



Transition and Youth Career Services



Vocational Rehabilitation

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) provides services designed to improve economic opportunities for individuals with physical and mental disabilities through employment.

An individual who is eligible for services is one who has a physical or mental impairment which constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment and can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and requires VR services to obtain, retain, advance or regain competitive integrated employment.

Transition and Youth Career Services

Transition and Youth Career Services are planned services that help youth and students (in secondary education) with disabilities gain knowledge, skills, experience, and resources which help them transition to planned post-secondary outcomes.



Partnering with Education

- * Memorandum of Understanding between Mississippi Department of Education and MDRS
- * Cooperative Agreements between Local School Districts and Local VR District Offices



OVR/OVRB Counselors

- * Provide information to students, parents and school staff about VR policy and procedures as they relate to transition planning and VR outcomes
- * Work with the school district to appropriately identify students who may benefit from VR services
- * Participate in school-based transition activities, including conferences and meetings

OVR/OVRB Counselors

- * Participate in informal and formal presentations to parent groups
- * Provide consultation to local education staff regarding challenging or complex situations before or after referral
- * Contribute to the transition planning by communicating with school staff, so that students, parents, and school district staff can avail themselves of the counselors' expertise

OVR/OVRB Counselors

- * Attend local educational transition fairs and community job fairs to promote employment
- * Participate on Transition teams
- * Participate in local meetings that provide services to youth
- * Determine eligibility for VR services

OVR/OVRB Counselors

- * Counsel transitioning students and their parents about vocational and career planning and employment outcomes related to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) by reviewing existing school records related to the student
- * Advise students, parents, and school staff during the transition planning and service delivery process regarding current labor market information; community resources, including community-based services and the need for involvement by other state agencies

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

- * Signed into law on July 22, 2014 by President Obama
- * Replaced the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA)
- * Amends the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The law aims to increase opportunities, particularly for those individuals with disabilities who face barriers to employment, and invests in important connections between education and career preparation.

New Definitions

- 1.) Youth with a disability is someone who is 14 to 24 years old
- 2.) Student with a disability is someone who is 16 to 21 years old and is enrolled in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized educational program

Youth with a Disability

Youth with a disability are individuals between the ages of 14 to 24 years old. They are usually divided into two groups.

- * In-school youth are between the ages of 14 and 15 years old
- * Out-of-school youth are not older than 24 and have exited high school

Services for In-School Youth with Disabilities

- * Coordinate Work Incentives Planning and Assistance presentations for youth/students at school
- * Attend other area functions relevant to youth with disabilities (i.e. Job Fairs, Career Days)
- * Discuss different vocational and career options with youth

Services for In-School Youth with Disabilities

- * Consult with parent groups
- * Meet with youth, parents, and school personnel for the purpose of discussing the Vocational Rehabilitation program and disseminating information

Services to Youth

- * Promote self-awareness and self-esteem
- * Develop self-advocacy and self-empowerment skills
- * Explore and promote individual career opportunities. Services to youth age 14-15 will primarily take place in group settings and must be provided by the counselor at least once during the school year

Student with a Disability

Student with a disability is someone who is 16 to 21 years old and still in school, including post-secondary education. Once the individual exits school, he or she is no longer considered a student.

Provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services

VR must collaborate with local education agencies to provide *pre-employment transition services* for all students with disabilities in need of such services who are eligible or potentially eligible for services.

Pre-employment transition services must be provided to “students with a disability.”

Pre-Employment Transition Services Required Activities

VR is required to make available the following five pre-employment activities:

1.) Job Exploration Counseling

2.) Work-Based Learning Experiences

- * In school opportunities (work experience)
- * After school opportunities (jobs)
- * Nontraditional opportunities (internships or apprenticeships)

Pre-Employment Transition Services Activities Required

3.) Workplace Readiness Training

- * To develop soft skills
- * To develop or enhance independent living skills

4.) Counseling on Post-Secondary Education (PSED) or Training Opportunities

5.) Instruction in Self-Advocacy

- * May involve peer-mentoring

VR Process for Youth and Students

- * Referral for services
- * Community outreach meetings (with parents)
- * Application taken for services
- * Eligibility is established
- * Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) Development
- * Postsecondary Education, Training, Career Engagement, etc.
- * Employment Outcome

Who Should Be Referred

Youth and students with a documented disability

- * Receiving services under IDEA (IEP)
- * On a 504 Plan
- * Who have Other Health Impairments (OHI)
- * Who have a Sensory Impairment

When to Refer

- * Referral information should be received around the age of 14-16
- * Application for VR services should be taken during final two years of school
- * Individual Plan of Employment (IPE) should be developed as early as possible within the final two years of school
- * May be referred during post secondary education (PSED)

Student Documentation Needs for VR Eligibility

- * Complete Assessment Team Report (original psychological evaluation)
- * Current Re-evaluation Form within the last three years
- * Current IEP or current available 504 Plan
- * I-9 information for students who participate in paid work at a CRP or through VR programs
- * Medical or psychological records for students who are not receiving services under IDEA or when such conditions are cited

Pre-Employment Transition Coordination

- * Attending IEP meetings, when invited
- * Attending PCP meetings, when invited
- * Working with schools to coordinate and ensure the provision of pre-employment transition services
- * Working with local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, and employers to help develop:
 - * Internships
 - * Summer employment
 - * Apprenticeships

A Student May Qualify for the Following after Applying for VR Services

- * On-Campus Work Experience
- * Assistance with PSED Training
- * Community Rehabilitation Referral and Services
- * Career Placement Opportunities
- * Etc.

Present Contact Information

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