



DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES
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Vocational Rehabilitation Program Manual



DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES

Division of Blind Services

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM MANUAL



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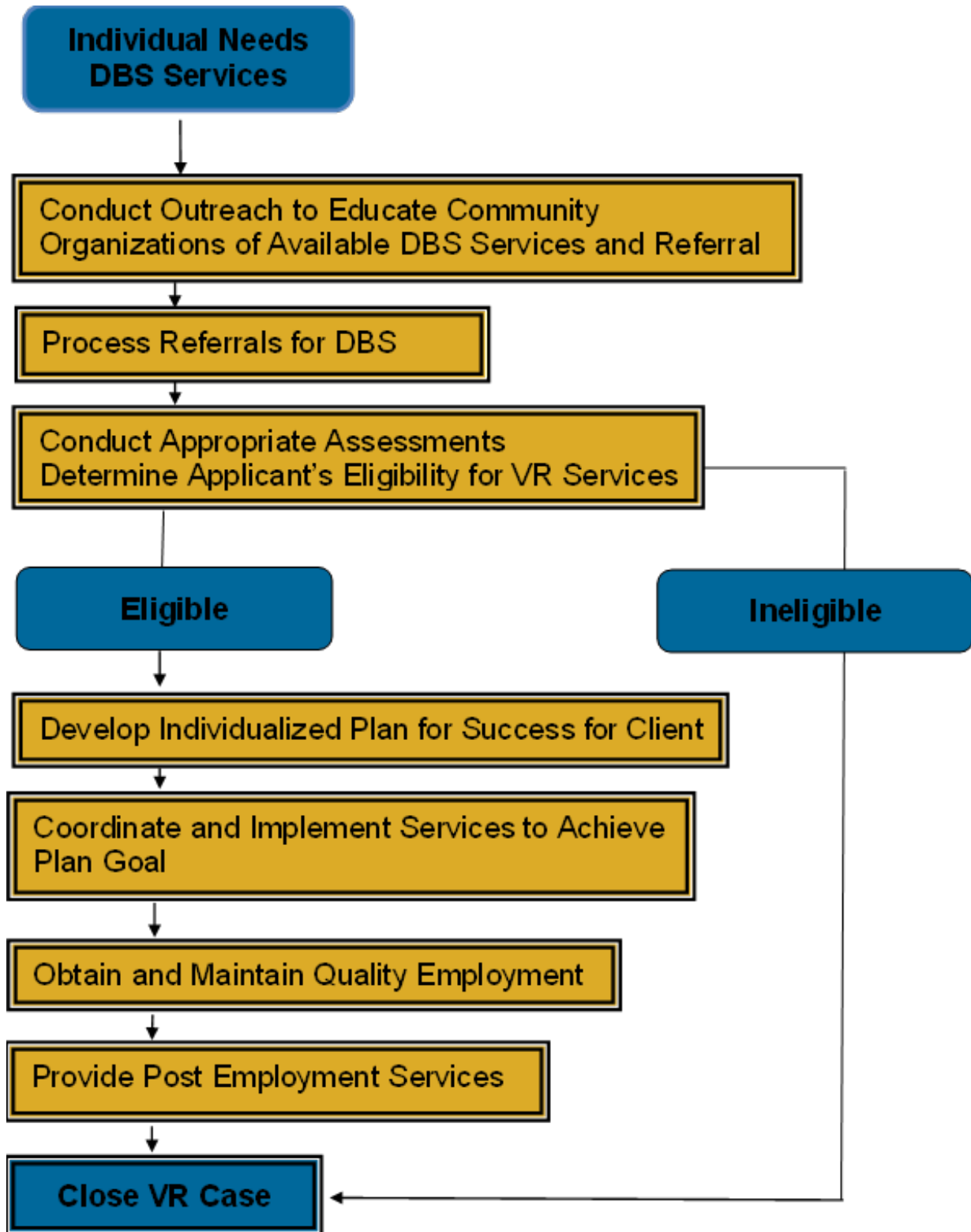
DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The Mission of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is to provide education, training, assistive technology, and services for individuals who are blind and visually impaired, enabling them to improve and develop skills necessary for obtaining, maintaining, or advancing in employment that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

The Division of Blind Services serves Floridians with a bilateral visual impairment whose visual acuity is 20/70 or less in the better eye (after best possible correction).



Vocational Rehabilitation Process



The previous chart depicts the Vocational Rehabilitation Process. The process begins when an individual needs services and has learned about DBS through various outreach activities that have been conducted in the community.

The individual applies for services by submitting an online or paper application. The referral and application are processed, and appropriate assessments are completed to determine if the individual is eligible for services. If the individual is determined eligible, an individualized plan for employment (IPE) is developed jointly by the client and counselor. The Rehabilitation Counselor explains client's rights to appeal agency decisions throughout the VR process. Services on the IPE are coordinated and implemented. Once services are completed, job placement activities are performed to assist the client in finding employment. Once the client is employed, post-employment services may be provided if necessary to stabilize the employment; then the case is closed successfully.

The applicant is given Form 205 Consumer Rights Vocational Rehabilitation Program - which explains the appeal process – if the assessment determines the applicant is ineligible for the program and the case is closed.

The Division of Blind Services policies are on the DBS Intranet Website located at: [DBS Intranet Website Main Page \(fldbs.net\)](http://fldbs.net)

Quick Reference Guide

A. Referral and Application Process

An individual may submit a referral by phone, electronically or regular mail. A Rehabilitation Technician or designee must contact the individual within 10 days to:

1. Explain application requirements and available services.
2. Inform the individual they must intend to work and be able to achieve an employment outcome to receive Vocational Rehabilitation services.
3. Conduct Systematic Alien Verification Entitlement (SAVE) verification check.
4. Obtain information to begin the initial intake process.
5. Establish applicant status once signed application is received or make appropriate referral (Send Introduction letter within 10 days of receiving application).
6. Complete the initial intake process.
7. Discuss individual rights.
8. Assign the case to a Rehabilitation Counselor.

B. Requirements to Open a Case

1. Signed Application
2. Demographics
3. Income (primary source at application)
4. Disability Summary
5. Voter Registration

***** Application Status is automatically generated by Aware**

NOTE: If existing information is not available regarding the individual's visual impairment, an eye exam with an ophthalmologist must be scheduled for the individual by the Rehabilitation Technician or designee.

Mail the following documents for applicant response and/or information:

1. Consent for Release form, located in DBS intranet (if existing eye exam or other assessment data is available).
2. Appointment letter (if eye exam has been scheduled and is to be sponsored by DBS).

When it has been determined that a bilateral visual impairment exists, the Rehabilitation Technician:

1. Staffs case with Assistant District Administrator/District Administrator.
2. Makes a caseload assignment according to the district's protocol; and
3. Transfers the record of service in Aware

C. Ineligibility Determination Process

When it has been determined that a bilateral visual impairment does not exist, based on eye medical reports, the Rehabilitation Technician or designee:

1. Staffs case with Assistant District Administrator/District Administrator.
2. Prepares a Certificate of Ineligibility.
3. Prepares a Closure Letter.
4. Submits the Certificate of Ineligibility to the Assistant District Administrator for approval and signature.
5. Documents staffing with the Assistant District Administrator in the Aware Case notes.

6. Mails Closure Letter, which includes the individual's rights and the process for contacting the Client Assistance Program, and places copy in paper file.
7. Closes record of service with the appropriate closure reason and summary and files paper file accordingly.

NOTE: Only Rehabilitation Counselor, Assistant District Administrator, or District Administrator can determine ineligibility and approve closures.

D. Eligibility and Program Development Process

Initial Interview

Rehabilitation Counselor should conduct an initial interview including a counseling session with the applicant and, as appropriate, their representative to:

1. Determine eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation services, based on a bilateral visual impairment and any other impediments to employment.
2. Conduct the My Vocational Situation Assessment.
3. Determine the need for a comprehensive assessment for the purpose of identifying an employment outcome, intermediate objectives, and scope of needed services.
4. Provide an accessible copy of Division of Blind Services Guidelines for Development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) (See S Drive VR program folder).
5. Determine the method for development of the IPE based on the individual's informed choice.
6. Review Client Rights and provide an additional copy if requested by individual.
7. Offer voter registration information. Mail the completed application and keep a copy in a designated file in the office.
8. Inform applicant of Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and training.

9. Assist the applicant with applying for services available through the DBS Braille and Talking Books Library.
10. Complete the Application for Financial Need and Assessment for Financial Assistance using form DBS-007 if the client is requesting services based on economic need.
11. Review, sign, and provide client with a copy of Professional Disclosure Form and place a copy in the file folder.

Trial Work Experiences

If a trial work experience is required to determine the individual's eligibility for services, a Trial Work plan should be developed during the initial interview. This plan should include the use of a trial work experience to explore the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in a work situation. The following documentation should be prepared in Aware by the Rehabilitation Counselor:

1. Certificate of Eligibility for Trial Work Experiences.
2. Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), including the review schedule for the trial work experience.
3. Statement of justification for trial work experience (located in the Goals sub- function of the IPE in Aware).

*****Obtain Assistant District Administrator approval/signature until independent status has been designated.**

NOTE: A copy of the Plan should be given to the individual in the format of their choice, such as large print, Braille, electronic format, etc. (Signature of the client is required on the plan of services prior to services beginning.)

Individualized Plan for Employment

Once an IPE has been developed by the Rehabilitation Counselor and the client and approved, the Rehabilitation Counselor must prepare the following documentation in the Aware case:

1. Certificate of Eligibility.
2. Individualized Plan for Employment including a review schedule.
3. Vocational Goal statement (located in the Goal sub-function of the Aware plan).

*****Obtain Assistant District Administrator approval/signature until independent status has been designated.**

NOTE: A copy of the Plan must be provided to the client in the format of their choice. The IPE must be signed by the counselor and the client prior to the start of services.

E. Program Implementation

Implementation must occur as scheduled on the IPE and agreed upon by the Rehabilitation Counselor and individual or, as appropriate, their representative. The Counselor and client should jointly review progress towards obtaining the employment outcome as scheduled on the plan and develop amendments to the plan as needed (see Documentation Guidelines located on the intranet. The following documentation must be entered in the Aware case file by the Rehabilitation Counselor:

1. Plan amendments
2. Amendment justification

*****Obtain Assistant District Administrator approval/signature until independent status has been designated. NOTE: A copy of all amendments should be provided to the client or, as appropriate, their representative in an accessible format for review and signature/e-signature and placed in the client's paper file.**

Significant progress toward meeting the intermediate objectives must be documented by the Rehabilitation Counselor or designated staff member in the individual's record of service as either:

1. Scheduled Review Case Progress Notes, or
2. IPE Progress Notes (follow the who, what, why, when, where and how rule)

NOTE: All other documentation necessary for case management must be completed quarterly (see Documentation Guidelines located in the DBS intranet)

F. Employment Outcome Process

A meeting should occur between the client, Rehabilitation Counselor, and if appropriate, the client's employer once an employment outcome has been reached to address the following:

1. Client's satisfaction with the employment outcome.
2. Employer satisfaction with client's job performance.
3. Possible need for post-employment services prior to case closure.
4. Identification of extended service providers, if appropriate.
5. Verification of salary, hours worked, and benefits.
6. Review of client's rights.

NOTE: All efforts to verify employment should be made and documented in Aware

Once it has been determined that the employment outcome is successful and satisfactory to the client, the Rehabilitation Counselor must complete the following documentation in the Aware:

1. Employment Outcome Summary (Located in the Closure sub function).
2. Closure letter.
3. Income (primary source at closure).
4. Closure.

*****Obtain Assistant DA/District Administrator approval/signature until independent status has been designated.**

NOTE: The counselor must provide a Closure Letter including Client's Rights and Mediation information to the individual or, as appropriate, their representative in an accessible format.

The Rehabilitation Counselor will close the client's case record in successful employment status in Aware.

G. Trial Work Process

Implementation should occur as scheduled on the Trial Work plan and agreed upon by the client or, as appropriate, their representative.

The Rehabilitation Counselor and client will jointly review progress toward determining eligibility as indicated on the plan, but at least every 90 days, and develop amendments to the plan as needed.

The counselor will enter the following documentation in the Aware case file:

1. Plan amendments
2. Amendment justification
3. Any significant progress toward determining eligibility must be documented in Aware by the Rehabilitation Counselor

*****Obtain Assistant DA/District Administrator approval/signature until independent status has been designated.**

NOTE:

- 1. A copy of the amended plan will be provided to the client or, as appropriate, their representative in an accessible format.**
- 2. For all other documentation necessary for case management, refer to Documentation Guidelines located in the DBS intranet**
- 3. At the point eligibility or ineligibility can be determined, the Rehabilitation Counselor will follow the procedures as outlined. If client is determined eligible, plan development, plan implementation and Documentation Guidelines will be followed.**

H. Vocational Rehabilitation Status

Application – signed request for services

Eligibility Determination Extension – (status extension will appear in Aware as Application – X)

Trial Work Experiences – (status (status extension will appear in Aware as Application – E)

Service – (plan approved, signed and services have begun)

Job Ready – when primary service is job placement

Employed – once all services are completed and client begins job

Post-Employment Services – Post-Employment Services defined in 34 C.F.R. § 361.5(c)(41) as one or more of the VR services per 34 C.F.R. § 361.48(b) that are identified prior to the client exiting the program while achieving competitive integrated employment outcome based on the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. Thus, after the employment outcome has been achieved but before the individual is reported as having exited the VR program is the period that the individual is most likely to need discrete short-term services (i.e., post-employment services) to ensure that the employment outcome can be maintained.

Closed Successfully – Rehabilitated successfully employed for 90 days or more (Supported Employment clients may be closed 60 days after making the transition to extended services and have been employed for at least 90 days (example, client is placed on the job, is on the job for 30 days and then transitioned into extended services). The client must be in extended services for 60 days before being closed, 90 days in total (example, client is placed on the job for 70 days and then transitioned to extended services). The client must be held in extended services for 60 days before closure, 130 days in total.

Closed Unsuccessfully– No employment outcome (moved, unable to locate, no impediment, etc.).

An In-Depth Look

1.0 Processing Referrals and Applications

1.1 Referrals

When a referral (see definition) is received, a reasonable effort must be made to contact the individual and inform them of application requirements and to gather information necessary to initiate an assessment for determining eligibility. The Rehabilitation Technician or district office designee is responsible for this process and must document that an effort has been made to contact the individual within 10 working days of receipt of the referral. (Policy 2.16 Timeliness of Services)

NOTE: Once the signed referral/application has been received and date stamped, it will be entered in the Aware system within 2 business days. An introductory letter will be completed in the Aware Write Participant Letters Function, documented in Aware within 10 calendar days, recorded in the activity history, printed, signed and mailed to the applicant by the Rehabilitation Technician or designee. (A printed copy should be included in the paper record of service.) In addition to sending a printed letter, the Rehabilitation Technician will attempt to phone the applicant to discuss their need for services and obtain information the Rehabilitation Counselor may need for the initial interview such as medical information, employment history, etc.

1.2 Applications

An individual is considered to have applied for services when they or the client's representative, as appropriate:

1. Has completed and signed an agency application or has submitted a written request for services or has completed a common intake form in a CareerSource or other Workforce center requesting Vocational Rehabilitation services;
2. Has provided information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility; and



3. Is available to complete the assessment process.

Individuals who are homeless may be considered for services if they have an address of a homeless shelter they use and contact DBS regularly if they cannot be reached by cell phone.

Individuals with substance abuse problems may be considered for services if they are either trying to receive treatment or are actively participating in a treatment program. (Policy 8.03 Drugs and Alcohol)

NOTE: The Initial Interview must be conducted promptly within 10 days and face-to-face with a Rehabilitation Counselor and conducted with all applicants regardless of whether the eye medical information has been received. The Initial Interview Form is in both the Pages section of the participant file and in the Letters section of Aware. The client should review and sign the Professional Disclosure during the initial interview and keep a copy. The Rehabilitation Counselor will maintain a copy in Section 2 of the paper file.

*****At this time the paper or electronic file should be established according to the file organization outline located on the DBS intranet.**



2.0 Assessment for Determining Eligibility for Services

2.1 Basic Eligibility Requirements 34 CFR 361.42(a)(1) (Division Policy 2.16)

An assessment for determining eligibility must be conducted for each applicant in the most integrated setting (see definition) possible, consistent with the individual's needs and informed choice. The Rehabilitation Counselor must base determination of an applicant's eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation services on the following criteria:

1. A determination that the individual has a bilateral visual impairment.
2. A determination that the individual's visual impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment (see definition).
3. A presumption (as defined in Section 2.2) that the individual can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services.
4. A determination that the applicant requires Vocational Rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Any applicant who has been determined eligible for Social Security benefits under Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act is presumed eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. (34 CFR 361.42(a)(3)(A))

NOTE: Only a Rehabilitation Counselor, Assistant District Administrator, or District Administrator may make determinations of eligibility. Only eye reports from licensed ophthalmologists are acceptable to support eligibility determination. If an eye report indicates that a bilateral visual impairment does not exist, a staffing must take place with the Rehabilitation Counselor or Assistant DA/District Administrator and documented in Aware. If an eye report has been received and a bilateral visual impairment exists, then the Rehabilitation Technician will conduct a phone interview to initiate the initial interview process. The Rehabilitation Technician must assign

the case to a Rehabilitation Counselor to complete the Initial Interview process and to ensure referral(s) to other agencies for appropriate and comparable services.

2.1.1 Eligibility Determination Timeframe 34 CFR 361.41(b) (Policy 2.16 Timeliness of Services)

Eligibility determinations must be made as soon as possible, but not to exceed 60 calendar days after the individual has submitted a signed application unless:

1. Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the agency preclude a determination within **60 calendar days** and the individual agrees to a specific extension of time.
2. An exploration of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations is being conducted (see Sections 2.2.1 and 2.3).
3. If eligibility cannot be determined then an Eligibility Determination Extension must be completed in *Aware* on or prior to the 60-day mark (if day 60 falls on a weekend or holiday, the extension must be entered on the following working day).

NOTE: When exceptions to this time are necessary, the Eligibility Determination Extension page in *Aware* should clearly document applicant involvement and agreement to a specific extension of time and the length of time agreed upon by the agency and the individual.

2.1.2 Achievement of an Employment Outcome

Any eligible individual, including an individual whose eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation services is based on the individual being eligible for Social Security benefits, (see Section 2.4) must intend to achieve an employment outcome that is consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. The Rehabilitation Technician and Rehabilitation Counselor are responsible for informing applicants that individuals who receive services under the Vocational Rehabilitation program must intend to achieve an employment outcome.

NOTE: The client's completion of the application process for Vocational Rehabilitation services is sufficient evidence of their intent to achieve an employment outcome. No additional demonstration of intent on the part of the applicant is required.

2.1.3 Referrals Under Age 67

When DBS receives a referral from someone under the age of 67 who might want Independent Living services only, an interview must be conducted by the Rehabilitation Counselor or Assistant District Administrator, if the ILAP Specialist is unavailable, to assess for program appropriateness by using the following: DBS-260 Assessment Tool for Clients Under 67 located on the DBS intranet.

If the assessment determines the individual is best served in VR, intake will proceed for the VR program. If the tool indicates the individual would be better served in the ILAP program, the case will be presented to the Assistant District Administrator or District Administrator for final approval and then referred to the ILAP program.

The Rehabilitation Counselor will then notify the ILAP Specialist via email and attach the completed assessment tool to the email. When the case is opened in ILAP, either by DBS or the CRP, the assessment tool must be loaded into the Aware Case Notes section and labeled "VR Assessment."

NOTE: The Rehabilitation Counselor can make an exception to the above if the client provides medical documentation of inability to work.

2.2 Presumption of Benefit 34 CFR 361.42(a)(2) and 361.42(e)

It must be presumed that an applicant can benefit, in terms of an employment outcome, from vocational rehabilitation services unless it is demonstrated, based on clear and convincing evidence, that the applicant is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome due to the severity of the disability of the applicant.



2.2.1 Trial Work Experiences

In making the demonstration of clear and convincing evidence, an exploration must be conducted of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in realistic work situations. Such an exploration must involve the use of trial work experience with appropriate support provided by the Division. These include assistive technology devices and personal assistance services to accommodate the rehabilitation needs of the individual in an employment setting. The work experiences must be of sufficient variety and over a sufficient period of time to:

1. Determine that there is sufficient evidence that the individual can benefit from the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome, **OR**
2. Determine the existence of clear and convincing evidence that the individual is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from Vocational Rehabilitation services due to the severity of their disability.

Trial work experiences may include Supported Employment (see definition), On-the-Job Training (see definition), and other experiences using realistic work settings (see section 7.11.2). A Trial Work Plan must be developed to assess the individual's capabilities and capacity to perform in work situations. Such an assessment must be conducted in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with informed choice and the individual's rehabilitation needs.

2.3 Presumption of Eligibility for Social Security Beneficiaries

Any applicant who has been determined eligible for Social Security benefits (SSI Disabled, SSI Blind, SSDI) under Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act is:

1. Considered to be an individual with a significant disability (see definition).
2. Presumed to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services (provided the individual intends to achieve an employment outcome consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice).

NOTE: Submission of an application for vocational rehabilitation services constitutes an individual's intent to work.

If an applicant asserts that they are eligible for Social Security benefits (SSI Disabled, SSI Blind, or SSDI), but is unable to provide appropriate evidence such as an award letter, the Rehabilitation Counselor must verify the applicant's eligibility for Social Security benefits by contacting the Social Security Administration, directly or through the DBS State office.

Exceptions to this presumption of eligibility may be made only when it can be demonstrated with clear and convincing evidence that the individual is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from Vocational Rehabilitation services due to the severity of their disability. This demonstration must be conducted as described in Section 2.2.1 Trial Work Experience.

2.4 Prohibited Factors

No client will be found ineligible solely based on the type of disability, and eligibility determinations will be made without regard to:

1. Age, sex, race, color, or national origin of the applicant.
2. Type of expected employment outcome.
3. Source of referral for Vocational Rehabilitation services.
4. Service needs or anticipated cost of services required by an applicant or the income level of an applicant or an applicant's family.
5. Applicants' employment history or current employment status.
6. Applicants' educational status or current educational credential.

Clients are not required to be residents of the state of Florida to receive VR services. However, clients receiving vocational rehabilitation services must have legal status in the United States with Green Card or Work Visa and be eligible to secure temporary or permanent work status. Student visas will not be considered for Vocational Rehabilitation services. Transition-aged individuals must be legal residents and eligible to secure permanent work status by age 18.



2.5 Review and Assessment of Data for Eligibility Determination

Determination of each of the eligibility criteria must be based on:

1. Observations by the Rehabilitation Counselor of client's ability to ambulate, communicate, see/read printed material, etc.
2. Education Records.
3. Information provided by the individual or the individual's family.
4. Information used by the Social Security Administration.
5. Determinations made by officials of other agencies.

NOTE: Existing data may be unavailable or inappropriate to describe the current functioning of the individual. In some cases, additional data from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, such as assistive technology devices, low vision evaluations and work site assessments may be necessary to determine whether an individual is eligible.

2.6 Certificate of Eligibility

A Certificate of Eligibility (CE) (see Section 13.1) is required for everyone determined eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services. The certificate must be completed in the Aware. The CE is generated when the data page is completed. Once all the information is entered, the counselor must sign the CE or the Assistant District Administrator if the counselor does not have Independent Status. The counselor must include a copy in the client's record of services.

3.0 INELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

3.1 Ineligibility Determination 34 CFR 361.43 (Policy 2.15 Interagency Collaboration)

If it is determined that an applicant is ineligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services or that an individual receiving services under an Individualized Plan for Employment is no longer eligible for services, the Rehabilitation Counselor, Assistant District Administrator, or District Administrator must:

1. Make the determination only after providing an opportunity for full consultation with the individual during the face-to-face meeting or, as appropriate, with the individual's representative.
2. Inform the individual in writing, supplemented as necessary by other appropriate modes of communication consistent with the informed choice of the individual, of the ineligibility determination, the reasons for the determination, and how they may express and seek remedy for any dissatisfaction, including the procedures for review of the determination by an impartial hearing officer (Client Rights).
3. Provide the individual with a description of services available from the Client Assistance Program at Disability Rights Florida and how to contact that program.
4. Refer the individual to other training or employment related programs that are part of the Workforce (see Definition) service delivery system under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (see Definition). Send the closure letter with client rights and mediation process and document in Aware.
5. The Closure Letter and an ineligibility determination must be documented with a Certificate of Ineligibility and placed in the hard copy or electronic file as well as in Aware (see Section 13.2).

3.2 Closures without an Eligibility Determination



An individual's case file may not be closed prior to making an eligibility determination unless:

1. They decline to participate or are unavailable to complete an assessment for determining eligibility.
2. A minimum of 3 attempts over a 30-day period have been made to contact the applicant and documented in the Aware file. The last attempt must be the 10-day letter sent to the applicant or the applicant's representative to encourage the applicant's participation.

The closure must be documented in the Status function of the applicant's Aware case file and notification must be provided to the individual in writing or an appropriate mode of communication that includes the Client's Rights form.

4.0 Development of the Individualized Plan for Employment 34 CFR 361.45

4.1 Procedural Requirements (Division Policy 2.14)

An Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) must be designed to achieve an employment outcome that is consistent with the individual's strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, resources, and informed choice. **The development of an IPE must occur as soon as possible, but not exceed 60 calendar days of the Certification of Eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. All IPEs must be reviewed and updated annually.** In developing an individual's IPE, the Rehabilitation Counselor must ensure that:

1. It is developed, agreed to, and **signed** by the individual (if 18 or older and is legally responsible for themselves) or, as appropriate, their parent or representative.
2. It is **signed** and approved by the Rehabilitation Counselor or approved by an Assistant District Administrator if the Rehabilitation Counselor does not have independent status.
3. The individual or, as appropriate, their representative is advised in writing or other appropriate mode of communication of the individual's options for developing an IPE (Guidelines located on the DBS intranet).
4. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is taken into consideration if the individual is a student with a disability who is receiving special education services.
5. The IPE is reviewed with the individual or, as appropriate, their representative as often as necessary, but **at least once each year** to assess progress toward meeting the employment outcome (a review schedule must be developed and included in each IPE).



6. If there are substantive changes in the employment outcome, VR services or service providers, the IPE must be amended, as necessary, by the individual or, as appropriate their representative, in collaboration with the Rehabilitation Counselor (to the extent determined to be appropriate by the individual).
7. A copy of the IPE and its amendments are promptly provided to the individual or, as appropriate, their representative in the language and/or mode of communication as requested by the individual or their representative.
8. Client is provided their Rights at this time and the Rights Verification form is completed and signed and attached to the plan and filed in Section 2 of the paper file.

NOTE: Services on an IPE (initial and all amendments) cannot be initiated until the IPE has been agreed to and signed by the client and Rehabilitation Counselor and approved by the Assistant District Administrator or District Administrator if the Rehabilitation Counselor does not have independent status.

4.2 Options for Development of an IPE

An eligible individual or, as appropriate, their representative must be provided in writing the options for the development of an IPE. These options include:

1. Assistance from a DBS Rehabilitation Counselor in developing all or part of the IPE (See IPE Guidelines, DBS intranet)
2. Assistance from an entity other than DBS (example: Disability Rights Florida) based on the individual's informed choice in developing all or part of the IPE.
3. Independent development of all or part of the IPE by the individual.

Each eligible individual who selects options 2 or 3 must be provided with the DBS Guidelines for Development of an Individualized Plan for



Employment packet in the language and appropriate mode of communication of the individual's choice. This information packet includes the following:

1. A description of the full range of services that must be included in an IPE.
2. An explanation of agency guidelines for services that are based on financial need.
3. A description of the full range of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
4. An explanation of the individual's responsibility to apply for and seek comparable services and benefits.
5. Required forms for the development of an IPE and information on the availability of assistance in completing the forms.
6. A description of the rights and remedies of the clients in the VR program including the availability of the Client Assistance Program at Disability Rights Florida and how to contact the program.

If an individual chooses to develop all or part of the IPE with assistance from another entity or independently, the IPE must be submitted in writing to the Rehabilitation Counselor to be considered for approval.

Regardless of the development method chosen by the individual, the IPE must be:

1. Agreed to and **signed** by the individual or, as appropriate, their representative.
2. Approved and **signed** by the Rehabilitation Counselor or Assistant DA/District Administrator if the Rehabilitation Counselor does not have independent status.

4.3 Preparation of IPE without a Comprehensive Assessment (see definition under Vocational Evaluation/Assessment)

If an IPE is prepared without a Comprehensive Vocational Assessment, it may be due to but not excluding the following reasons: the client is not changing vocational goal(s), or prior comprehensive vocational assessment(s) are still valid. However, to the extent possible, the employment outcome and the nature and scope of services to be included in the IPE must be determined based on the data used for the assessment of eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services.

NOTE: A Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation must be conducted on all new/non-recurring applicants and Transition students unless waived by the Assistant DA/District Administrator.

4.4 Preparation of IPE Based on a Comprehensive Assessment

If additional data are necessary to determine the employment outcome and the nature and scope of services to be included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, a comprehensive assessment of the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, including the possible need for Supported Employment services must be conducted. Such an assessment will be conducted in the most integrated setting possible consistent with the individual's informed choice. A comprehensive assessment must be limited to information that is necessary to identify the rehabilitation needs of the individual and to develop the IPE that may include (Policy 2.17 Vocational Assessment for Transition Students and New VR Clients):

1. An analysis of pertinent medical, psychological, vocational, educational, cultural, social, recreational, and environmental factors, and related functional limitations, that affect the employment and rehabilitation needs of the individual.
2. An analysis of the individual's personality, career interests, interpersonal skills, intelligence, functional capacities, educational achievements, work experience, vocational aptitudes, personal and social adjustments, and employment opportunities.
3. An appraisal of the individual's work behavior and services needed to acquire occupational skills and to develop work attitudes, work habits, work tolerance, for successful job performance.



4. An assessment, including the provision of rehabilitation technology services, of the individual's capacities to perform in a work environment, including in an integrated setting, to the maximum extent feasible and consistent with the individual's informed choice.

In preparing an assessment for purposes of developing an IPE, existing information that must be used to the maximum extent possible, including information that is:

1. Available from other programs and providers, particularly information used by education officials and the Social Security Administration.
2. Provided by the individual and the individual's family.
3. Obtained under the assessment for determining the individual's eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs.

4.5 Informed Choice 34 CFR 361.52 (Policy 2.02 Informed Choice)

An IPE must be developed and implemented in a manner that affords an eligible client the opportunity to exercise informed choice. Informed choice should be exercised by the client in selecting:

1. An employment outcome.
2. The Vocational Rehabilitation services specified on the plan.
3. The entities that will provide the Vocational Rehabilitation services.
4. The employment setting and the settings in which the services will be provided.
5. The methods used to procure services.

It is the responsibility of the Rehabilitation Counselor to ensure that an eligible individual is provided or assisted in obtaining information necessary for an individual to make an informed choice about the specific Vocational Rehabilitation services, including providers of those services, that are

needed to achieve their employment outcome. This information must include, at a minimum, information relating to the:

1. Cost, accessibility, and duration of potential services.
2. Qualifications of potential service providers.
3. Types of services offered by potential providers.
4. Degree to which the services are provided in an integrated setting.

4.5.1 Methods or Sources for Facilitating Informed Choice

The following methods or sources may be utilized when assisting an individual in obtaining information necessary to make an informed choice regarding services or service providers:

1. State or regional lists of services and service providers.
2. Referrals to other consumers, local consumer groups, or disability advisory councils qualified to discuss the services or service providers.
3. Relevant accreditation, certification, or other information relating to the qualification of service providers.

5.0 The Individualized Plan for Employment

NOTE: All plans must include only those services that are known to be needed to achieve an employment outcome. No anticipated services are to be placed on any plan. Additional services may be added as necessary via plan amendments.

5.1 Content of the IPE 34 CFR 361.46

An IPE must be developed for each eligible individual. The IPE outlines the individual's employment outcome and the services that will be provided to accomplish the employment outcome. The IPE includes the following documents (Policy 2.14 Individualized Plan of Employment

1. The Plan (including the Vocational Goal Statement - see Section 12.4)
2. Employment Outcome Summary – see Section 12.7)

The IPE must include, as appropriate, statements concerning the following items:

1. A description of the specific vocational goal chosen by the client consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice.
2. The specific rehabilitation services to be provided to achieve the established employment outcome, including such services as home management, personal management, communication, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, employment services, rehabilitation technology services, work experience and on-the-job training, and related personal assistance services, including the management of such services, and a statement that services are provided in the most integrated setting. Service categories for the plan may include contract and non-contract services.

Contract Services may include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Assessment:** Vocational Rehabilitation assessment is defined as a process that includes an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel.
- **Assistive Technology Training:** Assistive Technology Training is defined as services that directly assist an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.
- **Counseling Services:** Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Services are defined as services that assist individuals with disabilities in achieving their employment goals.
- **Information and Referral:** Vocational Rehabilitation Information and Referral services encompasses the process of providing individuals with disabilities or their representatives with information about available vocational rehabilitation services and resources. It also involves directing them to appropriate services that can assist them in achieving employment outcomes.
- **Job Development – Search Assistance:** Job Development is defined as a set of services aimed at assisting individuals with disabilities in preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in, or regaining employment.
- **Job Placement Assistance:** Job Search Assistance is a service provided to individuals with disabilities to support their efforts in finding employment.



- **Job Readiness services:** Job Placement Assistance is defined as a range of services provided to individuals with disabilities to help them secure employment.
- **Other Services – Job Coaching:** Job Coaching is defined as a service provided by individuals who specialize in assisting those with disabilities to learn and accurately carry out job duties. Job coaches offer one-on-one training tailored to the needs of the employee.
- **Rehabilitation Technology:** The systematic application of technologies, engineering methodologies, or scientific principles to meet the needs of and address the barriers confronted by individuals with disabilities.
- **Other Training:** Other vocational rehabilitation services that cannot be recorded elsewhere, such services as the provision of funds for occupational licenses, tools and equipment, initial stocks, and supplies.

Non-Contract Services

**All Other (Including services to families and small businesses)
Counseling and Guidance – Substantial
Eligibility/Rehabilitation Needs Assessment
Maintenance
Personal Assistance Services
Physical and Mental Restoration
Rehabilitation Technology Services
Training
Transition Services
Transportation
On the job training**

3. As determined necessary, a statement of the expected need for post-employment services after an employment outcome has been achieved (Employment Outcome Summary and Post-Employment Outcome Summary see Section 12.8).

4. Timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome and the initiation of the services.
5. A description of the entity or entities chosen by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, their representative that will provide the services and the methods used to procure those services.
6. A description of the criteria that will be used to evaluate progress toward achievement of the employment outcome.
7. The terms and conditions for the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services, including:
 - a) The responsibilities that DBS will assume in relation to the achievement of the employment outcome.
 - b) The responsibilities the individual will assume in relation to the achievement of the employment outcome.
 - c) The extent of the individual's participation in the cost of services, if applicable.
 - d) The responsibility of the individual in applying for and securing comparable services and benefits.
 - e) The responsibilities of other entities based on arrangements made pursuant to comparable services and benefits.
8. A summary of relevant elements of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for that student, including, as appropriate, a summary of the relevant goals, objectives, and coordinated services identified in the IEP for students who are eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
9. For individuals who will be receiving Supported Employment services:
 - a) Description of the Supported Employment services to be provided by DBS.



- b) Description of the expected extended services needed, which may include natural support.

Identification of the source of extended services or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the IPE is developed, include a description of the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that those sources will become available. (Employment Outcome Summary).

5.2 IPE Signatories

The IPE must be:

Agreed to and **signed** by the individual or, as appropriate, their representative; (Students under the age of 18 can sign their plans along **with** the parent or other representative) and

Approved and **signed** by the Rehabilitation Counselor or Assistant District Administrator if the Specialist does not have independent status.

5.3 IPE Review and Amendment Processes

At a **minimum, the IPE must be reviewed annually and in person (if possible)** by the Rehabilitation Counselor and the client or, as appropriate, their representative. The IPE must be amended to reflect any substantive changes to the employment outcome, vocational rehabilitation services, or service providers. The amended plan should not include any services that are no longer needed. The counselor must add a case note in Aware summarizing the changes for each amended plan according to the Guidelines for Documentation.

A copy of the original plan and amendments will be provided to the client in an accessible format and, if necessary, supplemented by an appropriate mode of communication. The signed copy should be added to the client's paper or electronic file.

5.4 Continuation of Planned Services during review, mediation, and appeals. 34 CFR 361.57(4)(i)(ii)

Services, evaluations and assessments on the IPE will continue during the appeals process.

Impact on provision of services. DBS may not institute a suspension, reduction, or termination of vocational rehabilitation services being provided to an applicant or eligible individual, including evaluation and assessment services and IPE development, pending a resolution through mediation, pending a decision by a hearing officer or reviewing official, or pending informal resolution under this section unless—

1. The individual or, in appropriate cases, the individual's representative requests a suspension, reduction, or termination of services; or
2. The State agency has evidence that the services have been obtained through misrepresentation, fraud, collusion, or criminal conduct on the part of the individual or the individual's representative.



6.0 RECORD OF SERVICES

A record of services must be maintained for each applicant or eligible individual to include the IPE documents as well as other documents which require the individual's signature or, as appropriate, their representative. The record of services includes, to the extent pertinent, the following documentation. (Documentation Guidelines are located on the DBS intranet.)

1. Documentation supporting the determination that an individual is either eligible or ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services (Certificate of Eligibility Section 12.2 or Certificate of Ineligibility Section 12.3).
2. Documentation supporting the determination that the individual has a significant disability or a most significant disability (Disability Summary).
 - a) **Individual with significant disability** means an individual with a disability who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;
 - i. Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and
 - ii. Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord conditions (including paraplegia and quadriplegia), sickle cell anemia, intellectual disability, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and



vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

- b) **Individual with a most significant disability** means an individual with a significant disability who meets the DBS' criteria for an individual with a most significant disability (see Appendix II: Definitions). These criteria must be consistent with the requirements in [§ 361.36](#).
3. Documentation supporting the periodic assessments conducted during the (Scheduled Review Notes).
 4. The written plan developed for the Trial Work Experiences.
 5. The IPE, and any amendments to the IPE.
 6. Documentation describing the extent to which the applicant or eligible individual exercised informed choice regarding the provision of assessment services and development of the IPE with respect to the selection of the specific employment outcome, the specific services needed to achieve the employment outcome, the entity to provide the service, the employment setting, the settings in which the services will be provided, and the methods of procurement (Plan and Vocational Goal Statement Section 12.4).
 7. Documentation of periodic reviews and evaluations of progress toward achieving an employment outcome.
 8. Once a client obtains competitive integrated employment, verification that the client is compensated at or above the minimum wage and that the wage and level of benefits are not less than that customarily paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by non-disabled individuals. Documentation needs to be placed in Aware verifying employment by contacting the client's Assistant District Administrator with client's approval or by obtaining a first/current pay stub. For self-employment, request a copy of the quarterly tax statement, or if it is not available, a previous statement can be used.



9. Documentation concerning any action and decision resulting from a request by a client for review of a Rehabilitation Counselor, Assistant District Administrator, or District Administrator.
10. If a client obtains an employment outcome under Supported Employment or extended employment, in which the client is earning below the minimum wage, documentation of the results of the annual reviews, the client's input into those reviews, and the client's or, if appropriate, their representative's acknowledgement that those reviews were conducted.
11. In the event that a client requests that documentation in the record of services be amended and it is not amended, documentation of the request and DBS response must be made.
12. If a client is referred to another program, documentation of the referral and scope of services provided must be included.
13. If a client's record of services is closed as a successful employment outcome, documentation that demonstrates the services provided under the IPE contributed to the achievement of the employment must be included.
14. If a requested service by a client is denied, a denial letter must be completed and sent to client. (Aware Letter Section)

NOTE: Whenever vocational rehabilitation services are reduced, suspended, denied or terminated, the Denial of Services letter in the AWARE Letters' section must be sent, with a copy of the client's rights, including services available through the Client Assistance Program at Disability Rights Florida.



7.0 Scope of Vocational Rehabilitation Services 34 CFR 361.48

7.1 Services Based on Financial Need

1. An individual's financial need may be considered for maintenance for additional costs incurred exceeding **normal living expenses** while the individual is participating in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or while receiving services under an IPE. (Policy 8.07)
2. The only vocational rehabilitation service that is based on financial need is maintenance for clients who do not receive SSI/SSDI. All other services are provided regardless of financial need.
3. Except for client's receiving SSI/SSDI, those clients applying for maintenance service must complete DBS-007 Financial Need Application form.

A Needs Assessment for Financial Assistance must be completed for all clients requesting maintenance and updated yearly as the maintenance continues. This form is designed to aid the counselor and client in determining the amount of maintenance necessary. The client's eligibility for maintenance must be made as soon as possible, but not to exceed 60 days of the client's request.

College students refer to the College Handbook located on the DBS website.

NOTE: Financial eligibility for a client is determined based upon the family unit. The client is part of the family unit for the purposes of determining financial eligibility if the client is a college student who is claimed as a dependent on the parent's income taxes

7.2 Services to SSI/SSDI Recipients

All services must be provided **WITHOUT** regard to financial need for individuals who have been determined eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). These clients are eligible for maintenance regardless of any other income in their

household. If applying for maintenance services, SSI/SSDI recipients will need to complete the Needs Assessment for Financial Assistance to determine the amount of maintenance they may receive.

7.3 Financial Need Exceptions

The District Administrator must approve all financial exceptions for individuals whose monthly income falls above the Total Available Income as calculated on form DBS-007 and outlined in the table below:

1	\$1215
2	\$1643
3	\$2072
4	\$2500
5	\$2928
6	\$3357
7	\$ 3785
8	\$4213

The following criterion must be used when making an exception:

1. The individual's expenditures for subsistence items (food, shelter, and clothing) must exceed 70% of the applicable gross monthly income.
2. The financial status of the family unit results in the participant being ineligible and it is clearly demonstrated that the family unit will not or cannot provide financial support.

7.4 Services Available Without Regard to Financial Need

The following services should be provided without regard to financial need; however, comparable benefits should be explored and documented, without imposing unreasonable delays in the provision of services. (Policy 6.11 Comparable Benefits)

1. Assessment for determining eligibility.



2. Assessments for determining Vocational Rehabilitation needs, such as, Assistive Technology, Orientation and Mobility, Adaptive Daily Living (ADL) skills, Low Vision Evaluation, Vocational Evaluation, etc.
3. Comprehensive vocational evaluation or assessment, etc.
4. Counseling and Guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice.
5. Referral and other services necessary to help applicants and eligible individuals secure needed services from other agencies if such services are not available in the Vocational Rehabilitation program.
6. Vocational and other training services, including personal and vocational adjustment training, post-secondary school training such as universities, colleges, or technical institutes may not be paid for unless maximum efforts have been made and documented in *Aware* by DBS and the client to secure grant assistance in whole or in part from other sources.
7. Books, tools (talking calculators, watches, tape recorders and other training materials).
8. Transportation in connection with the rendering of any vocational rehabilitation service.
9. Technical assistance and other consultation services to conduct market analyses, develop business plans, and otherwise provide resources, to the extent such resources are authorized to be provided through the Workforce Investment System, to eligible individuals who are pursuing self-employment or telecommuting or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome.
10. Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks, and supplies.



11. Interpreter services for individuals who are deaf and tactile interpreting services for individuals who are deaf-blind per Policy 6.15 Interpreter Services.
12. Reader services, rehabilitation teaching services, and orientation and mobility services, including adequate training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems (Policies on Technology).
13. Rehabilitation technology devices and services including rehabilitation engineering, and assistive technology, computer systems, various assistive technology services, telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices (Policies on Technology, Equipment over \$600 require Form 108).
14. Job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up and follow-along services, relocation, etc.
15. Supported Employment services.
16. Personal assistance services provided while the client is receiving other VR services.
17. Post-employment services necessary to assist a client to retain, regain, or advance in competitive integrated employment, prior to case closure.
18. Pre-ETS and Transition services for students that facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the IPE.
19. Corrective surgery or short-term therapeutic treatment necessary to correct or substantially modify a physical or mental condition that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment, but is of such a nature that such correction or modification may reasonably be expected to eliminate or reduce the impediment to employment within a reasonable length of time. (See DBS Medical Services Policies 8.0 -8.19)



- a. Necessary hospitalization in connection with surgery or treatment.
- b. Prosthetic and orthotic devices.
- c. Eyeglasses and visual services as prescribed by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws and who are selected by the individual. (See DBS-016 and Policy 8.17 for glasses)
- d. Diagnosis and the short-term treatment for mental and emotional disorders by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws.

NOTE: Special services such as transplantation, dialysis and supplies necessary for clients with end-stage renal disease, require approval by the Bureau Chief of Client Services.

20. A variety of additional services may be based on individual client needs, such as short-term services to a client's family members which may include childcare and/or counseling can be provided to enable a client to achieve an employment outcome but must be staffed with Assistant District Administrator/District Administrator.

7.5 Assessment Services for Determining Eligibility

Vocational rehabilitation services should be provided to assess a client's eligibility for services only if:

1. Existing data does not describe the current functioning of the client or
2. Existing data is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to make an eligibility determination.

When appropriate, the provision of rehabilitation technology services and work site assessments should be provided to a client to assess and develop the capacities of the client to perform in a work environment.

7.6 Assessment for Determining Vocational Rehabilitation Needs

To the extent possible, the employment outcome and the nature and scope of services must be determined based on the data used for the assessment

of eligibility. If additional data is necessary for determining vocational rehabilitation needs, an assessment should be conducted in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the client's informed choice.

Such an assessment must be limited to information that is necessary to identify the client's rehabilitation needs and may include but is not limited to, the following vocational rehabilitation services:

1. Medical, psychological, and vocational assessments.
2. Personality, career interests, vocational aptitudes, and intellectual potential.
3. Work attitudes, work tolerance, social and behavioral assessments.
4. A rehabilitation technology assessment provided by a skilled instructor to determine the client's level of expertise and training needs.

7.7 Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance

Vocational Rehabilitation counseling and guidance for individuals is a core service and must be on all vocational rehabilitation plans and provided and documented throughout the rehabilitation process. The goal of Vocational Rehabilitation counseling and guidance is to assist the individual in obtaining, maintaining, regaining, or advancing in employment. Counseling and guidance must promote independence, enhance self-esteem, and assist individuals in making informed choices regarding their rehabilitation program.

7.8 Referral Services

All individuals should be provided with referrals and other services designed to assist them in securing needed services from other agencies and programs funded by other state and federal programs as well as local community organizations.

7.9 Diagnosis and short-term treatment of physical and mental impairments

Diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments should be provided to the extent necessary for an individual to achieve maximum vocational potential for obtaining an employment outcome. Emphasis should be placed on sight restoration services or short-term medical intervention to prevent further loss of vision (Policy 8.05 Eye Medical Treatment). Experimental eye, physical, or mental restoration services cannot be sponsored by DBS. For Psychological referrals use Form 258.

7.9.1 Intercurrent Illness

Short term treatment of an illness, which occurs during the course of an IPE and prevents participation in the program, may be provided for an eligible client. An IPE amendment must be developed to provide services for intercurrent illness treatment. Minor physical ailments that do not interfere with participation in an IPE cannot be considered intercurrent illnesses, and other comparable services and benefits or individual resources must be used to pay for treatment (e.g., toothache or hives).

Prior to developing an amended IPE for an intercurrent illness, the client's case must be staffed with the Assistant District Administrator or District Administrator.

7.9.2 Dental Services

An individual may be provided dental services if the dental condition is a substantial impediment to employment and meets one or all of the following criteria:

1. Causes cosmetic problems severe enough to prevent an individual from obtaining a job which involves serving the public or will cause loss of the job unless the condition is corrected.
2. Results in toxic poisons which cause physical symptoms in other parts of the body or aggravates an already existing disability.
3. Is an acute dental condition that interferes with employment and/or the provision of other services.



7.9.3 Provision of Services during Pregnancy

There is no established policy that precludes continuing services under an IPE during pregnancy. Medical services related to pregnancy should be provided through comparable benefits and services or individual resources. If it is determined that a pregnant individual cannot or does not wish to pursue her employment outcome after delivery, services will be discontinued.

7.9.4 Eye Surgery

When an eye condition presents an impediment to employment, DBS may sponsor surgery or other medical treatment when such surgery is needed to achieve an employment outcome. The IPE must include all appropriate eye medical services needed, such as physicians' fees, and hospital, anesthesia and lab fees. All community resources/comparable benefits must be exhausted and documented in Aware (e.g., the Lions Club) prior to any DBS involvement.

NOTE:

- 1. All surgeries sponsored by DBS must be approved by DBS eye medical consultant (DBS 005 Medical Recommendations Form).**
- 2. Eye medical reports being reviewed for DBS sponsorship of surgery and/or treatment after eligibility determination must be current and documented in Aware. New reports that are received during treatment or after surgery must be entered in Aware.**

7.10 Vocational and Other Training

DBS provides vocational and other training services necessary for the client to meet their employment outcome as outlined on the IPE. Progress reports from the training provider are required throughout the training period and must be entered in Aware (e.g., semester grade reports, Community Rehabilitation Program monthly training reports, etc.).

All training facilities used must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

7.10.1 Post-Secondary Training

Post-secondary training may be sponsored by DBS if the individual requires such training to obtain their employment outcome. (See College Handbook)

1. DBS will only finance Florida state tuition costs as a Florida resident. The individual will be responsible for all fees exceeding the cost of the in-state fees.
2. DBS will support individuals in attending private, out-of-state universities, field trips, or out-of-country experiences when the degree program can be justified in terms of the individual's employment outcome, and it is a unique circumstance. These opportunities may be approved after discussion with the Bureau Chief of Client Services. (Policy 2.09 Post-Secondary Education)
3. DBS will only sponsor individuals at institutions that are fully accredited.

Given the rehabilitation needs of the individual, the District Administrator may staff the case with the Bureau Chief for exceptions to numbers 1 & 2.

No training or training services in an institution of higher education may be sponsored by DBS unless maximum efforts have been made and documented by the Rehabilitation Counselor and the individual to secure grant assistance in whole or in part from other sources.

NOTE: Additional information can be found in the College Handbook. The Rehabilitation Counselor must review this handbook prior to developing the IPE.

7.10.2 On-the-Job Training

On-the-job training (OJT) is the placement of a client with an employer who agrees to train and hire that client for entry into a position meeting the requirements of a competitive integrated employment outcome. All labor

regulations apply to the client participating in an OJT (e.g., Social Security, income tax, worker's compensation, and unemployment insurance).

The employer is responsible for paying the client for the OJT; however, DBS may pay the employer a percentage of the employee's salary plus the cost of benefits that are customarily offered by the employer. The percentage DBS pays in salary and benefits should be negotiated with the employer and will be reduced progressively on a monthly basis until the employer is fully responsible.

In addition to the IPE, the OJT agreement between the employer, DBS, and the client must be developed specifying the objectives, wage, (client to be paid no less than minimum wage) hours, type of training that will be provided, evaluation criteria, and time frames not to exceed 90 days. The agreement to use can be found on the DBS intranet.

NOTE: Clients are to remain in service status in Aware until OJT employer is fully responsible for client's salary and benefits.

7.10.3 Work Experience/Work Based Learning Experience

Work experience training may be provided for a client to learn employability skills and transferable job skills and to allow the Counselor to observe the client and determine equipment and other employability needs in their vocational field. Work experience training should occur on an actual work site, and the IPE must clearly indicate the type of training and specific skills to be acquired. Work experiences are based on client needs and are designed by the client and Counselor.

Documentation of visits by the Rehabilitation Counselor and training reports from the employer are to be included in the individual's record of service. The Rehabilitation Counselor must ensure that the client is provided with adequate instruction, assistive devices, and ongoing support, etc., to achieve the desired work experience outcome. The use of trained job coaches can be utilized to assist in learning job-related tasks and skills. The services of the job coach should be reduced as the client demonstrates and performs the required job tasks.



Work Based Learning Experiences may include opportunities that are in-school or after school, or outside the traditional school setting (including internships), provided in an integrated setting in the community to the maximum extent possible. DBS should exhaust all opportunities for work-based learning experiences in integrated settings before placing an individual in a nonintegrated setting.

- **Group:** WBLEs in a group setting may include: (1) coordinating a school-based program of job training and informational interviews to research employers; (2) worksite tours to learn about necessary job skills; (3) job shadowing; or (4) mentoring opportunities in the community.
- **Individual:** WBLE on an individual basis could include paid or unpaid: (a) internships, apprenticeships (including pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships); (b) short-term employment, fellowships, or on-the-job trainings located in the community.

A work experience, which also includes a Work-Based Learning Experience, is considered training, and stipends should be paid at the rate established in Policy 2.38 Work-Based Learning Experiences. The stipend should cover costs incurred by the client to assist with expenses such as clothing. Additional transportation expenses can be paid if necessary. In case of an injury on the work experience site, the client may be covered by the worker's compensation program (See Chapter 440 Florida Statutes) or medical expenses may be paid by DBS as an intercurrent illness. (Section 7.10.1)

7.10.4 Career, Technology, and Training Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CTTC)

The CTTC, located in Daytona Beach, provides rehabilitation instruction for blindness and low vision skills (ADL skills), orientation and mobility (O&M), Assistive Technology, etc., for residential and day students. The CTTC provides vocational training opportunities including:

1. Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Training
2. Access Computer Technology Training
3. Independent Living Skills Program
4. CompTIA
5. Pre-Employment Training

The mission of the Career, Technology, and Training Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired is to empower individuals with varying degrees of vision loss to achieve independence.

To refer a client to any of the Center's programs, email the referral memo. (Contact the center to determine who is receiving these referrals). The referral should include the client's name, program being referred to, any past rehabilitation training, any medical problems the center should be aware of and any psychological history or current treatment.

The following is required for all programs:

1. Referral Memo.
2. The following reports in Aware
 - a) Client application.
 - b) Education History.
 - c) Eye Exam.
 - d) IPE (Individualized Plan for Employment).
3. A client's IPE should include the following:
 - a) Transportation – required regardless of program.
 - b) Medical – consider using 98999 to cover any medical issues that may arise that any client insurance will not cover.
 - c) Training Maintenance – Code 061000 for \$150 per month for all clients.

NOTE: Regardless of income, all clients who attend the CTTC in Daytona for training purposes will receive maintenance of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00)/each month, which will assist in

covering the cost of that individual's social activities in the community.

All referrals to the CTTC must be generated in the client's Aware case file (Case Tracking, CRP Referral sub-function) and notification made via email. For more detailed information on services provided at the CTTC, visit the DBS website.

7.10.5 Other Division Training Programs

DBS partners and contracts with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) throughout the state to provide a multitude of services such as adjustment to blindness, prevocational and vocational training, as well as training in O&M, ADL, assistive technology. Pre-Employment Transition and other Transition services (beginning at age 14) are provided year-round. Many CRPs offer extensive summer activities as well as work experiences. The types of services provided by each local CRP are based on the capabilities of and contract with each facility. The District Administrator or designee should be contacted for more detailed information.

The Conklin Davis Center for the Visually Impaired in Daytona Beach is a residential facility that provides a variety of services to blind individuals who have one or more most significant disabilities. The Conklin Davis Center accepts referrals from all over the state. Services include evaluation, vocational training, job placement, and Supported Employment. Conklin Davis Center staff may provide an evaluation in the home of the individual and/or an extensive two-week evaluation at the Center. Clients may be invited back to participate in extended training opportunities. Additional training may be offered depending upon an individual's needs.

7.10.6 Business, Vocational, and Technical Schools

Clients requiring training from a business, vocational or technical school will be provided with information to assist them in selecting a program that offers a curriculum that will lead to a successful employment outcome. DBS will only sponsor accredited schools and pay tuition at the rate of a public institution in the local area. Exceptions may be made by the District

Administrator in consultation with the Bureau Chief of Client Services if training at a private school or training in a school not in the client's local area has been justified in terms of the client's employment outcome, and it is clearly in the best interest of the client to attend a private school or a school outside of the client's locality.

As with college and university training, maximum efforts must be made by the Rehabilitation Counselor and the client to secure grant assistance in whole or in part from other sources prior to DBS sponsorship.

7.11 Books, Tools, and Other Training Materials

Books, tools, and other training materials (watches, writing guides, low- and high-tech items, etc.) may be purchased for clients participating in post-secondary training, work experience training, vocational training to include CRP services, On-The-Job training, and for initial placement.

Books and training materials should be provided in an accessible format of the client's choice. The Bureau of Braille and Talking Book Library Services staff can assist Rehabilitation Counselors or individuals in finding the most efficient method to obtain accessible materials.

7.12 Maintenance

Maintenance as defined by 34 CFR Section 361.5(c)(35):

Maintenance means monetary support provided to an individual for expenses, such as food, shelter, and clothing, that exceed the normal expenses of the individual and that are necessitated by the individual's participation in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or the individual's receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under an IPE.

(Authority: Sections 12(c) and 103(a) (7) of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 709(c) and 723(a) (7))

The following are some examples, but do not reflect all possible scenarios of expenses that would meet the definition of maintenance. The examples

are illustrative, do not address all possible circumstances, and are not intended to substitute for individual Counselor judgment.

Example 1: The cost of a uniform or other suitable clothing that is required for an individual's job placement or job-seeking activities.

Example 2: The cost of short-term housing (such as a hotel) that is required for an individual to participate in assessment activities or vocational training at a site that is not within commuting distance of an individual's home.

Example 3: Initial one-time costs, such as a security deposit or charges for the initiation of utilities, that are required in order for an individual to relocate for a job placement.

Example 4: The costs of an individual's participation in enrichment activities related to the individual's training program.

Use DBS-117 form for all maintenance requests.

Note: Maintenance must be reevaluated every 6 months as the client's needs may change.

7.12.1 Maintenance for CTTC Attendees (see 7.10.4)

7.12.2 Maintenance for College Students (See College Handbook)

7.13 Transportation

Transportation services refer to travel and related expenses (not to exceed state regulated per diem allowances) in connection with transporting clients or applicants and their attendants for the purpose of participating in Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Transportation may also include relocation and moving expenses-when a client has been offered and accepted a job that will require relocation outside his or her home area. Documentation from the employer verifying employment must be placed in Aware. (Policy 6.13 Relocation Expenses)



Transportation costs and necessary food and lodging during travel may be paid to an attendant to accompany a client participating in a VR service. DBS will not pay a fee or salary if the attendant is normally available to the individual.

7.14 Services to Family Members

For purposes of providing VR services, family member means an individual who either:

1. Is an immediate relative, spouse, caregiver or guardian of an applicant or eligible individual or
2. Who has a substantial interest in the well-being of that individual and
3. For whom receipt of services is necessary to enable the applicant or eligible individual to achieve an employment outcome.

NOTE: Examples include childcare and short-term counseling.

All services to family members must be prior approved by the District Administrator.

7.15 Interpreter Services for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Deaf-Blind

In accordance with 34 CFR 361.53(c) (2), if comparable services or benefits exist under any other program and are available to the individual at the time needed to ensure the progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome in the individual's IPE, DBS must use those comparable services or benefits to meet, in whole or in part, the cost of the vocational rehabilitation services. Clients who are deaf/blind should first seek interpreter services from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation when served by both agencies (see the DBS/DVR Cooperative Agreement located on DBS intranet). Counselors should first seek interpreter services from other community agencies/providers, such as CRP's, doctors, training sites, etc., for DBS clients. In the event there are no other resources within the community, DBS can pay for interpreter services to ensure the progress

of the individual toward achieving an employment outcome (Policy 6.15 Interpreter Services). DBS will provide interpreter services when they are necessary for the client to participate in an assessment or receive vocational rehabilitation services. An individual's IPE must address the need for interpreter services in order to achieve an employment outcome.

7.16 Reader Services

Reader services must be available to clients who require this service to achieve an employment outcome. Readers cannot be family members, caregivers, etc. Clients shall be informed about the DBS Braille and Talking Books Library and other organizations that provide accessible materials.

DBS will provide the current minimum wage as payment for reader service that is not technical in nature. Hourly wages can be negotiated with the District Administrator or designee for reading that requires expert knowledge (e.g. reading foreign language, highly technical or scientific text). Readers must be advised that earnings will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service and that they are responsible for paying income and Social Security taxes. Reader Services must be included in the client's IPE.

*****See College Handbook, for Reader Services as it relates to college students.**

NOTE: Prior approval must be obtained for reader services.

7.17 Tutor Services

Tutor services should be available to clients who are participating in a training program and require these services to achieve an employment outcome. Tutors are individuals who are knowledgeable in the subject area and have the skill to teach the specified subject. A legitimate need for each subject for which these services are requested must be demonstrated (for college/university students, see College Handbook). Tutor Services must be included in the client's IPE.

NOTE: Prior approval must be obtained for Tutor Services.



7.18 Rehabilitation Teaching Services

Rehabilitation teaching services should be discussed with each client with regards to instruction in the use of low vision aids and devices as well as daily living skills, grooming and personal management, adjustment to vision loss, coping and adjustment to vision loss, etc., that are specifically designed to increase an individual's independence at home, work and in the community. An individual may require such services to achieve and/or maintain an employment outcome. Local community rehabilitation programs and the DBS Division of Blind Services Career, Technology, and Training Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired provide these services.

7.19 Orientation and Mobility Services

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) services may include but are not limited to, instruction in the use of sighted guide, cane skills, principles of indoor and outdoor orientation to the environment, street crossings, use of public transportation vehicles and systems, and traveling in unfamiliar environments. O&M services should be provided to a client to achieve an employment outcome, and to increase and/or maintain independence in the community. O&M services should be discussed and assessed with all clients and must be provided by a certified O&M instructor. O&M services should be provided by a local community rehabilitation program, the Division of Blind Services Career, Technology, and Training Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired or, on very rare occasions, through private vendors if there is no CRP in the area and the client is unable to attend the CTTC. (Staff these situations with the District Administrator prior to authorizing services under private vendors)

DBS does not provide clients with dog guides or training with dogs; however, clients may be assisted with the resources to obtain a dog guide. DBS can provide orientation and mobility assistance to a client who has acquired a dog guide if emergency assistance in the home environment is necessary or if the client experiences problems with the dog guide in an unfamiliar environment. It may be necessary to refer clients back to the guide dog school for further training if problems persist.

7.20 Job Search and Placement Assistance/Job Retention Services



Use Form 259 for Referral to Employment Placement Specialist.

7.20.1 Job Search and Placement Assistance

Employment Placement Specialists (EPS) are expected to take the lead in this area with Rehabilitation Counselors providing additional support. Job search and placement assistance should be provided to eligible clients for the purposes of obtaining, maintaining, or regaining an employment outcome as well as career advancement consistent with an individual's informed choice. Such services may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Resume development and application completion.
2. Training in interview skills.
3. Job development and marketing.
4. Assistance with interviews and appointments.
5. Job analysis and modification of tasks.
6. Job follow-up and job follow-along.

NOTE: Thorough documentation must be placed in Aware to support and detail all activities.

A client's IPE must indicate the responsibilities agreed upon by the Rehabilitation Counselor, the Employment Placement Specialist, and the client regarding job search and placement.

Once a client obtains employment, follow-up services should be provided to ensure job stability and access to the work environment. Such services may include but are not limited to:

1. Rehabilitation Technology
2. Orientation and Mobility
3. Job Coaching
4. Supported Employment Services (see Appendix II: Definitions)
5. Personal Assistance Services
6. Transportation Services

7.20.2 Job Retention Services

Job retention services may be provided to a client who is experiencing disability-related difficulties in maintaining employment. These services may be provided to an eligible client during the implementation of their IPE. Work-related difficulties might include inability to access the work environment, absenteeism, tardiness, or poor co-worker relationships. Retention services to address the client's needs may include but are not limited to:

1. Rehabilitation Technology.
2. Supported Employment Services.
3. Job Coaching.
4. Counseling and Guidance.
5. Personal Assistance.

7.20.3 Small Business and Self-Employment

The Rehabilitation Counselor should consider the need for psychological, assistive technology, and functional capacity evaluations to assess the individual's ability to operate a business. Technical assistance and other consultation services may be provided to conduct market analyses and develop business plans for clients who have identified an employment outcome of self-employment or small business development. (Policy 2.10 Self-Employment Services)

Rehabilitation Counselors should refer to Policy 2.10 for specific guidelines regarding the development and implementation of an IPE with the employment outcome of self-employment or small business development. (See Self-Employment checklist located on the intranet). Once a client completes a Self-Employment Plan, the Rehabilitation Counselor, Assistant District Administrator, and District Administrator will review the self-employment plan prior to sending it to the Bureau Chief of Client Services for final review and approval.

7.21 Supported Employment Services

Supported Employment Services are (see definition) (34 CFR 361(5)(c))



(54)) services needed to support and maintain a client with a most significant disability in entering and/or maintaining competitive integrated employment. These clients have multiple disabilities which must be documented in Aware. Some examples include deaf/blind clients, developmentally disabled blind clients, and physically disabled blind clients.

Supported Employment services must be based on a determination of the needs of an eligible client as specified in an IPE. Supported Employment services mean ongoing support services provided by the DBS for a period not to exceed 24 months, unless under special circumstances a longer period to achieve job stabilization has been jointly agreed to by the individual and the rehabilitation counselor and established in the IPE, before an individual with a most severe disability makes the transition to extended services.

Supported employment services are organized and made available, singly or in combination, to assist an eligible individual to achieve competitive integrated employment.

Supported employment means competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, or employment in an integrated work setting in which an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, is working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment that is individualized, and customized, consistent with the unique strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual. Supported Employment outcomes are intended for clients:

1. For whom competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred; or
2. For whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and
3. Who, because of the nature and severity of their disabilities, need intensive Supported Employment services or extended services after the transition from support provided by DBS to perform such work.



A client is eligible to receive Supported Employment services if the following criteria are met:

1. The client is eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services;
2. The client is determined to be an individual with multiple disabilities and is considered most significantly disabled; and
3. Supported Employment has been identified as the appropriate rehabilitation objective for the individual based on a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs including an evaluation of rehabilitation, career, and job needs.

Ongoing support services (see Appendix II: Definitions) must be provided to clients in Supported Employment, both while they are receiving supported employment services funded by DBS and while they receive extended services from a provider other than DBS. Extended services (see Appendix II: Definitions) must be arranged prior to a successful outcome determination. The provider of extended services must be identified both on the client's IPE and Employment Outcome Summary. Extended services should be provided by a private nonprofit organization, employer, or other appropriate resources, including natural supports, but must be provided from funds other than those received under Title I or Title VI part B. Youth with disabilities, i.e., clients under the age of 25, may receive extended services paid for by DBS for up to four years or until the youth turns 25.

Ongoing support services and extended services supplied by the provider may consist of but are not limited to, the following:

1. An additional comprehensive assessment.
2. The provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site.
3. Job Development.
4. Assessment of employment stability and provision and coordination of specific services at or away from the worksite that are needed to maintain stability, based on either a minimum of twice-monthly



- monitoring at the worksite, or especially at the request of the individual, off-site monitoring consisting of twice monthly meetings with the individual.
5. Social skills training.
 6. Regular observation or supervision of the individual.
 7. Follow-up services such as regular contact with the employers, the clients, parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of the clients, and other suitable professional and informed advisors, to reinforce and stabilize the job placement during the time-limited VR funded training.
 8. Facilitation of natural support at the work site.

The Conklin Davis Center for the Visually Impaired provides residential Supported Employment services and assessment services on a statewide basis. DBS provides local CRPs with funds to provide local Supported Employment services.

NOTE: As per 34 CFR 6.55, An individual with the most significant disabilities who is receiving supported employment services is SUCCESSFULLY REHABILITATED if the individual maintains a supported employment placement for 90 days after making the transition to extended services. As soon as the counselor is notified the client has been moved to extended services, counselor can begin the 90-day count to closure.

7.22 Personal Assistance Services

Personal assistance services (see Appendix II: Definitions) include a range of services designed to assist a client to perform daily living activities on or off the job that the client would typically perform without assistance if they did not have a disability. The services must be designed to increase the client's independence and ability to perform everyday activities on or off the job. Personal assistance services must be necessary to the achievement of

an employment outcome and may be provided **only while the individual is receiving other vocational rehabilitation services.**

The degree to which a client requires ongoing personal assistance services must be evaluated prior to their completion of an IPE, and assistance should be provided in securing those services through other resources such as the Medicaid waiver, Centers for Independent Living, Developmental Services, and DVR. DBS will not directly contract with a vendor for these services, nor will DBS locate, interview, and hire a Personal Assistant.

7.23 Post-Employment Services (Policy 2.20)

Post-employment Services (see Appendix II: Definitions) should be provided, as needed, after the employment outcome has been achieved but before the individual is reported as having exited the VR program. This also includes those who have been trained and placed through Supported Employment.

For a client to be eligible for post-employment services:

1. Services will need to be provided under an amended IPE thus after the employment outcome has been achieved but prior of the client exiting the VR program.
2. Services must be necessary to assist the client in maintaining, regaining, or advancing in employment.
3. Services must be discrete short-term services (3-4 months as per policy), limited in scope and duration, and available to meet rehabilitation needs (e.g., purchasing equipment to keep a client employed or providing orientation and mobility for a change in job site).

If more extensive services are necessary and the case has been closed, the client's case must be reopened. Eligibility determination must be expedited using data in the client's case record.



7.24 Occupational Licenses, Tools, Equipment, Initial Stocks, and Supplies

Tools, equipment, initial stocks, and supplies may be purchased for an eligible client when they are necessary to achieve an employment outcome. Fees for obtaining an occupational license may be sponsored for a client if the license is required for employment in their chosen field. Prior to purchasing an occupational license, contact should be made with the local tax collecting authority to investigate possible exemptions that may apply to blind or visually impaired individuals.

7.25 Rehabilitation Technology Devices and Services

Rehabilitation technology (see Appendix II: Definitions) services include rehabilitation engineering, assistive technology devices and training. Rehabilitation technology should be provided with the goal of obtaining, maintaining, regaining, or advancing in employment. (See Technology Policies 6.07 and 6.10)

For complex technological situations, DBS will refer to the appropriate contract provider for assistance and use the referral form provided by the provider.

7.26 Provision of Equipment and Computer Software Upgrades

To ensure appropriate disbursement of equipment and software upgrades, the following must apply (Client Equipment and Inventory form DBS 108):

1. The client's vocational training and employment outcome require equipment and computer software upgrades.
2. The computer should be chosen from the recommended quotes provided by the DBS Rehabilitation Engineer after consultation with the consumer.

NOTE: If any variations are necessary, they must be approved by the DBS Rehabilitation Engineer. If a client requests a computer package that differs from the recommended packages, the client is responsible for repair and support expenses incurred and may be responsible for

paying the difference in the costs of the selected computer package. The Rehabilitation Counselor should document everything related to this decision and purchase in Aware.

7.27 Transition Services (including Potentially Eligible and Pre-ETS)

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are available to eligible or potentially eligible students with a vision disability, age 14 through 21, enrolled in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program. Pre-ETS include job exploration counseling; work-based learning experiences; counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs; workplace readiness training; and self-advocacy instruction. Pre-ETS and Transition Services for students begin at age 14. A student who is potentially eligible for services through DBS may be 13 at the time of referral but may only participate in Pre-ETS beginning at age 14.

Eligibility determination for services is identical to the Vocational Rehabilitation program standards for eligibility except for those who are potentially eligible. Criteria include eye medical reports, counselor's observations, information provided by the client or the client's family, client's IEP from the school and information from other agencies as necessary (see Section 2.6). The Rehabilitation Counselor for the Children's Program will assist by completing a Transition Referral Summary Form and meeting with the Transition Counselor upon referral of the student to the Transition Program. The two Counselors will meet to discuss and determine if the client is appropriate for Transition services. If the client is determined to be appropriate for Transition services, the case should be closed in the Children's Program and referred to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

The Division has entered into contractual agreements with CRPs throughout the state to assist with providing needed year-round Transition services. Referrals to these programs should be made promptly upon eligibility determination.

NOTE: A review of eligibility for the Transition Programs must be made by the Children’s Counselor in coordination with the Rehabilitation Counselor, unless the student and his or her parent, guardian, or representative does not wish to apply for Vocational Rehabilitation services. This should be documented in Aware by the Children’s Counselor.

Development and implementation of an IPE must occur with the full involvement of the eligible client and their parent or guardian, and in accordance with Vocational Rehabilitation IPE development procedures (see Section 4.0). The IPE should be designed to facilitate transition from school to work, independent living, and/or post-secondary education.

IPE development must be completed in conjunction with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or Individual Transition Plan (ITP) processes if the client is receiving special education services in the public school system. Emphasis should be placed on providing pre-vocational activities and career exploration that will lead to an appropriate employment goal based on the client’s informed choice. Services may include job shadowing, interest/skills inventories, attending career fairs, learning to write a disability statement, development of job-seeking skills, a vocational evaluation and work experiences as well as Adaptive Daily Living Skills, Orientation and Mobility, Advocacy, training and more. The IPE should be developed in accordance with 34 CFR 361.45 as early as possible during the transition planning process and not later than the time a student with a disability determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting.

It is the responsibility of the DBS to coordinate with contracted community rehabilitation providers to plan and provide the services needed to meet the expected outcomes that lead to an employment goal in conjunction with services available to the client in the school system. Upon exiting the school system, a client will continue to receive transition or vocational rehabilitation services that are necessary and have been planned to achieve an employment outcome. For a student or youth with a disability, the employment outcome on the IPE may be a description of the individual’s projected post-school employment outcome as opposed to a specific employment outcome required for an individual with a disability who is not a student or youth.

7.28 Ticket to Work

The Social Security Administration funds the Ticket to Work Program to protect a recipient's benefits while they attempt to gain employment. When a client is receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) payments they are automatically eligible for the Ticket to Work (TTW) program. For a client to take full advantage of the program, they must use an Employment Network (EN).

If a Ticket is presented, the Ticket Assignment Request form ([SSA-1365](#) is on the DBS intranet) is to be completed and submitted to SSA. The original form and ticket are to be placed in the client file. The client's name and social security number are to be e-mailed to the state office representative for record keeping.

Ticket assignment forms must not be completed until the client is in plan development. Forms are to be completed and provided to SSA within two weeks of the signing of the IPE.

Those who have questions about the ticket program should contact SSA at 1-866-949-3687 or visit the SSA website at www.yourtickettowork.ssa.gov.



8.0 Comparable Services and Benefits 34 CFR 361.53 (Policy 6.11)

Prior to providing vocational rehabilitation services to an eligible client or their family, it must be determined whether comparable services and benefits (see definition) may be available through other sources and whether those services/benefits are available to the client.

If comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and are available to the client at the time needed to achieve the rehabilitation objectives in their IPE, those services and benefits must be documented in Aware and utilized to meet, in whole or in part, the cost of Vocational Rehabilitation services.

If comparable services and benefits exist but are not available at the time needed to satisfy the rehabilitation objectives in the IPE, DBS must provide Vocational Rehabilitation services until those comparable services and benefits become available.

The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:

1. Assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs.
2. Counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist a client in exercising informed choice.
3. Referral to other agencies, such as a One Stop, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, social services, etc.
4. Job-related services including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services.
5. Rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices.



NOTE: Prior to DBS purchasing any equipment for job related and job retention services, employers should be approached to determine if they can financially assist with the need for accommodations.

6. Post-employment services consisting of 1-5.

Utilizing comparable services and benefits does not apply if:

1. The determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would delay the provision of VR services to a client who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate, qualified medical professional.
2. An immediate job placement would be lost due to a delay in the provision of comparable services and benefits.
3. Waiting for a comparable service or benefit would delay a client's progress in achieving an employment outcome.



9.0 Fiscal Procedures

9.1 Fiscal Process and Procedure

(Policy 6.01 Requesting and Authorizing Purchases addresses who has authorization to draft, issue, and invoice authorizations)

1. Rehabilitation Counselor determines that a particular service is necessary and directs appropriate staff to develop an authorization.
2. If the service is already on the plan, then a case note will be created by the counselor regarding the justification for the authorization.
3. If the service is not on the plan, then a case note will be created explaining the need to amend the current plan.
 - a. Once the plan has been amended and approved, then the plan must be signed by the client before services can proceed.
 - b. Once the plan has been signed, a case note is created regarding justification for the authorization.
4. The DBS Vocational Rehabilitation Technician or Word Processor will create the authorization(s).
5. Once the authorization has been approved, the original authorization and one copy will be mailed to the vendor with a request that the original be signed and returned to the issuing DBS office by the vendor along with an invoice. The copy is for the vendor to keep for their records.
6. Once the service has been rendered, the authorization will be signed by the counselor or appropriate staff if counselor is unavailable (Policy 6.01 Requesting and Authorizing Purchases) and the payment processed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Technician or Word Processor. If the invoice is not original, then it must be stamped as such and authenticated by the appropriate person.



7. The authorization with invoice and any supporting documentation must be attached to the authorization file in Aware (including the DBS 108 Client Equipment Receipt and Inventory Record, which can be found on the DBS intranet, if appropriate).

NOTE: This includes the requirement for collecting receipts for maintenance.

8. An email listing all the authorizations (**each authorization number**) being submitted for payment must then be sent to DBS Aware Authorizations at Aware.Authorizations@dbs.fldoe.org. Fiscal will then process payment accordingly.
9. All vendor invoices must be signed in the lower right-hand corner by the District Administrator or Assistant District Administrator. All authorizations must also be signed by the District Administrator or Assistant District Administrator when approving for payment (signature in the lower right-hand corner).
10. Reports that correspond to the invoice (doctors report, evaluations, surgical reports, college updates, etc. will be placed in the case notes section of the electronic file and/or in Section 3 of the paper file).



NOTE: DBS must attempt to make payments directly to vendors/payees for maintenance for clients. When this is not possible, DBS will collect receipts from clients when they are given direct maintenance checks to verify appropriate use of the funds. Receipts must be scanned into Attachments with the summary line stating, "Receipt Auth# ____".

If the client does not provide a receipt, the Counselor will document a counseling session indicating that this is a requirement, and that the client may not directly receive maintenance in the future if this continues. If the client does not provide a receipt the second time, the Counselor and Assistant District Administrator will counsel the client and ensure additional maintenance payments are made directly to the vendor. Part of the VR program is to teach clients responsibility and convey that working towards their VR goal is a team effort. Expecting a client to provide a receipt is a reasonable expectation given the program they are participating in.

Examples:

- Transportation - Client would get receipt from cab company and submit. If a client uses a friend/family and pays for gas, the friend/family must provide gas receipts for client to turn in.
- Internet for College - Client sends DBS a copy of the cable bill.
- Books, supplies, etc. for school - Client sends DBS the invoice/receipt from the purchase.
- Clothing - Client sends DBS the receipt and/or staff goes with them (Counselor or EPS) and gets receipt.

If the client does not spend all the money provided, they will be required to reimburse DBS the difference via a money order. Remember **every effort should be made to pay vendors directly, rather than via maintenance checks.**

10.0 Clients Determined to Have Achieved an Employment Outcome 34 CFR 361.56

10.1 Employment Outcome Closures

The following requirements must be met to determine that a client has achieved an employment outcome:



1. The client has achieved the employment outcome as described in their current IPE.
2. The provision of services under the client's IPE has contributed to the achievement of the employment outcome and the goal on their current plan reflects the employment outcome.
3. The employment outcome is consistent with the client's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.
4. The employment outcome is in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the client's informed choice. Justification of nonintegrated setting must be documented in Aware.
5. The individual has maintained the employment outcome for a period of at least 90 days.
6. At the end of the 90-day period (for Supported Employment see section 7.22) the client, Rehabilitation Counselor, Employment Placement Specialist, and employer consider the employment outcome to be satisfactory and agree that the client is performing well on the job.
7. The client no longer needs vocational rehabilitation services to maintain this job.

There are several types of employment outcomes that a client may be determined to have successfully achieved. They include:

1. Full-time competitive integrated employment (including Supported Employment).
2. Part-time competitive integrated employment (including Supported Employment); or
3. Any other type of employment in a competitive integrated setting and is consistent with an individual's strengths, resources, priorities,



concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice (including, Business Enterprise Program, self-employment, and supported employment where the client is working toward competitive wages).

NOTE: Enclave and sheltered workshop positions are not considered successful employment outcomes.

An Employment Outcome Summary (see Section 12.7) must be completed when documenting a client's employment outcome. This includes a justification for other types of employment if competitive integrated employment is not the choice or outcome for the client. An Employment Outcome Summary should indicate whether a client is receiving any benefits on the job and must be prepared by the Rehabilitation Counselor. The Assistant District Administrator must approve for those specialists who have not achieved independent status.



11.0 Review of Division of Blind Services Personnel Determinations and Consumer Rights Notification

11.1 Consumer Rights Notification (Policy 2.05 Review Process and Mediation VR)

All applicants or eligible clients or, as appropriate, their representative must be notified of:

1. The right to obtain review of a determination made by DBS that affects the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to that client through an impartial due process hearing;
2. The right to pursue mediation with respect to such determination;
3. The availability of assistance from the Client Assistance Program at Disability Rights Florida; and
4. When the client requests mediation, DBS and the client must come to agreement on the process and terms associated with mediation.

Such notification must be provided in writing or other appropriate modes of communication. Rights have been provided at each phase of the rehabilitation process as indicated below:

1. At the time a client applies for vocational rehabilitation services.
2. At the time the client's IPE is developed, and when any amendments to the plan are made; and
3. Upon reduction, suspension, or cessation of vocational rehabilitation services for the client.

11.2 Informal Reviews

DBS has three procedures for conducting informal reviews as requested by an applicant or eligible client regarding decisions made by a Rehabilitation Counselor or Assistant District Administrator concerning the provision or

denial of services.

1. A District review is to be conducted by the Rehabilitation Counselor's direct supervisor, the Assistant District Administrator or District Administrator at the verbal or written request of an applicant or eligible client or, as appropriate, their representative.
2. If the client is dissatisfied with the outcome of an Assistant District Administrator review or chooses to bypass an Assistant District Administrator review, they can contact the state office by phone, make a written request for an Administrative Review to be conducted by the Bureau Chief of Client Services or their designee. The Bureau Chief must receive this written request within 30 days of the decision regarding the furnishing or denial of services.
3. If a client prefers mediation, the individual can request mediation at any time during the informal or formal procedures at the local or state level.

None of these procedures for conducting reviews may interfere with client's right to a hearing or mediation or to consult with the Client Assistance Program at Disability Rights Florida.

What is the Client Assistance Program (34 CFR 370)?

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) assists individuals who have concerns, difficulties or wish to appeal decisions made regarding their vocational rehabilitation program. CAP is funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. CAP also advises people with disabilities of the services and benefits available to them under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

11.3 Mediation Procedures 34 CFR 361.57 (Policy 2.05 Review Process and Mediation VR)

An applicant or eligible client has the right to pursue mediation with respect to any decision concerning the furnishing or denial of services by DBS. The process of mediation is voluntary, must not be used to delay or deny a



client's right to a formal hearing, and will be conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques. The cost of mediation is the sole responsibility of DBS.

Each session in the mediation process must be scheduled within 60 days of a client's written request. The client must submit such a request within 30 days of the decision regarding service provision to the Bureau Chief of Client Services and Program Support.

If the parties to the dispute in the mediation process reach an agreement, it will be set forth in a written mediation agreement.

Discussions that occur during the mediation process are confidential and will not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process or civil proceedings. Each party to the mediation will be required to sign a pledge of confidentiality prior to the commencement of the mediation process.

The process of mediation must not delay a formal hearing if so desired by the client unless the client, or as appropriate their representative, agrees to an extended time frame.

11.4 Formal Review Through Impartial Due Process Hearing Procedures

An applicant or eligible client may request a formal review of a decision about the furnishing or denial of services through the process of a Fair Hearing. An impartial hearing officer is chosen on a random basis or by agreement between the DBS director and the applicant or eligible client, or as appropriate, their representative. An impartial hearing officer conducts Fair Hearings within 60 days of a written request by the client unless informal resolution is achieved prior to the 60th day or the parties agree to a specific extension of time. The client must submit such a request within 30 days of the decision regarding service provision to the DBS Director.

DBS does not suspend, reduce, or terminate services being provided under an evaluation, assessment, or IPE. Such services will be provided pending a final resolution through either mediation or an impartial due process hearing unless there is evidence that services have been obtained through

misrepresentation, fraud, collusion, or criminal conduct on the part of the individual.

The client, or client's representative, must be afforded the opportunity to provide additional evidence, information, and witnesses as well as the opportunity to examine all witnesses and other relevant information and evidence. The client may elect to be represented by counsel or other appropriate advocates including a representative from the Client Assistance Program at Disability Rights Florida.

The impartial hearing officer will make a decision based on the provisions of the approved State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, Federal VR regulations, and State regulations and policies that are consistent with Federal requirements. A written report of the findings will be provided to the client or, if appropriate, their representative within 30 days of completion of the hearing.

Either party involved in the hearing may choose to seek an impartial review of the decision of the hearing officer by the Commissioner of the Department of Education. A request for such review must be submitted to the DOE Commissioner within 20 days of the mailing of the impartial hearing officer's written decision. This process must provide an opportunity for submission of additional evidence and information relevant to a final decision concerning the matter under review.

The Commissioner may overturn or modify the impartial hearing officer's decision only if, based on clear and convincing evidence, the decision is clearly erroneous because it is contrary to the approved State plan, the Rehabilitation Act, Federal Vocational Rehabilitation regulations, or State regulations or policies that are consistent with the Federal requirements. A final decision, full report of the findings and grounds for decision will be provided in writing to both parties within 30 days of providing notice of review.

Except for time limitations established in 34 CFR 361.57(b)(1) and 361.57(b)(5), reasonable time extensions may be provided for good cause shown at the request of either or both parties.

A decision made by the Commissioner is final unless the party aggrieved by such decision brings a civil action in any State court of competent jurisdiction or in a district court of the United States of competent jurisdiction without regard to the amount of controversy.

NOTE: Whenever vocational rehabilitation services are reduced, suspended, denied, or terminated the Denial of Services letter in the Aware Letters section must be sent, with a copy of the client's rights.

11.5 Participant Confidentiality and Privacy

DBS staff must protect the confidentiality and privacy of clients' rights and records. DBS staff should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to provide services or conducting evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply. (Policy 2.03 Confidentiality and Release of Client Information)

12.0 Vocational Rehabilitation Documentation Format Outlines

NOTE: Refer to Documentation Guidelines located on the DBS intranet.

12.1 Initial Interviews

Initial Interviews for all programs will be done face to face; however, there may be circumstances beyond the control of the Rehabilitation Counselor when VR Initial Interview (I.I) may need to be conducted via other mode of communication. Initial Interviews must be written using the template found in the “Application” section of Aware. When selecting the Initial Interview template, it is important to ensure that the checkbox is marked allowing the document to be saved in the “Participant Notes” section of Aware.

Each section of the template should be completed in detail and tell a descriptive and informative story about the client. “Not Applicable” is unacceptable for section completion. Moreover, sections must not be left blank.

12.2 Certificate of Eligibility

1. Select Certificate of Eligibility, Eligibility Determination form, under Eligibility in Aware.
2. Complete the form and save it in Aware.
3. Place a copy signed by Rehabilitation Counselor in the paper case file.
4. Complete Comment section for the Primary Disability of the Disability Sub-function in the Aware case file describing how the client’s bilateral visual impairment poses an impediment to employment.
5. If the client has additional disabilities, they must be entered on the disability screen (documentation is only required if DBS will be providing services due to the secondary disability, e.g., mental health counseling for depression, Supported Employment Services, etc.).

12.3 Certificate of Ineligibility

1. Select Certificate of Ineligibility form in the Participant Letters Function of AWARE.
2. Complete the form and save it as a letter in Aware.
3. Place a copy signed by Rehabilitation Counselor in paper case file.

12.4 Vocational Goal Statement

(Complete as Part of the Individualized Plan for Employment in the Aware case file, Goals sub-function of the Plan)

1. State the employment outcome of the client and briefly describe how this goal was decided upon and is consistent with the client's career interests, abilities and with the individual's informed choice.
2. Describe the extent to which goods and services will be provided in the most integrated setting possible consistent with individual's informed choice. If services are to be rendered in a non-integrated setting, briefly describe why this decision has been made.
3. If the client is receiving exceptional education services in the public school system, briefly describe coordination of goods and services with the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

12.5 Statement of Justification for Comprehensive Assessment

(Complete as Part of the IPE in the Aware case file, Goals sub-function of the Plan)

1. Briefly describe what additional data is needed to determine the client's employment outcome, objectives, services, and/or service providers and how this data will be obtained.
2. Describe the extent to which goods and services will be provided in the most integrated setting possible consistent with client's informed

choice. If services are to be rendered in a non-integrated setting, briefly describe why this decision has been made.

12.6 Statement of Justification for Trial Work Plan

(Complete as Part of the IPE in the Aware case file, “Goals” subfunction of the Plan)

1. Briefly describe what additional data is needed to determine the client’s eligibility for VR services and the scope of services that are required to reach an employment outcome. Specify how this data will be obtained through work trials.
2. Describe the extent to which the work trials will be in the most integrated setting possible consistent with client’s informed choice. If services are to be rendered in a non-integrated setting, briefly describe why this decision has been made.

12.7 Employment Outcome Summary

Complete in the Closure sub function of the AWARE case file.

1. Briefly state how the employment outcome is consistent with the client’s abilities, interests, and informed choice.
2. Describe the extent to which the employment outcome is in the most integrated setting possible consistent with informed choice. If the employment setting is not integrated, briefly describe why this decision was made.
3. State how the individual considers the employment outcome to be satisfactory.
4. Briefly describe the client’s performance on the job and the employer’s level of satisfaction.
5. Briefly describe all post-employment services. If there is no anticipated need, provide a statement that the client was informed of



the availability of post-employment services. If appropriate, state how services will be provided or arranged with other service providers through cooperative agreements.

6. Supported Employment (if appropriate) - describe the extended services needed and identify the source of these services.
7. Describe how the services in the DBS IPE contributed to the successful outcome.
8. Final Goal statement on last plan should match closure goal.

12.9 Aware File Documentation Requirements

NOTE: Refer to Documentation Guidelines located on the DBS intranet.

12.9.1 Case Tracking

1. Application Function Standards

All fields are complete and correct for cases in all statuses.
2. Income Function Standards
 - a. Contains one entry for Support Source – Primary Application Source for cases in all statuses.
 - b. Contains one entry for Support Source – Primary Closure Source for cases in successful closure status.
 - c. All other income sources at application are listed as Support Source – Application Source.
 - d. All other income sources at closure are listed as Support Source – Closure Source.
3. Status Function Standards



- a. An eligibility determination was made within 60 days of application unless waived by the individual with a specific timeframe agreed to for determination.
 - b. Closure Reason must be indicated.
 - c. Closure Approval Date is at least 90 days from the Date Work Began for cases in successful closure status.
4. Closure Function Standards
- a. Legally blind is updated, complete and correct on the special programs' page.
 - b. The Outcome Summary is complete and accurate.
5. Activity History Function Standards: One of the following must be completed
- a. Contains an indication that a Certificate of Eligibility was completed.
 - b. Contains an indication that a Certificate of Ineligibility was completed.
 - c. Contains an indication that a Certificate of Trial Work was completed.
6. Disability Summary Function Standards
- a. Contains one Primary Disability entry for cases.
 - b. If applicable, contains additional secondary disability entries.
 - c. Significant Disability and Most Significant Disability indicators are complete and correct on the special programs page.
 - d. The Comment Section contains a description of the impediments to employment.

12.9.2 Case Progress Reports

1. Scheduled Reviews occur as indicated on the Activity Due reminder with full participation of the individual annually at minimum.
2. Case Progress Reports document significant progress towards achieving the vocational goal. (Refer to Documentation Guidelines



located on the DBS intranet) Documentation should address who, what, where, why, when, and how.

12.10 Participant Planning

1. IPE
 - a. Contains an active approved IPE.
 - b. IPE was developed and approved within 60 days of eligibility determination.
 - c. IPE contains service beginning and end dates.
 - d. Plan contains Vocational Goal Statement that is complete and accurate, discussed with and agreed upon with client.
2. Amended IPE
 - a. Contains current services (all completed or unnecessary services have been removed).
 - b. Vocational goals are accurate.
 - c. All added services support vocational goals.

12.11 Paper File Documentation Requirements

1. Paper file should be organized using the guide, Organization of Participant Files.
2. All forms and documentation must be placed in the file promptly to ensure completeness.
3. Only those items listed in the Organization of Client Files will be in the paper file.

NOTE: Organization of Client Files outline is located on the DBS intranet.

13.0 Business Enterprise Program - Referral, Training and Placement Phases

The following offers a progressive overview of the referral process and training components that an interested blind person would follow to reach licensure by the DBS Business Enterprise Program (BEP). **All BEP training is coordinated through the BEP State Office Administrative Consultant at 850-245-9406.**

BEP at a Glance:

All forms cited in this document are on the DBS intranet.

Step 1 – Client expresses interest in the BEP program and meets with their Rehabilitation Counselor.

Step 2 – Client completes a Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation or Assessment.

Step 3 – Counselor reviews the results of the Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation, as well as results from any other pertinent training received by the client within the last calendar year, to determine if client meets the minimum qualifications. The Rehabilitation Counselor may recommend further assessments and training, as needed.

Step 4 – If client meets minimum qualifications, counselor schedules meeting for client with Regional BEP Business Consultant. (refer to 13.3)

Step 5 – Client completes and submits application with all necessary paperwork to the Rehabilitation Counselor who forwards the packet to State Office BEP Administrative Consultant.

Step 6 – Applicant completes and passes background screening.

Step 7 – Applicant completes the Assessment Interview and receives recommendation from interview panel (Interview – approx. 1 hour).

Step 8 – Applicant successfully completes Work Experience (10 days).

Step 9 – BEP Administrative Consultant schedules applicant for next available training class.

The BEP Program In-Depth

(All forms and documents identified in this process are available on the DBS intranet)

13.1 Referral Phase

DBS client expresses interest in the Business Enterprise Program. The Rehabilitation Counselor should explain the types of facilities (vending, cafeterias, and snack bar), the application requirements (See 9 steps At a Glance above) and timeline related to training). Operators in the program have average over \$50K annually for many years. The counselor should be objective in explaining the program and balance the opportunity with the responsibility of the client for success.

The Rehabilitation Counselor schedules the Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation/Assessment. The client completes the evaluation, and the results are to be forwarded to the BEP Consultant. For questions regarding eligible Vocational Evaluators in your area, please contact the appropriate state office staff.

The counselor reviews the results of the evaluation as well as results of training assessment/evaluations conducted by the local CRP (assessments/evaluations performed more than one year ago may not be reliable). Use the CRP's reports, evaluations, and staff comments to determine if the client would be appropriate for the program. The counselor uses all documentation and information provided to complete the DBS-BEP Form #008 – Business Enterprise Pre-Applicant Skills Checklist. This checklist is a guide to aid the counselor in determining if the client is qualified to enter the BEP training program in view of licensure and eventually as a small business operator.



1. Is the individual motivated and does the individual have an entrepreneurial spirit?
2. Did the client demonstrate the appropriate academic functioning levels, independent living skills, technology skills for being a BEP operator?

If the counselor believes the client may have the potential to succeed in the program, but assessment results in all areas are unavailable or inconclusive, further assessments should be scheduled and conducted by the local CRP, or through the Career, Technology and Training Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired should the client need further training in some areas before being recommended for the program.

All assessment results should be forwarded to the BEP Consultant and the designated staff member at the CTTC for review and feedback. Recommendations for additional training for the client may be indicated. The final decision to recommend the client for the BEP program lies with the Rehabilitation Counselor.

13.2 Schedule Meeting with Regional BEP Business Consultant

If the Rehabilitation Counselor is satisfied that the client meets the minimum qualifications, the Counselor schedules a meeting with the Regional BEP Business Consultant. The Business Consultant will explain the BEP program, including training, licensure, types of facilities, realistic timetable for advancement and potential income levels.

Following the meeting with the Business Consultant, if the client still desires to pursue the BEP program and the counselor believes the client can succeed in the BEP program, the client is given the green light to complete the application.

13.3 Application Process



The client applies by completing the DBS-Form #005-Business Enterprise Program Application and submits completed application to the Rehabilitation Counselor along with all the required “proof.”

1. Documentation of US Citizenship (birth certificate, passport, or naturalization paperwork)
2. Current Florida ID
3. Documentation of High School Diploma or Equivalency
4. Documentation of Legal Blindness
5. Clear copy of Social Security Card
6. Physician’s Statement of Health

The Rehabilitation Counselor checks the packet to be sure that all required documents are included and sends the complete packet to the BEP Administrative Consultant at the State Office. The Administrative Consultant will review the paperwork to ensure all required documentation is included and is in order.

The applicant must now complete a level II background screening which includes fingerprinting. Rehabilitation Counselors will provide assistance and instruction about this process. Applicants must complete:

- a. DBS-BEP Form #001 Consent to Screening and Security Background Investigation
- b. DBS-BEP Form #002 Affidavit of Good Moral Character
- c. DBS-BEP Form #003 Notice of Client and Licensee Rights

DBS will pay for the background screening. Screening will be scheduled with the client by the BEP Administrative Consultant. The Administrative Consultant will use the provider currently being used by the Division. Background screening results are automatically sent to the State Office. The background screening will be reviewed to determine if there are any disqualifying offenses.

1. If the applicant does not have any disqualifying offenses after review of the background screening, the BEP Administrative Consultant will contact the Rehabilitation Counselor to inform them that the applicant



will be permitted to continue the application process.

2. If the applicant has disqualifying violations, they will be sent a letter from the BEP Administrative Consultant informing them that they are not eligible for the program and a copy will be sent to the Rehabilitation Counselor.

13.4 Assessment Interview

A. The BEP Administrative Consultant will set up the Assessment Interview with the applicant. The interview will take place via conference call and typically takes about one (1) hour. Members of the interview panel include:

1. BEP Regional Business Consultant.
2. Committee Chair and/or District Committee member representative.
3. BBE Bureau Chief and/or Operations Manager.
4. Members of the Training Subcommittee.

B. Applicants will be asked questions from a prepared list of questions. The purpose of this interview is for the panel to determine from an applicant's responses if the applicant is suited for and capable of functioning as a business manager. It will also allow the panel to explain the program and to clear up any misunderstandings or recent changes in the program of which the applicant should be Aware. The applicant will also be allowed to ask questions about the program, which will help them determine if the BEP program is for them. As a result of the interview, the applicant may be denied entry in the program, may be recommended with caution, or may be recommended or highly recommended. If there is a waiting list for training, those that are highly recommended will be placed at the top of the list regardless of when they applied.

13.5 After Recommendation Made

A. If the Interview Panel recommends the applicant for the BEP training program, the BEP Administrative Consultant will set up the next step of the assessment, a ten-day Work Experience (WE) for the applicant with a local BEP program vendor. The purpose of this exercise is to give the applicant on the job experience, which, first, will help them determine if this is the

vocation they want to commit to and do for a living and second, provide an environment where an experienced operator can assess them. The Work Experience operator will use:

1. DBS-BEP Form #004 - Work Experience Assessment Report, and
2. The DBS-BEP Form #006 - Work Experience Daily Check Sheet to record data related to the applicants work practices and skills.

This feedback will be used to counsel the applicant prior to and during the training if accepted.

B. The BEP Administrative Consultant will coordinate with the applicant, Rehabilitation Counselor, and the selected operator to schedule work experience. If a local operator is not available, it may be necessary for the applicant to travel to another town.

C. The BEP Administrative Consultant sets up the ten day WE which may consist of either ten days with one operator doing vending and food services, or two, 5-day work experiences, one with vending and one for food services (snack bar or cafeteria).

D. The applicant will be informed as to the attendance and dress code requirements for training by the BEP Administrative Consultant.

E. Applicants doing Work Experience will be paid \$14.00 per hour and the operator conducting the WE will be paid \$30.00 per day. Hotel accommodations and transportation will also be provided if needed.

After the applicant successfully completes the work experience, the BEP Administrative Consultant schedules them for the next available training class at the Career, Technology and Training Center in Daytona.

The Training Program includes the following two phases:

The six training modules are as follows:

1. Vending – 3 weeks

2. Business Startup – 2 weeks
3. Recordkeeping – 3 weeks
4. Food Safety – 2 weeks
5. Food Service – 3 weeks
6. Business Management – 3 weeks

Trainees will receive Food Service Certification during the Food Safety module. Client Services will pay any fees required. A final review and instruction on computer training is included with the training program.

Trainees may be provided \$150 per month Client Services for maintenance.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) may take between 4-10 weeks to complete. For someone entering the program with previous food service management or business management experience, it may be possible to successfully complete OJT in as little as four weeks. Customarily, trainees should expect to spend a minimum of eight to ten weeks in OJT.

Trainees are provided lodging and transportation plus a stipend of \$36 per day (if OJT is taking place outside of the client's home area), or \$500 per month for other expenses (if OJT is within the client's home area). The rate or stipend should be evaluated based on the participant's IPE.

Operators conducting the OJT are paid by Client Services funds from the District that the trainee is from in the amount of \$800.00 for weeks 4-6 (prorated for anything less than 4 weeks) and \$75 for each approved additional week (weeks 7-10).

For payments to be made to a vendor, OJT trainers need to submit an invoice to the VR counselor with an invoice number, date, dates of training and hours of training. The invoice must state that it was for training, and the trainee's name should be on it, as well as the amount to be paid. The OJT trainer must also complete BEP Form #011-BEP OJT Progress Report on the trainee. This form along with other relevant BEP forms and application are on the DBS intranet.

Once the applicant has successfully completed training, they may proceed to the placement phase of the program.



13.6 Placement Phase

A. The newly licensed client may apply at will for any vacant vending facility. Facility announcements are advertised on January 15, May 15, and September 15 on DBS' website - along with detailed application instructions and information regarding the subsequent interview.

Should the newly licensed client secure an interview, the Rehabilitation Counselor may financially assist with travel arrangements.

B. When a client is offered an initial Licensed Operator Facility Agreement to operate a BEP location, the Rehabilitation Counselor, with the assistance of the Regional BEP Consultant, will assess the need for and underwrite the following:

1. Incorporation Fees
2. General Liability Insurance – 3 months
3. Worker's Compensation Insurance – 3 months
4. Commercial Vehicle insurance for vending routes or interstate rest areas without storage – 3 months
5. Storage facility rental fee for the first month if a storage unit is deemed necessary for the operation of the facility.
6. State (DBPR), County and City License Fees
7. Relocation Assistance for up to two (2) times for a client within a five (5) year period.
8. Consultation/setup fees for accounting services.
9. Adaptive equipment such as talking cash register, talking bill identifier, etc. if needed.
10. A computer with any necessary adaptive technologies, if needed.

APPENDIX I: BEP Frequently Asked Questions

Q: If a client has previously been licensed by the BEP, do they require any re-training?

A: It depends on how long the client has been uninvolved or inactive in the Business Enterprise Program. If the licensed client has not held a Business Enterprise Program Licensed Operator Facility Agreement (LOFA) Type I or Type II within the past 5 years, they are required to go through the entire training process again.

Q: If a client has previously been licensed by the BEP, can portions of the training required, like On-the-Job training, be waived?

A: No. If a previously licensed client is required to go through the training program again, no portion can be waived.

Q: If a client was licensed in another State, can their license be transferred to Florida?

A: No. There is no licensure reciprocity among State Randolph-Sheppard programs. Such clients need to go through the entire training process. However, prior experience will accelerate the client's training.

Q: Can a client have their BEP Training Evaluation done at a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP)?

A: Yes. The District Administrator has a list of acceptable vocational evaluators throughout the state. The Career, Technology and Training Center is a great option if one cannot be found close to home.

Q: Can a client skip the classroom modular training offered at the Career, Technology and Training Center in Daytona Beach?

A: No. The classroom modular training is important to ensure the client has adequate preparation to enter a financial risk environment as an independent contractor, operating one of the BEP locations. This training is



mandatory unless the client successfully passes pre-tests (a score of 80% or better) on the content of each module. This is known as the CLEP process and is available for three of the six training modules (Food Safety, Business Startup, and Business Management). An individual may only utilize the CLEP process for one of the three components.

Q: Can a client who has been licensed and has been under a LOFA with the Business Enterprise Program within the last 5 years, go through training again if he or she feels they would benefit from it?

A: Yes. If the Client has been accepted for services again or is still a client, then re-training would be permissible from the Business Enterprise Program's viewpoint. It depends on classroom space availability. Perhaps, on the job training with another licensed vendor is more beneficial.

Q: How do I know which Business Enterprise Program Regional Consultant to call?

A: Unlike Client Services, BEP divides the State into 6 regions, instead of 10. The following correlates the BEP Regions and Participant Services' District Offices:

BEP Region 1- Pensacola, Panama City, Tallahassee District Offices
(Administrative Services and Consultant - Tallahassee State Office)

BEP Region 2 - Jacksonville and Gainesville District Offices
(Consultant - Jacksonville District Office)

BEP Region 3 - Orlando, Cocoa and Daytona Beach District Offices
(Consultant - Orlando District Office; BEP Instructors and BEP Food Service Training Staff - Daytona at the CTTC)

BEP Region 4 - Tampa, Lakeland, Palmetto and Ft. Myers District Offices
(Consultant - Lakeland District Office)

BEP Region 5 - West Palm Beach and Sunrise District Offices
(Consultant - Sunrise District Office)

BEP Region 6 - Miami District Office (Consultant - Miami District)

APPENDIX II: DEFINITIONS (34 CFR 361.5)(c)

Applicant:

An individual is an applicant for vocational rehabilitation services when they:

Complete and sign an agency application form or has otherwise requested services.

Provide information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility.

Complete the assessment process.

Apprenticeship Program

An apprenticeship program combines paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction. It is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where individuals obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, mentorship, and a portable credential.

Appropriate Modes of Communication (34 CFR 361.5(c)(4):

Specialized aids and supports that enable an individual with a disability to comprehend and respond to information that is being communicated. Appropriate modes of communication include, but are not limited to, the use of interpreters, open and closed-captioned videos, specialized telecommunications services and audio recordings, Brailled and large print materials, materials in electronic formats, augmentative communication devices, graphic presentations, and simple language materials.

Assistive Technology:

Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of an individual with a disability.

Assistive Technology Services:

Any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device, including:

The evaluation of the needs of an individual with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the individual in their training or work environment.

Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition by an individual with a disability of an assistive technology device.

Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices.

Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs.

Training or technical assistance for an individual with a disability or, if appropriate, the family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of the individual.

Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services), employers, or others who provide services, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of individuals with disabilities.

Bilateral Visual Impairment:

A visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after best possible correction.

Client Assistance Program at Disability Rights Florida:

A program that assists individuals who have concerns, difficulties or wish to appeal decisions made regarding their vocational rehabilitation program. CAP is funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. CAP also advises people with disabilities of the services and benefits available to them under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Community Rehabilitation Program (34 CFR 361.5(c)(7):

For the purposes of this definition the word program means an agency, organization or institution or unit of an agency, organization or institution that provides directly or facilitates the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, as well as other services to enable those individuals to maximize

their opportunities for employment. Such services include:

Assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs.

Orientation and mobility services for individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired.

Job development, placement, and retention services.

Evaluation or treatment of specific disabilities.

Rehabilitation Technology.

Supported Employment services and extended services.

Extended Employment.

Testing, fitting, or training in the use of prosthetic and orthotic devices.

Medical, psychiatric, psychological and social services including positive behavior management.

Speech, language, and hearing therapy.

Physical and occupational therapy.

Recreational therapy.

Services to family members, if necessary, to enable the applicant or eligible individual to achieve and employment outcome.

Personal assistance services.

Comparable Services and Benefits (34 CFR 361.5(c)(8):

Comparable services and benefits mean services and benefits that are:

Provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other Federal, State, or local public or private agencies by health insurance or by employee benefits.



Available to the individual at the time needed to achieve an employment outcome or initiate the vocational rehabilitation services in the individual's IPE.

Commensurate to the services that the individual would otherwise receive from the vocational rehabilitation agency.

Competitive Integrated Employment (34 CFR 361.5(c)(9)):

1. Is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment) and for which an individual is compensated at a rate that—
 - (A) Is not less than the higher of the rate specified in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) or the rate required under the applicable State or local minimum wage law for the place of employment;
 - (B) Is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and
 - (C) In the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and
 - (D) Is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees; and
2. Is at a location--
 - (A) Typically found in the community; and
 - (B) Where the employee with a disability interacts for the purpose of performing the duties of the position with other employees within the particular work unit and the entire work site, and, as appropriate to the work performed, other persons (e.g., customers and vendors), who are not individuals with disabilities (not including Assistant District Administrator personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with these persons; and

3. Presents, as appropriate, opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.

Diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments:

Diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments includes:

Corrective surgery or therapeutic treatment necessary to correct or substantially modify a physical or mental condition that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment but is of such a nature that such correction or modification may reasonably be expected to eliminate or reduce such impediment to employment within a reasonable length of time.

Necessary hospitalization in connection with surgery or treatment.

Prosthetic and orthotic devices.

Eyeglasses and visual services as prescribed by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws.

Special services (including transplantation and dialysis), artificial kidneys, and supplies necessary for the treatment of individuals with end-stage renal disease; and

Diagnosis and treatment for mental and emotional disorders by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws.

Employment Outcome (34 CFR 361.5(c)(15):

With respect to an individual, entering, advancing in, or retaining full-time or, if appropriate, part-time competitive integrated employment, as defined in §361.5(c)(9) (including customized employment, self-employment, telecommuting, or business ownership), or supported employment as defined in §361.5(c)(53), that is consistent with an individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice..

Extended Employment:

Work in a non-integrated or sheltered setting for a public or private nonprofit agency or organization that provides compensation in accordance

with the Fair Labor Standards Act and any needed support services to an individual with a disability to enable the individual to continue to train or otherwise prepare for competitive integrated employment, unless the individual, through informed choice, chooses to remain in extended employment.

Extended Services: (34 CFR 361.5(c)(19) and 363.6 (B) (iv)

As used in the definition of “Supported Employment,” are ongoing support services and other appropriate services that are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in Supported Employment that is provided by a State agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer, or any other appropriate resource, from funds other than funds received under 34 CFR part 361 or 363, after an individual with a most significant disability has made the transition from support provided by the designated State unit (DBS). DBS may provide extended services with funds under Parts 361 or 363 to youth with disabilities under the age of 25 for a period of up to four years.

Extreme Medical Risk (34 CFR 361.5(c)(20):

A probability of substantially increasing functional impairment or death if medical services, including mental health services, are not provided expeditiously.

IDEA:

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law enacted in 1990 and reauthorized in 2004. It is designed to protect the rights of students with disabilities by ensuring that everyone receives a free appropriate public education (FAPE), regardless of ability. Furthermore, IDEA strives not only to grant equal access to students with disabilities, but also to provide additional special education services and procedural safeguards.

Special education services are individualized to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities and are provided in the least restrictive environment. Special education may include individual or small group instruction, curriculum or teaching modifications, assistive technology, transition services and other specialized services such as physical, occupational, and speech therapy. These services are provided in accordance with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), which is

specifically tailored to the unique needs of each student.

Individual Who Is Legally Blind:

A person who has a bilateral eye condition resulting in central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective lenses or a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter or visual field subtends an angular distance of no greater than 20 degrees.

Individual with a Disability (34 CFR 361.5(c)(27):

Except in 34 CFR 361.5(c)(28), Is an individual—

Who has a physical or mental impairment.

Whose impairment 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.

Individual with a Significant Disability: (34 CFR 361.5(c)(30)

Is an individual with a disability who has a physical or mental impairment seriously limits one or more functional capacity (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and

Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period.

Individual with a Most Significant Disability: 34 CFR 361.5(c)(29)

Has a bilateral visual impairment or a combination of visual, physical, or mental impairments that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment and seriously limits two or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and

Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require at least four vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period (twelve months or more).



Individual's Representative (34 CFR 361.5(c)(31):

Any representative chosen by an applicant or eligible individual, including a parent, guardian, other family member, or advocate, unless a representative has been appointed by a court to represent the individual, in which case the court-appointed representative is the individual's representative.

Informed Choice:

Informed choice means the consumer:

- A. has meaningful options from which to choose;
- B. understands his or her abilities, capabilities and interests related to the employment outcome; and
- C. participates in a planning process with bureau staff which considers such issues as:
 - 1. Relevant factors regarding choices made in the rehabilitation process. This includes, but is not limited to, service provider effectiveness and consumer satisfaction, relative cost of service options and labor market trends; and
 - 2. Applicable laws, regulations, state plan provisions and policy which establish parameters within which choices must be made.

Institution of Higher Education:

A university, college, junior college, community college, vocational school, technical school or other postsecondary institution legally authorized to provide a program of education beyond secondary education

Integrated Setting (34 CFR 361.5(c)(32):

With respect to the provision of services, means a setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non-disabled individuals other than non-disabled individuals who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals.

With respect to an employment outcome, means a setting typically found in the community in which employees with disabilities interact for the purpose of performing the duties of the position, with other employees within the particular work unit and the entire work site, and, as appropriate to the work

performed, other persons (e.g., customers and vendors) who are not individuals with disabilities, (supervisory personnel and non-disabled individuals who are providing services to those employees with disabilities, to the same extent that employees without disabilities in comparable positions interact with these persons.

Maintenance (34 CFR 361.5(c)(34):

Maintenance means monetary support provided to an individual for expenses, such as food, shelter, and clothing, that exceed the normal expenses of the individual and that are necessitated by the individual's participation in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or the individual's receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under an individualized plan for employment.

The following are examples of expenses that meet the definition of maintenance. The examples are illustrative, do not address all possible circumstances, and are not intended to substitute for individual counselor judgment.

Example 1: The cost of a uniform or other suitable clothing that is required for an individual's job placement or job-seeking activities.

Example 2: The cost of short-term shelter that is required for an individual to participate in assessment activities or vocational training at a site that is not within commuting distance of an individual's home.

Example 3: The initial one-time costs, such as a security deposit or charges for the initiation of utilities that are required for an individual to relocate for a job placement.

Example 4: The costs of an individual's participation in enrichment activities related to that individual's training program.

One Stop Service:

Centers providing a variety of services including those related to employment at no cost, to businesses and job seekers. Services are publicly funded and remain driven by the needs of the local business community.

Ongoing Support Services (34 CFR 361.5(c)(37): As used in the definition of Supported Employment.

Services that are:

Needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in Supported Employment.

Identified based on a determination of the individual's needs as specified in an IPE; and

Furnished by DBS from the time of job placement until transition to extended services.

Must include an assessment of employment stability and provision of specific services or the coordination of services at or away from the work site that are needed to maintain stability based on:

At a minimum, twice-monthly monitoring at the work site of each individual in Supported Employment; or

Under special circumstances, especially at the request of the individual, in which the IPE provides for off-site monitoring, twice monthly meetings with the individual.

Must consist of:

Any particularized assessment supplementary to the comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs conducted prior to the development of the IPE.

The provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site.

Social skills training.

Regular observation or supervision of the individual.

Follow-up services including regular contact with the employers, the

individual, the family members, the guardians, advocates or authorized representative of the individual, and other suitable professional and informed advisors, to reinforce and stabilize the job placement.

Facilitation of natural supports at the work site.

Any other service identified in the scope of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals; or

Any service similar to the foregoing services.

Personal Assistance Services (34 CFR 361.5(c)(38):

A range of services provided by one or more persons designed to assist an individual with a disability to perform daily living activities on or off the job that the individual would typically perform without assistance if the individual did not have a disability. The services must be designed to increase the individual's control in life and ability to perform everyday activities on or off the job. The services must be necessary to the achievement of an employment outcome and may be provided only while the individual is receiving other vocational rehabilitation services. Such services include training, managing and supervising personal assistance services.

Physical or Mental Impairment (34 CFR 361.5(c)(40):

Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine; or

Any mental or psychological disorder such as intellectual disabilities, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

Post-employment Services (34 CFR 361.5(c)(41):

One or more of the services identified in 34 CFR 361.48(b) that are provided subsequent to the achievement of an employment outcome but before the client's case is closed and that are necessary for an individual to

maintain, regain, or advance in employment, consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

These services are available to meet rehabilitation needs that do not require a complex and comprehensive provision of services and, thus, should be limited in scope and duration. If more comprehensive services are required, then a new rehabilitation effort should be considered. Post-employment services are to be provided under an (amended) IPE; thus, a re-determination of eligibility is not required.

The provision of post-employment services is subject to the same requirements as the provision of any other vocational rehabilitation service. Post-employment services are available to assist an individual to maintain, regain, or advance in employment. These services are to be short term and not complex, such as orientation and mobility to a new site when the employer has relocated, an additional piece of equipment, etc.

Post-employment Services:

One or more vocational rehabilitation services that are provided subsequent to the achievement of an employment outcome and that are necessary for an individual to maintain, regain, or advance in employment, consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.

Potentially Eligible:

All students with disabilities.

Pre-Employment Transition Services:

Required activities available in collaboration with local education agencies to all students in the state who are eligible or potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

Referral:

To direct to a source or other agency for information or services.

Rehabilitation Engineering (34 CFR 361.5(c)(44):

The systematic application of engineering sciences to design, develop, adapt, test, evaluate, apply, and distribute technological solutions to



problems confronted by individuals with disabilities in functional areas, such as mobility, communications, hearing, vision, and cognition, and in activities associated with employment, independent living, education, and integration into the community.

Rehabilitation Technology (34 CFR 361.5(c)(45):

The systematic application of technologies, engineering methodologies, or scientific principles to meet the needs of, and address the barriers confronted by individuals with disabilities in areas that include education, rehabilitation, employment, transportation, independent living, and recreation. The term includes rehabilitation engineering, assistive technology devices, and assistive technology services.

Representative or Individual's Representative:

Any representative chosen by the consumer, as appropriate, including a parent, guardian, other family member, or advocate, unless a representative has been appointed by a court to represent the individual, in which case the court-appointed representative is the individual's representative.

Student with a Disability:

An individual with a disability in a secondary, postsecondary or other recognized education program who is:

- A. Between the ages of 16 and 21, and
- B. Eligible for, and receiving special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or
- C. An individual with a disability, for purposes of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Substantial Impediment to Employment (34 CFR 361.5(c)(52):

Systematic Alien Verification Entitlement (SAVE):

SAVE will provide fast, secure, and reliable immigration status information to assist DBS in maintaining its program integrity. SAVE will assist DBS in verifying immigration status but does not determine eligibility for actual DBS services. SAVE electronically verifies immigration status using three step process; initial verification, additional verification, and mail form G-845 to USCIS.



If DBS requests additional verification and completes all verification steps, including submitting a G-845 if prompted to do so, and the applicant believes his or her information in DHS records is incorrect, the applicant can seek a records correction. Applicants can visit www.uscis.gov/save and click the link entitled “How To Correct Your Records” for more information. The Bureau of Client Services will be establishing and maintaining the Division’s users; including adding or deleting users’ roles.

Substantial Impediment to Employment:

A physical or mental impairment (in light of attendant medical, psychological, vocational, educational, and other related factors) that hinders an individual from preparing for, entering into, engaging in, or retaining employment consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Supported Employment (34 CFR 361.5(c)(53):

(i) Supported employment means competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, or employment in an integrated work setting in which an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, is working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment that is individualized, and customized, consistent with the unique strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, including with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities—

(A) For whom competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred, or for whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and

(B) Who, because of the nature and severity of their disabilities, need intensive supported employment services and extended services after the transition from support provided by the designated State unit, in order to perform this work.

(ii) For purposes of this part, an individual with a most significant disability, whose supported employment in an integrated setting does not satisfy the criteria of competitive integrated employment, as defined in paragraph (c)(9) of this section is considered to be working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment so long as the individual can reasonably anticipate achieving competitive integrated employment—

(A) Within six months of achieving a supported employment outcome; or



(B) In limited circumstances, within a period not to exceed 12 months from the achievement of the supported employment outcome, if a longer period is necessary based on the needs of the individual, and the individual has demonstrated progress toward competitive earnings based on information contained in the service record.

Supported employment services (34 CFR 361.5(c)(54):

Ongoing support services, including customized employment, and other appropriate services needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, in supported employment that are—

- (i) Organized and made available, singly or in combination, in such a way as to assist an eligible individual to achieve competitive integrated employment;
- (ii) Based on a determination of the needs of an eligible individual, as specified in an individualized plan for employment;
- (iii) Provided by the designated State unit for a period of time not to exceed 24 months, unless under special circumstances the eligible individual and the rehabilitation counselor jointly agree to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment; and
- (iv) Following transition, as post-employment services that are unavailable from an extended services provider and that are necessary to maintain or regain the job placement or advance in employment.

Ticket to Work (TTW):

The TTW is a Social Security Administration (SSA) program available to individuals who qualify for social security disability benefits and want to work. SSA issues tickets that may be used at any employment network (EN) participant. TTW allows individuals to keep their benefits while exploring employment, receiving vocational rehabilitation services and gaining work experience. TTW is free and voluntary.

Transition Services (34 CFR 361.5(c)(55):

A coordinated set of activities for a student or youth with a disability—

- (i) Designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, competitive integrated employment, supported employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent

living, or community participation;

(ii) Based upon the individual student's or youth's needs, taking into account the student's or youth's preferences and interests;

(iii) That includes instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation;

(iv) That promotes or facilitates the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the student's or youth's individualized plan for employment; and

(v) That includes outreach to and engagement of the parents, or, as appropriate, the representative of such a student or youth with a disability.

Trial Work Experience:

An exploration of an applicant's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in realistic work situations to determine whether or not there is sufficient evidence that the applicant can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome. Trial work experiences include supported employment, on-the-job training, and other experiences in which necessary supports are provided in realistic work settings. The work experiences must be of sufficient variety and over a sufficient period to determine that either the applicant has the ability to work in competitive integrated employment or that there is clear and convincing evidence that due to the severity of their disability they cannot benefit from such services. A plan must be developed to provide these services and to assess the applicant's progress throughout the trial work experience.

Vocational Evaluation/Assessment Definitions:

Vocational Assessment:

Process of assessing an individual's vocational interests, liabilities and assets and providing occupational information to assist them in choosing appropriate training and occupational direction. Vocational evaluators use informational interview, file review, interest inventory, academic testing and aptitude testing such as computer evaluation or combinations thereof. The vocational evaluator provides a report upon completion of the assessment.

Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation:

A process conducted by a vocational evaluator referred by the District

Offices in the client's local area. The assessment process covers a period of time, usually 2 to 4 days, involving a multidisciplinary approach for the purpose of identifying individual characteristics, education, training and placement needs, serving as part of the basis for planning an individual's educational program, and which provides the individual with insight into vocational potential. Vocational Instruments include intellectual potential, psychological, interest inventories, personality, learning style, academic testing, aptitude, work samples and combinations of each depending on individualized requirements. The vocational evaluator provides a report upon completion of the assessment.

Situational Assessment or Simulated Job Station Evaluation:

The systematic observation process for evaluating work-related behaviors in a controlled or semi-controlled work environment. Although any type of task or situation may be used, real work is most often used to add relevance. The element distinguishing situational assessment from other types of assessment is the capability of systematically varying demands to evaluate work-related behaviors. Behaviors to be evaluated include social skills, quantity of work, work tolerance, following directions, interaction with coworkers, promptness, appearance, use of materials, and any other observations that would affect the ability to work in competitive integrated employment. The time of the evaluation can be from 2 to 5 days. A variety of workstations should be utilized if possible. A report is included from the evaluator and from the employer if a real work site is utilized.

Community Based Assessment:

An evaluation technique in which the individual performs actual job duties in a real work situation. Performance is supervised and evaluated by the employer in combination with evaluation staff. Evaluation criteria are provided by the evaluation unit based on the referral information from the district. There is a predetermined beginning and ending date for up to 3 work weeks. It is not necessarily intended to result in employment, but this is not restricted. The time can be from 1 to 3 weeks and includes all aspects of actual work experience. The Rehabilitation Counselor or CRP/vendor will use the work experience, including interest inventories, aptitude, and other assessments to determine the vocational goal. The individual is not paid, but expenses (such as transportation) can be covered. A report is provided by the evaluation unit and with supporting data from the employer.



Work-Based Learning Experience:

Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLEs) may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible. Work Based Learning is an educational approach or instructional methodology that uses the workplace or real work to provide students with the knowledge and skills that will help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities.

Work Experience:

A planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period, which can be paid or unpaid, as appropriate, and takes place in the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. Work experiences must include academic and occupational education. The educational component may occur concurrently or sequentially with the work experience.



APPENDIX



FAQ

RESOURCES

All forms and other information related to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program are located on the DBS intranet.

Forms: [Client Services Forms \(fldbs.net\)](http://fldbs.net)

Policies: [Client Services Policies - Florida Division of Blind Services \(fldoe.org\)](http://fldoe.org)

VR Program Information (items such as the Cooperative Agreement with DVR, Authorization Checklist, College Handbook, Guidelines for IPE Development, etc.):

[VR Program Forms and Information](#)

Code of Federal Regulations 34 (CFR Part 361): [eCFR :: 34 CFR Part 361 -- State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program](#)

Disability Rights Florida: 1-800-342-0823 or 1-800-346-4127 (TDD); www.disabilityrightsflorida.org

National Federation of the Blind (NFB): www.nfb.org

American Council of the Blind (ACB): www.acb.org

American Printing House for the Blind (APH): www.aph.org

Hadley School for the Blind: www.hadleyhelps.org

National Rehabilitation Association (NRA):
www.nationalrehab.org

Centers for Independent Living (CIL): www.floridacils.org

Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Commission:
<http://crrcertification.com/>

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) can assist with clients who may only have a unilateral eye condition. DBS and DVR can also have dual cases on deaf/blind clients, as well as clients with other dual diagnoses.
[Vocational Rehabilitation | Florida Department of Education \(rehabworks.org\)](http://www.rehabworks.org)

Lions Club may also be able to assist with eyeglasses, some eye medical, etc. Contact your local group.

Learning Ally (formerly known as RFB&D or Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic): www.learningally.org