
DEFINITION

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) helps eligible people with disabilities obtain, maintain or advance in employment. The VR program is part of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

ELIGIBILITY

- Do you have a physical or mental impairment?
- Does your impairment make it difficult for you to be employed?
- Can VR services assist you with preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in or regaining employment?

If the answer to each of these questions is “yes,” you could be eligible for VR services. The person who will work directly with you is a qualified rehabilitation counselor or a counselor supervised by a qualified rehabilitation professional. Your counselor might not be able to tell right away if you are eligible for services; in that case, additional tests or evaluations may be necessary to determine your eligibility. Your counselor will determine if you are eligible for services within a reasonable period of time. This will usually be done within 60 days after you have applied for services unless exceptional and unforeseen circumstances occur. Your cooperation is necessary to assist in obtaining records and to keep all appointments scheduled by your counselor.

Due to restricted funding, Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation is currently unable to provide services to all individuals with disabilities. A statewide Order of Selection has been implemented. Individuals will be served on the basis of the severity of their disability.

A PLAN FOR YOU

If you are eligible for rehabilitation services, you and your counselor will develop a vocational goal that will assist you in reaching an employment outcome. This is known as your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). You may include a disability advocate or any other representative you choose in the development of your plan.

This plan will be completed within 90 days unless you and your counselor agree upon an extension. At all stages throughout your VR program, you will be provided vocational information and guidance allowing you to make informed choices regarding your employment. At least every 12 months, your plan will be reviewed with you to see if it is still the best plan for you.

It is your responsibility to put forth your best effort to reach your employment outcome. Your plan will list many of your responsibilities, and these will vary depending upon the type of service. If you are receiving Social Security disability benefits, your counselor will provide you with information on available supports to assist you in returning to work.

SERVICES TO HELP YOU BECOME EMPLOYED

VR provides a wide range of services. You and your counselor will determine which services are required to help you become employed.

Types of services that could be provided include:

- pre-employment transition services for high school students with disabilities.
- vocational exploration to determine what services are required for you to become employed.
- guidance in choosing suitable employment.
- individual counseling during the rehabilitation process.
- time-limited physical or mental restoration services that can assist you in obtaining employment.
- transportation costs necessary for you to participate in a training program.
- assistive devices (such as artificial limbs, wheelchairs or hearing aids) that increase your ability to work.
- vocational training to prepare you for employment. This could include tuition/fees as well as books/supplies for education in a college, university, trade school, community rehabilitation program or on-the-job training program.
- supported and/or customized employment.
- job-related tools and licenses for you when you are ready to go to work.
- help in developing job-seeking skills.
- assistance in finding a job in a competitive, integrated setting.

WHO PAYS FOR VR SERVICES?

Depending upon your income and resources, you may be required to pay for some or all of the costs of services. No services will be paid by VR unless officially authorized before they are provided. Your counselor will assist you with any questions concerning authorizations or the billing process.

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services operates a Client Assistance Program (CAP) that might be of interest and help to you. CAP provides several services including assistance with advocacy or other measures to protect your rights under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. CAP can also provide information about other agencies and programs in Missouri that offer rehabilitation services to people with disabilities.

Contact CAP by writing or calling:

Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services
925 S. Country Club Drive
Jefferson City, MO 65109-0352
Phone: 800-392-8667

PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF/ HARD OF HEARING

Counselors trained in manual communication are located in VR offices in Farmington, Jefferson City, Kansas City, Springfield and St. Louis. VR district offices may be contacted through Relay Missouri at 800-735-2966 (TTY), 866-735-2460 (VOICE) or by dialing 711.

YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL

You have the right to appeal any time you do not agree with a decision about your rehabilitation services made by your counselor or by anyone else at VR. For example, if you are told you are not eligible for VR services, you may appeal that decision. If you do not agree with the IPE your counselor develops with you, you may appeal.

Tell your counselor you would like to appeal. If the counselor explains the reason for the decision and you still do not agree, you may request to speak with the supervisor of the VR district office that is handling your case. You may, however, request a formal review at any time.

Formal reviews will be held within 60 days of the request. Requests should be made by contacting the coordinator of development and consumer affairs at info@vr.dese.mo.gov.

You also have a right to request mediation on the issue or to contact CAP to assist you. If you wish to pursue mediation, contact the coordinator of development and consumer affairs at info@vr.dese.mo.gov.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

VR operates under the authority and regulations of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

It is necessary for VR to gather personal information about you that could include your medical and psychological records and work history to determine your eligibility for the program. It is important to have your cooperation during this process so that a determination can be made about your eligibility for services. Lack of cooperation on your part could result in services being denied.

In providing services to people with disabilities, VR collaborates with various agencies such as the Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher Education, Mental Health, Corrections, and Social Services. VR also works closely with the Division of Workforce Development, Missouri Assistive Technology, the Missouri AgrAbility Project and local school districts.

VR has cooperative agreements with these agencies that routinely allow certain information such as names, addresses, phone numbers, educational/work histories and income information to be shared without an individual's written consent. This is only for the purpose of providing and coordinating services with these agencies related to your rehabilitation program.

In these situations, information about your disability will not be released unless you or your representative consent or request it in writing.

If you are attending a community rehabilitation program or are receiving services from medical care professionals or service providers, information about you or your disability may be released without your or your representative's written consent.

In these situations, personal information about you will only be released when it is directly related to your rehabilitation program and is necessary to provide services. In most other instances, however, VR will ask for your or your representative's written consent before releasing any of your personal information.

Sometimes individuals will request copies of information in their files. VR will provide timely copies when the individual or his or her representative requests it in writing.

In some situations, a file might contain information that the agency feels could be harmful to the individual. In these instances, the information will not be released directly to the individual but must be provided to his or her court-appointed representative or a third party chosen by the individual, an advocate, a family member, or a qualified medical or mental health professional.

If you or your representative has questions about the release of information in your file, your VR counselor will assist you.

All forms of communication (including electronic) will be handled with the same level of professionalism. Please contact your VR counselor if you require additional information.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

VR complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended. Services are provided without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age or disability.

Any individual may file a written complaint with VR or with the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Education, or both, if he or she believes that discrimination is being practiced.

Contact:

Coordinator of Development and Consumer Affairs
Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation
3024 Dupont Circle
Jefferson City, MO 65109-6188

Phone: 573-751-3251
Toll-free: 877-222-8963
Fax: 573-751-1441
Email: info@vr.dese.mo.gov
Website: vr.dese.mo.gov

This brochure explains the processes of Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation and your appeal rights and responsibilities. If you do not understand the information in this brochure, call the Coordinator of Development and Consumer Affairs at 573-751-3251 or toll-free at 877-222-8963.

Your VR counselor will work with you throughout the process.



*Office of Adult Learning and
Rehabilitation Services*

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Office of the General Counsel, Coordinator – Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI/Title IX/504/ADA/Age Act), 6th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or TTY 800-735-2966; email civilrights@dese.mo.gov.