



OKLAHOMA
Rehabilitation Services

Your Rights and Responsibilities

What You Need to Know as a Job Seeker using Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired





OKLAHOMA Rehabilitation Services

About Us

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services' (DRS) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) help Oklahomans with disabilities to prepare for, obtain, keep or advance in jobs. VR programs are also linked with a network of other job training, education and employment services located at Workforce Oklahoma Center locations across the state.

Oklahoma Department of
Rehabilitation Services
State Office
3535 N.W. 58th Street, Suite 500
Oklahoma City, OK 73112-4824
Toll Free Office Locator:
800-487-4042
Phone: 405-951-3400
Toll Free: 800-845-8476
Fax: 405-951-3529
www.okdrs.gov



About this Book

This publication specifies your rights and responsibilities and VR/SBVI responsibilities in helping you. Though there is no section specifically titled "Your Rights," they are included in the text in several sections of the book. If you have questions, your VR/SBVI counselor can provide answers.

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Introduction to VR and SBVI services

What is Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)?

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services' (DRS) **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** and **Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI)** help Oklahomans with disabilities to prepare for, obtain, keep or advance in jobs. The basic vocational rehabilitation (VR) services are counseling and guidance with job placement. Other services compensate for, correct or prevent disability-based barriers to employment.

Programs offered by the divisions are supported by federal (79 percent) and state (21 percent) funds.

VR programs are also linked with a network of other job training, education and employment services located at Workforce Oklahoma centers across the state.

Note: VR means general vocational rehabilitation services provided by both divisions. VR refers to the **Vocational Rehabilitation Division services**. For more help with the definitions of **green** highlighted words, please see Vocational Rehabilitation Definitions on page 23.

How do VR programs work?

VR programs empower individuals with disabilities to improve employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence and integration into society. As a result of VR services, thousands whose disabilities kept them from working become taxpayers each year, eliminating or reducing their need for disability benefits and social assistance.

What kind of services can clients get?

Eligible clients may receive vocational, medical or psychological assessments; career counseling and guidance; physical and mental restoration to improve employment opportunities; rehabilitation equipment and devices; **supported employment**; vocational training; college education; on-the-job training; job placement assistance; and

specialized services for people who are blind, Deaf, hard of hearing or Deaf/Blind, and those with speech impairments.

High school-age students with disabilities can get a head-start on job training and work experience through **Transition: School-to-Work** programs offered free of charge by **VR and SBVI**. Students may receive services – such as vocational counseling and guidance, vocational assessment, work adjustment training, work study, on-the-job training, **supported employment** and job placement assistance – that boost their confidence, help them discover strengths and improve skills needed to succeed on the job.

Who is eligible?



You are **eligible** for vocational rehabilitation services if you have a physical or mental impairment that results in a barrier to employment, and you require VR services to prepare for, obtain, keep or advance at work.

There must be a chance you can benefit from our services in terms of an **employment outcome**. **DRS** assumes that an individual with a disability who wants to work can benefit from VR services unless evidence indicates the disabilities are too significant.

Applicants receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are presumed to be **eligible** for VR services if they intend to achieve employment outcomes.

What if I need assistance to make services available?

All **VR/SBVI** programs and services must be accessible to you. If your disability limits mobility, hearing or sight, for example, VR/SBVI will, to the maximum extent possible, provide the assistance you need to participate fully in your VR program. Assistance will be provided in your preferred method of communication or native language, or that of your family member or other person representing you. This may include written materials in braille, large print, electronic file or audio versions; sign or foreign language interpreters; offices accessible to those with mobility disabilities; or other technology or assistance.

What do VR services cost?

Some services — such as medical examinations to determine if you are **eligible** for services, vocational counseling and job placements — are always provided at no charge to you. You may be asked to share the cost of some other services, depending on your income and financial resources. Your counselor can provide a list of services available at no charge.

When can VR/SBVI provide medical services?

When assistance is not available from another source, **VR/SBVI** can provide diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments when these services are needed for **clients** to prepare for, obtain, keep or advance at work.

How do I apply for services?

Individuals may apply at VR/SBVI field offices located throughout Oklahoma. To contact the office nearest to you, telephone our toll-free hotline at 800-487-4042 or telephone the **DRS** State Office toll free at 800-845-8476. Visit DRS online at www.okdrs.gov or consult the state government web pages online. Spanish speaking individuals may call 1-800-523-1565. Oklahomans can also submit a self-referral for services online and view the status of their referral by going to oklahoma.gov/okdrs/client-portal.html.

What is the Client Assistance Program (CAP)?

Client Assistance Program is an advocacy program, which is not part of DRS. CAP staff can help you communicate concerns to VR/SBVI and help you work out disagreements through administrative, **mediation**, legal and other solutions. For more information, contact:

Client Assistance Program
Office of Disability Concerns
11212 N. May, Suite 103
Oklahoma City, OK 73120-6335
Phone: 405-521-3756
E-mail: odc@odc.ok.gov
Website: www.ok.gov/odc/C.A.P./index.html

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Steps in the Vocational Rehabilitation Process

1. Applying for VR services

2. Evaluating your disability

3. Determining your eligibility

4. Planning your services

5. Receiving VR services

6. Getting a job

Step 1: Applying for VR Services

Any person with a disability may apply for **VR** or **SBVI** services. To contact the office nearest to you, call our toll-free hotline at 800-487-4042, or call the **DRS** State Office toll free at 800-845-8476. Spanish speaking individuals may call 800-523-1565. You may also visit DRS at www.okdrs.gov or consult the state government pages online. Tribal members may also apply with participating tribal **VR** programs. See page 17 for more information.

The staff will arrange for you to make an application and meet with a vocational rehabilitation counselor so you can provide the information needed for VR/SBVI to determine if you are **eligible** for services. You can speed up the application process by bringing or emailing current medical, psychological and educational records or other information about your disability with you to the appointment.

During the first interview, the counselor will explain the rehabilitation process and gather information about you. You may also register to vote or change your voter registration information when applying for or receiving services from a VR/SBVI office.

Step 2: Evaluating your disability

VR/SBVI must evaluate your disability to find out if you are **eligible**.

You may be asked to help get medical or other records. If additional tests are needed, VR/SBVI will pay for the tests required to determine your eligibility. The purposes of the evaluation are to gather diagnostic information and explore your background, abilities, disability-related barriers to employment and rehabilitation needs to help you prepare for employment.

All information is confidential and will be used only for vocational rehabilitation, unless you have signed a release form giving written consent, or in situations where the law requires VR/SBVI to release the information.

Step 3: Determining your eligibility

VR/SBVI has 60 days from the time you apply to determine whether you are **eligible** for services unless you and your counselor agree to a specific extension.

If you are **eligible**, you will be assigned to a **priority group** based on the significance of your disability. Sometimes there is a waiting period — called an order of selection. All **priority groups** can be under an order of selection. **Applicants** in **priority groups** may have to wait until funds are available to pay for their services. Those who have completed an **Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)** before an order of selection begins will continue to receive services under the IPE. If there is an order of selection when you apply for services, your counselor will explain it to you.

Even when you are not **eligible** for **VR** services or when you are placed on a waiting list, **VR/SBVI** will provide **vocational rehabilitation** information and referral assistance to help you obtain services from other sources.

VR counselors will refer you to other federal or state programs that may help with your employment needs, including those located at Oklahoma Works career centers.

Step 4: Planning your services

If you are **eligible**, your counselor will provide information about choices you have for developing an Individualized Plan for Employment. This is a plan of VR services that you will follow to get or keep suitable employment in an appropriate career. Your IPE is based on your strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice, and must be approved by DRS according to Rehabilitation Act requirements.

You may write the plan yourself, work with your counselor or use the assistance of someone else who is willing to help. The plan must be in writing. If you decide to write the IPE yourself, your counselor will explain what items should be included and what assistance is available to help you. Your plan must be completed within 90 days of the determination of eligibility unless you and your counselor agree to a specific extension.

Information will be provided to you about types and costs of services, length of time services are expected to last, who is available to provide services and qualifications of service providers.

As part of the planning process, you will have the opportunity, with the help of your counselor, to choose an appropriate employment goal, the VR services to be provided under your plan, the businesses or companies that will provide the services and the methods for providing those services. You may be required to participate in assessment activities to help gather

the information needed to identify your interests, capabilities, strengths and rehabilitation needs.

Your counselor will do a financial status determination based on your income before any services are provided. The purpose is to find out if you will need to share the cost of some services. Some services are available to all **eligible** individuals without charges — for example, evaluations or other diagnostic assessments used to determine eligibility and rehabilitation needs; vocational counseling and guidance; information and referral to other sources; job search; on-the-job training and placement. Your counselor can provide a list of other services available to you at no charge. Those receiving Social Security disability benefits do not have to share costs for their rehabilitation programs.

After you and your counselor sign the **IPE**, you will get a copy. The plan will be provided in large print, braille, electronic or audio versions at your request. To the maximum extent possible, the plan will be provided in your native language or method of communication, or that of your family member or other person representing you.

At least once each year, you and your counselor will review your financial status and the IPE to be sure it is still the best plan for you. If your needs change while you are in **vocational rehabilitation**, your plan may need to be changed. You may ask for a review of your plan at any time.

The IPE is like a road map of **VR** services to help you prepare for, obtain, keep or return to suitable employment in a career based on your interests, strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities. Please feel free to ask questions. Your participation in planning and carrying out your VR program is critical to your success.

Step 5: Receiving VR services

Many different services are available to help **clients** reach their employment goals. Your VR services will probably be different from those received by other **clients** because the services outlined in IPEs are based on individual needs and goals.



Medical, psychological and other assessments are used to determine eligibility, abilities, disability-related barriers to employment and rehabilitation needs.



Vocational evaluation, counseling and career planning guidance are provided by counselors to **clients** throughout the rehabilitation process.



Information and referral help individuals get appropriate services from other agencies.



Employment services, including job search, placement and follow-up services, help clients obtain and keep suitable employment in their chosen careers.



Assistive Technology is any item, piece of equipment or product system used to maintain or improve the ability of people with disabilities to prepare for employment and function more effectively in the workplace, or any service that assists individuals in selecting, obtaining or using an **assistive technology** device.



Training includes vocational, post-secondary education, on-the-job, personal and vocational adjustment training, job search skills development and job coaching.



Diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental disabilities may be provided to enhance clients' employment opportunities when services are not available through health insurance or other benefits.



Maintenance helps pay for expenses, beyond a person's normal living expenses, that are necessary to enable the person to participate in **VR** assessments or services.



Transportation, including training in the use of public transportation, is provided in connection with other services needed to reach employment goals.



Instructional services, such as rehabilitation teaching and orientation and mobility services, assist individuals who are blind.



Self-employment programs help individuals who want to work for themselves or operate their own businesses.



Personal assistance services are intended to help an individual with a disability perform daily living activities on or off the job. These services can be provided when necessary to enable a person to participate in vocational rehabilitation services and achieve an **employment outcome**.



Transition services help high school students with disabilities prepare for and reach employment and other post-school goals.



Supported employment assists individuals with significant physical, emotional, intellectual or multiple disabilities with employment in the community.



Specialized programs assist clients who are blind, Deaf, hard of hearing, Deaf-blind and individuals with speech impairments, significant disabilities and those who require independent living services.

Step 6: Getting a job

Your counselor will assist you in finding a job. We also have employment specialists who work with counselors and potential employers to match qualified clients with suitable employment.

Please let your counselor know when you start working at a new job. It's a good idea to keep in touch so your counselor can help with any problems. Generally, your **VR** case will be closed after you have worked successfully for 90 days.

VR/SBVI Responsibilities

We are committed to treating individuals with disabilities fairly and with respect. As an **applicant** and as a **client**, if you are **eligible** for services, you can expect **VR/SBVI** to:



Contact you by phone or in person within 30 days if you are referred for services or ask VR/SBVI about services.



Evaluate you for, and provide services, if you are eligible, without regard to your race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability.



Determine whether you are eligible to receive services, generally within 60 days. If you are legally blind, you will also be referred to a rehabilitation teacher to find out if you are eligible for rehabilitation teaching services.



Include you as a full participant in decisions about your **vocational rehabilitation**.



Look for services and benefits that are available to you through other government programs. Even when another program can provide a service, DRS can pay for the VR service if using the other program would delay your progress toward employment or delay services when you are at medical risk.



Provide relevant information so that you can make informed choices about your program.



Authorize services for you according to your **IPE**.



Notify you in writing as soon as possible about any negative decision concerning your case.



Inform you of your right to a **fair hearing** or **mediation** when you disagree with decisions about your case, and refer you to the CAP for help in resolving concerns you may have about your VR case. See page 21 for more information.

Your Responsibilities

You also have responsibilities as an **applicant** or **client**. To help make your **vocational rehabilitation** a success, you should:



Provide information and be available to complete the assessment process to find out if you are **eligible** for services.



Be on time and keep appointments with **VR/SBVI** staff, doctors and others. Call in advance or as soon as possible if you cannot come to an appointment.



Follow the advice of doctors and other medical professionals.



Apply for and use benefits, services and additional sources of funding — such as education grants, public welfare programs and private insurance — to help pay for your VR services if other funding is available to you.



Participate with your counselor in developing your **IPE**, including participating in assessments needed to determine your needs and strengths.



Make progress toward completing the steps outlined in your IPE in order to reach your employment goal.



Provide enrollment documents to your counselor, if your IPE includes educational and training services. When your plan includes college, provide enrollment documents to your counselor before the college's designated add/drop deadline.



Attend education or training classes on a regular basis and maintain a cumulative 2.0 grade point average based on a 4.0 scale, if your IPE includes these services.



Review your IPE with your counselor at least once per year and participate in making revisions to the plan when needed.



Inform your counselor of changes in your address, financial status or other program-related changes.



Abstain from drug and alcohol abuse. Refusal or failure to cooperate will be considered reasonable cause to end services.



Work with your counselor to get or keep suitable employment when your other services are completed.

Appealing Decisions

You have a right to discuss a problem or concern with your counselor at any time during your **Vocational Rehabilitation** program. Please call for an appointment. Most concerns or problems can be worked out between the two of you.

If you are not satisfied with a decision about your case, you have the right to due process, which means you can get decisions evaluated by department management in an **administrative review**, resolved through **mediation** or reviewed at a **fair hearing**.



CAP staff can help you communicate concerns to **VR/SBVI** and assist you with administrative, mediation, legal and other solutions.

The Appeal Process

1. If you are not satisfied with any decision by VR/SBVI, which affects your case, you have 30 days to make a written request for a Fair Hearing. The request may be sent to your local VR/SBVI office or directly to the Hearings Coordinator in the State Office:

VR/SBVI Hearings Coordination
Department of Rehabilitation Services
3535 N.W. 58th Street, Suite 500
Oklahoma City, OK 73112-4824
Phone: 405-951-3400
Toll Free: 800-845-8476

2. If you ask, the local office will help you complete your request and give you information from your case record. Services being provided under an **IPE** will not be stopped, delayed or reduced because you have requested a Fair Hearing. You have the right to be represented by another person, including a lawyer, at your own expense. You may want to ask CAP (see page 6) for help in preparing your appeal. If you do not request a Fair Hearing within 30 days, you will lose the right to appeal the decision.
3. VR/SBVI will start an **administrative review** to try to work out the disagreement, but the review cannot be used to delay or deny

mediation or a fair hearing. You will get a letter explaining the decision resulting from the administrative review. If the problem is solved, you do not have to have a fair hearing.

4. When you ask for a fair hearing, you and VR/SBVI can use mediation to find a workable solution if both parties agree. Mediation cannot be used to delay or deny a fair hearing or other right. The department will pay mediation costs. The mediation session will be scheduled in a timely manner at a location as convenient to you as possible. Discussions will be confidential. If you agree to a solution, it will be written in a case record, and you will be provided a copy. You do not have to go to a fair hearing.
5. A fair hearing must be held within 60 days from the date a "Request for Fair Hearing" form is received by the VR/SBVI hearings coordinator, unless you agree to a solution or to a longer period of time. The fair hearing is a formal meeting with an impartial hearing officer. At the fair hearing you or your representative and VR/SBVI will present your problem or concern. You will receive a letter from the impartial hearing officer with a decision within 30 days after the fair hearing.
6. You can request a review of the impartial hearing officer's decision within 20 days by contacting the VR/SBVI hearings coordinator. Your review request will be sent to the governor's office or its designee. A written decision will be provided within 30 days of your review request.
7. If you are not satisfied with the decision of the governor's office or its designee, you can bring a civil action asking a state court or district court to review the decision. The last decision of the governor's office or its designee will be implemented while the court reviews your case.



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Other Helpful Resources

ABLE Tech makes **assistive technology** devices and services more available and accessible to individuals with disabilities of all ages and their families. ABLE Tech accomplishes this by providing **assistive technology** through a short-term equipment loan program, AT demonstration centers, re-utilization of AT through the ABLE Tech Equipment Exchange and a low interest bank loan for AT. ABLE Tech provides information and referral services along with training on various AT topics.

Oklahoma ABLE Tech
1514 West Hall of Fame
Stillwater, OK 74078-2026
Phone: 405-744-9748
Toll Free/TTY: 800-257-1705
Fax: 405-744-2487
Email: abletech@okstate.edu
Website: www.okabletech.org



American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs assist eligible Native Americans with disabilities in becoming employed through programs offered by a number of tribal nations in Oklahoma. **The Department of Rehabilitation Services** has a tribal liaison who provides technical assistance to the program. Because information may change, please visit oklahoma.gov/okdrs/job-seekers/drs-programs/tribal-vr.html for the latest contact information.

DRS Tribal Liaison
1802 NW Ferris Avenue
Lawton, OK 73507-5625
Phone: 580-585-4200
Fax: 580-585-4232

Apache Tribe Vocational Rehabilitation Program
P. O. Box 1330,
Anadarko, OK 73005-1220
Phone: 405-247-7494
Fax: 405-247-9872
E-mail: apachendnvr1@yahoo.com
Website: www.apachetribe.org

Cherokee Nation, Vocational Rehabilitation
17657 S. Muskogee Ave., Tahlequah, OK 74464-5492
P. O. Box 948, Tahlequah, OK 74465-0948
Phone: 918-453-5004
Toll Free: 800-256-4415
Fax: 918-458-4482
E-mail: brenda-fitzgerald@cherokee.org
Website: www.cherokee.org/all-services/career-services/vocational-rehabilitation-program

Cheyenne and Arapaho, Vocational Rehabilitation
100 Red Moon Circle, Concho, OK 73022
P. O. Box 167, Concho, OK 73022-0038
Phone: 405-422-7617
Toll Free: 800-247-4612
Fax: 405-422-8213
E-mail: caaivr@cheyenneandrapaho-nsn.gov
Website: www.cheyenneandrapaho-nsn.gov/labor/vocational-rehabilitation-program

Chickasaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program
910 Colony Drive, Ada, OK 74820
Phone: 580-559-0815
Toll Free: 888-436-0553
Fax: 580-436-0830
E-mail: vocrehab@chickasaw.net
Website: www.chickasaw.net/vocrehab

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program
403 Chahta Circle, Hugo, OK 74743-3859
P. O. Box 88, Hugo, OK 74743-0088
Phone: 580-642-6007, Toll Free: 800-522-6170
E-mail: ddavenport@choctawnation.com
Website: www.choctawnation.com/services/vocational-rehabilitation



Comanche Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program

P. O. Box 908, Lawton, OK 73502

Phone: 580-492-3605

Fax: 580-699-7241

E-mail: matilda.lomavaya@comanchenation.com

Website: comanchenation.com/departments/career-educational-programs/vocational-rehabilitation

Delaware Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

7249 S. Western, Suite 204, Oklahoma City, OK 73139-2011

Phone: 405-632-3749

Toll Free: 877-297-3139

Fax: 405-632-9753

E-mail: rallen@delawarenation-nsn.gov

Website: <https://www.delawarenation-nsn.gov/vocational-rehabilitation-2>

Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma, Vocational Rehabilitation

335588 E. 750th Rd., Perkins, OK 74059

P. O. Box 728, Perkins, OK 74059-0728

Phone: 405-547-2402

Toll Free: 888-336-4692

Fax: 405-547-1090

E-mail: rbaker@iowanation.org

Website: www.bahkhoje.com/native-services/human-services

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

401 S. Woody Guthrie St., Okemah, OK 74859

P. O. Box 489, Okemah, OK 74859-0468

Phone: 918-623-1197

Toll Free: 888-367-2332

Fax: 918-623-2796

E-mail: edelacruz@mcn-nsn.gov

Website: www.muscogeenation.com/vocational-rehabilitation

Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, Vocational Rehabilitation

P. O. Box 729, Anadarko, OK 73005

Phone: (405) 247-2425, Ext. 148

Fax: 405-247-2429

E-mail: vocrehab@wichtatribe.com



Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are consumer-controlled, nonresidential, private, nonprofit agencies that provide access to a range of services, programs, activities, resources and facilities for individuals with significant disabilities. The main services include information and referral, independent living skills training, transition assistance from nursing homes and other institutions, peer counseling, and individual and systems advocacy. Other services include helping individuals at risk of institutionalization to remain in their own homes in the community and aid in the transition of youth with disabilities into their life after postsecondary education.

Ability Resources
110 West 7th Street, Suite 200
Tulsa, OK 74119
Phone: 918-592-1235
Fax: 918-592-5651
E-mail: clawson@abilityresources.org
Website: www.abilityresources.org

Progressive Independence
121 N. Porter Ave.
Norman, OK 73071-5834
Phone: 405-321-3203
Toll Free/TTY: 800-801-3203
Fax: 405-321-7601
E-mail: jlhughes@progind.org

Oklahomans for
Independent Living
201 E. Cherokee Avenue
McAlester, OK 74501
Phone: 918-426-6220
V/TDD 918-426-6220
Fax: 918-426-3245
E-mail: info@oilok.org
Website: www.oilok.org

Sandra Beasley
Independent Living Center
705 S. Oakwood Road, Suite B1
Enid, OK 73703-6276
Phone/TTY: 580-237-8508
Fax: 580-233-6403
E-mail: sbilcdirector@coxinet.net
Website: www.sbilc.com

Client Assistance Program (CAP) informs and advises applicants and clients about the vocational rehabilitation process and services available under the federal Rehabilitation Act, including services provided by VR and SBVI. CAP staff can help you communicate concerns to VR/SBVI and assist you with administrative, mediation, fair hearing, legal and other solutions.

Client Assistance Program
Office of Disability Concerns
P.O. Box 25352
Oklahoma City, OK 73125-6335
Phone: 405-522-6702
E-mail: william.ginn@odc.ok.gov
Website: www.ok.gov/odc/C.A.P./index.html

Oklahoma ABLE Tech Device Reutilization Program — Oklahoma ABLE Tech has partnered with the Oklahoma Health Care Authority to provide the Oklahoma ABLE Tech Device Reutilization Program. The program is designed to reuse durable medical equipment no longer needed and reassign it to Oklahoma residents who are in need at no cost.

The program retrieves donated equipment; sanitizes and refurbishes devices returning DME to peak performance; works with vendors to repair equipment if needed to ensure quality; and reassign DME to the best matched eligible client.

Oklahoma ABLE Tech Device Reutilization Program
4301 Will Rogers Parkway, Ste. 950
Oklahoma City, OK 73108
Phone: 405-967-6010, Voice/TTY: 833-431-9706 (Stillwater)
Fax: 405-967-6011
Email: atreuse@okstate.edu
Website: www.okabletech.org/guide-to-all-services/device-reutilization

Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council (ORC), in partnership with DRS, develops and reviews state goals and priorities in regard to standards of services provided to people with disabilities. Members of the council are appointed by the governor.

The mission of ORC is to facilitate consumer education and empowerment and to assure services are of high quality and lead to employment of individuals with disabilities within the state of Oklahoma.

Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council
3535 N.W. 58th Street, Suite 500
Oklahoma City, OK 73112-4824
Phone: 405-951-3579
Toll Free: 800-569-7974
Fax: 405-951-3532
E-mail: orc@okstate.edu
Website: orc.okstate.edu



Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) jointly develop a state plan for independent living services for Oklahomans with significant disabilities. SILC works with **DRS** and the Centers for Independent Living to accomplish goals in the plan.

Oklahoma Statewide Independent Living Council
Sidna Madden, Executive Director
6108 NW 63rd Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73132
405-888-0068
Email: smadden@oksilc.org
Website: www.oksilc.org

Oklahoma Works is the state's workforce development system created to foster job growth, link Oklahomans to employment opportunities and build a productive workforce that meets employers' needs. The system operates regional career centers where job seekers can go for assistance with training, job search and information on job openings. Partner agencies include the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Oklahoma Department of Human Services and Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services.



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www.oklahomaworks.gov

Definitions

Administrative Review: An internal process used by the Vocational Rehabilitation or the Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired to work out a disagreement when a client is not satisfied with a decision that affects a case. Cannot be used to delay or deny a fair hearing or mediation.

Applicant: A person who has requested vocational rehabilitation services and has provided information needed to determine eligibility. Must be available to complete the assessment process.

Assistive Technology (AT): An item, piece of equipment or product system used to maintain or improve the ability of people with disabilities to function more effectively, or any service that assists individuals in selecting, obtaining or using an assistive technology device.

Client: An eligible individual who is receiving vocational rehabilitation or other services provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation or the Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired through the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services.

DRS: See Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): A division of the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services. Assists Oklahomans who have physical or mental disabilities in preparing for and getting employment, except those with vision impairments who are served by the Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Eligible: Qualified to receive vocational rehabilitation services. To be eligible, an individual must have a physical, mental or visual disability that is a substantial and continuing barrier to employment and be able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services by achieving an employment outcome. The individual must require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, obtain, keep or advance in employment.

Employment Outcome: Full-time or part-time employment in the community at the same wage and benefits paid to others for similar work; supported employment; self-employment; or other employment in a setting where people with and without disabilities can interact. Must match an individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.

Fair Hearing: A review by an **impartial hearing officer** requested by a **client** who is not satisfied with a **Vocational Rehabilitation** or **Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired** decision.

Impartial Hearing Officer: An individual who presides over a Fair Hearing, reviews the issues and makes a decision.

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE): A written plan developed by a **client** and a vocational rehabilitation counselor to outline all the services needed to obtain quality employment that pays a living wage and offers a chance for advancement.

Mediation: A process that uses an independent, qualified mediator to work with the **client** and the agency to develop a solution that is agreeable to both because a **client** is not satisfied with **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** or **Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI)** decision affecting his or her case. Offered as an option if a **client** requests a fair hearing. Cannot be used to delay or deny a fair hearing or other right.

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS): A state agency that provides assistance to Oklahomans with disabilities through vocational rehabilitation, employment, independent living, residential and outreach education programs and the determination of medical eligibility for disability benefits.

Order of Selection: Implemented after consultation with the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council when the Department of Rehabilitation Services cannot serve everyone eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation or **Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired** assistance. **Clients** with existing **Individualized Plans for Employment** are not affected. New **applicants** in some **priority groups** may be placed on waiting lists until funds are available to pay for their services. **VR** and **SBVI** continue to process new applications, gather diagnostic information and assign priority groups based on the significance of an applicant's disability. When funds are available to serve applicants in a **priority group**, **VR** and **SBVI** contact each applicant on a first-come, first-served basis according to the individual's application date.

Priority Groups: Three categories indicate the significance of **eligible clients'** disabilities. During an order of selection, the groups are used to prioritize services so that those who have disabilities that are the most significant barriers to employment are served first.

Priority Group 1 – Most Significant: Eligible individuals with the most significant barrier to employment, including a mental or physical disability resulting in serious limitations in three or more functions. They require multiple services over a long time, usually six months or more. Functions include mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance and work skills.

Priority Group 2 – Significant: Eligible individuals with significant disabilities having serious limitations in one, but not more than two, functions who require multiple services over a long time, usually six months or more.

Priority Group 3 – Not Significant : Eligible individuals with disabilities that are not significant barriers to employment.

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI): A division of the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services. Assists Oklahomans who are blind or have significant visual impairments. SBVI staff also provides services for Oklahomans who are Deaf-Blind. People qualify for the services if they have both of the following: Legal blindness or progressive visual disabilities that will result in legal blindness, and severe to profound hearing loss or significant difficulties communicating in home or community settings. SBVI staff provide help preparing for and getting jobs, training and services for adjustment to vision loss, services for older blind individuals and other programs for people with visual impairments.

Supported Employment: Provides services needed to support and maintain individuals with significant physical, emotional, mental or multiple disabilities in employment in the community.

Transition: A **Department of Rehabilitation Services** program that helps eligible students with disabilities make the transition from high school to post-school activities, such as post-secondary education, vocational training, employment, adult education, independent living and community participation.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): Helps Oklahomans with disabilities get jobs in appropriate careers. Main services are counseling and guidance with job placement. Other services compensate for, correct or prevent disability-related barriers to employment.



Who to Call in VR and SBVI

DRS Division: _____

Counselor: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Programs Manager: _____

Phone: _____

Field Coordinator: _____

Phone: _____

Division Administrator: _____

Phone: _____

Director: _____

Phone: 405-951-3400, Toll Free: 800-845-8476

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