



Working

with **Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Frequently Asked Questions from Teachers



Does VR only provide services to special education students?

No. Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) is a state agency that works with individuals with all types of disabilities to obtain or maintain their employment goals. VRS can help people identify their vocational interests and abilities. Anyone who has a physical and/or mental impairment that substantially interferes with his/her ability to work should be referred to a local VRS office. This includes students with IEPs and 504 plans—students do not necessarily need to be receiving special education services to be eligible. Some examples:

- A student who has acquired a brain injury as a result of a car accident
- A student with cerebral palsy who is on the honor's list
- A non-verbal student with autism who uses assistive technology
- A student with bipolar disorder who will be leaving school with a certificate of completion
- A student with limited use of an arm due to a congenital birth defect



Should I wait to refer students to VRS until their final semester of high school or until after they graduate?

You should refer students to VRS as soon as appropriate and no later than the last semester of their projected exit year. It is important to be proactive in preparing students for employment after high school.



Does VRS only work with college-bound students? Does VRS only work with students with severe disabilities?

No, VRS works with anyone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially interferes with their ability to work. You should refer any student who fits that definition to their local VRS office.



Is the special education director the only person who can refer a student?

No. Anyone can refer a student to VRS. A teacher, guidance counselor, or a family member can refer a student. A student of legal age can even refer himself/herself by contacting a local VRS office! You can find a VRS Office Directory at: http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/VRS_Area_Offices.pdf.

A publication of

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

A division of the Indiana Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

<http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2636.htm>

and

Indiana Department of Education

<http://www.doe.in.gov>

Developed by

The Center on Community Living and Careers

<http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc>

Continued on page 2.



Working

with Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Frequently Asked Questions from Teachers, *continued from page 1*



Is VRS a one-time service?

Once VR determines that an individual is eligible, services are provided on a time-limited basis, depending upon the needs of the individual. The individual's VRS case will be closed if he/she:

- 1) achieves his/her employment goal;
- 2) maintains the employment outcome for a period of time, but not less than 90 days; *and*
- 3) agrees with his/her VR counselor a) that the employment outcome is satisfactory, and b) he/she is performing well on the job.

An individual can re-enter or re-apply for VR services if he/she encounters barriers to employment, such as being fired or laid off from a job or an additional service need is interfering with his/her ability to maintain the job.



Should students be referred to VRS even if they don't know what kind of job they want?

Yes. VRS is a state agency that works with individuals with all types of disabilities to obtain or maintain their employment goals. The VR counselor's responsibility includes helping people identify their career goals and the types of jobs they might want.



Do I need to invite VRS to the transition case conference?

Per Article 7, case conference participants must identify transition services that will assist the student in reaching his/her postsecondary goals. Case conference members will also identify any individuals and agencies that will implement the transition services. Depending on the student's needs and/or postsecondary goals, schools should invite appropriate adult services, which may include VRS. Given adequate notice, the VR counselor may attend a case conference to effectively collaborate with the school in order to assist in the VR referral and application process and identify appropriate VR services available to help a student reach his/her postsecondary goals. Some schools have also invited VR counselors to career and family nights to talk with students and parents.



What other responsibilities do I have in the process?

- **Talk with students about their career goals and what they need to do to achieve them.**
- **Teach students about VRS**—what VRS does, how to access VR services.
- **Communicate with VRS counselors** on an ongoing basis about students who might be eligible for vocational rehabilitation. (*Note: Per Article 7 confidentiality regulations, you must obtain consent from a student/guardian prior to communicating with VRS about that student.*)
- **Refer students to VRS.**
- **Follow up with VRS** to see how the Referral/Application process is progressing.
- **Collaborate and coordinate with VRS** to ensure appropriate coordinated transition activities are developed in the Transition IEP and Individualized Plan for Employment.

Continued on page 3.



Working

with Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Frequently Asked Questions from Teachers, *continued from page 2*



Are my students who are planning to attend college out of state eligible for VR supports?

Yes. The VR program is available in all 50 states. State VR programs can work together to coordinate services for eligible students.



I have a student who wants to both work *and* go to college. Can VRS help him with both?

VRS will work with the student to identify a specific job goal and, together, they will develop an Individualized Plan for Employment to support that specific goal. VRS will then provide the services necessary to achieve the goal. The development of the employment outcome and identification of services necessary to achieve the outcome is a very individualized process.



Can you give me a list of the services VRS provides?

VRS can't give you a complete list, since services depend on an individual's specific needs, and support technology changes rapidly. However, VRS can give you some examples that may help you explain to students and families how the agency can help and what it is that VRS does and doesn't do. If you or they have questions, please contact your VR counselor and ask!

Things VRS Is <u>NOT</u>	Things VRS <u>CAN</u> Provide*
A scholarship program	Vocational guidance & counseling
A training program to build "fun" skills	Job placement assistance, including supported employment
A quick fix	Training for a job, e.g., vocational school, college/university, and on-the-job training
A summer job	Tutors, note takers, etc.
A seasonal job	Medical treatment to correct or modify a physical or mental health challenge
	Rehabilitation technology, e.g., assistive devices like speech-to-text software or drivers' training

** Services provided to VRS clients are chosen depending upon the individual needs and employment goals of the client. Not all clients are eligible for all services.*