



The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, which is operated through the Department of Human Services, offers rehabilitation services that lead to employment for individuals with disabilities consistent with their strengths, priorities, and resources.

What services or resources does this agency provide?

VR provides many different services to their clients. The services an individual receives depends on the client's unique needs. Some services offered by VR include diagnosis, counseling & guidance, treatment, training, maintenance & transportation, special emphasis programs, the personal care assistance program, rehabilitation technology services, job placement, post-employment services, supported employment, the client assistance program and independent living services. VR assists people with disabilities in securing and maintaining employment through a variety of services that are customized to meet the individual's needs in order to maintain those jobs.

What areas of Tennessee do they serve?

Vocational rehabilitation is available in all 95 counties across the state. Visit the following website to find a list of regional and county offices: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/ds/office-locator-trc-ttap.html>



Is there a cost and, if so, who pays?

VR will look at income to assess if individuals will pay for all or some of the services provided. Some individuals will be exempt from paying for services.

For which students might this agency be appropriate?

This agency is appropriate for students with disabilities who are interested in pursuing employment upon graduating high school. Students as young as 14 years old can access a variety of services such as pre-employment transition services, transition school to work services, Project SEARCH, and of course, traditional VR services. Additionally, all adults with a disability can apply for VR services.

Who is eligible to receive their services/ supports and when?

To receive services from VR an individual must



have a physical, sensory, or mental impairment that impacts the ability to work. An individual must also demonstrate need that VR services would assist in securing, retaining or regaining employment consistent with the person's strengths, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. Individuals who receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income) or SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) benefits based on their own disability or blindness are presumed to be eligible for VR services if they intend to seek employment. It is important to remember that being eligible to receive services does not mean the individual's application will be approved for services. Services can start as early as 14 years of age, but can also be served throughout the course of life as determined by eligibility and need.

What is the referral process?

What documents are needed?

An agency, parent, teacher, or community member may refer an individual to VR, or the individual themselves may also apply directly to VR for services. To make a referral, contact your local VR to make an appointment with a counselor. The documentation needed depends on the age category one belongs in. If a student between 14-22 years old is applying, they may bring their individualized education plan (IEP), 504 plan, or psychologist assessment to the meeting. If applying for VR services as an adult, one can bring in SSI or SSDI paperwork and documentation regarding how the disability impacts daily living skills. The VR counselor will also be able to provide you with more information on specific document needed. A VR counselor has 60 days to make an eligibility

Where can I learn more?

Visit their website at:

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/ds/vocational-rehabilitation.html>

decision regarding an application for services. If the VR counselor has not made a decision within 60 days, they can extend the time needed to make a decision on an application. Applicants who are currently receiving SSI or SSDI benefits must indicate this in their application for VR services, in addition to providing documentation of these benefits.

What is the family's responsibility?

The family or student will be responsible for keeping appointments, following program guidelines, and paying any costs. The family should help the student in contacting VR, applying for services, and helping the student acquire any documentation needed for the meeting with the VR counselor.

What is the student's responsibility?

The student will be responsible for keeping appointments, following all program guidelines, and engaging with the counselor. The student should share openly in regards to their aspirations and goals. The student should also be honest about dislikes and things they certainly would not like to do. This will help the counselor explore possibilities with the student in a more effective way.



What is the responsibility of an educator?

The educator will be responsible for inviting a representative from VR to the transition planning meetings and ensuring that there is time allotted for them to inform the family about what they do and their role in transition planning. Additionally, educators should provide documentation and pertinent data and information about the student to work collaboratively with VR counselors.

How (and when) do you involve them in the transition planning process?

- When the transition process begins at age 14, invite a representative to come speak to the family about the transition process and services offered by VR. As the student becomes older, VR should become more involved in the transition process
- Contact VR to learn more about the Transition School to Work (TSW) program they offer; see if your student would be eligible to apply for the program
- If a student is not eligible for TSW program, seek a VR representative's opinion on appropriate alternative career exploration activities or experiences a student can have within a community while still in school

What questions should I ask of Vocational Rehabilitation?

- How can VR contribute to the transition planning process?
- How can the transition services provided by VR strengthen and support transition services at my school?
- How can VR be of us regarding assessments and evaluations?

Additional contact information:

- Give them a call at: (615) 313-4891