

OVR District Offices

ALLENTOWN BVRS

45 North Fourth Street, Allentown, PA 18102
610-821-6441 Voice | 610-821-6144 TTY | 800-922-9536* Voice | 888-377-9207* TTY

ALTOONA BVRS

1130 12th Avenue, Suite 500, Altoona, PA 16601
814-946-7240 Voice | 814-949-7914 TTY | 800-442-6343* Voice | 866-320-7955* TTY

ALTOONA BBVS

1130 12th Avenue, Suite 300, Altoona, PA 16601
814-946-7330 Voice | 814-949-7956 TTY | 866-695-7673* Voice | 866-320-7956* TTY

DUBOIS BVRS

199 Beaver Drive, DuBois, PA 15801
814-371-7340 Voice | 814-371-7505 TTY | 800-922-4017* Voice/TTY

ERIE BVRS

3200 Lovell Place, Erie, PA 16503
814-871-4551 Voice | 814-871-4535 TTY | 800-541-0721* Voice | 888-217-1710* TTY

ERIE BBVS

4200 Lovell Place, Erie, PA 16503
814-871-4401 Voice | 814-871-4599 TTY | 866-521-5073* Voice | 888-884-5513* TTY

HARRISBURG BVRS

Forum Place, 555 Walnut Street, 8th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-787-7834 Voice | 717-787-4013 TTY | 800-442-6352* Voice | 877-497-6545* TTY

HARRISBURG BBVS

Forum Place, 555 Walnut Street, 8th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-787-7500 Voice | 717-787-1733 TTY | 866-375-8264* Voice | 888-575-9420* TTY

JOHNSTOWN BVRS

727 Goucher Street, Section 10, Johnstown, PA 15905
814-255-6771 Voice | 814-255-5510 TTY | 800-762-4223* Voice | 866-862-6891* TTY

NEW CASTLE BVRS

100 Margaret Street, New Castle, PA 16101
724-656-3070 Voice | 724-656-3252 TTY | 800-442-6379* Voice | 888-870-4476* TTY

NORRISTOWN BVRS

1875 New Hope Street, Norristown, PA 19401-3146
484-250-4340 Voice | 484-250-4357 TTY | 800-221-1042* Voice | 888-616-0470* TTY

PHILADELPHIA BVRS

444 North 3rd Street, 5th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19123
215-560-1900 Voice | 215-560-6144 TTY | 800-442-6381* Voice | 800-772-9031* TTY

PHILADELPHIA BBVS

444 North 3rd Street, 5th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19123-4189
215-560-5700 Voice | 215-560-5725 TTY | 866-631-3892* Voice | 888-870-4473* TTY

PITTSBURGH BVRS

531 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-392-4950 Voice | 412-392-5921 TTY | 800-442-6371* Voice | 888-870-4474* TTY

PITTSBURGH BBVS

531 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-565-5240 Voice | 412-565-3678 TTY | 866-412-4072* Voice | 877-255-5082* TTY

READING BVRS

3602 Kutztown Road, Suite 200, Reading, PA 19605
610-621-5800 Voice | 610-621-5806 TTY | 800-442-0949* Voice | 877-475-7326* TTY

WASHINGTON BVRS

201 West Wheeling Street, Washington, PA 15301
724-223-4430 Voice | 724-223-4443 TTY | 800-442-6367* Voice | 866-752-6163* TTY

WILKES-BARRE BVRS

300 G Laird Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702-7013
570-826-2011 Voice | 570-826-2023 TTY | 800-634-2060* Voice | 888-651-6117* TTY

WILKES-BARRE BBVS

300 G Laird Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702-7013
570-826-2361 Voice | 570-826-2023 TTY | 866-227-4163* Voice | 888-651-6117* TTY

WILLIAMSPORT BVRS

The Grit Building, Suite 102, 208 West 3rd Street, Williamsport, PA 17701
570-327-3600 Voice | 570-327-3620 TTY | 800-442-6359* Voice | 800-706-0884* TTY

YORK BVRS

2550 Kingston Road, Suite 101, York, PA 17402
717-771-4407 Voice | 717-771-4433 TTY | 800-762-6306* Voice | 866-466-1404* TTY

HIRAM G. ANDREWS CENTER

727 Goucher Street, Johnstown, PA 15905
814-255-8200 Voice | 814-255-5873 TTY | 800-762-4211* Voice/TTY

OVR CENTRAL OFFICE

1521 North 6th Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102
717-787-5244 Voice | 717-787-4885 TTY | 800-442-6351* Voice | 866-830-7327* TTY
BBVS 717-787-6176 Voice | 800-622-2842* Voice



Rehabilitation Services Handbook



Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Tom Corbett, Governor

Department of Labor & Industry

Julia K. Hearthway, Secretary

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Stephen H. Suroviec, Executive Director



pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program



This guide will help explain vocational rehabilitation -- how it works and how you can make it work for you. Your counselor will also explain vocational rehabilitation services and answer any questions that you or anyone in your family may have.

WHAT IS OVR?

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) serves people who have disabilities that present a substantial impediment to employment. Services are provided to individuals to prepare for, enter into, engage in or retain employment. OVR has 21 District Offices located around the State. Our counselors work every year with thousands of persons who have physical, mental and emotional disabilities.

SHOULD I APPLY TO OVR?

You should apply if:

- You have a disability
- Your disability causes you substantial problems in preparing for, obtaining or maintaining a career
- You want to work.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

For more information about services, call or write the OVR District Office listed on the back of this brochure that is nearest to where you live.

WILL I BE ELIGIBLE?

When you apply to OVR for help with employment, a counselor will be assigned to work with you. The counselor will meet with you face-to-face to get to know you in order to decide how OVR can best assist you to help yourself. With your written consent, your counselor will gather information about your needs, your interests, aptitudes, education, work experience, family and finances. Your counselor will arrange any needed medical examinations and testing, at no cost to you. You will be eligible for OVR services if:

- You have a disability, that is a physical, mental or emotional impairment which results in a substantial impediment to employment and you can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from services provided
- Vocational rehabilitation services are required for you to prepare for, enter, engage in or retain gainful employment.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO DETERMINE IF I AM ELIGIBLE?

You will know if you are eligible for OVR services within 60 days of the date you apply for OVR services, unless

- Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond our control preclude us from completing the determination and you agree an extension is warranted
- An extended evaluation is required to determine your eligibility.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR OVR?

You and your counselor will work together to make informed choices regarding a cooperative plan of action to include a career goal, the services needed to assist you help yourself to get started in or maintain your career, and your responsibilities. This plan of action is called the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Deciding on your goal usually takes time. During this time you will receive information and options to assist you in developing a successful program. You will have the opportunity to consider different types of careers, your job skills, chances for employment in your local area, potential earnings, family responsibilities, training, and other matters of importance to you and your family.

Your counselor wants you to pick a career, one that you will still want and at which you will still be able to work years from now. Your IPE outlines the steps you will take to obtain a job and can be changed if your needs change. You and your counselor will work together to make any necessary changes.

WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?

Some services can help you overcome or lessen your disability; others can directly help you prepare for a career. The services you receive will be arranged to meet your individual needs. Not everyone will need every service.

- **Diagnostic Services** include medical, psychological and audiological exams and tests used to better understand your disability and your needs for specific types of services.
- **Vocational Evaluation** includes testing such as aptitude, interest, general ability, academic exams, work tolerance and "hands-on" job experience used to understand your vocational potential.
- **Counseling Services** are offered to assist you find ways to better help yourself throughout the rehabilitation program from the first meeting with your counselor to your starting and maintaining a career. Counseling services help you to better understand your potential, rely on your abilities, set realistic vocational goals, change them when necessary, develop successful work habits and begin a satisfying career.
- **Restoration Services** include many types of medical services and equipment such as physical and occupational therapy, wheelchairs, automobile hand controls and other types of rehabilitation technology that may be provided to enable you to pursue your career and achieve independence.

- **Training Services** include education to prepare you for a job including but not limited to basic academic, vocational/technical, college, on-the-job, independent living skills and personal and work adjustment training. It may be necessary for you to leave home to get the training you want and need.
- **Placement Services** include counseling, job-seeking programs, job club and job development used to increase your ability to obtain a job. You will receive ideas, practice and advice on finding job leads, filling out applications, getting interviews for a job and how to interview. Your counselor may also give you job leads or explain to employers about tax credits they can receive when hiring you. The more contacts with employers you make, the better your chances are of starting your career.

Support services are provided if they are necessary for you to start your career. Services may include:

- Room, board and transportation costs during your evaluation or while you are completing a rehabilitation program.
- Occupational tools, licenses or equipment.
- Home modifications, adaptive or special household equipment related to obtaining or maintaining a job.
- Van or car modifications, including special driving devices or lifting devices to enable you to travel to your job.
- Personal care assistance provided to help you with your daily needs in order to enable you to participate in a vocational rehabilitation program.
- Job site modifications that will enable you to obtain and maintain a job.
- Independent living training to provide the means for you to become more self-sufficient and thereby make it possible for you to participate fully in the vocational rehabilitation program.
- Text Telephone (TTY), signaling devices, hearing aids and interpreter services may be provided to help you communicate if needed to participate in the vocational rehabilitation program.

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST ME?

It does not cost you anything to apply for services. There is no charge for diagnostic services, vocational evaluation, counseling or job placement assistance. If you are eligible for services, your counselor may ask you to provide documents about your income and expenses. Depending upon your income, you may have to contribute to the cost of OVR services. OVR cannot pay for any services you received before you applied to OVR. Even after you apply, OVR can pay only for those services approved in advance by your counselor.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ME TO START MY CAREER?

That depends on your abilities, the career for which you are preparing, and on your individual needs. Most important, it depends on how much responsibility you take for helping yourself to prepare for, start or maintain a career. You can help things move along as quickly as possible if you:

- Help your counselor get the needed information.
- Keep all appointments or call if you can't be there.
- Stay in touch with your counselor (if your counselor cannot find you, things are bound to slow down).
- Tell your counselor if you feel things are going too slowly.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS?

This is your rehabilitation program. Don't hesitate to ask questions about anything. You are entitled to the best service OVR can give you. Your comments, suggestions and criticisms are important.

If you are an applicant or a customer of OVR and are dissatisfied with a determination or service OVR is providing, please contact your counselor or your counselor's supervisor to discuss your concerns. You may request a hearing before an impartial Hearing Officer. A written request for a hearing must be made within thirty (30) days. This request must be mailed to or filed with the Director, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (BVRS), Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, 1521 North Sixth Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102. An impartial Hearing Officer will be assigned to hear and decide your case. You will be given the opportunity for an informal administrative review prior to the impartial hearing. At any time during your program you may contact the Client Assistance Program for help.

WHAT IS THE CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) works with you and your counselor to:

- Act as an advocate for your rights;
- Answer your questions about rehabilitation;
- Explain rules, regulations and procedures;
- Assist you through the appeal process; and
- Help you to establish and maintain open communication.

Any applicant for OVR services who wants general information or who would like CAP's involvement during their rehabilitation program can contact CAP for assistance. If your case is about to be or already has been closed by OVR, you may ask CAP to review the case to ensure that you have received maximum benefits from OVR. To contact CAP, call this toll-free number 888-745-2357 Voice/TTY.

WHAT ARE IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER IF I AM DISSATISFIED?

- Try to solve the problem with your counselor first.
- Your counselor will help you with an appeal if you ask for help.
- You will not be penalized for making an appeal.
- You may bring someone with you to help you at the appeal.

WHEN DO I LEAVE OVR?

A perfect ending is when you have started your career. Even though you are working and your case is closed, it is possible that help can be provided if you begin to have problems with your employment or with your disability. If this happens, please contact your counselor. You may choose to end your involvement with OVR at any time, but you should let your counselor know if you make such a decision. If you do not follow through with the steps you helped to plan; are uncooperative; cannot be located; or if OVR cannot help you reach a vocational goal, your counselor may find it necessary to close your case.

CAN I START OVER AGAIN?

Yes. You may reapply at any time.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

- You may not be discriminated against by reason of religion, race, age, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, HIV/AIDS status or disability.
- You are entitled to a thorough evaluation to find out if you are eligible for rehabilitation.
- All information that is given to your counselor or obtained about you will be used only for your rehabilitation.
- You have a right to ask to change counselors.
- You have a right to continuing service if you should move to an area serviced by a different district office within PA. Discuss your move with your counselor.

HOW WILL I BE TREATED?

You will be treated in a manner consistent with the principles of:

- Individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination and pursuit of a meaningful career based on informed choices that you make
- Respect for your privacy, rights and equal access as an individual
- Inclusion, integration and full participation as an individual
- Support for the involvement of a parent, family member, guardian, advocate or authorized representative if you request, desire or need such assistance
- Support for individual advocacy and community involvement

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

You are in charge of your rehabilitation program and must be willing to help yourself. You must participate actively in setting your vocational goals and work hard to achieve them. It is very important that you talk to your counselor about your needs, your deadlines and anything else that could speed up, slow down or stop you from starting and maintaining a career. Rehabilitation will work better if you:

- Keep all appointments, or call if you can't be there
- Ask questions if you do not understand something
- Are honest about your needs and feelings
- Help yourself

WHAT ARE MY COUNSELOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

Your counselor understands how disabilities can get in the way of a career. It is your counselor's responsibility to help you understand your strengths and the steps needed to overcome your substantial impediment to employment. Your counselor will help you decide on a career that builds on your strengths; give you information, provide guidance and support; and arrange for you to receive the services you need to prepare for, start and maintain a career. We hope that the information in this brochure will help you understand OVR and that it marks the beginning of a successful partnership. If you have any further questions, please ask your counselor.

PLEASE NOTE:

When OVR does not have enough money to provide services to all eligible individuals, it is required to provide services according to an Order of Selection. Under an Order of Selection, a certain group (or groups) of individuals receive services while others are placed on an indefinite waiting list for when sufficient funds become available. OVR's Order of Selection places all eligible individuals into one of three groups as follows:

- Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities
- Individuals with Significant Disabilities
- All remaining eligible individuals

Should you be eligible for OVR services, your counselor will inform you if OVR is on an Order of Selection and whether you will be provided services or placed on a waiting list.

OVR'S NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

OVR prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, ancestry, HIV/AIDS status and age. Any applicant or customer of OVR who believes he or she is being discriminated against may contact OVR at the following address:

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
1521 North Sixth Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102
Telephone 717-787-5244 (Voice), 717-787-4885 (TTY),
800-442-6351* (Voice), 866-830-7327* (TTY)
BBVS 717-787-6176 (Voice), 800-622-2842* (Voice)

* Toll free within Pennsylvania