



## Understanding Vocational Rehabilitation Services

### Introduction

In 1973, the U.S. Congress authorized the *Rehabilitation Act*. This act required all states offer vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to persons with disabilities to prepare them for the world of work. The act was amended by the *Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act of 2014* (WIOA), which added pre-employment transition service requirements for students with disabilities. This tip sheet will provide information about eligibility for VR services, the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), and what services are provided by state VR agencies. At the end of the tip sheet is a listing of VR agencies and contact information for the six states within RSA Region B-2.

### Who is eligible for VR Services?

Requirements for eligibility state a person must have a mental or physical disability that interferes with his or her ability to obtain, maintain, or advance in work that is consistent with their interests and abilities. *The Rehabilitation Act* states that the disability must be a “substantial impediment” to employment in order to be eligible for services. Any services that an individual receives from the VR agency must be connected to an employment goal. In addition, students who are considered “potentially eligible” under WIOA may receive all pre-employment transition services.

### An Individualized Plan for Employment

Once an individual is found eligible for VR services, an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) will be developed. The IPE must include an employment goal, services to be provided to help the person reach the goal, a timeline to meet the goal, who will provide the services, and how progress will be evaluated. The IPE must be reviewed each year and amended if needed. A comprehensive assessment may be

needed to help determine the employment goal and what services are needed to reach it.

## What services does VR offer?

Any services that VR provides must be to assist the individual to get ready for a job, find a job, keep a job, advance in a job, or regain a job. Some required pre-employment transition services for students include:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education
- Workplace readiness training to develop social and independent living skills
- Instruction in self-advocacy

Individuals who apply for VR services and are found eligible can receive many types of services. All services are customized for the individual's unique needs and circumstances. All decisions are through the counseling and guidance process between the VR Counselor and the customer. "Informed choice" is a principle followed by VR to ensure customers have all the information and can participate in decisions made on their cases. A few of the services offered include:

- Testing to determine if the person meets eligibility
- Assessment for determining functional limitations and vocational rehabilitation needs
- VR counseling and guidance
- Referral and other services necessary to assist applicants and eligible individuals to secure needed services from other agencies
- Paying for vocational and other training services, books, tools, and other training materials if other sources for paying for those services is not available, and based upon financial need
- Transportation if connected to getting VR services
- Interpreter services for those who are deaf or hard of hearing or deaf-blind
- Reader services, rehabilitation teaching services, and orientation and mobility services for individuals who are blind
- Providing tools, equipment, and uniforms for participation in training or the job



## How can you access VR services in your state?

Each state has slightly different action steps for applying for VR services, but all states require you to complete an application process. Below you will find contact information for each state's VR agency in RSA Region B-2. Many agencies suggest visiting their website for application procedures. Keep in mind that not everyone will be eligible for services and must complete an application process to determine eligibility.



### Alabama

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS)

<https://www.rehab.alabama.gov>

ADRS State Office  
602 S. Lawrence St.  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
P: 334-293-7500  
TFN: 800-441-7607



### Arkansas

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (under Workforce Services, a division of the Department of Commerce)

<https://www.arcareereducation.org/about/arkansas-rehabilitation-services>

ARS State Office  
1 Commerce Way, Suite 206  
Little Rock, AR 72202  
TFN: 1-800-330-0632  
P: 501-296-1600



### Louisiana

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (under the Office of Workforce Development, a division of the Louisiana Workforce Commission,)

[https://www2.laworks.net/WorkforceDev/LRS/LRS\\_Main.asp](https://www2.laworks.net/WorkforceDev/LRS/LRS_Main.asp)

State Office  
1001 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
P.O. Box 91297  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9297  
P: 225-219-2225  
TFN : 1-800-737-2958



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF  
REHABILITATION SERVICES  
*Opportunities for Independence*

## Mississippi

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

<https://www.mdrs.ms.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

State Office Location

1281 Highway 51

Madison, MS 39110

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 1698

Jackson, MS 39215

TFN: 1-800-443-1000



OKLAHOMA  
Rehabilitation Services

## Oklahoma

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

[www.okdrs.gov](http://www.okdrs.gov)

State Office

3535 NW 58<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 500

Oklahoma City, OK 73112

TFN: 1-800-487-4042



TEXAS  
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS  
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

## Texas

Texas Workforce Solutions - Vocational Rehabilitation Services

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-services>

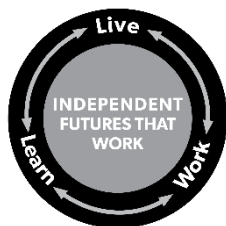
State Office

101 East 15<sup>th</sup> Street

Austin, Texas 78778-0001

P: 512-936-6400

This document was created by the Independent Futures that Work project to assist parents and youth with disabilities in understanding the *Rehabilitation Act* and services offered by state vocational rehabilitation agencies.



Independent Futures that Work is a project of the Alabama Parent Education Center in conjunction with the Parent Training and Information Centers from Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas

<https://independentfuturesthatwork.com>

