

VERMONT DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
A Guide to Secondary Transition Services
September, 2011

The outline below describes the process for referring students with disabilities to VocRehab Vermont for assistance with their transition from high school. The VR Transition Counselor is interested in developing working relationships with the student, IEP team and parent or guardian prior to graduation, and to assist with post secondary transition to employment as well as college or career related training opportunities.

I. Student Identification, Review and Referral

Special Educators help students and their families/guardians make linkages from their IEP transition assessments to their post secondary transition goals, including referral to VocRehab.

- The Special Educator identifies potential students with disabilities for referral to VocRehab early in the Fall.
- The Special Educator will obtain a signed release of information from the student or parent, (if under age eighteen), allowing for discussion and sharing of information with the VR Transition Counselor.
- VR Transition Counselor should be contacted in the early Fall to schedule a time to meet with school staff for an informal review of referrals.
- The Special Educator will refer the students to a VR Orientation Group or for individual meeting with the VR Transition Counselor.

Additional guidelines for referrals to VR Transition Counselors

Although all of your students are important to us, our first priority will be students with disabilities who are in their last 18 months of school. Generally, this means Seniors are the first priority, followed by Juniors as capacity allows.

By arrangement, VR Transition Counselors are available to consult with IEP teams or Special Educators at earlier grades or for specific transition planning purposes.

II. Orientation for Referred Students and their Parents/Legal Guardian

The VR Transition Counselor needs to meet with students and at a later time, their parent/guardian (if under 18), to provide basic information about VocRehab services. The Special Educators needs to work with the VR Transition Counselor to arrange these meetings and to find appropriate space at the school to hold the meetings.

- VR Transition Counselor will work with the Special Educators to schedule group orientation dates to be held at the school.
- The group orientation presentations will be facilitated by the VR Transition Counselor with a member of the school special education staff present, whenever possible.
- With advance notice and coordination, VocRehab will offer an evening group orientation at the high school for parents who wish to attend a session.
- For students unable or unwilling to attend a group orientation, the VR Transition Counselor will provide the Special Educators with a visitation schedule for individual orientation meetings.
- Students can also call the local VR office to make an appointment at the VR office to meet with a Transition Counselor for an orientation meeting.
- At the orientation, each student will have the option to complete a VR referral form indicating their interest in working with the VR Transition Counselor. For those students, the VR Transition Counselor will request copies of records from the school and/or health care provider to help determine eligibility. These records include the current IEP and copies of the latest student evaluations.

Guidelines for VR requests for student records

In order to make a determination about eligibility for VR services, the VR Transition Counselor needs, at a minimum:

- *Current IEP and transition plan for each student*
- *Most recent three year evaluation*
- *Any other pertinent information*

III. Intake and Application Process

After making a connection with the VR Transition Counselor, the student chooses whether to apply for VR services as part of their post high school plan and fills out a VR Application Form. (Legal age and guardianship are necessary factors in the independence of the decision.)

- Students or parent(s) interested in applying to VR must contact the VR Transition Counselor to schedule an intake appointment.
- Intake appointments can be held at the high school, the local VR office, or another community setting as needed.
- If the VR Transition Counselor does not already have the current student records when the intake is completed, VR Transition Counselor will request copies of

records from the school and/or health care provider to help determine eligibility. These records include the current IEP and copies of the latest student evaluations.

IV. Eligibility Determination

Following a review of the records, the VR Transition Counselor determines eligibility for VR services. If VR services are determined NOT to be the best fit, the VR Transition Counselor will assist with recommendations to other adult services.

- By law, VocRehab must establish eligibility within sixty days of application. Therefore it is crucial to receive all pertinent documentation related to the disability from the family and school in a timely manner.
- If the student is determined eligible, the VR Transition Counselor will begin services and the development of a plan for services called an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).
- If the student is not determined eligible, a meeting will be offered to the family and school personnel to discuss the reason for the decision.

V. Career Counseling and Plan Development

Special Educators are critical advisors to the VR Transition Counselor in this process because of their expertise and experience with each individual student throughout the high school career.

- During the Senior year, the VR Transition Counselor begins a process of career counseling including employment related activities with students who are enrolled with VocRehab.
- The VR Transition Counselor then develops and, when possible, finalizes, the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with each student who enrolled with VR, to facilitate their future vocational plans.
- School staff should encourage the students/consumers and their families or guardians to meet with the VR Transition Counselor at the local VR office at least once, when possible, to become familiar and comfortable with the agency prior to graduation.

Guidelines for plan development

Other records that the VR Transition Counselor may find helpful in developing plans for post high school include:

- *Recent career assessments*
- *Grade reports*
- *Achievement testing*
- *Summary of performance*

VI. Service Provision

Paid services by VR are provided as a result of the development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Generally, VR paid services are targeted toward the student's post high school goals for employment and/or post secondary education or training.

Guidelines for connecting students to other Vermont services

The VR Transition Counselor is available to consult with Special Educators and IEP teams to help students and families find the best resources for their individual situation. Since Vocational Rehabilitation works collaboratively with other community resources and state agencies, the VR Transition Counselor can assist with navigating the array of adult services with differing eligibility criteria.

Additional guidelines for VR Transition Counselor visits

At the beginning of the school year, the VR Transition Counselor will contact Special Educators about a visitation schedule to the school for both orientation meetings and providing services. In order to make the best use of the VR Transition Counselor time at your school, they will need:

- A private space to meet with students
- Scheduled appointments for students to maximize the use of the counselor's visit
- Access to the Internet if possible
- Communication about school closures, meeting cancellations, etc.

VR Transition Counselor attendance at IEP meetings:

It is understood that the VR Transition Counselor will be informed about any IEP or Transition Planning meetings for VR eligible students. We ask that Special Educators identify meetings where VR Transition Counselor participation is a high priority. The VR Transition Counselor can then adjust his/her calendar whenever possible. If the meeting date is not during a scheduled visit, early notification helps facilitate participation.