OVR staff will use various methods of communication to keep in touch regarding the progress of your case. With your consent, these methods can include:

- Telephone
- Text messaging
- E-mail
- Fax
- United States Postal Service
- DocuSign
- Semi-Autonomous Rehabilitation Assistant (SARA)

DocuSign

Throughout your case, you will need to complete and sign forms. DocuSign can assist in this process by allowing you to securely sign, send, and manage documents digitally.

Semi-Autonomous Rehabilitation Assistant (SARA)

SARA is a communications tool used by OVR that helps staff effectively connect with you and assist in documenting your case's progress. Communications and documents are sent through SARA to protect privacy. OVR staff may rely on SARA to communicate with you using text, email, and video conferencing. Through SARA, you and your counselor can communicate directly concerning appointments, updating paperwork, and important case-related reminders.

6. Service Eligibility

To be eligible to receive OVR services, a vocational rehabilitation counselor must determine that you meet all three of the following criteria:

1. You must have a physical or mental impairment.
2. Your disability makes it hard for you to gain or keep employment.
3. You must require OVR services to gain or keep employment.

OVR will ask for your medical records to confirm the disability you reported. If additional information is needed, we can arrange testing at no cost to you.

OVR must decide if you are eligible within 60 days after receiving your completed application—unless something unusual and unexpected causes a delay. If more time is needed, you and your counselor can agree to a one-time extension, but you must sign and return the extension form before the 60 days are up. If you do not, your case may be closed.

If you get Social Security benefits because of your own disability and you want employment that fits your strengths, needs, and interests, you are presumed eligible for OVR services.

If you are eligible for OVR services, your counselor will explain your category assignment and what that means for you.

Your counselor will inform you of your eligibility status by letter, discuss next steps and provide you with appeal rights.

7. Order of Selection

Individuals are assigned a priority category when they are determined eligible. In the event that OVR does not have enough resources to serve all eligible individuals, they are placed on a wait list. As resources become available, OVR provides services to those with the most significant disabilities first. This process is called an Order of Selection. When individuals are placed on a wait list, they are given information about other community resources.

During an order of selection, individuals may be placed on a waiting list. Individuals will be accepted for services from the waiting list as resources become available.

8. Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

Once your counselor confirms you are accepted for services and you are not on the wait list, they will talk with you about your employment interests and how to reach your employment goal. Together, you will create an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), which outlines:

- Your employment goal
- An estimated date for achieving that goal
- The services you will receive
- Service providers
- Funding for services
- Other benefits
- Tracking your progress

Your plan will be designed to match your strengths, abilities, priorities, and interests. When making your plan, you should consider things like the local job market, expected wages, financial needs, your ability to travel, education, and work experience.

Your plan must be developed within 90 days of being determined eligible, or being taken off the waitlist. If it takes longer, you and your counselor may agree to an extension. If this occurs, you must sign the extension agreement and return it before the 90 days timeline, or your case may be closed.

During the planning stage, you have options for creating your IPE:

- Write it yourself (alone or with a representative)
- Write it with help from your counselor
- Have your counselor write it for you

No matter which option you choose, it must be written using approved agency forms and it is not active until you and your counselor signs it. If you need extra help, the Client Assistance Program (CAP) is available to assist you. This information can be found on page 13.

Your plan can be updated or adjusted as needed. You and your counselor will review your IPE at least annually. If OVR is unable to complete this annual review because you do not participate or cannot be reached, that may affect continued services and may result in case closure with written notice and appeal rights.

9. Informed Choice

Informed choice means that you have the right information and support to make decisions about your OVR services. We want to make sure that you, along with your representatives, get the guidance and resources you need to understand your options.

This includes access to:

- Information about the program
- Choices in services and providers
- Counseling to help with decisions

With informed choice, you can actively participate in shaping your plan for employment based on your needs and goals.

10. Vocational Rehabilitation Services

OVR offers many services to help you reach your employment goal and improve your ability to work. In addition to services provided by staff, OVR may provide financial assistance for programs and services provided by approved vendors. Only services that are required in order for you to achieve your employment goal are provided. Services may include:

- Employment goal assessment
- Counseling and guidance
- Medical and mental health services
- Personal skill development
- Job training and education
- Supported employment services
- Personal assistance service
- Low vision aids for individuals with vision impairments
- Interpreter and note-taking services
- Assistive technology training and equipment
- Help obtaining and maintaining employment
- On-the-job training
- Follow-up support after you start working
- Information and referrals to other helpful programs
- Pre-Employment Transition Services for students preparing for work

Independent Living Services for People Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision

If you have vision impairments, you may need Independent Living Services to help you live more independently. This program provides training on skills and

tools that make daily life easier with your vision impairment, including using adaptive methods and devices.

If you are interested in this service, ask your OVR counselor about a referral.

11. Your Obligation to Pay for Services

Services performed by OVR staff will be provided at no cost to you. However, OVR may reduce the amount of funding we provide to other service providers based on your level of income.

Some services may not be included in your plan for employment until proof of income is provided to your counselor. You and your counselor will talk about your income and household size to determine OVR financial support.

12. Purchase of Services

OVR staff services are provided at no cost to you. If your counselor recommends additional services that have a cost, you may be asked to help pay for those services. Your OVR counselor will work with you to complete a Financial Participation worksheet to determine if you are required to contribute. You will not be responsible for any payment unless you fully understand and agree to your portion of the cost.

13. Services and Benefits from other Agencies

If you qualify for benefits such as Medicare, Medicaid, Workers' Compensation and insurance, federal law requires that you utilize those benefits to access services before you receive vocational rehabilitation services.

If you choose not to apply for or use these benefits, OVR may not be able to cover the cost of the service you need.

14. SSI/SSDI Recipients/Ticket to Work

If you get Social Security Disability benefits (SSI or SSDI), you may wonder how working affects your payments. Your counselor can help you understand how benefits will be impacted so that you can make an informed choice about employment.

Basic information for Kentucky residents is available at <https://ky.db101.org/>. Your counselor can also connect you with a work incentive expert for a detailed benefits review.

Ticket to Work Program

Most people receiving Social Security disability benefits qualify for Ticket to Work, a program that helps with job training, employment, and vocational rehabilitation. You can choose an approved provider to support your employment search.

While you are working with us, your Ticket to Work is considered “in-use.” After signing your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), we submit your information to the Ticket Program Manager for processing.

If you still qualify for Ticket to Work when your case is closed, you may want to assign it to another agency for ongoing job support.

More Information

Call Ticket to Work at 1-866-968-7842 (TTY: 1-866-833-2967) or visit <https://choosework.ssa.gov/>.

Email: TicketToWork@ssa.gov

Contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY: 1-800-325-0778) or visit <https://www.ssa.gov/work/>.

15. Residential Facility

OVR operates two residential facilities:

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC) (Thelma, KY) provides training, independent living and support services to OVR individuals. It offers services like:

- Job assessments and training
- Counseling and medical rehabilitation
- Psychological support and recreational activities
- Speech and language services
- Assisted living and student dorms

For admission info, contact your local vocational rehabilitation counselor or call (606) 788-7080 (V/TTY) or 1-800-443-2187. Learn more at <https://kcc.ky.gov/Vocational-Rehabilitation>.

The Charles W. McDowell Rehabilitation Center (McDowell) (Louisville, KY) supports Kentuckians with visual disabilities by providing blindness skills training to help them live independently and find employment. Programs focus on:

- Career and vocational training
- Independent living skills
- Orientation and mobility services
- Assistive technology training

For admission info, contact your local vocational rehabilitation counselor or call (502) 429-4460 or (800) 346-2115. Learn more at <https://kcc.ky.gov/Vocational-Rehabilitation>.

16. Kentucky Business Enterprise

Kentucky Business Enterprise (KBE) is one of the nation's leading vending and food service programs providing full-time employment and career opportunities for Kentuckians who are visually impaired or blind. The program trains and places participants as self-employed operators of snack bars, dining facilities, and automated vending facilities in public and private buildings across the state. Learn more at <https://kcc.ky.gov/Vocational-Rehabilitation>.

17. Confidentiality of Information/Privacy Policy

Federal and state law requires OVR to protect the confidentiality of your case information. OVR may only use or share your information as permitted by law, including when needed to provide services, coordinate benefits or programs, meet federal or state reporting requirements, protect your safety or the safety of others, or when you give written permission.

Some of your personal information may be shared with Kentucky state agencies, the Social Security Administration, service providers, or entities assisting OVR with program administration, surveys, reporting, or coordination of services, as permitted by law.

You may communicate with OVR by email or fax, or other electronic methods if you consent; but these methods are not always secure, so confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

18. Your Rights to Case Record

You, or your legal representative, may request your case record in writing. To do this, you, or your legal representative, must submit a written request to your OVR counselor specifying what information you need. OVR will provide a copy to you in a timely manner, subject to applicable legal requirements. If medical, psychological, or other information in your case record may be harmful to you,

OVR may provide that information to a third party you choose, unless a court-appointed representative must receive it. If the information came from another agency or organization, OVR may release it only under that source's conditions. Personal information may be requested from your case record.

19. Your Appeal Rights

Most concerns can be resolved by having a conversation with your counselor. If you disagree with a decision that affects your vocational rehabilitation services, you have the right to appeal. You must submit your appeal within fourteen (14) days of receipt of written notice of the decision.

Specific details about the appeals process can be found in the OVR 4 Individual Appeals Rights form provided with this guide.

20. Help With Your Appeal

Protection & Advocacy, Kentucky's federally mandated system designed to protect and promote the rights of Kentuckians with disabilities, houses the Client Assistance Program (CAP). CAP is available to assist you if you have concerns about the services you receive from OVR or if you need assistance with your appeal. CAP can help you understand services, provide advice on other benefits from state and federal agencies, and help you pursue proper remedies to ensure the protection of your rights. All services are free. To seek assistance from CAP please visit <https://kypa.net/get-help/> or call 1-800-372-2988.

21. Case Closure

Your case may be closed for a variety of reasons, including if:

- You achieve your employment outcome and have maintained employment long enough for OVR to determine the outcome is stable;
- You ask that your case be closed;

- OVR determines that you are not eligible for services under applicable program requirements;
- OVR determines, based on the facts of your case, that vocational rehabilitation services are not currently expected to result in an employment outcome; or
- OVR is unable to contact you after a reasonable efforts or you do not participate in services needed to move your case forward.

If OVR decides to close your case, OVR will send you written notice explaining the reason for closure and your appeal rights. It is required that you maintain accurate contact information with OVR. If your mailing address, email address, or phone number changes, it is critical that you notify OVR as soon as possible.

22. Reapplying for Services

If your case is closed, you can reapply for services anytime. However, because your needs and situation may change, your eligibility will be determined each time you apply.

23. Voter Registration

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 to vote, your counselor will explain the registration process and, upon request, assist you in completing forms to become registered.

24. Information on the Internet

OVR has a website with helpful information and links to other useful resources.
<https://kcc.ky.gov/Vocational-Rehabilitation>

25. Written Notice of Beneficiary Protections

Because this program is supported in whole or in part by financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education, we are required to provide you the following information:

- (1) We may not discriminate against you on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice.
- (2) We may not require you to attend or participate in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) that may be offered by our organization, and any participation by you in such activities must be purely voluntary.
- (3) We must separate in time or location any privately funded explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) from activities supported with direct Federal financial assistance.
- (4) You may report violations of these protections, including any denials of services or benefits by an organization, by filing a written complaint with the U.S. Department of Education at BeneficiaryNoticeComplaints@ed.gov.

This written notice must be given to you before you enroll in the program or receive services from the program. Unless the nature of the service provided changes or exceptional circumstances occur making it impossible to provide such notice before we provide the actual service. In such an instance, this notice must be given to you at the earliest available opportunity. 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.

26. Contact Information

My Counselor is:

The Supervisor in my area is:

Central Office:

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