



Vocational Rehabilitation

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Services

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Transition Talks Tuesday February 3rd, 2026

Learning Targets

- Understand DVR's referral and application process.
- Learn about DVR's eligibility criteria.
- Discuss DVR's transition services.
- Share tools and best practices for successful student transition.
- Address your questions about DVR transition service.



What is DVR?

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is a federal/state program that:

- Offers individualized services to eligible people with disabilities who want to work.
- Provides training and technical assistance to employers regarding disability employment issues.
- Actively engages with roughly **19,000 consumers** at any given time who are working toward an employment goal.
- Funding for DVR is **78.7** percent federal, **21.3** percent state match.



DVR Mission

To obtain, maintain, and improve employment for people with disabilities by working with VR consumers, employers, and other partners.

Find a Job.
Keep a Job.
Get a Better Job.



Referral and Application Process

- High school students with a disability should apply to DVR at least two years before completing high school.
- For those under 18 or those over 18 who are not their own guardian, the individual's legal guardian must sign all documents.
- Referral to apply can be done online, by mail, or in person.



What does DVR do?

- DVR helps consumers develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with their DVR counselor, which defines:
 - The job goal.
 - The services needed to reach that goal.
 - The job seeker's role and responsibilities.
- DVR also supports individuals with disabilities by providing career planning, training assistance, and connections to Wisconsin businesses.



Who is eligible for DVR?

- To be eligible for DVR services you must have a documented medical or psychological disability that presents a barrier to employment and requires DVR services.
- DVR staff will work with the applicant to:
 - Gather needed written documentation and information releases.
 - Schedule a meeting to discuss the applicant's disability and needs.
 - Use existing information to the greatest extent possible (IEP, functional screen, previous medical records, etc.).
 - Refer the applicant for additional assessment if needed.



What is an IPE?

- An IPE is an Individualized Plan for Employment – not to be confused with an IEP (Individualized Education Program)!
- DVR helps consumers develop a plan to find a job, keep a job, or get a better job.



What is Order of Selection (OOS)?

- OOS evaluates how a person's disability affects seven different areas that relate to work:
 - Mobility
 - Communication
 - Self-care
 - Self-direction
 - Interpersonal skills/acceptance
 - Work tolerance
 - Work skills
- As required by federal law, DVR serves those with the most serious limitations first, due to a disability.



DVR's Order of Selection

Why the Waitlist Exists

- DVR has implemented an Order of Selection due to insufficient resources.
- DVR must prioritize services for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- Individuals are served as resources become available, based on category and application date.



How the Waitlist Works

- Eligible individuals are placed into one of three categories.
- **Category 1** served first.
- DVR will contact individuals when services can begin.



Students on the Waitlist / Impacted Services



What Students CAN Receive

- Pre-ETS services
- Project SEARCH skills training

What DVR Cannot Fund While on Waitlist

- Transportation
- Uniforms
- Job Development
- Systematic Instruction



Pre-employment Transition Services

- Coordinated transition services with schools and other partner agencies:
 - Job exploration counseling.
 - Work-based learning experiences.
 - Counseling on comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational program enrollment opportunities.
 - Work-based readiness training to develop social and independent living skills.
 - Instruction on self-advocacy.



Key Practices for Transition

- Invite DVR to IEPs or allow DVR to provide technical assistance for students with disabilities who are not DVR consumers but are considering applying for services in the future.
- Offer employment planning consultation through DVR, which can be provided for any student with a disability.
- DVR vocational counselors schedule and attend regular meetings with the high school.



Comparable Benefits

- Must look at other sources in the community before using DVR funds for services.
- Examples:
 - Financial aid
 - Transit services
 - Libraries/computer labs
- Cost-sharing between agencies.



End Goal: Competitive Integrated Employment

“Most integrated setting” is now defined as:

“...a setting that enables an individual to interact with persons without developmental disabilities to the fullest extent possible.”

(§46.279(1)(bm) Wisconsin Statutes; emphasis added.)



Successful Closure

- Once an individual has maintained employment for a minimum of 90 days, DVR will mark the case as a successful closure and then close the file.
- For consumers in supported or customized employment, this 90-day timeframe begins following the transition to long-term support.
- Closures may allow others to come off waitlists.
- Consumers can re-apply for services at any time.



Transition Resources

- START = Statewide Transition Action and Resource Team:
<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/job-seekers/transition/start-list.pdf>
- DVR Transition Services:
<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/job-seekers/transition/>
- DVR School Liaison List:
<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/job-seekers/transition/pdf/school-liaisons.pdf>
- Transition Action Guide (TAG)
<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/policy-guidance/toolkits-guides-manuals/transition-action-guide/>



Questions?





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