Arkansas Department of Human Services

Division of Services for the Blind

Policies and Procedures

Mission:
To enhance the personal and economic independence of blind and severely visually impaired persons of all ages in Arkansas.

Vision:
Consumers are knowledgeable of their rights and resources and empowered to live independently throughout their lives.

Core Values (C-CRIT)
Compassion
Courage
Respect
Integrity
Trust

Beliefs
Every person matters.
Empowered individuals help themselves.
Consumers deserve access to good rehabilitation.
We have responsibilities to provide knowledge and services that work.
Partnering with communities and families is essential to the success of the individuals we serve.
Introduction

This manual is a tool to use in serving blind and visually impaired Arkansans. It is a guide to be used in the day-to-day operations of DSB. It is revised as needed.

The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind is within the Department of Human Services and functions under a board appointed by the Governor. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is operated in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998 and in accordance with the recent 2014 revisions under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Title 324 of the Code of Federal Regulations Parts 361, 363, and 397 released August 19, 2016.

The VR Program serves all 75 counties from 10 field offices across the state. DSB employees are highly trained in their fields and are dedicated to providing quality services in a caring way. The goal of the VR Program is to empower blind and visually impaired Arkansans to become employed in the field of their choice and to lead productive and independent lives.
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**Policy on the Protection of Legal Rights – Chapter 1**

1.1 OVERARCHING POLICY

1.1.1 Introduction

Certain principles and guidelines extend over all DSB policies. Therefore, overarching policy has been created to preface the specific program policies.

1.1.2 Overview

Consumers and potential consumers of the Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind are afforded certain rights with respect to the following principles:

- timeliness of services, decisions, and notifications,
- nondiscriminatory availability of services,
- confidentiality of consumer records,
- informed choice,
- allowances for exemptions to policy limitations under reasonable extenuating circumstances, and
- an opportunity to appeal decisions regarding their planned services or their eligibility for such services.

Additionally, it is intended that consumers of this agency receive the best and most appropriate services available within agency guidelines and funding capabilities.

1.1.3 Use

While the guidelines and procedures contained herein will serve as general policy, specific legal questions which are not addressed may be referred to the Agency Director through appropriate supervisory channels. The Office of Chief Counsel is also available to address specific legal questions.

1.1.4 When to Inform

Consumers will be notified of their rights at the initial interview and throughout the VR process as appropriate, i.e., development of IPE, Progress/Program Reviews, closure, etc.

1.2 TIMELINESS

1.2.1 Timely Action

DSB consumers have a right to timely action without unreasonable delays in regard to eligibility determination, provision of services, case decisions, notifications and other activities. VR Counselors will follow timeframes as stated in policy. When necessary, the VR Counselor and the consumer may agree to a specific extension of time needed to complete an action. Such extensions should be documented in the case record.
1.3 EXEMPTIONS

1.3.1 Allowing for Exemptions

DSB recognizes that occasionally medical emergencies, or other circumstances beyond the consumer’s control, occur preventing the consumer from completing an activity within allotted timeframes or causing a need for additional services. In these situations, the consumer may request an exemption to policy limits. Depending on the policy affected, a VR Counselor, Field Supervisor or Program Administrator would review the situation and determine if reasonable extenuating circumstances existed and whether an exemption to policy limitations should be approved.

1.4 NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

1.4.1 Policy

All persons eligible for services from the Division of Services for the Blind will receive the full range and scope of appropriate services on the basis of their visual disability and without reference to any other standards of criteria.

This policy of nondiscrimination applies to all of the Division's programs and activities.

1.4.2 Title VI Compliance

The Division's Vocational Rehabilitation Program is administered in such a manner that no person in Arkansas will be denied services on the basis of race, color, sex, age, disability, or national origin.

1.4.3 Legal Basis

The above policy statement is in compliance with the following:

   Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000D et seq.)
   Federal Regulations (34 CFR Part 361).

1.4.4 Section 504 Compliance

The Division's Vocational Rehabilitation Program is administered in such a manner that no person in Arkansas, who is otherwise qualified, will be denied services on the basis of disability.

1.4.5 Legal Basis

The above policy statement is in compliance with the following:

   Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
   Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

1.5 CONFIDENTIALITY
1.5.1 Introduction

Division of Services for the Blind has developed policies and procedures to safeguard the confidentiality of all personal information made available to DSB, its representatives, and employees. All personal information regarding applicants and consumers of vocational rehabilitation services furnished to this agency will be held confidential in accordance with the following regulations and guidelines.

1.5.2 Legal Basis

Agency policy shall be in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended (Section 361.38), Arkansas Department of Human Services Policy 1059, and Arkansas Code 20-79-216.

1.5.3 Rules

All consumer information is the property of the Division.

All vocational rehabilitation applicants, consumers and, as appropriate, those individuals’ representatives, service providers, cooperating agencies, and interested persons will be informed as to the confidentiality of personal information and the conditions for accessing and release of such information.

Information containing identifiable personal information may not be shared with advisory or other bodies that do not have official responsibility for administration of the VR Program.

All employees of this agency are responsible for protecting the confidentiality of consumer records.

1.5.4 Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors

DSB professional staff members are expected to adhere to the standards as set forth by the Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors adopted by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification in reference to the protection of confidentiality.

1.5.5 What is to be Held Confidential?

All information as to personal facts given or made available to employees or representatives of the Division in the course of the administration of the VR Program will be held confidential, including: lists of names and addresses, records of agency evaluation, reports of medical examination and treatment, financial information, and photographs.

1.5.6 Consumer Consent for Release
Information will not be disclosed directly or indirectly, other than in the administration of the VR Program, unless the informed consent of the consumer has been obtained in writing.

1.5.7 Conditions for Release

Release of information to any individual, agency, or organization shall be conditioned upon satisfactory assurance by such individual, agency, or organization that the information will be used only for the purpose for which it is provided, and it will not be released to any other individual, agency, or organization.

Information will not be disclosed without a written consent which includes the purpose for which the information is desired, the specific information desired, a date of expiration of the written consent, and the dated signature of the consumer, or parent or guardian as needed.

1.5.8 Release of Information to Consumer

Except as provided in paragraphs 1.5.8 and 1.5.9 of this section, if requested in writing by an applicant or consumer, DSB shall make all requested information in that individual’s record of service accessible to and shall release the information to the individual or, as appropriate, parent or guardian, or other representative in a timely manner.

For purposes in connection with any proceeding or action for benefit or damages, only information that is relevant to the needs of the consumer may be released.

1.5.9 Release of Medical, Psychological, or Other Information

Medical, psychological, or other information that DSB determines may be harmful to the individual may not be released directly to the individual, but can be provided to the individual through a third party such as an advocate, a family member, or a qualified medical or mental health professional if requested in writing. When a representative has been appointed by a court to represent the individual, the information can be released to the court-appointed representative.

1.5.10 Information Obtained from Another Agency

If DSB has obtained personal information from another agency or organization, it may be released only by the other agency or organization from which it originated.

1.5.11 Release of Information to Organizations Involved in Audit, Evaluation, or Research

Any request for release of information for research purposes requires approval of the DSB Director. Information may be released to an organization, agency, or individual engaged in audit, evaluation, or research only for purposes directly connected with the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program, or for
purposes that would significantly improve the quality of life for applicants and consumers and only if the organization, agency, or individual assures that:

The purpose of the research is directly connected with the administration of the Division's VR Program.
Satisfactory assurance is given that the information will be used only for the purpose for which it is provided.
The information will be released only to persons officially connected with the audit, evaluation, or research.
The information will not be released to the involved individual.
The information will be managed in a manner to safeguard confidentiality.
The final product of the research will not reveal any information that may serve to identify any consumer without written consent of such consumer and the Division Director.

1.5.12 Cases of Abuse

Individuals who have reasonable cause to believe a child, elderly, or disabled person is being abused, neglected or exploited shall report the information. For individuals in a facility, the incident is to be reported to the authority having responsibility for the facility. For other situations, the local office of Adult Protective Services (State Abuse Hotline 1-800-482-8049) will be notified if the individual is an adult; if the individual is a child, then Child Protective Services (Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-482-5964) will be notified.

1.5.13 Subpoena of Consumer Records

In the event a subpoena is served on a counselor or other Division employee, consumer information should not be released or testimony given except as noted below. The subpoena may specify personal appearance or specific file information. Time allowed to respond is specified in the subpoena (immediate response, same day response, or multiple day response) and dictates what action is to be taken.

The consumer or consumer's representative will determine if release of the information is detrimental to the consumer.

1.5.14 Immediate Response

In some situations no time is allowed to contact anyone (consumer, consumer's attorney or area supervisor) and records must be presented upon receipt of the subpoena. The counselor or area supervisor (if counselor is not available):

Takes a copy of the requested case record information and goes before (in order of preferred availability) the judge noted in the subpoena, judge's clerk, or attorney requesting subpoena material.

Presents the following statement:

“As a representative of the Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind, and in response to the subpoena, I am cooperating with the court. Please be
advised that the confidentiality of these records is protected under federal regulations 34 CFR 361.38. Use of these records without consumer consent might jeopardize the case."

Proceeds as directed by judge, judge's clerk, or attorney.

1.5.15 Same Day Response

If the subpoena must be responded to the same day it is delivered, the counselor must immediately contact the consumer and the area supervisor.

If the consumer can be contacted and has signed a specific release form (DSB-8021), then the information may be released without consideration of quashing the subpoena.

If the consumer can be contacted and has an attorney, then contact the consumer's attorney to advise the attorney of appropriate state and federal legislation regarding confidentiality of VR consumer records, and give the attorney an opportunity to quash the subpoena.

If the consumer can be contacted, but has no attorney, then the counselor must be sure the consumer has signed a specific written release prior to release of the information.

If the consumer can be contacted, but has not signed a specific release form or cannot be contacted, then proceed the same way as described in the Immediate Response (1.5.14).

1.5.16 Multiple Day Response

If the time allowed for response involves more than one day, follow the same procedure as Same Day Response.

1.5.17 Who is Authorized to Disclose Consumer Information?

Disclosure of information in accordance with directives from supervisory staff may be made only by the responsible caseload carrying person.

1.5.18 Security of Confidential Records

Consumer records of a confidential nature will be kept in a locked desk or filing cabinet when Division staff is not present to assure proper security. Additionally, it is strongly urged that all employees, in handling confidential records, make it a practice to place such records face down or otherwise protected from view, when they are not in immediate use and before they are returned to the files.

1.5.19 Rule

Consumer records are not to leave the office. The only exception to this rule is when cases are being transferred. All case folders being transferred must be sent by certified mail or hand delivered.
1.5.20 Confidentiality of HIV Status

A medical report that includes HIV status information can be filed in the case file. However, caution must be used in safeguarding the confidentiality of the consumer's HIV status at all times and from any source. **Do not share** HIV status information with anyone **without** a signed release that makes specific reference to HIV status. If you do not have a signed release, a doctor or the consumer will have to provide HIV status information to all other parties.

Make no reference to HIV status in any case narratives.

1.5.21 Internal Procedures for Release of Personal Information

Informed written consent of the consumer for the release of personal information is required **if** it is determined that the information can be released. The agency form, Release of Information Form (DSB-8021), should be used for the execution of policy under this section.

If the consumer disavows intent to release the information, even after signing the form, but prior to its release, the information will not be released.

In cases were personal information must be sent to another agency, e.g., Lions World Services for the Blind or Louisiana Center for the Blind, informed written consent is not required. When the purpose is directly related to the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program, is required by Federal or State law, or to protect the safety of the consumers or others, informed written consent is not required.

1.6 MEDIATION AND IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES--OVERVIEW

1.6.1 Introduction

The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind aims, within policy and fiscal constraints, for consumer satisfaction in the provision of VR services. In situations where an issue is not resolved after discussion between the applicant or eligible consumer and the counselor, an appeal process is available to provide an applicant or eligible consumer an opportunity to remedy any dissatisfaction with respect to any of the following:

- Denial of services
- Change in planned services
- Termination of services
- Inaction
- Failure to act with reasonable promptness
- Any other Division action affecting the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

1.6.2 Handling Complaints and Appeals
The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind is committed to ensuring that complaints are handled fairly and impartially. In order to avoid an interruption in services, it is expected that complaints will be handled expeditiously and at the lowest level possible.

Counselors are to thoroughly investigate a consumer complaint and explore all options and alternatives available within Division policy to foster consumer satisfaction.

1.6.3 Consumer Assistance

While the applicant or eligible consumer may at any time call the following numbers, it is encouraged that they first pursue this agency's informal appeal process. The numbers are:

- The Division of Services for the Blind's toll free number (1-800-960-9270)
- Client Assistance Program (1-800-482-1174)

1.6.4 Legal Basis

The hearing procedures available to applicants and consumers are in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in Section 102 (c) and 504, and federal regulations (34 CFR 361.57) regarding administrative review of agency action and fair hearing.

1.6.5 Notification of Applicant and Consumer Rights and the Appeal Procedure

It is the Division of Services for the Blind's policy that applicants or consumers be informed of their rights and the Division's appeal procedures in a timely manner. The Applicant Information Form (DSB-8033) is provided to applicants and consumers:

- when the application is completed;
- at initial plan development (Individualized Plan for Employment);
- when the person is determined ineligible for VR;
- when services are reduced, suspended, or terminated; and
- anytime an applicant or a consumer requests a copy.

**NOTE:** Anytime the DSB-8033 or copy of the appeal procedure (found in this section) is given to the applicant or consumer, it must be documented in a case narrative.

1.6.6 Applicant or Consumer Options

An applicant or consumer may choose to request either or both of the options listed below:
An informal review (informal administrative review)
A formal review (impartial hearing)

An informal review is used to clarify issues and resolve disputes at the lowest possible level. The review involves the counselor, the area supervisor, and if necessary, an informal administrative hearing. Services are provided according to the rehabilitation needs of each individual as identified in the IPE and are consistent with the individual’s informed choice. If an informal review finds exemptions to policies are necessary for the rehabilitation needs of the individual to be met, then such exemptions can be made. AN INFORMAL REVIEW IS NOT INTENDED TO DELAY OR IN ANY WAY DENY ACCESS TO A FORMAL REVIEW. Any planned services will continue to be provided pending the outcome of the appeal or review.

A formal review involves a formal hearing by an impartial hearing officer. It may be requested at anytime.

1.6.7 Due Process Procedures

The grievance procedure starts the 45 day clock at the time the individual first appeals the State Agency's decision or determination. The entire appeals process, informal and formal, is a 45-day process. The appeals procedure will normally progress in the following sequence:

Step 1 – The applicant or consumer should discuss with counselor and ask for a decision.

Step 2 - If dissatisfied, the applicant or consumer can ask for an informal administrative review from a Program Administrator.

Step 3 - If still dissatisfied, the applicant or consumer can ask for a mediation session.

Step 4 - If still dissatisfied, applicant or consumer can ask for an impartial hearing.

1.7 MEDIATION AND IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES—STEPS 1 AND 2

1.7.1 Decision of the Counselor

An applicant or consumer who is dissatisfied with an action (inaction) by DSB should notify the counselor of the matter in contention. If after discussing the decision and the applicant or consumer is still dissatisfied, the applicant or consumer will be asked to complete a request for an administrative review. Counselor will advise the applicant or consumer of CAP (Client Assistance Program) assistance. This request for administrative review will be given to the Program Administrator.

1.7.2 Informal Administrative Review
The Field Administrator will schedule the informal administrative review that will be conducted within ten (10) days of the initial date of request at the time and place convenient to the applicant or consumer (usually during business hours at the DSB local office), and by the Field Administrator, who has no direct personal knowledge of the details involved in the matter and has not participated in the decision being reviewed.

The applicant or consumer has a right to:

- be represented by an attorney, client assistance, parent or guardian, friend, relative, or any other representative of his/her choice (NOTE: DSB cannot provide reimbursement for attorney fees),
- reader services or interpreter services (requires a three [3] working day notice to arrange for these services),
- present evidence and call witnesses in support of the case,
- question Agency staff members, and
- receive a decision in writing from the person conducting the administrative review within five (5) days following the review.

1.8 MEDIATION AND IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES—STEP 3 - MEDIATION SESSION

1.8.1 Mediators

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) will make available to DSB a list of individuals who are qualified mediators and knowledgeable in laws (including regulations) relating to the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation Services under this title, from which mediators shall be selected.

1.8.2 Rules

The mediation process shall:

- be voluntary on the part of the parties;
- not be used to deny or delay the right of an individual to a hearing under this subsection, or to deny any other right afforded under this title; and
- be conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques.

1.8.3 Cost

DSB shall bear the cost of the mediation process (Mediator Officer and Interpreters expenses).

1.8.4 Scheduling

The mediation session must be held within 45 calendar days from the date the request for a mediation session is received, unless the issue is resolved prior to the
45th day or the parties agree to a specific extension of time. The administrative review must be conducted and concluded within the same 45 days. Delays or continuances will not be given for the purpose of extending the provision of services. Any agreement to an extension of time must be formalized in writing and agreed upon by both parties.

1.8.5 Consumer’s Participation

At a mediation session, the individual, or the individual’s representative, is afforded the opportunity to present additional evidence, information, and witnesses to the Mediation Officer; be represented by counsel or another appropriate advocate (DSB cannot provide reimbursement for attorney’s fees), and examine all witnesses and other relevant sources of information.

1.8.6 DSB Staff Attendance

Professional staff involved in the disputed determination will appear at the session to provide appropriate evidence and testimony. Other staff will appear as directed.

1.8.7 Order of Proceedings

The Mediation Officer will conduct the session in accordance with the State laws regarding conduct of individual proceedings before an agency, and applicable Federal laws and regulations. Generally, the mediation follows this order of proceedings:

- Presentation, arguments, and disposition of all preliminary motions
- Opening statements
- Evidence presented by DSB
- Evidence presented by the applicant or consumer
- Rebuttal by either or both sides
- Closing statements by the applicant or consumer
- Closing statements by DSB

1.8.8 Agreement

The Mediation Officer shall help negotiate an agreement that can be agreed on by both parties in the dispute. The Mediation Officer shall write a mediation agreement within ten (10) days of the final session. The written agreement should go to the applicant or consumer or their representative and a copy to the Director of DSB.

If a mediation agreement cannot be reached or the applicant or consumer disagrees with the mediation process, the applicant may request an impartial hearing.

1.9 MEDIATION AND IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES—STEP 4 – IMPARTIAL HEARING

1.9.1 Submission of Request
When an applicant or consumer or his/her representative wishes to request an impartial hearing, he or she may do so by submitting a request in writing to the Director of the Division of Services for the Blind. The request must be made no later than five (5) days of the administrative review decision.

When the Division Director receives a request for a formal hearing, he will request a copy of the consumer's file from the Program Administrator. The impartial hearing will be completed no later than forty-five (45) days from the date of initial request.

The file will also contain a memorandum which summarizes the basis for the administrative review decision. It will also contain a statement of issues and a summary of all facts supporting the administrative review decision. All statements should be written in simple language. Ambiguous and technical words and phrases shall be avoided. The memorandum should be prepared in triplicate. The original memorandum is sent to the applicant or consumer with copies to the appropriate rehabilitation staff member, the Program Administrator.

1.9.2 Parties’ Rights

Parties to a hearing conducted pursuant to these procedures shall be afforded the right to:

- be represented by counsel and by individuals with special knowledge or relevant training,
- present evidence and confront, cross examine and compel the attendance of witnesses,
- prohibit the introduction of evidence not discussed at least five days prior to hearing,
- have an interpreter present (in scheduling an interpreter, three [3] working days notice should be given), and
- a written report of the findings of fact and conclusions shall be provided to all parties within thirty (30) days of the hearing.

1.9.3 Requests for Witnesses

The applicant or consumer and/or representative will be advised by a letter prepared by DSB, and sent certified mail, return receipt requested, that he or she has ten (10) days from the date of signature on the certified mail receipt to request witnesses.

The Program Administrator must advise the Director at the time the Hearing File is submitted of any witnesses he or she wishes to appear in order to document the action or to support an administrative decision.

1.9.4 Scheduling the Hearing

After the time frame for submitting applicant or consumer witnesses has expired, the hearing will be completed within forty-five (45) days of the initial request. The
scheduling letter advises the applicant or consumer of the time, date, place of hearing, and the name of the Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO) who will conduct the hearing. The IHO shall be selected on a random basis from a pool of qualified persons by DSB.

1.9.5 Place of Hearing

The hearing will normally be held in the local DSB office. It may be held in another location if requested by either party and approved by the Director.

1.9.6 Non-Attendance

If either DSB or the applicant or consumer requests that the hearing be rescheduled prior to the date of the hearing, a request may be made to the Director to determine if good cause for such a request exists. If it is determined that good cause does exist, the hearing may be rescheduled. If the applicant or consumer fails to appear for the hearing and does not provide notice prior to the date of the hearing, the appeal may be dismissed at the discretion of the IHO. If an emergency arises, the applicant or consumer must justify in writing his/her reasons for non-appearance.

1.9.7 DSB Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Field Administrator to arrange for an office in which to conduct the hearing.

The Rehabilitation Counselor or Program Administrator will be responsible for presenting the case for DSB and answering any questions regarding the issue. The applicant or consumer and/or representative have the right to cross-examine the DSB representative.

DSB may request legal assistance in preparing for the hearing by contacting the Arkansas Attorney General.

1.9.8 Confidentiality Requirements

Arkansas Code 20-79-216 states that it is unlawful, except for purposes directly connected with the administration of DSB programs, to disclose the name or refer to the name of persons applying to receive services.

To ensure the confidentiality of a closed hearing, the IHO shall inquire if there is anyone present with whom the applicant or consumer is not familiar. Should an applicant or consumer indicate in the affirmative, the party in question will come forward, identify himself and state the reason for his presence. Should there be objection on the part of the applicant or consumer to the relevance of this person’s attendance at the hearing, the IHO will have the responsibility to rule on the individual’s presence.

1.9.9 Conduct of Hearing

The hearing will be conducted by the IHO.
The IHO’s responsibility is to maintain a professional atmosphere and to ensure that the proceedings are conducted in a fair and impartial manner so that each party may present evidence and testimony. The IHO will explain hearing procedures and swear in witnesses. The hearing shall provide both parties with an opportunity to be heard and to present their evidence and testimony.

The applicant or consumer may be represented by an attorney or client representative who may present testimony. An applicant or consumer or representative will be given the opportunity to present witness, advance arguments, offer additional evidence, and to question or refute evidence.

DSB will be given the opportunity to present witnesses, advance arguments, offer additional evidence, and to question or refute evidence.

All parties have the right to cross-examine witnesses. The IHO can pose questions at anytime during the proceedings. Questioning of all parties will be confined to the issue(s) involved. The IHO is to ensure only relevant information is permitted to be presented. Arkansas Rules of Evidence will serve as general guidance as to the admissibility of evidence.

The IHO shall not fraternize with either party prior to or during the hearing. Situations may occur in which a party wishes to approach the IHO to say something privately. This is not permissible and the IHO may need to explain that all facts are to be heard by both parties and will be accepted impartially.

The IHO should provide for reasonable recesses in lengthy hearings.

1.9.10 IHO Opening Statement

IHO opening statement will include:

- IHO self-introduction and statement of impartiality,
- function, role and authority,
- confidentiality,
- reason for hearing, and
- citing of applicant or consumer request.

1.9.11 Opening Statement on Behalf of Both Parties

Both parties will enter their appearances by stating their name, who they represent, and their address. Only one person shall make an opening statement on behalf of a party.

The DSB opening statement will be a summary of the rehabilitation status of the applicant or consumer and the reasons for that status.

The applicant or consumer opening statement will be a summary of his/her current rehabilitation status and the reasons for requesting a hearing on his/her rehabilitation status.
1.9.12 Questions for the Record (DSB)

If records, reports, and files were requested, were they made available?
Are copies available for the record?
Are all appropriate personnel in attendance?
Was applicant or consumer informed in writing that he or she has the right:

- to bring counsel or consumer representative,
- to provide witnesses,
- to examine all DSB records upon which the Agency based its decisions, and
- to request that certain DSB personnel be present at the hearing and of their right to cross-examine the DSB witnesses?

Was the applicant or consumer informed in writing the role of the IHO which includes:

- hearing both sides,
- limiting evidence that is presented at the hearing to relevant information,
- making a decision in the applicant’s or consumer’s best interest, and
- engaging in fact finding?

1.9.13 Questions for the Record (Applicant or Consumer)

Have you had an opportunity to examine your VR Record of Service, reports and files regarding your rehabilitation status?
Have you had an opportunity for an informal administrative review by your counselor or Program Administrator?
Have you had an opportunity to call witnesses?
Have you been assured by DSB that your rehabilitation status would not change until all proceedings were completed?

1.9.14 Decision

The IHO will prepare the decision based on a comprehensive review of the information presented at the hearing. The format will consist of an Introduction, Findings of Facts, Conclusion of Law, and a Decision. The decision will be based on the provisions of the approved State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act as amended and applicable state laws. The decision of the IHO must be provided to the applicant or consumer within thirty (30) days from the date the hearing was conducted. The applicant or consumer must be advised at the time the decision is sent that the decision will become final twenty (20) days from the date of mailing, unless it is to be reviewed by the DSB Director.

1.9.15 Review of Decision of Appeals and Hearings

The DSB Director has the authority under 34 CFR Section 361.57 (b) (5) to review the IHO’s decision within twenty (20) days of the mailing of the IHO decision. If
the applicant or consumer is not notified within twenty (20) days of the IHO’s
decision by the Director of the intent to review, the decision of the IHO will
become final. If the Director reviews the decision, the final action occurs when the
Director sends out a decision.

Criteria on which the Director can base his decision to review the IHO’s decision:

  The IHO’s decision is arbitrary, capricious, reflects abuse of discretion, or
  otherwise unreasonable.
  The IHO’s decision is not supported by substantial evidence, i.e., consistent
  with facts and applicable Federal and State policy.
  In reviewing the IHO’s decision, inappropriate and inadequate interpretation
to such factors may be noted:

    The Federal Statute and Regulations as they apply to the specific issue(s)
in question
    The State Plan as it applies to the specific issue(s) in question
    The State Procedures Manual as it applies to the specific issue(s) in question
    Key portions of conflicting testimony
    State Agency options in the delivery of services if such options are
    permissible by regulations
    Restrictions in the Federal Statute or regulations with regard to such
    supportive services as maintenance and transportation
    Approved Federal or State Agency policy as it relates to the issue(s) in
    question

In those instances where one or more of these standards have been abused, the
DSB Director should have grounds upon which to exercise his option for a review.
That review would be limited to the findings with which the Director took issue.
Consequently, the complexity of the review would be dictated by the degree to
which there is a disagreement.

If the DSB Director decides to review the decision of the IHO, an opportunity must
be provided all parties involved in the hearing to submit additional evidence and
information that may be pertinent to the final decision.

The DSB Director must make a final decision and provide a full report in writing
of the decision within thirty (30) days of providing notice of the intent to review
the IHO’s decision. The final decision must contain all the findings and grounds
upon which the decision is based.

Copies of the decision are to be provided to the applicant or consumer or, if
appropriate, the individual’s parent, guardian, or other representative.

The DSB Director cannot delegate the responsibility to make the final decision to
any other officer or employee of DSB.
Except for the provision requiring a twenty (20) day time limit for the Director to notify all parties of his intent to review the IHO’s decision, reasonable time extensions for good cause can be granted.

1.10 CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

1.10.1 Overview

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is established and funded in the Rehabilitation Act. This program is designed to uphold the rights of individuals who are applying for or receiving services from DSB. CAP is operated independent of any agency which provides treatment, services or rehabilitation to individuals under the Rehabilitation Act.

1.10.2 CAP Services

When an applicant or consumer is not satisfied with services provided or denied from DSB, the Client Assistance Program can assist in resolving the problem. CAP personnel offers the following:

- Provides information and referral services
- Gives information on consumer rights
- Advises consumers of the procedure to follow for resolving problems
- Aids, if requested by the applicant or consumer, in pursuing administrative or legal action, if necessary, to ensure the consumer's rights under the Rehabilitation Act are protected

1.10.3 Counselor Responsibility

It is the DSB counselor's responsibility to inform each applicant or consumer of the Client Assistance Program and how to access the service.

1.10.4 Number to Contact

The Client Assistance Program can be reached at one of the following numbers:

1-800-296-1775 V/TDD, or 1-800-482-1174 V/TDD

1.10.5 Applicant Information Form (DSB-8033)

ALL DSB applicants are to be given the Applicant Information Form (DSB-8033). This form explains the applicant's rights and responsibilities, and provides information on appeals and the Client Assistance Program. A copy of this form, signed by the applicant, is to be placed under the Application for Services Form in the case record.

1.11 Substance Abuse Policy

DSB may require a blood test, urinalysis or other drug/alcohol screening for eligible clients of vocational rehabilitation any time there is reasonable cause to suspect the client is actively engaged in using illegal substances or abusing prescribed substances. If a counselor orders a
Drug/Alcohol Test due to a reasonable cause or suspicious behavior they must document the client’s behaviors in the AWARE system. Reasonable cause to suspect substance abuse may be established by any of the following:

A. Observed impairment.
B. Uncharacteristic or erratic behavior.
C. Habitual absenteeism from work.
D. Direct observation of drug or alcohol use or possession while engaged in a training or service program. Observation from a counselor, DSB staff member, or direct vendor of services leading to employment.
E. Physical symptoms indicative of drug or alcohol use. For example, slurred speech, tremors, drowsiness, pupils dilated or constricted, irritability, hyperactivity, general motor impairment, disorientation, or the smell of alcohol on the breath.
F. Any other facts or circumstances which would cause a reasonable person to believe that the client is in possession of, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Drug or alcohol testing would be reasonable to ensure that the individual is not or no longer is engaging in the use of illegal drugs or alcohol. Drug testing will be arranged by the DSB counselor and the number of drug/alcohol tests required will be at the discretion of the Area Supervisor. Written documentation of attendance at the drug treatment program must be provided by the treatment facility. DSB will pay for drug testing. All drug/alcohol screening must be documented in the client’s case file.

If a client tests positive, DSB will provide counseling assistance and discuss the need for a more comprehensive drug treatment program. The client’s plan may need to be revised to include a comprehensive drug treatment program. Groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) are not drug treatment programs, but support groups.

If the client refuses to participate in drug testing and a drug treatment program, the client’s case must be closed.

**The Vocational Rehabilitation Process – Chapter 2**

**2.1– APPLICANT**

**2.1.1 Definition**

An individual is considered an applicant when the individual or individual's representative, as appropriate, has completed and signed an agency application form.

**2.1.2 Application**

It is the responsibility of the counselor to complete the application with the client and have the client sign the application. This can be done electronically, in the AWARE system or the application in the AWARE case record management system can be printed and signed manually. The counselor then can have the
signed form scanned and attached to the case record management system. However, in an emergency, a rehabilitation assistant may be asked to complete the application form. This can be done using a paper copy of the form. All new applicants must have a signed application in the AWARE system and in the case record.

### 2.1.3 Purpose

The purpose of application status is to gather diagnostic information sufficient to make a determination of one of the following:

- Eligibility for placement in a Trial Work Experience or Extended Evaluation
- Ineligibility
- Eligibility

### 2.1.4 Moving From Application

Movement out of application status occurs once a determination has been made that the applicant should be certified as:

- eligible for VR services,
- ineligible for VR services, or
- eligible for a Trial Work Experience or Extended Evaluation.

### 2.2 PRE-SERVICE

#### 2.2.1 Definition

A consumer in Pre-Service is one who has been determined eligible for VR services, but does not meet the agency’s order of selection priorities, and therefore, must wait for services to be provided. The consumer’s name is placed on a waiting list for services until such time as the agency has sufficient funds to provide the needed services.

#### 2.2.2 Purpose

The purpose of Pre-Service is to provide a holding status for consumers who are eligible for VR services, but due to limited funding must wait for the provision of needed services.

#### 2.2.3 When to Move Into Pre-Service

A consumer is moved into Pre-Service after they have been found eligible for VR services, but due to limited funding will not move on to the planning stage.

#### 2.2.4 When to Move Out of Pre-Service
A consumer is moved out of pre-service when the agency has money to provide the needed services, or the case is closed indicating services will not be provided for whatever reason.

2.3 TRIAL WORK EXPERIENCE

2.3.1 Purpose

Trial work experience is used only to determine if an applicant with a significant disability is capable of achieving an employment outcome.

2.3.2 VR Eligibility Criteria

Prior to any determination that an individual with a disability is unable to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome because of the severity of that individual’s disability or that the individual is ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services, the designated State unit must conduct an exploration of the individual’s abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in realistic work situations.

2.3.3 Clear and Convincing Evidence

There must be clear and convincing evidence that due to the severity of the individual’s disability, the individual is incapable of benefiting from the vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome;

2.3.4 Trial Work Experience

If the counselor has reason to doubt that the consumer can benefit from VR services, the consumer should be provided with a trial work experience of sufficient variety in a competitive integrated employment setting to the maximum extent possible, consistent with the informed choice and rehabilitation needs of the individual.

Trial work experiences include supported employment, on-the-job training, and other experiences using realistic integrated work settings. Trial work experiences must be of sufficient variety and over a sufficient period of time to determine that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the individual can benefit from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome.

The designated State unit must provide appropriate supports, including, but not limited to, assistive technology devices and services and personal assistance services, to accommodate the rehabilitation needs of the individual during the trial work experiences.

2.3.5 Timelines
Trial work experiences should be conducted for a period not to exceed 6 months. The counselor must review work placement, supports, services, and the individual’s progress at least once every 30 days using the job readiness checklist (see policy 11.4.3).

2.4 CLOSURE FROM TRIAL WORK EXPERIENCE AT APPLICATION

2.4.1 Definition

A consumer that is closed from trial work experience is not accepted for VR services.

2.4.2 Purpose

The purpose of this status is to identify all consumers not accepted for VR services and close from either application or eligibility.

2.4.3 When to Move Into Closed from Trial Work Experiences

When an individual shows evidence over a 6 month timeframe that trial work was unsuccessful, the case should be moved to closure status. An AWARE closure form must be completed and a letter sent to the client.

2.4.4 Note

When closing a case after trial work experiences are unsuccessful, it will require clear and convincing evidence that the client can not benefit in terms of an employment outcome.

It is also necessary to cancel or pay all outstanding encumbrances prior to closure.

Oversight: Supervisor approval of all closures is required for all counselors. The approval must occur before the case is actually closed.

2.5 ELIGIBILITY

2.5.1 Requirements

a) Eligibility requirements—(1) Basic requirements. Eligibility must be based only on the following requirements:
(i) A determination by a counselor that the applicant has a visual impairment that meets the DSB policy guideline for blindness, legal blindness, visual impairment, or the imminent danger criteria. (ii) A determination by a counselor that the applicant’s visual impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment for the applicant; and (iii) A determination by a counselor that the applicant requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment that is consistent with the individual’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest, and informed choice.
2.5.2 Purpose

For purposes of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs under this part, an individual is presumed to have a goal of an employment outcome. Once a client has been determined eligible it is appropriate for the counselor to conduct a comprehensive case study in order to determine the nature and scope of services.

**NOTE:** It is critical that the counselor has a clear understanding of the client's abilities, limitations, and desires before proceeding with the development of an IPE.

2.5.3 Supervision

Supervisor approval of the Eligibility is required for counselors during their first twelve months of employment.

2.5.4 Service Status

A consumer is in Service Status when the IPE has been formulated and written. This occurs AFTER the eligibility determination is documented.

2.5.5 Ninety (90) Day Time Frame

The IPE will be developed within 90 days after Eligibility for VR services has been completed.

2.6 INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (IPE)

2.6.1 Definition

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is a written plan that identifies:

- the employment outcome, also referred to as the employment goal;
- the services that will be provided to achieve the employment goal and the time frames for those services; and
- the steps that will measure progress toward the employment goal.

The IPE outlines how the individual will achieve a specific employment goal that is consistent with the individual’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests and informed choice. The employment goal and specific vocational rehabilitation (VR) services are determined through an assessment of the eligible individual’s vocational rehabilitation needs. During the process of developing the IPE, the individual will be informed of his/her rights and responsibilities and the steps necessary to achieve an employment outcome. The counselor and the eligible individual agree on the criteria to evaluate progress toward the employment goal.

Individuals with disabilities must be active and responsible participants in their own rehabilitation programs, including making informed, yet practical and
realistic, choices about the selection of their employment goal, the vocational rehabilitation services they receive and the providers of those services.

**Oversight:** Supervisor approval of the IPE is required for counselors during their first twelve months of employment.

### 2.6.2 Purpose

Developing a plan with a consumer indicates that the consumer is ready for services that will assist him/her in the accomplishment of the vocational goal and the attainment of employment.

### 2.6.3 When to Move Into Service Status

Movement into Service Status occurs when the counselor and consumer have jointly developed and signed the IPE.

### 2.6.4 When to Move Out of Service Status

Movement out of Service Status occurs when planned VR services have been completed or the case is closed prior to the initiation of services.

### 2.7 VOCATIONAL COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE

#### 2.7.1 Definition

Vocational Counseling and Guidance is provided by the counselor to:

1. promote a successful consumer/counselor partnership throughout the rehabilitation process, and

2. engage the consumer in a decision-making process in the selection, planning and achievement of an employment outcome, where the consumer is responsible for, and makes, decisions about the plan and services leading to employment.

#### 2.7.2 When to Provide

Counseling and Guidance is a core vocational rehabilitation service that is provided throughout the consumer's entire experience with DSB. Counseling and guidance is provided by DSB counselors and is not purchased from other sources. However, other community members (e.g. services providers, family, friends) can play a crucial role in the effectiveness of counseling and guidance by supporting the achievement of vocational goals.

#### 2.7.3 Scope of Service

Counseling and guidance may be provided to:
1. encourage the consumer through establishing a relationship of mutual respect, where the counselor can be both supportive, yet challenging, in promoting the consumer's development of the skills needed to achieve an employment outcome.

2. facilitate informed choice throughout the entire rehabilitation process by providing information about the scope and limits of vocational rehabilitation services, and by helping the consumer obtain specific information on programs, resources and services that can assist him/her in the selection and achievement of vocational goals and an employment outcome. When there are limits on the provision or availability of vocational rehabilitation services, the counselor can assist the consumer in exploring alternatives.

3. gain a comprehensive and individualized understanding of the consumer's abilities, capabilities, interests, strengths, resources, priorities and concerns in order to identify factors that will be critical to vocational achievement.

4. facilitate the consumer's understanding of his/her strengths on which to capitalize in achieving vocational goals and plan with the consumer to find ways to work around any impediments, such as functional limitations related to visual issues, health, personal, economic (e.g. benefits, work disincentives/incentives) and social issues.

5. assist the consumer in selecting a vocational goal and developing a plan of services toward that goal.

6. involve "significant others" (with the consumer's consent) such as family members, relatives and friends in the community who can: be assets to counseling; support the desired outcomes; and, at times, provide valuable resources.

2.7.4 Therapeutic Counseling Services

If based on the counselor's observations, assessments or training reports, the counselor believes that a consumer can benefit from therapeutic counseling, the counselor should strongly recommend that the consumer seek these counseling services. If the consumer agrees to participate in counseling services, the counselor should arrange for the service and revise the IPE as needed. If the consumer refuses counseling, the counselor should advise the consumer that failure to address issues may impact the consumer's ability to participate successfully in their vocational rehabilitation program.

2.7.5 Documenting

Thorough and frequent documentation in the narrative section of the case service record is necessary to show progress towards the goal and to identify what interventions have been used to overcome barriers to employment.
2.8 PHYSICAL AND MENTAL RESTORATION

2.8.1 Definition

An individual uses this service under an approved plan. Physical and mental restoration services include medical, surgical, psychiatric, or therapeutic treatment, the fitting of prosthetic appliances, hospitalization, convalescent care, and nursing services.

2.8.2 Purpose

The purpose of providing restorative services is to alleviate or diminish the effects of the disability in order to improve employability.

2.8.3 When to Add Physical and Mental Restoration as a Service

A consumer requires a plan specifying physical and mental restoration services upon initiation of planned medical treatment, psychological or psychiatric treatment, surgical treatment, or fitting of a prosthesis or aid.

2.8.4 Emergency Physical Restoration Policy

DSB should not be used as a medical insurance resource. Inform the consumer and the community that physical restoration services are one of many services offered by vocational rehabilitation, and provided to assist consumers to reach specific vocational goals.

2.8.5 Emergencies and Prevention of Blindness

Emergencies do occur which threaten an individual's vision and ability to work requiring intervention to prevent blindness. It is the VR counselor's responsibility, with the assistance of the supervisor, to determine the feasibility of emergency intervention prior to payment for any physical restoration services.

2.9 TRAINING

2.9.1 Definition

Training services:

- Academic
- Business
- Vocational
- Personal and/or vocational adjustment

2.9.2 Purpose

The purpose of providing training is to develop or restore those vocational and/or independent living skills necessary for successful employment outcomes.
2.9.3 When to Provide Training as a Planned Service

A consumer requires training on an IPE when one or more of the following are going to be received:

- Training in a public or private school
- Training in a commercial or industrial establishment under employment conditions
- Training by an individual teacher, instructor, or by distance or online education
- Personal/social adjustment training
- Work adjustment training
- Rehabilitation teacher training

2.9.4 When to End the Training Service

A consumer no longer requires the training once training has been completed, interrupted, or terminated. This should be documented in the case notes.

2.10 READY FOR EMPLOYMENT/JOB READY

2.10.1 Definition

Job Ready means one who has completed preparation for employment and is ready to accept employment but has not yet been placed, or has been placed but has not begun employment.

2.10.2 When to Move Into Job Ready Status

A consumer is moved into Job Ready Status when planned services have been completed insofar as necessary or possible and when the consumer is ready for employment.

2.10.2 When to Move Out of Job Ready Status

A consumer is moved out of Job Ready Status: Once the consumer's employment actually begin; if the rehabilitation program is interrupted; if the consumer's case is closed after planned services were initiated.

2.10.4 Note

Any necessary service can be purchased in this status if it is appropriate to keeping the job, i.e., job adaptation or modifications of equipment.

2.11 IN EMPLOYMENT

2.11.1 Definition

A consumer has actually begun employment.
2.11.2 Purpose
The purpose of employment status is to provide sufficient time on the job to assure employment stability before case closure, typically 90 days.

2.11.3 When to Move Into Employment Status
Movement into Employment Status is made once a consumer is actually working and the program of rehabilitation services has been completed insofar as necessary or possible.

2.11.4 When to Move Out of Employment Status
A consumer may be moved from Employment Status to Closed Rehabilitated only after being continuously employed for at least 90 days. Movement out of Employment Status may also occur if the individual has achieved 90 days in employment, if employment is interrupted, or the case is closed not rehabilitated due to a change in circumstances.

If the individual experiences a job loss, then the case can be moved back to service status and a new plan can be written.

2.12 SERVICE INTERRUPTION

2.12.1 Definition
A consumer in Interrupted Status is one who has experienced a significant change in circumstances which interferes with the VR process and rehabilitation services are interrupted after eligibility has been determined.

2.12.2 Purpose
The purpose of Interrupted Status is to put the case in a holding status until such time the individual is able to resume rehabilitation services or the case is closed.

2.12.3 When to Move Into Interrupted Status
A consumer is placed in Interrupted Status if rehabilitation services are interrupted while the consumer is in service.

2.12.4 When to Move Out of Interrupted Status
A consumer is held in Interrupted Status until the consumer returns to previously initiated services or the case is closed not rehabilitated.

2.13 CLOSED REHABILITATED

2.13.1 Definition
A consumer in Closed Rehabilitated status is one who has successfully attained their vocational goal and reached an employment outcome. With respect to an individual, an employment outcome means:

- entering or retaining full-time or, if appropriate, part-time (20 hours per week minimum) competitive employment in the integrated labor market,
- satisfying the vocational outcome of supported employment, or
- satisfying any other vocational outcome RSA may determine to be appropriate (including satisfying the vocational outcome of self-employment, telecommuting, or business ownership), in a manner consistent with the Rehabilitation Act.

2.13.2 Purpose

The purpose of Closed Rehabilitated is to indicate when a consumer has been successfully rehabilitated.

2.13.3 When to Move Into Closed Rehabilitated

A consumer is moved into this status when all of the following are applicable:

(a) Employment outcome achieved. The individual has achieved the employment outcome that is described in the individual’s individualized plan for employment in accordance with § 361.46(a)(1) and is consistent with the individual’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

(b) Employment outcome maintained. The individual has maintained the employment outcome for an appropriate period of time, but not less than 90 days, necessary to ensure the stability of the employment outcome, and the individual no longer needs vocational rehabilitation services.

(c) Satisfactory outcome. The client and the counselor consider the employment outcome to be satisfactory and agree that the individual is performing well in the employment.

(d) Post-employment services. The individual is informed through appropriate modes of communication of the availability of post-employment services.

2.13.4 Bills

Before a case can be closed, all outstanding authorizations must be paid or canceled.

2.13.5 Note

A consumer will not be closed rehabilitated more than once in any fiscal year.

Oversight: Supervisor approval of all closed rehabilitated closures is required for all counselors. The approval must occur before the case is actually closed.
2.14 CLOSED AFTER IPE INITIATED (NOT REHABILITATED)

2.14.1 Definition

A consumer closed in Closed Not- Rehabilitated is one who is unable to achieve the vocational goal after having received at least one planned VR service. Cases closed not rehabilitated can only be closed from service status, job-ready status, employed status, or interrupted status.

2.14.2 Purpose

The purpose of Closed Not Rehabilitated is to identify all persons not rehabilitated even though the IPE had been developed and services initiated.

2.14.3 When to Move Into Closed Not Rehabilitated

A consumer is moved into Closed Not Rehabilitated if the following criteria have been met: at least one service planned in the IPE has been initiated or circumstances prevent the consumer's attainment of a suitable occupation.

Oversight: Supervisor approval of all Closed Not Rehabilitated closures is required for all counselors. The approval must occur before the case is actually closed.

2.15 CLOSED, OTHER REASONS, BEFORE IPE INITIATED

2.15.1 Definition

A consumer is closed in Closed, Other Reasons, Before IPE Initiated when it is determined the individual cannot progress to a point of initiating services. A consumer is closed in this status prior to plan initiation only.

2.15.2 Purpose

The purpose of Closed, Other Reasons, Before IPE Initiated is to identify all persons closed, not rehabilitated, before actual initiation of services in an IPE.

2.15.3 When to Move Into Closed, Other Reasons, Before IPE Initiated

A consumer is moved into Closed, Other Reasons, Before IPE Initiated if no planned service has been provided, and circumstances preclude participation in a VR program of services as outlined in the IPE.

Oversight: Supervisor approval of all Closed, Other Reasons, Before IPE Initiated closures is required for all counselors. The approval must occur before the case is actually closed.
2.16 POST-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

2.16.1 Definition

A consumer is placed in this status has previously been rehabilitated and the need for post-employment services has been identified and planned to maintain the individual in employment.

2.16.2 Purpose

The purpose of this status is to avoid, wherever possible, the necessity of re-opening a case in order to provide a relatively minor service.

**NOTE:** Cases in Post Employment Services, post-employment, cannot be transferred out. No case will remain in this status over 8 months without supervisor approval.

**Supervisor approval of all cases being moved to Post Employment Services is required for counselors during their first twelve months of employment.**

2.17 CLOSED FROM POST-EMPLOYMENT

2.17.1 Definition

A consumer closed in Closed from Post-Employment is one for whom all post-employment services have been completed insofar as necessary or feasible in terms of an employment outcome.

2.17.2 Purpose

The purpose of Closed from Post-Employment is to furnish a means for identifying all persons who have received post-employment services and are being closed from Post Employment Services.

2.17.3 When to Move Into Closed from Post-Employment

A consumer is moved into Closed from Post-Employment when services which required the need for post-employment are successfully completed, or it is determined that post-employment services cannot maintain the consumer in employment.

**Oversight:** Supervisor approval of all Closed, Other Reasons, Before IPE Initiated closures is required for all counselors during their first twelve months of employment. The approval must occur before the case is actually closed.

2.19 TRANSFERS

2.19.1 Introduction
A transfer will be made when a consumer on a counselor's master list permanently moves into another counselor’s area. Cases in employed status will only be transferred when the counselor believes that it is the best choice for the consumer.

2.19.2 Transferring A Case

When it is determined that a case should be transferred to another counselor, the following instructions should be followed.

- Document in case narrative the reason for the transfer.
- Send an e-mail with the case to the receiving counselor explaining the make-up of the case thus far.
- An e-mail will also be sent to both supervisors involved.
- The case must be hand-carried or mailed certified to the receiving counselor. The case must be transferred in AWARE.
- Only supervisors have the authority to transfer a case. The receiving supervisor must review the case and see that it is up-to-date prior to accepting it.

NOTE: Cases in Post Employment Services will not be transferred.

Policy on Diagnosis and Evaluation – Chapter 3

3.1 PRELIMINARY DIAGNOSTIC STUDIES

3.1.1 Purpose of Diagnostics

All diagnostics are gathered to help applicants/consumers better understand their skills, abilities, and interests and to assist the counselor in making decisions in partnership with the consumer.

3.1.2 Purpose of Preliminary Diagnostics

The purpose of the preliminary diagnostic study is to gather information to help the counselor establish whether an applicant is eligible or ineligible for services. These diagnostics also provide valuable information to the applicant regarding the applicant’s strengths and weaknesses in terms of employability.

The study is performed prior to an eligibility determination.

3.1.3 Who May Participate?

All applicants are entitled to participate in the preliminary diagnostic study.

3.1.4 RULE
All diagnostic work, for the purpose of establishing eligibility, must be completed prior to placing a consumer in active status.

3.1.5 Using the Preliminary Diagnostic Study

Following the determination of eligibility, results obtained in the preliminary diagnostic study serve as a starting point in development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

3.1.6 Diagnostics in Eligibility Status

Diagnostic work is also done in Eligibility Status. The study is referred to as the THOROUGH DIAGNOSTIC STUDY and is discussed later in this chapter.

3.1.7 Note

After a consumer has been placed in active status, it may become necessary to provide additional diagnostic work. As long as these studies are not done to determine eligibility, these services may be provided at any time during the rehabilitation process without change of status.

3.2 THOROUGH DIAGNOSTIC STUDIES

3.2.1 Purpose of Diagnostics

The purpose of the thorough diagnostic study is to determine the vocational goal and nature and scope of services in support of that goal.

These diagnostics may also provide valuable information to the consumer regarding vocational interests and aptitudes, the marketability of the consumer’s present and potential skill level, and amount of services that will increase consumer’s marketability of skills, equipment needs, etc.

3.2.2 When is the Thorough Diagnostic Study Conducted?

This study is provided after the consumer has been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services (Eligibility Status).

3.2.3 Components of the Thorough Diagnostic Study

The study may include a comprehensive evaluation of pertinent medical, psychological, vocational, educational, and other factors which bear upon the individual’s handicap to employment.

3.2.4 Examples of a Thorough Diagnostic Study

This study may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Placement of consumer in a rehabilitation facility in order to evaluate work
tolerance, ability to acquire specific job skills, and patterns of work behavior

- Provision of additional medical and/or psychological evaluations for the purpose of determining the nature and scope of services needed

3.2.5 Scope

Thorough diagnostic study represents the completion of all diagnostic studies necessary to determine the nature and scope of services needed by the consumer in order to develop the IPE.

3.2.6 Use of Comparable Services and Benefits

Although expenditure of agency funds is authorized for thorough diagnostics regardless of the consumer’s income level, the counselor will access all resources available through comparable services and benefits programs prior to using case service funds.

3.3 MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC STUDIES

3.3.1 Introduction

This section provides information regarding three types of medical diagnostic studies used by the VR counselor including the eye examination, the general medical examination, and specialist examinations.

3.3.2 When Can These Diagnostics be Provided?

Medical diagnostic studies may be provided as a part of the preliminary diagnostic study, the thorough diagnostic study, or a re-evaluation of any area that might impact the consumer’s reaching the long range goal.

3.3.3 Required Examinations

To determine if a consumer is eligible to receive services from this agency, medical information consisting of an eye examination is required. A general medical examination may be deemed necessary when there is reason to believe a secondary disability exists that would limit the employability of the individual.

NOTE: The eye examination is necessary to determine if the consumer has a visual disability which will allow the individual to receive services from DSB. The VR counselor is allowed to use some discretion in using his own judgment where both of these examinations are concerned. For example, if the consumer has bilateral enucleation, the counselor can assume the obvious and needs only to document this fact in the record. The presence of a secondary disability and the need for, or omission of, a general medical examination should be documented in the case service record.
3.3.4 Accountability

VR counselors will be held accountable for certifying an applicant eligible for VR services and the placement of the consumer in the Order of Selection for services.

**Supervisor approval of all applicants being certified as eligible is required for counselors during their first twelve months of employment.**

3.3.5 Types of Eye Specialists

- Ophthalmologist
  1. Is a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.)
  2. Specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases
  3. Performs ophthalmic surgery when necessary
  4. Prescribes glasses, contact lenses and low vision aids

- Optometrist
  1. Performs eye examinations
  2. Diagnoses eye diseases
  3. Prescribes lenses and trains individuals in their use

3.3.6 Optician’s Work Clarified

Confusion sometimes develops about the work performed by an optician. An optician

- Does...
  1. Grind lenses
  2. Fit spectacles and contacts
  3. Dispense glasses and other optical aids

- Does not…
  1. Diagnose or treat eye diseases
  2. Perform surgery
  3. Prescribe lenses

3.3.7 Selection of an Eye Specialist

If an applicant has already chosen an eye specialist, then the applicant may return to that specialist for the examination. If an applicant does not have an eye specialist, then the counselor will provide a list of specialists to the applicant.

3.3.8 General Medical Examination
When DSB is paying for a general medical examination on a consumer, the physician performing an examination must be a licensed Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) or Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.)

3.3.9 Exceptions

If there are current specialists examinations or hospital and clinical records which can provide the information required on the physical examination or the eye examination, they may be obtained from these sources by a request from the counselor, accompanied by a Release of Information Form (DSB-8021) signed by the consumer.

3.3.10 Cases From Institutions (Hospitals, State Schools, Correctional Facilities)

Most individuals who come from an institution are given thorough physical examinations upon admission under close supervision, and monitored for any significant change in health. Therefore, the medical information supplied by the institution may be considered adequate unless the counselor thinks additional medical information is required.

3.3.11 Selection of a Physician

If an applicant has already chosen a physician, then the applicant may return to that physician for the examination. If an applicant does not have a physician, then the counselor will provide a list of physicians to the applicant.

3.3.12 If a List is Provided

When providing a list of several physicians or specialists to applicants and consumers, the counselor considers the following:

- The amount of time the applicant will be waiting for the examination to be conducted.
- The timeliness of the doctor in reporting examination results to the agency.
- The willingness of the doctor to accept agency fees.

3.3.13 Hearing Evaluation

A hearing evaluation should be obtained on all consumers who are suspected of having a hearing loss.

3.3.14 Detection of Hearing Problems

The presence of a hearing loss may be suspected because it is indicated on the medical record by the physician, observed by the counselor during routine visits, or the consumer informs the counselor of a problem.
3.3.15 Audiological Examination

When a hearing loss is suspected, a comprehensive hearing evaluation will be obtained from a physician specializing in the diseases of the ear or from a licensed or certified audiologist.

3.3.16 Specialist Examinations

In addition to the eye exam and the general medical exam, other medical specialty exams may be needed, such as an examination by a cardiologist for an applicant who has a suspected heart problem, or an examination by an internist for an involved diabetic applicant. If the counselor feels a special exam of this type is needed, it may be provided by the agency.

3.3.17 Contents of All Diagnostic Studies

All reports received during preliminary diagnostic study should include the following:

- Diagnosis
- Prognosis
- Functional Limitations
- Recommendations

3.3.18 NOTE

Counselors should request assistance from their supervisor if difficulty exists in obtaining adequate and complete diagnostic reports.

3.4 OTHER DIAGNOSTIC STUDIES

3.4.1 Introduction

Diagnostic studies are not always medical in nature. Examples of other types of diagnostic studies might include the following:

- Vocational evaluations
- Educational evaluations
- Psychological evaluations
- Evaluations of potential benefit from rehabilitation engineering

3.4.2 When Can These Diagnostics be Provided?
Non-medical diagnostic studies may be provided as a part of the preliminary diagnostic study, the thorough diagnostic study, or a re-evaluation of any area that might impact the consumer’s program.

### 3.4.3 Use for Non-Medical Diagnostic Studies

When used in conjunction with other diagnostic studies, non-medical diagnostic studies provide sufficient evaluation of an individual’s assets and limitations so that the extent of the handicap can be evaluated, and an effective IPE can be developed.

### 3.4.4 Vocational Evaluation

A vocational evaluation provides much useful data including, but not limited to the following:

- A complete work history
- Specific skills already developed
- Tolerance for work
- Vocational aptitudes
- Work behaviors and attitudes

### 3.4.5 Vocational Records

Through reviewing employment records, the counselor can determine the types of jobs, degree of skills, and levels of performance which have been the individual’s pattern of work activity.

### 3.4.6 Other Areas of Consideration

The counselor will also consider stated vocational interests and aptitudes, general ability to work, and whether or not the visual problem will interfere with a specific interest.

### 3.4.7 Applicants

Counselors sometimes work with consumers who have been infrequently employed or have never worked for a living. When there is no established work history, a careful appraisal must be made to determine the individual’s abilities and interests.

### 3.4.8 Psychological Evaluation

Psychological evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility or for development of the IPE. When an applicant or consumer has a difficult, complex vocational problem, a psychological evaluation may be obtained to determine
aptitudes, interests, mental capacities, and emotional strengths and weaknesses that impact vocational decisions.

As with other diagnostics, this information is helpful in counselor assessment as well as consumer’s understanding of self. Informing the applicant or consumer of the purpose and process of the evaluation may increase their willingness to participate. If the applicant or consumer has been presented with the possible benefits of psychological testing but is unwilling to undergo such an examination, then the counselor needs to discuss other methods of gathering useful vocational information.

If a consumer requests an interpretation of the results, the consumer may contact the psychologist directly.

3.4.9 Mental Retardation or Emotionally Disturbed

A psychological evaluation with a test of intelligence must be obtained only if an applicant or consumer is mentally retarded or there is reason to believe so.

3.4.10 Where to Obtain Psychological Information

The counselor can obtain psychological information, as appropriate, from any of the following organizations:

- Schools
- Clinics
- Community agencies
- Public and private organizations
- Certified or licensed psychologists
- Vocational diagnostic units

3.4.11 Case Recording and Documentation

The counselor must document conclusions drawn from reviewing records and diagnostic studies in the record of services. The counselor should address the individual’s attitude toward himself or herself, his/her disability, and the support, or lack of it, from family and friends.

3.4.12 NOTE

In cases where the counselor only plans to provide the consumer with services needed for job retention, he/she may use their own discretion as to what diagnostic services are needed.
Eligibility Policy – Chapter 4

4.1 OVERVIEW

4.1.1 Individuals to be Served
The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind is a state vocational rehabilitation agency established to serve blind and visually impaired individuals in this state. In order to receive services from this agency, an individual must be classified in one of the following categories:

- Total blindness
- Legal blindness
- Visually impaired

4.1.2 Total Blindness
Total blindness means any permanent visual condition resulting in total loss of vision.

4.1.3 Legal Blindness
Legal blindness means any visual condition resulting in:

- a visual acuity for distance vision in the best eye with the best correction of 20/200 or less,
  OR
- the widest diameter of visual field subtending an angle of less than 20 degrees.

4.1.4 Visually Impaired
Visually impaired means a progressive visual condition with a visual acuity of 20/50 in the best eye after correction, which may result in total or legal blindness, OR there is imminent danger that the individual may become totally or legally blind as documented by a physician who is skilled in diseases of the eye.

4.2 DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

4.2.1 Introduction
The primary purpose of determining eligibility is to identify those individuals with visual disabilities who may be served with VR funds. The intent is to empower them to maximize their employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society, through a comprehensive and coordinated state-of-the-art program of vocational rehabilitation.

4.2.2 The Role of the VR Counselor
The VR counselor has the responsibility for determining an individual's eligibility for VR services, eligibility for a trial work period, or ineligibility for VR services. This responsibility cannot be delegated.

**NOTE:** For counselors within their first twelve months on the job, each Certification of Eligibility (DSB-1) must be reviewed and approved by the supervisor.

### 4.2.3 Eligibility Criteria for VR Services

The eligibility criteria for services from this agency are:

- the individual has a **visual impairment** which for such individual constitutes, or results in, a substantial impediment to employment and meets the DSB criteria stated in the VR Manual Chapter 4, 4.1.1, and
- the individual **can benefit in terms of an employment outcome** from vocational rehabilitation services, and
- the individual requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

### 4.2.4 60 Day Rule

- Eligibility determinations for either active VR services or for a trial work period must be made within 60 days after the consumer has applied for VR services. Exceptions can only occur if the consumer is notified that exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the agency's control prevent making a determination within the prescribed time (60 days) and the consumer agrees that the extension of time is necessary. The counselor must document in AWARE that the consumer has agreed and place a copy of the Eligibility Determination Extension from the AWARE case management system in the case file.

### 4.2.5 SSA Disability Determination

For VR purposes, all individuals that are SSDI beneficiaries and SSI recipients and meet the DSB criteria stated in the VR Manual Chapter 4, 4.1.1 are considered to meet all eligibility criteria for VR services. This is known as “presumed eligibility.”

**NOTE:** Although allowed SSDI beneficiaries and SSI recipients are presumed to be eligible for VR services, the presumption of their benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome can be rebutted in the same manner as with any other applicant for VR services. The rebuttal of the benefit presumption must be based on clear and convincing evidence that demonstrates the individual is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from VR services due
to the severity of the individual’s disability. The required “clear and convincing evidence” must be produced through the provision of trial work experiences.

4.2.6 Residence Requirement

DSB may not impose any durational or other residence requirement that excludes any individual who is present in the state.

NOTE: The ability to work as documented by a valid social security card or valid I-9 documentation is required to receive services. See 4.3.1.

4.2.7 Rule

Certification of eligibility for active VR services must be determined prior to applying an Order of Selection for payment of services.

4.2.8 Non Discrimination

Eligibility requirements must be applied without regard to age, gender, race, color, creed, national origin, or type of disability.

4.2.9 Age Limits for Eligibility

No upper or lower age limit may be established that will, in and of itself, result in finding ineligible any individual who is otherwise eligible.

4.3 DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY - IMMIGRANTS

4.3.1 Aliens

The counselor must consider for every individual/applicant whether there is a presumption that the individual can benefit from VR services and work in the United States after services are provided. An individual must have the required document(s) to work in the United States. Form I-9, page 9, Employment Eligibility Verification, Lists of Acceptable Documents to work in the United States identifies the documentation required to obtain, maintain, or regain employment in the United States. The I-9 form lists the documentation required for an individual to legally work in the United States.

List A identifies the list of documents that establish identity and employment authorization. List B identifies documents that verify identity only. List C identifies documents that verify employment authorization only. An individual can present a document from List A or one from List B and one from List C. All documentation presented must be unexpired.
A student visa or a visitor’s visa must accompany acceptable work eligibility documentation as described on the I-9 form. Illegal or undocumented individuals are also unable to legally accept work, and are therefore considered to be ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

4.3.2 Required Documents

Required documents for working in the United States may include:

  - Valid Social Security Card
  - Valid Driver’s License
  - Valid Non-Driver ID Card (issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles)
  - U.S. passport
  - Certificate of Naturalization
  - Certificate of Citizenship

See Section 4.3.2 above, for an individual who is not a citizen of the United States.

4.3.3 Illegal Immigrants

By definition, individuals in the United States without legal status are not eligible for VR services.

4.4 ELIGIBILITY FOR ACTIVE VR SERVICES - CRITERION I

4.4.1 Statement of Criterion I

The individual has a visual disability which is a substantial impediment to employment, and the individual can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of employment outcome.

4.4.2 What is a Visual Disability?

A visual disability exists when the functional ability of an individual is limited or may in the future be limited as a result of

  - a significant visual loss or
  - a potentially significant visual loss due to an eye condition being progressive in nature as documented by medical evidence.

4.4.3 Impact of a Progressive Eye Condition

A progressive eye disorder, for purposes of disability definition, is a visual condition which, if left untreated, may lead to blindness in both eyes.

4.4.4 What is a Substantial Impediment to Employment?
A substantial impediment to employment exists when a visual impairment significantly

- limits the opportunity for suitable employment,
- limits preparation for suitable employment,
- causes the individual to require special assistance in securing suitable employment or in performing job tasks, or
- threatens current employment.

4.4.5 Other Factors

Other medical, psychological, vocational, educational, cultural, and social factors may combine with a visual impairment to create an impediment to employment. Examples of such factors include:

- Lack of motivation
- Low educational level
- Community attitudes concerning the disability
- Employer attitudes concerning the disability
- Long-term unemployment
- Unstable work record
- Ethnic group
- Poverty environment
- Long history of dependency
- Consumer's poor attitude toward work, family and community
- Mental retardation
- Psychiatric condition
- Orthopedic impairment
- Deafness
- Epilepsy
- Other documented chronic conditions
- Lack of accessible transportation

4.4.6 Clear and Convincing Evidence

A consumer can be closed with a "disability too severe" only if there is clear and convincing evidence that the individual is not capable of an employment outcome. There must be evidence that establishes such a conclusion with a high degree of certainty. This determination is made only after providing services through a trial work experience. Supported employment services should also be considered.

4.4.7 Examples of Clear and Convincing Evidence

Clear and convincing evidence could be derived from the results of a thorough diagnostic study which factually proves the individual is not capable of benefiting
from VR services. Trial work experiences must be explored prior to closing a case as “too severe.”

4.5 ELIGIBILITY FOR ACTIVE VR SERVICES - CRITERION II

4.5.1 Statement of Criterion II

The individual requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.

4.5.2 What is Required?

The second eligibility criteria restated means that VR services must be required to enable the consumer to participate in employment.

The consumer requires VR services to prepare for, obtain, retain, or regain employment if one or more of the following services are needed for employment.

- Assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs
- Counseling, guidance, and work related placement services
- Vocational and other training services
- Physical and mental restoration services
- Maintenance
- Interpreter services for individuals who are deaf
- Reader services for those who are blind
- Rehabilitation teaching services and orientation and mobility services
- Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stocks and supplies
- Transportation in connection with other VR services
- Rehabilitation technology services
- Referral to other agencies
- Transition services that result in employment
- On-the-job or other related personal assistance services provided while the consumer is receiving other services described above
- Supported employment services
- Services to family members

These services must be provided, paid for, arranged, coordinated, or otherwise enhanced by the VR program.

4.5.3 Situations Not Requiring VR Services

Situations where the counselor determines that a consumer may not require VR services are:

- Consumer is already receiving the services needed for employment (e.g. physical restoration, training, etc.)
• Services needed for employment are readily available without VR providing, paying for, arranging, coordinating, or otherwise enhancing the services
• Consumer can obtain or retain employment without VR services
• Requested services are not VR services

4.6 ELIGIBILITY FOR EXTENDED EVALUATION

4.6.1 Criteria for Extended Evaluation

There are two criteria for extended evaluation. They are the:

• presence of a visual disability which for the individual constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment outcome, and
• a need to gather evidence to clearly demonstrate that the individual can or cannot benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome.

4.6.2 Purpose of Extended Evaluation

The purpose of providing VR services in extended evaluation is to assess the effect of the impairment on the individual in terms of employment outcome.

4.6.3 Extended Evaluation Services

The following services may be provided while in extended evaluation.

• Diagnostic and related services, including assessment for appropriateness for supported employment
• Counseling and guidance
• Rehabilitation teacher services
• Rehabilitation technology
• Physical restoration
• Maintenance
• Comprehensive evaluation at a community rehabilitation program, workshop, actual work site or other suitable facility
• Transportation

4.6.4 Services Not Allowed

These VR services may not be provided to a person certified for extended evaluation.

• Job placement
• Occupational tools
• On-the-job training
• Active supported employment services
4.6.5 Time Limits

A case should be moved out of Status 06 immediately upon making a decision that
the consumer does or does not meet the criteria for active VR services. This
determination must be made within a maximum of 18 months. After 18 months
the case must be closed Status 08 or certified eligible and moved to Eligibility
Status with the top portion of the DSB-1 completed.

4.6.6 Monitoring Requirements

A comprehensive assessment of progress must be constantly made to assure
appropriate expenditure of VR funds. Progress must be documented at least every
90 days.

4.6.7 Certification of Eligibility for Extended Services

Complete the bottom portion (Certification for Extended Evaluation) of the DSB-1
to certify that the consumer has been determined eligible for extended evaluation
to determine vocational potential. (See DSB-1 at the end of this section.)

NOTE: THE TRIAL WORK EXPERIENCE HAS REPLACED THE
EXTENDED EVALUATION. COUNSELORS MUST USE THE TRIAL
WORK EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO AN EXTENDED EVALUATION. THE
USE OF AN EXTENDED EVALUATION IS ONLY ACCEPTABLE AFTER
ALL OTHER OPTIONS HAVE BEEN EXPLORED AND NO
CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN.

4.7 CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENT (DSB-1)

4.7.1 Purpose

The DSB-1 is used to certify that an individual has met the basic eligibility
requirements for services, either in extended evaluation (Status 06) or as an active
consumer (Eligibility Status).

4.7 CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENT (DSB-1)

4.7.2 Who Completes the DSB-1?

It is the responsibility of the counselor to complete the form.

NOTE: For counselors within their first twelve months on the job, each
Certification of Eligibility (DSB-1) must be reviewed and approved by the
supervisor.

4.7.3 Directions for Completion
The Certification for Eligibility Form (DSB-1) is found in BSIS. The following steps should be followed in completing the DSB-1.

Step 1 - Enter the individual’s last name, first name and middle initial.

Step 2 - If individual is being certified for active services (Eligibility Status), then complete the top section as follows:

- Check appropriate statements
- Enter counselor signature
- Enter date of certification for active services

If individual is being certified for extended evaluation (Status 06), then complete the bottom section as follows:

- Enter counselor signature
- Enter date of certification for extended evaluation

Step 3 - Place certification in case service record.

4.8 INELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES

4.8.1 Introduction

An individual who has applied for services from this agency may not be eligible for VR services. The VR counselor must document in the case service record that one or both of the VR eligibility criteria are not met in order to show ineligibility. An applicant’s case service record may not be closed prior to making an eligibility determination unless circumstances are evident which prevent this decision.

4.8.2 Reasons for Ineligibility

Any of the following reasons may constitute the basis for a determination of ineligibility.

- Diagnostics indicate there is **NO DISABLING CONDITION**
- There is a disabling condition, but it **DOES NOT PRESENT AN IMPEDIMENT TO AN EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME**
- The individual's **DISABILITY IS TOO SEVERE TO ALLOW GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT**
- The individual **DOES NOT REQUIRE VR SERVICES** to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment

* A case cannot be closed due to disability too severe unless an extended evaluation has been provided or the consumer is being closed from active status.
4.8.3 Criteria for Closing a Case from Status 02

A case is closed from Applicant Status when
- one or both of the VR eligibility criteria are not met

OR

- circumstances are evident that an eligibility/ineligibility determination cannot be made (e.g., the applicant declines to participate in the assessment, and the VR counselor has made a reasonable number of attempts to encourage the applicant’s participation).

4.8.4 Closure Narrative

If a consumer is determined ineligible, the Closure Narrative is completed and signed by the counselor and consumer. The consumer is to receive a copy of the signed document and a copy is to be placed on top of the right hand side of the case service record. If the consumer has died, or the counselor is unable to locate the consumer, the counselor should make notation of this in the closure narrative.

**NOTE:** For counselors within their first twelve months on the job, each closure must be reviewed and approved by the supervisor.

4.9 ANNUAL REVIEWS OF INELIGIBLE CASES

4.9.1 Annual Review of Cases Closed Ineligible

Individuals whose cases have been closed in any of the following statuses are to be provided an opportunity for a review of the ineligibility determination no later than 12 months after the decision is made.

- Status 08 from Status 02 or 06,
- Closed Rehabilitated from Statuses 14-24, and
- Closed, Other Reasons, Before IPE Initiated from Statuses 10-12

4.9.2 When is an Annual Review NOT Required?

An annual review will not be conducted when the following apply:

- The individual refuses the opportunity for review
- The individual is no longer present in the state or his/her whereabouts are unknown
- Medical information upon which the ineligibility decision was based indicated the condition was terminal
- Deceased
- Institutionalized
- Transferred to another agency
Closed for failure to cooperate
No disabling condition
No vocational handicap

4.9.3 When is an Annual Review Required?

Any closure found ineligible because the individual is incapable of achieving an employment outcome (Code 02 Handicap too Severe) will be scheduled for an annual review.

*Order of Selection – Chapter 5*

**5.1 OVERVIEW**

**5.1.1 Definition**

The DSB Order of Selection is an explanation justifying the order in which eligible individuals will be served if DSB cannot provide services to all eligible individuals.

**5.1.2 Purpose**

The Order of Selection assures that priority is given to those individuals with the most severe disabilities in the provision of any VR services.

**5.1.3 Individuals to be Served**

In order to receive services from this agency, an individual must be classified in one of the following categories:

Total Blindness – Any permanent visual condition resulting in total loss of vision.

Legal Blindness – A visual acuity for distance vision in the best eye with the best correction of 20/200 or less, or the widest diameter of visual field subtending an angle of less than 20 degrees.

Visually Impaired – A progressive visual condition with a visual acuity of 20/50 in the best eye after correction which may result in total or legal blindness,

**OR**

there is imminent danger that the individual may become totally or legally blind as documented by a physician who is skilled in diseases of the eye.

**5.1.4 Eligibility for DSB Services**

In keeping with federal mandates, all applicants for VR services are entitled to a preliminary diagnostic study to determine eligibility or ineligibility for services.
Diagnostic services, provided in Status 02 (and sometimes Status 06) to determine eligibility and priority classification, are provided without regard to Order of Selection.

**NOTE:** Eligibility must be determined before applying the Order of Selection.

DSB consumers who were in Status 06 or 12-24 (have been determined eligible, an IPE completed, and services in place) prior to the implementation of the Order of Selection policy (October 1, 1995) will receive services as stated in their IPE.

### 5.1.5 Severe Disability

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Section 7 (21) (A), defines an individual with a significant disability as one

1. who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;

2. whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and

3. who has one or more physical or mental disabilities as identified in Section 7 (21) (A) of the Act, or any other disability or disabilities that cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

### 5.1.6 Priority Categories

The Director of DSB will establish the priority levels for expenditures based on availability of funds. The following sets forth the manner in which the Order of Selection will be applied by DSB.

**Priority 1 Most Significantly Disabled:**

Priority 1 includes eligible individuals with the **most significantly disability** whose impairment limits **four or more** functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome and whose rehabilitation requires **three or more** substantial VR services over an extended period of time.

**Priority 2 Significantly Disabled Needing Three or More Services:**

Priority 2 includes eligible individuals with a **significant disability** whose impairment limits **three** functional capacities in terms of employment outcome and whose rehabilitation requires **three or more** substantial VR services over an extended period of time.
Priority 3 Significantly Disabled Needing Two or More Services:

Priority 3 includes eligible individuals with a significant disability whose impairment limits two functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome and whose rehabilitation requires two or more substantial VR services over an extended period of time.

Priority 4 All Other Significantly Disabled:

Priority 4 includes all other eligible individuals.

5.2 APPLYING THE ORDER OF SELECTION

5.2.1 Determining Priority Category

In determining the priority category, the consumer will be placed in the highest category for which they qualify. However, if a consumer's condition changes after being assigned a category, re-evaluation may cause a downward or upward reclassification.

The following are the steps a counselor needs to take in placing a consumer in the proper priority category.

- Determine if the applicant meets the requirements to be served by this agency.
- Determine if the applicant is eligible for VR services.
- If eligible, determine the number of functional limitations of the applicant.
- Determine the number of services an applicant will need to achieve his/her VR goal.
- Determine the time it will take the applicant to achieve the goal.
- Place in proper Order of Selection priority.

Any applicant or eligible consumer who is dissatisfied with the Order of Selection and the category assigned them, may request an administrative review for re-evaluation. Counselors will inform applicants and eligible consumers of this right.

5.3 SERVICES TO SPECIAL GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

5.3.1 Definition of Public Safety Officer

Public safety officer means a person serving the United States or a state or unit of local government, with or without compensation, in any activity pertaining to:

- the enforcement of criminal laws, including highway patrol, or the
maintenance of civil peace by the National Guard or the Armed Forces;
• a correctional program, facility, or institution if the activity is potentially
dangerous because of contact with criminal suspects, defendants, prisoners,
probationers, or parolees;
• a court having criminal or juvenile delinquent jurisdiction if the activity is
potentially dangerous because of contact with criminal suspects, defendants,
prisoners, probationers, or parolees; or
• firefighting, fire prevention, or emergency rescue missions.

5.3.2 Special Consideration for Public Safety Officers

Special consideration will be given to public safety officers whose disability is a
result of any of the following:

• Action performed in the line of duty
• A criminal act, apparent criminal act, or a hazardous condition
• The officer's performance of duties in direct connection with the
endorsement, execution, and administration of law or fire prevention,
firefighting, emergency rescue missions, or related safety activities

Public safety officers who meet eligibility criteria for a specific category will be
given priority for services over other eligible individuals within that specific
category.

5.3.3 Civil Employees of the United States

Vocational rehabilitation services are available to civil employees of the United
States Government who are disabled in the line of duty under the same terms and
conditions applied to other individuals with disabilities.

5.3.4 American Indians

Vocational rehabilitation services are available to American Indians with
disabilities residing in the State to the same extent that these services are provided
to other significant groups of individuals with disabilities residing in the State.

DSB will continue to provide VR services, including, as appropriate, services
traditionally used by Indian tribes, to American Indians with disabilities who reside
on reservations and are eligible for services by a special tribal program under 34
CFR part 371.

Informed Choice – Chapter 6

6.1 OVERVIEW

6.1.1 Definition
Informed choice occurs within a partnership where the partners identify and explore together the various options at each decision point in the consumer’s rehabilitation, and where the counselor/team provides support as needed for the consumer to make the informed choices that will result in a meaningful career outcome. This is a true partnership of a skilled counselor and informed consumer. Informed choice means that consumers are empowered to consider a range of options, that they own decisions, and share responsibility for the outcomes.

It is the process by which individuals participating in the VR Program make decisions about their vocational goals, the services and service providers that are necessary to reach those goals, and how those services will be procured. The decision-making process takes into account the individual’s values and characteristics, the availability of resources and alternatives, and general economic conditions. Implementing informed choice requires communicating clearly, gathering and understanding information, setting goals, making decisions, and following through with decisions.

To the extent that the individual participates in the procurement of services, implementing choice may also involve basic consumer skills, such as money management and negotiating in the marketplace.

6.1.2 The VR Process

The process of vocational rehabilitation is not a linear process based on the old diagnostic/prescriptive model, but is a consumer-centered, consumer-owned process with key decision points focused on quality outcomes. Informed choice begins with the first meeting of the consumer and counselor and moves from that first moment toward an employment outcome.

6.1.3 Counselor Role versus Consumer Role

Informed choice does not mean unlimited or unreasonable choice. The counselor’s role is to provide information, tools, and resources to teach decision making skills, to facilitate the decision making process, and to support decision implementation.

The counselor will provide the consumer with up-front information about the parameters which may affect the range of available career goals or service options. It is the consumer’s responsibility to take the information provided and make sound career decisions, and to accept ownership of the decisions that he or she has made.

6.2 ADVICE AND INFORMATION

6.2.1 Traditional Rehabilitation

In traditional rehabilitation, information and advice have been fundamental aspects of the counselor/consumer relationship. The counselor has been responsible for
gathering facts and offering opinions on the consumer’s efforts to become employed as well as defining the questions, issues and barriers which need to be addressed. The provision of counselor-centered advice and information is no longer an option for the counselor, and he/she must shift the focus away from counselor ownership of advice and information to a broader, more natural and consumer-centered basis.

6.2.2 Biased Information and Advice

It is important to note that almost all advice and information are biased by some influence on the individual who is giving the information. Information relates to facts, so it would appear to be bias free. However, since most rehabilitation personnel work for systems with rules and traditional responses to certain situations, it is often difficult to know whether an interaction concerning informed choice is factual or biased in some way.

The opinion aspect of advice is almost always inherently biased. Therefore, good advice should contain alternate avenues for consumer consideration, as well as the opinion of those offering the opinion. Good advice is an individualized blend of information, opinion and workable options offered to a consumer in a manner which can be understood and utilized.

6.2.3 Processing Information and Opinion

While it may seem that a consumer is making an informed decision based on the information and opinion of a counselor, the reality may be that the consumer is seeking to please or to simply follow any advice offered. Understanding the difference requires those giving advice and information to closely monitor all decisions and to consider subtle ways to insure that the consumer owns and understands the decisions as much as possible.

It is important to consider that technology, interpretation services and accessible formats may need to be available to assure that an individual understands and processes opinions of others. When confronted with new and complex decisions, people with disabilities, especially persons with significant intellectual disabilities, may need support and feedback from those most closely concerned about them in order for information and advice to be understood and processed.

6.2.4 Gatekeeping Issues

VR counselors are entrusted with the proper disposal of public funds which consumers use to accomplish the decisions they make. When the sole source of information a consumer receives is from a counselor, who works in the system, it is easy for that input to become infused with the gatekeeping responsibilities which are part of the VR counselor's duties. All systems have gatekeeping issues which affect the consumer’s choices and which often require a blend of information and
advice to assist them to make successful informed decisions. Counselors must recognize the limits of their advice and the possible bias of their information in light of their gatekeeping responsibilities, and be able to communicate these limits to the consumer. The limits referred to here typically are monetary issues such as the cost, value or individual’s need relative to a service or product. Counselors need to reduce any arbitrary and limiting rules on the use of funds by placing the consumer’s needs and satisfaction as first line considerations.

However, there are gatekeeping issues which go beyond money and which can compromise the effectiveness of advice and the validity of information which the counselor gives the consumer. If the decision of the consumer is one which has the potential to cause physical or emotional harm, it is often necessary to impose limits as opposed to offering information, options or opinions. Counselors must decide if and when it is appropriate to intervene if it appears harm may occur. These types of situations obviously go against the purpose of informed choice. When it is necessary for a counselor not to support a decision made by a consumer, the counselor should seek a wide variety of acceptable options which can be presented to the consumer.

6.2.5 Believability/Reputation

Since one of the traditional counselor roles has been that of gatekeeper, many consumers have questioned the degree to which advice and information serve their needs or the agency needs. In order for counselor input to be perceived as believable, it is necessary for the counselor to build a reputation of honesty distinguishing between advice and the limiting reality of the gatekeeping needs of the agency.

6.2.6 Consumer Ownership of the Decision

The most important consideration relating to good advice and information is that responsible, viable and final decisions are made by the consumer, or by a designated family member, as appropriate. In order to accomplish this, counselors in advising roles must strive to provide unbiased advice and information which relates directly to the consumer choosing and pursuing a realistic employment objective. This advice and information should be adequate for the consumer to make an informed decision based on accurate information. It is the role of the counselor to provide information, but not usurp ownership by the consumer.

6.2.7 Rehabilitation Act Requirements

Rehabilitation Counselors are required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1992 (Section 361.52), to insure that each individual receives, through appropriate modes of communication, information concerning the availability and scope of informed choice, the manner in which informed choice may be exercised, and the availability of support services for individuals with cognitive or other
disabilities who require assistance in exercising informed choice.

6.2.8 Complex Issues

Counselors may find that complex issues are difficult for some consumers to comprehend. The more truly complex the issue, the more likely it is that the consumer will feel the need for professional or technical information and advice. In these cases it is important for the counselor to consider using an outside advisor who has special knowledge of the issue, especially if the counselor does not feel qualified to inform the consumer on the issue.

6.2.9 Different Sources of Information

An effective way to reduce bias information and deal with complex issues is to broaden the scope of those who provide the information. Counselors should seek input from a variety of sources, but should not overload the consumer with conflicting information. By viewing advice and information from multi-sources rather than a single, system-provided source, it is possible to include the counselor in the mix without violating the principle of impartiality. In general, the counselor should see that the consumer has access to information from a variety of sources.

6.3 STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING INFORMED CHOICE

6.3.1 Determining Consumer Ability

Methods to determine the consumer’s ability to implement informed choice may vary depending upon the individual’s disability and the severity of that disability. For some individuals the counselor, the consumer, or others can use a checklist to analyze the consumer’s skills and abilities in areas important to the implementation of informed choice. Such an analysis provides a way for the consumer and others working with him or her to identify those tasks for which the consumer needs support, accommodations, and skill building. Purchased checklists can be used or counselors can develop their own.

Working with a consumer on developing a vocational profile and employment goal will yield information about how the consumer gathers and responds to information and makes decisions. Situational assessments or trial work experiences provide the opportunity to observe the consumer in natural life situations that help clarify not only the consumer’s goal and service needs, but how the individual makes decisions. Interviewing family, friends, and others who are close to the individual may also yield the same information.

6.3.2 Counselor Judgment and Observation

Counselor judgment and observation are a primary source of discovery throughout the VR process. How the individual followed the process of obtaining VR services and how he or she processes information and responds to questions during
interview and intake provides information about some of the skills related to informed choice. Probing the reasons the individual says "no" to a particular option helps to determine if the consumer is responding because of lack of information or because of fear. Assessing changes in the consumer’s skill in implementing informed choice and adapting supports appropriately is a continuous evaluation and educational role for the counselor.

6.3.3 Consumer Self-Discovery

Self-discovery is an important factor in the implementation of informed choice. Employment outcome as defined in the final regulations for the VR Program includes the element that the employment outcome must be consistent with an individual’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

The more complex the individual’s situation or disability, the more difficult it is for others to help the individual consider all the factors necessary for making informed decisions. Using techniques that teach individuals to develop an awareness of how their disability affects them, how they function on a daily basis, and how they respond to information and make decisions may be a better investment of the time and efforts of VR counselors.

One method of self-discovery is for the individual to keep a log, either in writing or by audiotape. Individuals can record information such as variations in their energy level, times and conditions when they feel good and are doing their best work, variations in symptoms, etc. The log becomes a self-management tool, providing insight into behavior patterns and forming the basis for strategies to maximize the individual’s functioning level.

6.3.4 Gathering Information

Assisting the consumer in gathering information can begin during the assessment process by allowing him or her to direct the discussions between counselor and consumer. Also, the VR counselor can provide the consumer with information which is written in a manner the individual can understand. The consumer can then clarify and discuss the information with the counselor, a peer group, rehabilitation team, family members, or other individuals. In this manner the VR counselor makes sure that the consumer understands the information.

Consumers can also be taught to gather information about goods, services and service providers. To provide structure for gathering such information, the VR counselor and consumer can develop a list of questions to ask providers. For example, an individual who is seeking the services of a job developer might want to ask the following questions:

- Does the job developer specialize in certain types of jobs?
• How does the developer get job leads?
• How much time will the developer spend per week working with the individual?
• What will the developer expect from the individual?

6.3.5 Support and Assistance from Others

Consumers can obtain assistance from other individuals in the form of support in their decision making process. For any aspect of their rehabilitation process, the consumer could bring a friend, family member, or other individual into their making decisions on informed choice. The VR counselor plays a key supportive role in this process by following up with the consumer frequently to see how he or she is doing and by modifying or developing strategies to assist the individual in improving their planning and decision-making skills.

6.3.6 Simplifying Information

Counselors should provide consumers with access to appropriate information which will allow them to identify opportunities and solutions to problems, assess strengths and weaknesses, ask appropriate questions, locate resources, and, if necessary, advocate effectively.

Access to appropriate information allows a consumer to influence, and to be influenced by, the rehabilitation process.

6.3.7 Modes of Communication

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 361.52), requires that consumers receive information on informed choice through an appropriate mode of communication. This information must cover the availability of and scope of informed choice, the manner in which informed choice may be exercised, and the availability of support services for individuals with cognitive or other disabilities who require assistance in exercising informed choice.

6.4 GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

6.4.1 Partnership

Although the consumer and counselor form the heart of the partnership in the rehabilitation process, other individuals, such as parents, friends, advocates, peer counselors, mentors, vendors, other agencies, or the Client Assistance Program, etc., may be directly or indirectly involved in career identification and planning. These other partners may provide valuable support to the consumer in making informed choices. The consumer should be provided information and assistance as appropriate to evaluate and determine the involvement, impact and quality of these resource partners in the formulation of career options and plans.

6.4.2 Consumer Benefits
With the assistance of the VR counselor and through the formulation of partnerships, the consumer receives all the information necessary to make valid and responsible decisions.

Through the information provided, the consumer

- develops decision-making skills which will benefit and empower him or her for a lifetime,
- owns decisions and shares responsibility for outcomes,
- learns that each option or choice has a different impact, meaning or result, and should be weighed carefully,
- learns that being an active partner means that to reach a goal, you have to be part of making it happen,
- gains a better understanding of his/her own needs, strengths and desires,
- shares the responsibility for information gathering and exploration,
- gains in self-assurance and the ability to be a self-advocate, and
- has a better chance for a satisfying, rewarding and secure job as a result of exploring thoroughly his/her own capacities and a wide range of options.

6.4.3 Counselor Role

The counselor must focus on counseling and guidance, skills training, providing tools and resources, consulting, and facilitating and advocating.

The VR Counselor’s role includes the following:

- Assure consumers obtain adequate information on their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, needs, abilities, and capabilities in order to develop personally meaningful short-term employment goals and long-term career and quality of life goals.
- Provide skills training and opportunities to practice how to evaluate and prioritize options, solve problems, make decisions, communicate choices, and take responsibility for outcomes.
- Retain responsibility as professionals to present their best judgments to teach consumers to evaluate options, say "no" when alternatives are not possible under law, policy, budget constraints, the labor market or other circumstances, and help the consumer to understand that the universe of choices is not infinite.
- Inform the consumer that they have the right to appeal when an agreement cannot be reached within the rehabilitation partnership or parameters of agency policy and refer the consumer to the Client Assistance Program;
- Create hope, empower and expand the consumer’s range of “possibilities thinking” by emphasizing strengths and building capacities, and help identify and diminish barriers and fears.
• Individualize and customize their consumer partnerships and are sensitive to diversity issues.
• Create ways for consumers, regardless of their level of functioning, to participate to the fullest extent possible in the informed choice process.

6.4.4. Consumer Role

The consumer is an active partner in researching and exploring options, strengths, barriers, resources, solutions, and a range of career possibilities.

The consumer’s role includes the following:

• Evaluates reality-tests and prioritizes options.
• Develops and uses decision-making and self-advocacy skills.
• Learns to make career choices consistent with identified strengths, resources, abilities, and environmental realities.
• Takes responsibility for the results of decisions, and for following through on planned activities and steps toward their employment goals.
• Chooses whether or not to include family, advocates or service providers in identifying options.
• Learns to offset barriers through technology, adaptive and other skills, natural supports and reasonable accommodations.
• Learns how to advocate for his/her own choices, when the counselor or others do not agree, by presenting additional information, by finding solutions or resources, and by using the right to appeal, etc.
• Learns skills that will assist in keeping or advancing in employment throughout his/her lifetime.

6.4.5 Assessment and Career Planning

Consumers will be expected to own and share responsibility for their assessment and career exploration experience. Self-assessment opportunities and experiences will be offered and facilitated by the counselor. These will be reality-based and employment focused.

Consumers will be assisted, to the extent needed, to become aware of and knowledgeable about their skills, abilities, talents, interests, and priorities and how these relate to selection of meaningful career options. The pros and cons of a range of career paths will be explored with care and research. The counselor will provide the consumer with information and assist him or her to evaluate factors such as financial needs, occupational outlook, job availability, career values, and alternative strategies. This exploration may include other partners as the consumer decides appropriate.
Consumers will be taught to consider critical questions such as, “What more do I need to know about myself or about the world of work?” Counselors will facilitate critical thinking and support the process by suggesting and providing tools and resources, and by helping the consumer evaluate what is explored or experienced.

6.4.6 Options for Self-Assessment and Career Exploration

The following are some options for self-assessment and career planning:

- Participate in a job club which provides valuable peer feedback and support, as well as builds job search skills.
- Conduct an informational interview or job shadow a friend or mentor.
- Attend a career exploration or even specific job skills class.
- Take an interest or aptitude test.
- Get feedback from family and friends.
- Explore specific barriers through further standardized testing or psychological testing.
- Complete an assistive technology evaluation.
- Develop a resume or work profile.
- Do volunteer work.
- Form a consumer-centered team of selected friends, neighbors, providers, advocates, or others to participate in career exploration, assessment and planning.
- Take a self-advocacy skills class.
- Get feedback from the counselor and other partners on the above activities or experiences.
- Participate in participant group or mentoring programs.

NOTE: This list is by no means complete. Other tools/ resources may be identified or created to fit the specific needs of a particular consumer.

6.4.7 IPE

The Individualized Plan for Employment is the tool for focusing and organizing informed choices toward the goal of employment. Based upon the results of the self-assessment process, the consumer and counselor will jointly develop an employment goal from the range of vocational goals that were considered, and will base the choice upon the appropriateness of the goal in relation to the consumer’s interests, skills, abilities, and needs.

The consumer and counselor will identify specific steps (intermediate objectives) needed to reach the employment goal. The counselor will provide information about the range of services available to support those steps. This will include specific information about various service providers, training programs, etc., their effectiveness and other quality factors. The counselor will provide as many service
options from which to choose as reasonable and possible. The counselor will assist
the participant to evaluate the options in order to make appropriate and informed
choices.

The counselor and consumer will agree upon and clearly identify responsibilities,
time lines and how progress will be measured.

If agreement cannot be reached, the partners may need to gather more information
or to further research options. If this does not result in a mutual decision, the
consumer may exercise the right to appeal.

6.4.8 Case Recording and Documentation

The case record should reflect the consumer’s active involvement at major decision
points (specifically, in the development of the IPE) and how information about
choices was provided. The record should indicate what range of career options
was considered and the rationale for the choice of vocational goal. IPE
documentation should describe, in the consumer’s own words, how he or she
participated in the decision-making process, development of vocational goals and
selection of service providers. This documentation reinforces participant
ownership of and responsibility for the plan.

6.4.9 Consumer Satisfaction

The effectiveness of the Informed Choice policy and practice will be evaluated
through the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, area supervisors, and through DSB
case review.

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) – Chapter 7

7.1 OVERVIEW

7.1.1 What is VR?

Vocational rehabilitation is the provision of services designed to assist the
consumer in obtaining a successful employment outcome that is commensurate
with the consumer’s abilities, capabilities, unique strengths, resources, priorities,
concerns, interests, and informed choice to the maximum extent appropriate, which
results in employment in an integrated setting.

7.1.2 Aim of VR

To provide the consumer tailor-made services which will lead to a successful
employment outcome, self-independence, and independence from the state and
federal programs providing financial assistance in most VR cases.

7.1.3 What is the IPE?
The IPE is a written document, which specifies a series of actions necessary for the consumer to obtain or retain full-time or part-time employment, as appropriate. The IPE is jointly developed by the counselor and the consumer and/or a representative, as appropriate.

7.1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the IPE are to:

- Formalize joint case planning toward selection and achievement of an appropriate employment outcome
- Formalize case management practices
- Specify means and time frames for achieving and reviewing intermediate objectives and specific goals
- Jointly evaluate and monitor a consumer’s choice, participation, protection of rights, and understanding of the responsibilities involved in the rehabilitation process.

7.1.5 Range of Services

Section 103(a) (Scope of Vocational Rehabilitation Services) in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, lists a wide variety of services that may be provided to a consumer who is seriously seeking an employment outcome. In the provision of services through the IPE, the counselor **MUST** document the need for the services, and how the services will assist the consumer in accomplishing the goal and achieving an employment outcome. Only services listed in the IPE may be provided once a plan for services has been written. Additional required services will require an amended plan.

**NOTE:** To determine eligibility, diagnostic services and ancillary services such as transportation to receive the diagnostic service may be provided. All original IPEs must include multiple (at least three) services, and these services must address barriers that prevent the consumer from becoming employed in their chosen vocational goal.

7.1.6 Assessment

DSB will conduct a thorough assessment for determining VR needs for each eligible individual. The purpose of this assessment is to determine the specific employment outcome, the nature and scope of services needed to be included in the IPE, and the criteria for evaluation of progress toward an employment outcome.

**NOTE:** The term employment outcome means with respect to the individual:

- entering or retaining full-time, or if appropriate, part-time competitive employment in the integrated labor market, and
• satisfying the vocational outcome that is determined appropriate, including self-employment or business ownership.

7.1.7 Plan Development

The IPE may be jointly developed between the VR counselor and the consumer or the consumer may develop all or part of the plan independently or with technical assistance from another source. If the consumer chooses the latter option, the counselor must provide the consumer with the following:

• Information on the availability of assistance to the extent the consumer determines appropriate
• A description of the full range of components to be included in the IPE
• An explanation of agency guidelines and criteria associated with financial commitments concerning the IPE
• Additional information requested by the consumer or information deemed necessary by the agency
• Information on the availability of assistance in completing designated State agency forms required in developing the IPE
• A description of rights and remedies available to the consumer
• The availability of the Client Assistance Program

The IPE must be developed in accordance with any applicable fee schedule along with the methodology to permit exemptions so individual needs can be addressed. The counselor will document in the case narratives the counseling provided at IPE development.

7.1.8 Design

The IPE must be designed to achieve the specific employment outcome chosen by the individual and be consistent with the individual’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice. The documentation should show that there is adequate labor market demand to support the employment outcome chosen. If relocation would be required for the employment outcome chosen, the consumer must agree to relocate to an area with sufficient labor market demand for the chosen employment outcome prior to the signature and initiation of the IPE. The individual should acknowledge that he or she is familiar with the entry-level wages that are common in the chosen vocation.

7.1.9 Components of the IPE

The IPE must contain the following components:

• A specific employment outcome consistent with informed choice
• Criteria for evaluation of progress toward employment outcomes
• Specific rehabilitation services consistent with informed choice
• Projected timelines for initiation and duration of services
• Schedule for periodic reviews and evaluations
• Entity to provide services and methods for procurement consistent with informed choice
• Responsibilities of the individual and responsibilities of DSB
• Need for post-employment services
• Need for supported employment services
• Comparable benefits

NOTE: The services, service providers, and all activities selected by the consumer must be necessary to meet the employment outcome goal.

7.1.10 Supported Employment

For supported employment services, an employment outcome should include a description of the extended services needed and the source of extended services. If it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the IPE is developed, a statement must be included explaining the reasonable expectation that extended services will become available prior to closure. (See Chapter 9 for a full discussion on Supported Employment.)

7.1.11 Counselor’s Role

It is the counselor’s role to:

• provide information, tools, and resources to encourage decision making skills,
• facilitate the decision making process,
• support decision implementation, and
• provide the consumer with information about the parameters, which may affect the range of available career goals or service options.

7.1.12 90-Day Time Frame

The IPE will be developed concurrently or within 90 days after a Certificate of Eligibility for VR Services, a Certificate of Eligibility for Trial Work Experience or EE Services has been completed.

NOTE: Transition cases should be treated the same as any other case. VR Counselors are not to open a case unless they are going to write an IPE within the 90-day time frame.

7.1.13 Plan Approval
The completed plan must be signed and dated by the DSB counselor and the individual or, if appropriate, the individual’s representative. Within the framework of a counseling and guidance relationship, the DSB counselor is the approving authority; therefore, the counselor’s signature indicates approval of the IPE. A copy of the approved IPE must be given to the consumer or his/her representative. The approved IPE must be in accordance with any applicable fee schedule along with the methodology to permit exemptions so individual needs can be addressed.

Oversight: For counselors within their first twelve months on the job, each IPE must be reviewed and approved by the supervisor.

7.1.14 Reviews

The IPE is to be reviewed at least annually by the counselor and the consumer or, as appropriate, the individual's representative to assess the consumer’s progress in achieving the identified employment outcome.

7.1.15 Amendments

The IPE will be amended each time a substantial change is made in the consumer’s rehabilitation program. Examples of a substantial change that would initiate an amendment would include a vocational goal change, extend the time of a service being provided, or add a new service.

The IPE can be amended at anytime utilizing informed choice. A copy of all amendments will be provided to the consumer. Amendments do not take effect until agreed to and signed by the DSB counselor and the consumer or the consumer’s representative.

IPEs must be kept current. At no time should services be provided on an expired IPE.

NOTE: A new IPE must be completed when a consumer is moved from Trial Work Experience or EE services to an accepted status.

7.2 IPE FORMS

7.2.1 Introduction

In response to the legal requirements for a written record of the rehabilitation program, DSB has created the following documents:

- DSB-8017 Individualized Plan for Employment (AWARE Form Version)
- DSB-8017A Individualized Plan for Employment (AWARE Amendment Form Version)
The above forms are designed to effectively document all phases of the rehabilitation process, and are developed through the mutual participation and acceptance of the VR Counselor and the consumer and/or a representative, as appropriate.

7.2.2 Purpose of the DSB-8017 IPE

The purpose of the IPE is to formalize the development of a plan of rehabilitation services by the counselor and consumer and/or representative, as appropriate, and documents the responsibilities of all parties involved.

The IPE documents the rehabilitation goal, services, and responsibilities of the counselor and consumer. By this time in the rehabilitation process, the counselor **MUST** have adequate documentation supporting the services needed to assist the consumer in accomplishing the goal and achieving an employment outcome.

7.2.3 Development of the IPE

The Plan (IPE) is **ALWAYS** developed when a consumer moves from Applicant Status or Eligibility Status and is placed in one of the following statuses:

- Trial Work Experience or, if applicable, Extended Evaluation
- Service Status

7.2.4 Dates

The date the IPE is signed should match the date the consumer is moved into Service Status. The dates on the Header of the IPE represent the length of time it is expected to complete the overall rehabilitation program and meet the stated employment goal. Due to funding, detailed plans are to be written for no more than a year at a time and should be reviewed annually and amended as appropriate.

RSA requires that timelines for services be included in the IPE. It stands to reason that all planned services will not begin and end on the same date. With this in mind, timelines for detailed plans should represent the length of time they will be required during the plan year, and at least one service (i.e., counseling and guidance or assessment) should equal the plan initiation date.

7.2.5 Consumer’s Understanding of the IPE

As mandated by RSA, DSB has included this section on the IPE forms (original and amendment). The consumer has the right to make any comments explaining his/her involvement in the development of the IPE. The consumer must sign the IPE. **THIS SECTION IS NOT AN OPTIONAL SECTION; IT IS MANDATED BY LAW.**
7.2.6 Signatures/Date

Both the counselor and consumer should sign the IPE if both are in agreement to its terms and conditions. Record the date the IPE is signed by the consumer.

7.2.5 IPE Disbursement

The original IPE and subsequent amendments, which have been signed and dated, are to be filed on the left side of the case service record in chronological order (most recent on top). Provide the consumer a signed copy of the IPE and amendments.

Services – Chapter 8

8.1 OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

8.1.1 Introduction

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Section 103 and Federal Regulations 34 CFR 361 set out specific services that VR agencies may provide to consumers. DSB’s highest priority is to provide individualized services to eligible individuals so they can work in full-time or part-time competitive employment. Depending upon the needs of the consumer, all or a portion of these services can be provided.

8.1.2 Mandate

All goods and services necessary for the consumer to achieve a successful employment outcome will be provided as planned for on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Only those services specified for on the IPE may be provided by DSB. Should the consumer need additional services to secure employment, an amendment to the IPE must be completed.

8.1.3 Services Provided

Only those services specified for on the IPE may be provided by DSB. Should the consumer need additional services to secure employment, an amendment to the IPE must be completed.

8.1.4 Authorizing Services

All services or goods for which DSB is to pay must be authorized in writing, simultaneously with, or prior to, the provision of the services or goods.

8.1.5 In-State Services

It is the policy of DSB to provide all services to consumers from within the state whenever possible. If DSB purchases a service outside of the state that is available
within the state, the consumer will be responsible for any difference in the cost of the service.

8.1.6 Out-of-State Services

If a consumer is in need of a service that will assist in securing or maintaining a successful employment outcome, and the service is not available within the state, the service may be provided from a vendor outside the state and the expense endured fully by DSB. The counselor will contact the VR agency within that state and DSB will pay the rate the VR agency in that state pays. All comparable services and similar benefits must be explored.

8.2 ASSESSMENT OF REHABILITATION POTENTIAL

8.2.1 Who is Assessed?

All consumers referred for vocational rehabilitation services will receive an assessment to determine rehabilitation potential.

8.2.2 Scope

A primary assessment will be completed to determine a consumer's eligibility for VR services. If the consumer is found eligible for services, a thorough assessment will be completed to determine the nature and scope of services needed to assist the consumer in achieving a successful employment outcome.

8.3 AVAILABLE VR SERVICES

8.3.1 Scope of Services

Vocational rehabilitation services are any services described in an IPE necessary to assist an individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, including:

1. Assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services
2. Assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs
3. Vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice
4. Referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies
5. Job related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services
6. Vocational and other training services, including personal and vocational adjustment, books, tools, and other training materials, except that no training or training services in institutions of higher education (universities, colleges, community/junior colleges, vocational schools,
technical institutes, or hospital schools of nursing), may be paid for unless maximum efforts have been made to secure grant assistance in whole or in part from other sources to pay for such training

7. Diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments including:
   a. Corrective surgery or therapeutic treatment necessary to correct or substantially modify a physical or mental condition that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment, but is of such a nature that such correction or modification may reasonably be expected to eliminate or reduce such impediment to employment within a reasonable length of time
   b. Necessary hospitalization in connection with surgery or treatment
   c. Drugs and supplies
   d. Prosthetic and orthotic devices
   e. Eyeglasses and visual services as prescribed by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws and who are selected by the individual
   f. Special services (including transportation and dialysis), artificial kidneys, and supplies necessary for the treatment of individuals with end-stage renal disease
   g. Diagnosis and treatment for mental and emotional disorders by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws

8. Maintenance or additional costs incurred while participating in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or while receiving services under an IPE. Maintenance covers that individual's basic living expenses, such as food, shelter, clothing, and other subsistence expenses that are necessary to support and derive the full benefit of other VR services being provided. Transportation, including adequate training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems, that is provided in connection with the provision of any other service described in this section and needed by the individual to achieve an employment outcome.

9. On-the-job or other related personal assistance services provided while an individual is receiving other services described in this section

10. Interpreter services provided by qualified personnel for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and reader services for individuals who are determined to be blind

11. Rehabilitation teaching services and orientation and mobility services

12. Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stocks and supplies

13. Technical assistance and other consultation services to conduct market analyses, develop business plans, and otherwise provide resources to eligible individuals who are pursuing self-employment or telecommuting or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome

14. Rehabilitation technology services including telecommunication, sensory, and other technological aids, devices and services
15. Transition services for students with disabilities that facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the IPE
16. Supported employment services
17. Services to the consumer’s family when necessary to assist the individual to achieve an employment outcome
18. Specific post-employment services necessary to maintain employment

8.3.2 Definitions as Related to the AWARE Closure Form

1. **Assessment**

Assessment means services provided and activities performed to determine an individual's eligibility for VR services, to assign an individual to a priority category of a State VR agency that operates under an order of selection, and/or to determine the nature and scope of VR services to be included in the IPE. Include here trial work experiences and extended evaluation.

2. **Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments**

Diagnosis and treatment of impairments means:

1. Corrective surgery or therapeutic treatment that is likely, within a reasonable period of time, to correct or modify substantially a physical or mental impairment that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment
2. Diagnosis and treatment for mental and emotional disorders by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws
3. Dentistry
4. Nursing services
5. Necessary hospitalization (either inpatient or outpatient care) in connection with surgery or treatment
6. Drugs and supplies
7. Prosthetic, orthotic, or other assistive devices, including hearing aids
8. Eyeglasses and visual services, including visual training, and the examination and services necessary for the prescription and provision of eyeglasses, contact lenses, microscopic lenses, telescopic lenses, and other visual aids prescribed by personnel who meet State licensure laws and are selected by the individual
9. Podiatry
10. Physical therapy
   - Occupational therapy
   - Speech or hearing therapy
   - Mental health services
• Treatment of either acute or chronic medical complications and emergencies that are associated with or arise out of the provision of physical and mental restoration services or that are inherent in the condition under treatment
• Special services for the treatment of individuals with end-stage renal disease, including transplantation, dialysis, artificial kidneys, and supplies
• Other medical or medically related rehabilitation services

3. **Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance**

Vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance means discrete therapeutic counseling and guidance services that are necessary for an individual to achieve an employment outcome, including personal adjustment counseling, counseling that addresses medical, family, or social issues, vocational counseling, and any other form of counseling and guidance that is necessary for an individual with a disability to achieve an employment outcome. This service is distinct from the general counseling and guidance relationship that exists between the counselor and the individual during the entire rehabilitation process.

4. **Training**

General Note: Training services are designed to help the individual improve educationally or vocationally or to adjust to the functional limitations of his/her impairment.

1. **College/university Training**

    Academic training above the high school level leading to a degree (associate, baccalaureate, graduate, or professional), a certificate or other recognized educational credential. Such training may be provided by a four-year college/university, community college, junior college, or technical college.
2. **Occupational/Vocational Training**

Occupational, vocational, or job skill training provided by a community college and/or business, vocational/trade or technical school to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation, not leading to an academic degree or certification.

3. **On-the-job Training**

On-the-job training is in specific job skills by a prospective employer. Generally the individual is paid during this training and will remain in the same or a similar job upon successful completion. Also include apprenticeship-training programs conducted or sponsored by an employer, a group of employers, or a joint apprenticeship committee representing both employers and a union.

4. **Basic Academic Remedial or Literacy Training**

Literacy training or training provided to remediate basic academic skills that are needed to function on the job in the competitive labor market.

5. **Job Readiness Training**

Job readiness training is provided to prepare an individual for the world of work (e.g., appropriate work behaviors, getting to work on time, appropriate dress and grooming, increasing productivity).

6. **Disability Related Augmentative Skills Training**

Disability related augmentative skills training includes but is not limited to: orientation and mobility; rehabilitation teaching; training in the use of low vision aids; Braille; speech reading; sign language; and cognitive training/retraining.

7. **Miscellaneous Training**

Any training not recorded in one of the other categories listed, including GED or high school training leading to a diploma.

5. **Job-Related Services**

General **NOTE:** Job-related services include job search assistance, job placement assistance, and on-the-job support services.
a. **Job Search Assistance**

Job search activities support and assist a consumer in searching for an appropriate job. Job search assistance may include help in resume preparation, identifying appropriate job opportunities, developing interview skills, and making contacts with companies on behalf of the consumer.

b. **Job Placement Assistance**

Job placement assistance is a referral to a specific job resulting in an interview, whether or not the individual obtained the job.

c. **On-the-job Supports**

Support services provided to an individual who has been placed in employment in order to stabilize the placement and enhance job retention. Such services include job coaching, follow-up and follow-along, and job retention services.

6. **Transportation Services**

Transportation, including adequate training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems, means travel and related expenses that are necessary to enable an applicant or eligible individual to participate in a VR service. Examples of transportation services/expenses include, but are not limited to:

1. Travel and related expenses for a personal care attendant or aide if the services of that person are necessary to enable the individual to travel to participate in any VR service
2. Relocation expenses incurred by the individual in connection with a job placement that is a significant distance from the individual's current residence
3. The purchase and repair of vehicles, including vans, but not the modification of these vehicles
4. Training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems
7. **Maintenance** (see also section 8.15)

Maintenance means monetary support provided for those expenses such as food, shelter and clothing that are in excess of the normal expenses of the individual, and that are necessitated by the individual's participation in an assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs or while receiving services under an IPE. Examples of maintenance expenses include, but are not limited to:

a. Cost of uniforms or other suitable clothing required for an individual's job placement or job seeking activities
b. Cost of short-term expenses, such as food and shelter, that are required in order for an individual to participate in assessment or vocational training at a site that is not within commuting distance of an individual's home
c. Initial one-time costs, such as security deposits or charges for the initiation of utilities, that are required in order for an individual to relocate for a job placement
d. Costs of an individual's participation in enrichment activities related to that individual's training program.

8. **Rehabilitation Technology**

General Note: Rehabilitation technology means the systematic application of technologies, engineering methodologies, or scientific principles to meet the needs of, and address the barriers confronted by, individuals with disabilities in areas that include education, rehabilitation, employment, transportation, independent living, and recreation. The term includes the following:

- **Rehabilitation Engineering Service**

  Rehabilitation engineering is the systematic application of engineering sciences to design, develop, test, evaluate, apply, and distribute technological solutions to problems confronted by individuals with disabilities in functional areas such as mobility, communications, hearing, vision, and cognition, and in activities associated with employment, independent living, education, and integration into the community.
• **Assistive Technology Devices**

Assistive technology device means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of an individual with a disability.

• **Assistive Technology Services**

Assistive technology service is any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Services may include:

a. Evaluating the needs of an individual with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the individual in his/her customary environment
b. Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition by an individual with a disability of an assistive technology device
c. Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices
d. Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs
e. Training or providing technical assistance for an individual with a disability or, if appropriate, the family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of the individual
f. Training or providing technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services), employers, or others who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of individuals with disabilities to the extent that training or technical assistance is necessary for an individual with a disability to achieve an employment outcome

**NOTE:** It is possible for these services to be classifiable under any of the other service categories.

9. **Personal Assistance Services**

General Note: Personal assistance services are a range of services provided by one or more persons designed to assist an individual with a disability to perform daily living activities on or off the job that the individual would typically perform without assistance if the individual did not have a disability. The services must be designed to increase the individual's control in life and ability to perform everyday activities on or off the job.
Three distinct services that are considered personal assistance services are reader services, interpreter services, and personal attendant services. Further information on recording each of these services follows. Record only whether and which of these services were provided to the individual.

- **Reader Services**

  Reader services are for individuals who cannot read print because of blindness or other disability. Reader services include, in addition to reading aloud, transcription of printed information into Braille or sound recordings if the individual requests such transcription. Reader services are generally for individuals who are blind or deaf-blind, but may also include individuals unable to read because of serious neurological disorders, specific learning disabilities, or other physical or mental impairments.

- **Interpreter Services**

  Interpreter services are sign language or oral interpretation services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and tactile interpretation services for individuals who are deaf-blind.

  Specially trained individuals perform sign language or oral interpretation. Also include here real-time captioning services for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. Do not include language interpretation in this category, but in "other services".

- **Personal Attendant Services**

  Personal attendant services are those personal services that an attendant performs for an individual with a disability such as bathing, feeding, dressing, providing mobility and transportation, etc.

10. **Technical Assistance Services**

Technical assistance and other consultation services provided to conduct market analyses, to develop business plans, and to provide resources to individuals in the pursuit of self-employment, telecommuting and small business operation outcomes.
11. Information and Referral Services

Information and referral services are provided to individuals who need services from other agencies (through cooperative agreements) not available through the VR program.

12. Other Services

Use this category for all other VR services that cannot be recorded elsewhere. Included here are occupational licenses, tools and equipment, initial stocks and supplies. Medical care for acute conditions arising during rehabilitation and constituting a barrier to the achievement of an employment outcome is also included in this category.

8.4 COUNSELING, GUIDANCE AND REFERRAL SERVICES

8.4.1 Definition

Counseling and guidance services are those services provided when a consumer is consulted with or advised regarding any problem/situation impacting upon or any facet of his/her successful vocational functioning. These ongoing services may be provided during any stage of the rehabilitation process.

Counseling and guidance implies a greater impact has been made upon the consumer by the provision of such services; in other words, the consumer's life must somehow be changed. It includes physical restoration, provision of prosthesis, arrangement of services, employment assistance, etc.

8.4.2 Examples

The following are examples of counseling and guidance:

13. Assisting consumers in understanding his/her capacity, attitude and interest throughout the vocational rehabilitation process on the basis of assessment of the consumer's progress toward selected goals

14. Helping consumers understand his/her limitations and health, personal and social problems related to their vocational adjustment

15. Assisting consumers in understanding the services available from the agency and other community resources and how they can best be obtained and utilized in his/her vocational adjustment

16. Assisting consumers in situations encountered in achieving rehabilitation, e.g., control of anxieties concerning physical restoration, developing appropriate study and work habits, improving personal appearance, managing finances, preparing for job interviews and tests, devising effective relationships, gaining insight into the world or work, etc.

17. Assisting consumers in selecting a suitable and realistic vocational goal
18. Planning with the consumer and others, when necessary, for a program to attain a specific vocational goal

- Working with family members, relatives and various segments of the community to aid in the individual's vocational adjustment
- Continuing follow-up relationships with the consumer, employer, and others, as necessary, to assure suitability of occupation

8.4.3 What are Referral Services?

Referral services are those which assist a consumer in accessing other agencies or resources. These services are provided according to the individual needs of the consumer.

8.5 PHYSICAL AND MENTAL RESTORATION SERVICES

8.5.1 Definition

Physical and mental restoration services are those services necessary to correct or substantially modify within a reasonable period of time a physical or mental condition which is stable or slowly progressive, and results in a substantial handicap directly affecting the employability of a consumer.

8.5.2 Purpose

Restoration services are provided to enable a consumer to enter or retain employment by reducing or eliminating functional limitations imposed by the disabling condition, providing greater opportunity for vocational success thus lessening the employment handicap.

8.5.3 Use of Comparable Services & Benefits

Prior to the provision of any physical or mental restoration services, the counselor must determine if a comparable service or benefit is available to provide such services or cover a portion or total cost thereof.

If the consumer has health insurance, DSB is allowed to pay the difference between any insurance payment received and the contract fee with DSB. Once the vendor accepts and signs the authorization, the charges listed on the authorization are considered as payment in full and the consumer cannot be billed for any addition amount.

8.5.4 Examples

Examples of physical and mental restoration services include the following:

- medical services
- surgery
• diagnosis and treatment of mental or emotional disorders by a psychiatrist or psychologist
• dental work
• hospitalization for surgery and/or treatment
• drugs and supplies incidental to surgery and/or treatment
• prosthetics or other assistive devices
• eye exams and glasses if needed for employment
• physical, speech or hearing therapy

8.6 TRANSPORTATION

8.6.1 Definition

Transportation is defined as necessary travel and related expenses in connection with transporting a consumer who is disabled for the purpose of providing VR services. It is considered a supportive service which contributes to the consumer's ability to benefit from other VR services.

8.6.2 When to Provide

Transportation services may be furnished in connection with other rehabilitation services at any time during the rehabilitation process.

8.6.3 What is Included

Transportation services may include the following:

• fares/travel costs to use public or private modes of transportation
• attendant/escort for a person who is severely disabled
• travel cost incurred by an attendant/escort
• relocation or moving expenses

8.6.4 Counselor Duties

It is the counselor's responsibility to assure that:

• No consumer is unable to obtain services due to the lack of transportation
• Available transportation without cost to the agency is utilized whenever possible
• If agency funds are used, purchased fares must be the lowest available for type of transportation employed
• Transportation cost paid to a vendor to provide transportation for a client is set at the rate of $7.50 per hour.

8.7 SERVICES TO FAMILY MEMBERS

8.7.1 Definition
Services to family members are those provided to one or more of a consumer's family (as defined below). The purpose is to increase the effectiveness of VR services to the consumer and bring about a successful employment outcome.

8.7.2 Who is a Family Member?

The family of the consumer is considered to be the consumer, the parent(s), and/or legal guardian(s) and all individuals residing in the household for whom the consumer, parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) have legal or financial responsibility.

8.7.3 Criteria for Provision

In order to provide services to family members, such services will be:

- provided only after determination of eligibility for VR services or acceptance for extended evaluation,
- planned with the consumer and designated on the IPE
- furnished to only those family members meeting the definition of family as set out above,
- responsive to the needs of the consumer,
- a material contribution to the consumer's vocational adjustment or rehabilitation, and
- unavailable through existing community resources, agencies, or comparable services or benefits.

8.7.4 Rule

Services to family members are provided only if without such services, the consumer would be unable to begin or continue the IPE, and the program would be jeopardized or interfered with to the extent that employment would be unnecessarily delayed or could not be achieved.

8.8 INTERPRETER SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF

8.8.1 Definition

Interpreting is defined as a means by which the oral remarks of one person are translated or interpreted to another person through the use of sign language, finger spelling, alternate language and/or pantomime.

8.8.2 Purpose

Interpreter services are offered to an applicant or consumer in order to assure participation in VR services and attainment of a vocational goal.

8.8.3 Selection of Interpreters
If available, only interpreters certified by the Registry of Interpreters are used; if none are available, care is taken to assure quality services. If assistance is needed in locating a qualified interpreter for the deaf or hearing impaired, contact Communications Plus for assistance.

8.8.4 Payment of Service

Payment for this service should be consistent with the rate paid in the local market area. If a rate has not been established for this service, it is to be negotiated between the counselor and the service provider.

8.9 READER SERVICE FOR THE BLIND

8.9.1 Definition

Reader service is oral reading or taped recording provided by a vendor to a blind consumer. The material read is that which is otherwise inaccessible to the consumer. Reader service may be used for academic training, vocational training, and to maintain employment.

8.9.2 Who is Eligible?

Consumers eligible for reader service are those who have a visual impairment meeting the DSB eligibility criteria and are receiving academic or vocational training at a private postsecondary institution that does not provide this service. Consumers who are employed and are in need of this service in order to maintain employment are also eligible for reader service.

8.9.3 Reader Service is Provided by Public Postsecondary Institutions

State law provides funding to Arkansas public postsecondary institutions for reader service for the blind. This service is funded for public postsecondary institutions only. The public postsecondary institutions are responsible for arranging and providing reader service to blind and legally blind students.

8.9.4 Payment

The fee for this service should be negotiated between the counselor and the reader and reported on the DSB statement of reader service form (see forms section). The statement of reader service form should be submitted to the counselor by the consumer at the end of each calendar month for payment. The counselor will complete a DSB-1080 and pay the vendor directly for this service. The counselor may approve amounts up to a maximum of $8.00 per hour. Any amount above $8.00 must have the written approval of the Program Administrator.

8.9.5 Allowable Hours
The counselor and consumer should negotiate the number of hours of reader service needed in order for the consumer to complete training or maintain employment. This is a limited service and the consumer should understand this at the onset of this service.

8.9.6 Consumer Responsibility

It is the consumer's responsibility to utilize all other reading sources to the maximum degree possible prior to seeking payment by DSB, and submit the DSB statement of reader service form at the end of each month.

8.10 TELECOMMUNICATIONS, SENSORY AND OTHER TECHNOLOGICAL AIDS AND DEVICES

8.10.1 Introduction

As a result of technological advancements in the area of telecommunications, a number of special devices have been and will be developed which have considerable impact on training, employment and independent living for the severely disabled. Proper selection, timely acquisition and effective use of technology may make the difference in a consumer achieving success in training and employment.

8.10.2 Examples

Such special devices may include, but are not limited to, any electronic, computer-based, or mechanical equipment such as:

- Audio reading machines
- Braille writers
- Closed circuit television reading systems
- TTY’s
- Wheelchairs
- Speech boards
- Devices to aid in comprehension

8.10.3 Rehab Technology Specialist

The rehabilitation technology specialist develops and maintains information on scientific technological devices designed to assist people with disabilities to achieve their rehabilitation goal and achieve a successful employment outcome.

8.10.4 Assessment

Each consumer will receive a technological pre-assessment at the time of application. This assessment is made by the counselor to aid the counselor and
consumer in determining if the consumer will need a more thorough assessment by the rehabilitation technology specialist.

8.10.5 Referral for Assessment

Should the counselor and consumer agree that a more thorough technological assessment is needed, the counselor will refer the consumer to the rehabilitation technology specialist for assessment.

8.10.6 Recommendations

Appropriate adaptive devices may be purchased for the consumer if the need is documented on the technological assessment and the devices will assist the consumer in achieving a successful employment outcome. The counselor will review the recommendation and will decide what purchases will be made according to the individualized employment plan. The rehabilitation technology specialist will send the recommendations to the counselor within five working days from the date the referral was made to the RTS.

8.10.7 Before Obtaining Equipment

When equipment is recommended for a consumer, the counselor must be certain of the following:

- The consumer is committed to the training employment opportunity.
- The consumer will be able to learn to use the equipment effectively.
- The equipment recommended will allow the consumer to perform the necessary tasks.
- Exploration of available options regarding technology has occurred.
- Upon signing the DSB Title Agreement, the consumer understands the purpose and conditions under which adaptive equipment is issued.

8.10.8 Purchase of Equipment

The counselor should follow normal purchasing procedures for items under $5,000.00 by completing the DSB-1080. For items over $5,000.00 the rehabilitation technologist will obtain three bids as required and will forward the recommendations to the counselor.

8.10.9 Returning Equipment
If it is determined that the equipment issued to a consumer is no longer needed for the training, employment, or pursuit of employment, the equipment is to be returned to the counselor for re-assignment.

8.11 OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES, TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, AND INITIAL STOCK AND SUPPLIES

8.11.1 Purpose

Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stock and supplies are provided to increase a consumer's prospects of a successful employment outcome or successful self-employment following the completion of their rehabilitation program. By providing these services at the proper time during the rehabilitation process, a counselor can assure that the consumer is ready for employment at the completion of the IPE.

8.11.2 Definition

Occupational licenses are any licenses, permits, fees for examination of licenses, or other written authorities required by the state, city, or other government unit which must be obtained in order to practice an occupation or enter a small business.

8.11.3 Tools

Tools are limited to those items provided to the consumer when the IPE involves entry into a training program or an occupation.

8.11.4 Rule

Tools must be needed and required by the consumer to participate in training programs, or enter into an employment situation. This includes only those tools that are normally provided workers in the same or similar trade or profession.

8.11.5 Counselor Obligation

The counselor must assure that the proper tools are purchased and that they are not ordinarily provided by the employer.

8.11.6 Equipment

Equipment is defined as fixtures, apparatuses, machinery or appliances which are normally required to carry out the functioning of a specific business.

8.11.7 Examples

Examples of equipment that might be provided are:

- Power accessories
- Garden tractors
- Stationery equipment
- Special lighting fixtures

Examples of items **not** considered as equipment are:

- Automobiles
- Operating capital
- Buildings
- Operating cost
- Land

**NOTE:** In many instances equipment is provided by the owner or manager of the business rather than by the employee.

### 8.11.8 Initial Stock & Supplies

Initial stock and supplies are defined as the initial inventory of merchandise or goods necessary for direct resale or for further preparation for direct resale, either on a wholesale or retail basis, by a consumer entering into a self-employment enterprise.

### 8.11.9 Example

Examples of initial stock and supplies include:

- Livestock necessary to establish a base stock of animals
- Required books or technical manuals needed to assist a consumer in efficient/proper operation of the consumer’s business
- Purchase of initial supplies of seed for agricultural self-employment

**NOTE:** The amount of initial stock to be provided is determined as the amount deemed necessary to enable the consumer to initially open a place for business.

### 8.11.10 Ownership of Items

DSB retains residual title to all tools, equipment, and unused supplies issued to a consumer during the rehabilitation process.

### 8.11.11 Transfer of Items

Tools, equipment and supplies recovered from a consumer for whom these items were purchased may be transferred to another consumer.

### 8.11.12 Recovering Property
The counselor must exercise good judgment in recovering physical possession of DSB property no longer being properly used or needed by the consumer. The counselor must keep in mind the degree to which fair wear and tear has affected its value.

8.11.13 Responsibility

The consumer is required to take care of the tools, equipment, and supplies provided by DSB. The consumer is also liable for loss and damage resulting from wrongful act or neglect.

The counselor must exercise reasonable diligence in recovering items, and document in the case record circumstances related to any loss or damage to equipment.

8.12 OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES

8.12.1 Definition

Other goods and services are those identified by the counselor and consumer which can reasonably be expected to benefit the consumer in terms of employability, and are not described elsewhere in this section.

8.12.2 Examples

The following are possible examples of other goods and services:

- Payment of rent on premises to be used by the consumer for establishment of a business
- Insurance premiums for business equipment, premises and/or liability
- Dues for union membership
- Modification of buildings to remove architectural barriers

8.13 PROVISION OF SERVICES TO GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS

8.13.1 Overview

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended authorizes the provision of rehabilitation services to groups of individuals. DSB may establish contracts or grants to public or private, profit or nonprofit entities, including rehabilitation facilities to broaden the scope of goods and services, and create resources or facilitate the provision of services to consumers with disabilities.

For example, DSB could establish grants to WSB for provision of rehabilitation teaching which would be available to any person who is blind.
8.13.2 Guidelines

While services to groups of individuals are intended to primarily benefit consumers served in the vocational rehabilitation program, they are not restricted to that group. Thus, these services do not require an IPE entry.

"Services to Groups" authorizations and payments must bear the written approval of the Field Administrator and the Director/Designee.

8.14 EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

8.14.1 Introduction

Employment assistance is the planning and provision of services to prepare a consumer for work and to assist in obtaining suitable employment. These activities begin at referral and continue through placement and may continue through post-employment.

8.14.2 Services

Employment assistance services include development of consumer attitudes consistent with the job environment reconciling problems/barriers to employment that are caused by factors outside the consumer's control such as:

- Architectural barriers
- Transportation barriers
- Job barriers
- Employer attitudes concerning people who are blind or visually impaired

8.15 MAINTENANCE

8.15.1 Definition

Maintenance is a supportive vocational rehabilitation service in the form of cash payments which should be made first to a vendor, maintenance payments written directly to clients for basic living expenses such as food, shelter, clothing, or other incidental needs so a consumer may participate in a specific service can be done using the 8051 invoice form.

8.15.2 Purpose

Maintenance is a support which is provided, if necessary, so that the consumer can derive full benefit of vocational rehabilitation services, accomplish the vocational goal, and achieve a successful employment outcome.

8.15.3 Comparable Benefits
The counselor must first exhaust the assistance available through the Social Security Administration, consumer resources, and any comparable services or benefits programs before funding maintenance support.

8.15.4 When Maintenance is Needed

There are three stages during the vocational rehabilitation process which frequently create the need for maintenance assistance including:

- Diagnosis and evaluation
- Physical restoration
- Training

Maintenance may also be required during other phases of the rehabilitation process.

8.15.5 Diagnosis & Evaluation

Securing diagnostic and evaluation services might represent out-of-the-ordinary or extra costs to the consumer. **Example:** Payment for short-term lodging and meals while receiving specialized tests in a distant medical center or hospital.

8.15.6 Physical Restoration

Maintenance may be paid to allow the consumer to participate in or recuperate from physical restoration services. **Payment requires supervisor approval.**

8.15.7 Training

To participate in vocational, prevocational, or college training, the consumer may need maintenance assistance for supplies, room and board, etc.

8.15.8 Rule

Assisting consumers in achieving a normal standard of living is to be accomplished through the extension of effective rehabilitation services, not through making cash payments.

8.15.9 Specific Terms: “maintenance for additional costs incurred and maintenance in excess of the normal expenses”

A consumer living in their own residence (house or apartment), will not receive maintenance for living expenses they would normally incur if they were not involved in a rehabilitation program.
Consumers are to provide the counselor with a copy of the most current rental or lease agreement in order for maintenance payments for the purpose of rent to be authorized.

Individuals who receive SSI or SSDI cash benefits are expected to use those funds for their normal living expenses, but not for payment of VR services.

The Counselor must first utilize comparable services/similar benefits such as Social Security, community resources, and consumer resources before any DSB funds can be committed for rental assistance payments.

**8.15.10 Maintenance Payments Made Using the Invoice Form 8051**

The Invoice Form is used anytime a cash payment for maintenance is made to the DSB consumer. These services are needed in order for the client to participate in vocational rehabilitation services as documented by the Individualized Plan for Employment. This form should be completed and signed by the consumer, given to the counselor, and submitted with the authorization to CDC.

1. This form cannot be used to pay rent. Rent must be paid directly to the landlord.
2. Form 8051 is to be used on a month by month basis. The invoice date **cannot** be before the service date.
3. The service description should be detailed enough to let the reader know exactly what DSB is purchasing.
   - **Example for transportation:** Round trip from Van Buren to Little Rock for eye exam appointment on 08-17-2015. 298 miles @ $0.42 per mile.
   - **Example for others:** meals during training, payment for August 1-31, 2015; payment for clothing for new job.
4. It is understood that cash payments are made to the consumer in order to pay for a service. This means the client will need payment in order to participate in the service. In these instances, the consumer must submit any original receipts to the counselor within 30 days of the service date. These receipts will be attached to the authorization and filed in the case service record in AWARE. The DSB-8051 serves as the invoice for CDC. Failure to upload receipts into the AWARE system will jeopardize the availability of funds for future direct payments to clients using the 8051 form.
5. Exceptions: OJT payments made to clients will not result in receipts. Any other exceptions to this policy must have the approval of the Field Administrator.

**8.16 TRAINING**

**8.16.1 When is Training Required?**
Training is rendered to those consumers who require additional skills in order to maintain or establish employment. The training must be consistent with the consumer's interests, aptitude and abilities. The training must also be compatible with the consumer's physical and mental impairments.

8.16.2 Types of Training

There are nine basic types of training:

- Vocational
- Business/trade school
- Academic
- Personal/social adjustment
- Work adjustment
- Community rehabilitation program
- On-the-job
- Correspondence
- Job coach services

**NOTE:** For further information see VR Program Chapter 12.

8.17 SERVICES TO DSB EMPLOYEES AND/OR FAMILY MEMBER

8.17.1 Provision of Services to DSB Employees and/or Family Member

Services to an employee and/or family member must have the approval of the Field Supervisor as well as the written approval of the Field Services Administrator. Under no circumstances is the case to be serviced in the same office in which the employee works unless express approval has been granted by the DSB Director.

All practices and policies related to confidentiality must be honored as well as any standard of ethics as set forth in the Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors developed and administered through CRCC. The best interests of the employee and/or family member must always be given priority and consideration when determining which local office and to which individual VR counselor the case will be assigned.

**Supported Employment – Chapter 9**

9.1 OVERVIEW

9.1.1 Introduction

This section includes the following:

- Overview of the Supported Employment (SE) Program of Services
- Casework procedures
9.1.2 Supported Employment as a Program of Services

Supported employment is an individualized program of services within the Federal-State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program. The purpose of supported employment is to provide competitive employment in an integrated community setting at or above minimum wage for consumers who have the most severe disabilities and who need extended ongoing support, which may include natural supports, after VR case closure to maintain employment and community inclusion.

Essentially, SE is consistent with the basic philosophy of VR's community integration goals. SE is distinctive in that it is designed only for those consumers with the most severe disabilities. Extended services begin at case closure and continue with vendor(s) identified in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

9.1.3 Basic Premise of SE

A basic premise of supported employment is the belief that consumers with the most severe disabilities can, with availability of extended ongoing support services, maintain competitive employment in the community in an environment where they interact with employees who are not disabled and/or the general public.

Employment must be in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible. Wages are paid consistent with the standards of the Fair Labor Standards Act and must also be consistent with wages paid to other workers with similar job functions.

9.1.4 SE Guidelines

The SE guidelines of this section provide details of the program of services, federal requirements, definitions, and DSB rules for implementation. The guidelines are followed by both VR staff and organizations from which the services are purchased.

VR staff members follow the guidelines when accepting a consumer into the program of services, planning services on the IPE, purchasing the services, and doing case documentation. VR staff provide a copy of the guidelines to and review the material with the vendor before services are initiated.

9.1.5 SE Model: Place-Then-Train

In traditional VR, a "train-then-place" model has been used. Consumers are trained for a job then placed in a job. In the SE program of services, a "place-then-
train” model is used. Consumers are placed on jobs in the community, and needed training and supports are developed during employment.

Sequential preparatory VR services such as vocational evaluation, personal/social adjustment and work adjustment training are neither prerequisite nor desirable before a consumer enters into SE.

9.2 CASEWORK PROCEDURES

The decision to use the Supported Employment program should be based on findings from the comprehensive assessment and in consultation with the consumer and his/her significant others.

9.2.1 Supported Employment Eligibility Criteria

The individual must meet conditions (1) or (2) and condition (3) to be considered for supported employment—
(1) Competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred; or
(2) Competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and
(3) Who, because of the nature and severity of the disability, need intensive supported employment services, and extended services after the transition from support provided by DSB in order to perform the work.

9.2.1 (a) Supported Employment on a Short-Term Basis

An individual can work on a short-term basis in a non-competitive setting, if they are working towards competitive integrated employment—
(1) Within six months of achieving a supported employment outcome; or,
(2) In limited circumstances, within a period not to exceed 12 months from the achievement of the supported employment outcome, if a longer period is needed based on the needs of the individual, and the individual has demonstrated progress toward competitive earnings based on information contained in the service record.

9.2.2 VR Eligibility and SE Assessment

As with any case, determination of VR eligibility is required before a program of services is implemented. When determining eligibility, the counselor must consider if the consumer can reasonably be expected to work in a competitive work environment in the community if extended ongoing support services are available. If SE is identified as the appropriate program of services, but a resource for the provision of the extended services is not available, the consumer is determined eligible for VR, and the counselor pursues resources for extended services. If there are no SE funds available, the counselor may choose to fund this service from Q1 or Q2 VR funds.
A supplemental evaluation can be provided following the determination of eligibility for the VR program if it is needed to determine the most suitable job, determine needed ongoing support services, re-assess the suitability of a job, or re-evaluate any changes in the individual’s functioning or medical condition.

9.2.3 Data Item for SE Acceptance

When the consumer is accepted for the SE program of services, check “Supported Employment” on the Individual Plan for Employment.

9.2.4 IPE for SE

Joint development of the IPE occurs as is required with any case. In addition to regular VR services, federal requirements state that an IPE for SE services must also include the following as appropriate to progression of the case.

- A description of SE services to be purchased with VR fund
- Identification of the extended service provider, which may include natural supports, programs, or other entities and the basis for determining the availability of continuing support for extended services
- Prior to transition of case responsibility to the extended services provider, a description of the needed extended services
- A provision for periodic monitoring to ensure the consumer is making satisfactory progress toward meeting a **weekly** goal established in the IPE by the time of transition to extended services
- As appropriate, the rationale for any extension of a twenty-four month limitation on VR expenditures during consumer employment before transition is made to extended services, for youth extended services can be provided up to 48 months
- As appropriate, the rationale for provision of extended services (monitoring and assessment of employment stability) away from the work site as being in the best interest of the consumer
- To the extent job skills training is provided, the training will be provided onsite;

These can be recorded as specific services under intermediate objectives, and can be established as part of a program or progress review.

9.2.5 NOTE

All SE plans will include placement in an integrated work setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, interests, concerns, abilities, and capabilities of individuals with the most severe disabilities.

9.2.6 Time Limited Services
Time limited services means ongoing support services provided by the state VR agency until transition to extended services. They generally, do not exceed 24 months, and are established in IPE if 24 months is exceeded because individual has not achieved job stability, and include a variety of training, follow along, and related support services.

9.2.7 Progression of a SE Case

The logical progression of an SE case is as follows:

Application Status- Eligibility Status - Service Status - Develop individualized plan for employment, indicate that the plan is a supported employment plan by checking it off in AWARE. Employed, Transition into extended SE services, monitor for 90 days.

- After 90 days of successful employment- Close case
- Post Employment Services - Provide post-employment services if needed

9.2.8 SE Services Agreement

There must be a SE Services Agreement in the consumer’s case record. The Services Agreement authorizes the purchase and initiation of services. It is signed by the counselor, the agreement vendor organization, and the area supervisor (optional). The agreement is maintained in the consumer’s case record, and a copy is provided to the vendor.

9.2.9 Service Status

The case is in service status when the consumer is accepted into the program and SE services are initiated. The case remains in this status during job development, job coaching at the work site and in the community, and until the consumer is stable in employment, typically at 90 days. At that time the consumer is moved to employed and the decision is made to transition case responsibility to the extended services provider.

9.2.11 Transition to Extended Services

The case is moved to employed status at the point the client gains employment in the integrated setting at or above minimum wage. The case responsibility for the extended services is assigned at this time. The providers of extended services may include a State agency, a private nonprofit, an employer, or other appropriate resource. DSB funds are provided for extended services in the case of transition youth only.

Extended services, to youth that are blind and low vision can be provided
for a period of time not to exceed **four years**, or until such time that a youth reaches the age of 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth with a disability.

Funds may not be used to provide extended services to individuals who do not meet the definition of a youth with a significant disability.

### 9.2.12 Successful SE Closure

Following transition of the case, VR staff must allow for the usual 90 days of consumer employment stability before the case can be closed as successfully rehabilitated. Successful SE cases are considered competitive employment closures. A job placement is considered supported employment if at the time of case closure the consumer is

- employed in an integrated work setting at the number of hours established as the goal in the IPE,
- paid according to Fair Labor Standards Acts, and
- receiving extended support services as specified in the IPE.

### 9.2.13 Post-Employment Services Following Transition

If an SE case has been transitioned to the vendor or closed successfully rehabilitated, then only **discrete** post-employment services may be purchased for job retention. Discrete post-employment services are provided only if the needed services are not available through the SE vendor. The following are examples of such services.

- Job station redesign
- Repair and maintenance of assistive technology
- Replacement of prosthetic and orthotic devices
- Orientation and mobility services

**NOTE:** Purchase of additional job coach services is not allowed. The vendor has made the commitment to provide/arrange available services after case transition and after VR case closure.

### 9.2.14 Reopening a VR Case

In instances of underemployment or a need for extensive retraining, discrete post-employment services should not be used. Consideration should be given to opening a new case. If a consumer whose case has been closed successfully rehabilitated in the SE program of services loses employment and a new comprehensive program of services is indicated, the individual may reapply for VR services and a new SE program of services may be initiated under the new case.
9.3 PURCHASING SERVICES

9.3.1 Authority and Funding

The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind receives authority and funding for SE through Title VI-B of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended.

9.3.2 SE Service Agreements

DSB makes agreements with various organizations to develop SE services. The counselor should use one of these providers or initiate a service agreement with another provider to develop an IPE for supported employment services. The Supportive Employment Service Agreement Form (at the end of this section) will be used to purchase all SE services from a provider.

9.3.3 Counselor’s Responsibilities

Counselors have the following responsibilities in an SE case:

- Determine appropriateness for SE services
- Develop an IPE
- Initiate service agreements
- Monitor services with the SE
- Manage case movement
- Authorize services
- Review weekly summary reports from SE provider
- Approve payments

9.3.4 Payments

Upon referral of a consumer for Supported Employment Services, the SE Provider will receive a letter of referral from the counselor and an authorization for $1000.00 from DSB.

Note: Authorize referrals for adult consumers using QK (Supported Employment) funds. For transition youth authorize the referral using Q1 (State VR funds) or Q2 (Federal VR funds).

After the consumer has been placed in competitive employment at or above minimum wage, authorizations will be issued in the following amounts when the specific goals listed are accomplished. A total of $8,000.00 will be authorized in the following manner:

- $3,000.00 at the time of job placement
- $1,000.00 30 days after placement
- $3,000.00 90 days after placement and the consumer is still stable on the job
9.3.5 Alternate Funding

When QK Supported Employment (SE) funds are not available, counselors may purchase SE services out of Q1 or Q2 funds. SE services will not be purchased from independent contractors.

All SE services purchased with case service funds will be purchased in accordance with SE policies and using the Supported Employment Services Agreement Form.

9.3.6 Combining Funding

Regular VR funds and SE funds may be used simultaneously. For example medical, diagnostic, and physical restoration services should be purchased out of regular VR funds and SE services provided out of SE funds. The consumer could receive academic training with regular VR funds and then initiate an SE plan.

9.4 SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES

9.4.1 Definitions

Supported Employment: Competitive employment in an integrated setting, or employment in integrated work settings in which individuals are working toward competitive employment, consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Competitive Employment: work in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting; and for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

Integrated Work Setting: an employment environment where consumers with disabilities interact with non-disabled employees, other than the non-disabled individuals who are providing services, on a regular basis in the immediate work setting.

Ongoing Support: includes any service necessary to achieve and maintain the SE placement through the duration of that job. It applies to services provided while the VR case is open and after the case is closed.

Components of ongoing support are:

Time-Limited Services: the services purchased by the state VR agency with VR funds, not to exceed 24 months during consumer employment (unless a longer period to achieve job stabilization is established in the IPE), and
discrete post-employment services which are not available through the extended service provider, and

**Extended Services**: the services that are arranged or provided by the SE vendor to the consumer after state VR agency services are completed and responsibility for ongoing services has been transitioned to the SE vendor. Time-limited VR funding ceases when the consumer’s employment is stable and case responsibility is transitioned to the SE organization for provision of the extended services.

The extended ongoing support services must be provided throughout the duration of the job (in which the consumer is employed at the time of VR case closure). Provision of the extended services must be in accordance with the consumer’s IPE. Possible options for provision of the extended services throughout the duration of the job are as follows:

- a minimum of twice monthly monitoring the consumer’s employment stability at the work site, or
- if in the best interest of the consumer, a minimum of twice monthly face-to-face contact with the consumer away from the job site in the community and contact with the employer at least once each month.

Additional extended support services are provided on an individual consumer basis and as a result of the monitoring of employment stability.

**Discrete Post-Employment Services Following Transition**: unanticipated services needed to maintain the job placement following transition of case responsibility to the SE vendor and only those services which are not available through the SE vendor. These services may be purchased with VR funds.

The following are examples of discrete post-employment services following transition: job station redesign, repair and maintenance of assistive technology, replacement of prosthetic and orthotic devices, and orientation and mobility services.

After transition of case responsibility to the SE vendor has occurred, that organization will also be responsible for communicating with the VR counselor if needed extended services are not available through the vendor or an arranged source. After transition of the case, and with a subsequent 90-day minimum, the consumer’s case is closed from the VR rolls.

Discrete post-employment services may be available after a case is closed from the VR rolls with the same requirements of consumer need, non-availability of services through the SE vendor, and communication with VR staff.

**9.4. 4 Supported Employment Vendors**
Because the financial commitment for the extended services is required as long as the consumer is employed in the job, independent contractors do not qualify as vendors. SE services are purchased by written agreement with organizations or employers that commit to provide or arrange for the extended support services after VR responsibility for the case ceases.

### 9.4.5 Cost of Extended Services

The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) does not reimburse the cost of the extended support services. Federal regulations require that these services be paid for by a source other than VR. The SE vendor is responsible for arranging or providing for the extended services and the associated costs.

### 9.4.6 Authorized Activities in SE

Any or all of the following time-limited services are authorized for purchase with VR funds:

- Subsequent to VR eligibility determination and only if necessary for an individual case, consumer assessment to determine the most suitable SE placement or the needed support services.
- Job development, job placement or reassessment in the case of unsuitable employment or a change in a consumer’s medical condition.
- Job skills training and related services that are needed to support consumers in employment such as intensive on-the-job skills training and other training provided by skilled job trainers, co-workers, and other qualified individuals.
- Follow-up services, including regular contact with employers, trainees with severe handicaps, parents, guardians or other representatives of trainees, to reinforce and stabilize the job placement.
- Other specified services needed to achieve and maintain job stability.

### 9.4.7 Facility Based Services Versus SE

Traditional VR training facility services differ from those in SE. Historically, facility based services have been provided on a "train-then-place" model. Consumers are trained for a job then placed on a job. SE services are provided on a "place-then-train" model. Consumers are placed in competitive jobs in the community and needed training and supports are developed during training. Traditional sequential services such as vocational evaluation, personal and social adjustment training, and work adjustment are neither prerequisite, nor desirable, for consumer participation in SE.

### 9.4.8 Supplemental SE Assessment
Before a referral is made to the SE vendor, the consumer must be determined eligible for VR services by the counselor. The counselor considers the consumer’s potential for SE participation when determining eligibility. If additional information is necessary, a supplemental assessment may be performed by the vendor to determine the most suitable job placement and supports that will be needed. VR counselors are responsible for planning the program of services with the consumer, authorizing expenditures, and monitoring case progress.

SE vendors provide the service and offer input to the consumer and VR counselor.

9.4. 9 SE Acceptance: Job Development & Job Placement

When a consumer has been accepted for the SE program of services, the counselor and consumer develop the IPE to initiate services. Job development and job placement can be purchased from the SE vendor.

Examples of job development activities authorized for reimbursement with VR funds are:

- Research for job market analysis
- Phone work for appointment setting with employers
- Time spent with employers for discussion of SE services, plant tours, job analysis, obtaining employer commitment to hire and activities related to the job placement
- Expenses for travel costs (mileage) up to the maximum state rate (travel time is not reimbursable)

9.4.10 Supported Employment Placement Options

Depending upon an individual consumer’s needs, there are options for SE placements. DSB places priority on individual job placements within an immediate work setting.

Examples of other placement options are:

- Work groups of not more than eight individuals with disabilities within an immediate job site
- Mobile work crews

9.4. 11 VR Funding Restriction During Consumer Employment

During consumer employment use of VR funds is restricted. Starting with the first day of a consumer’s employment, time-limited services can be purchased with VR funds for up to eighteen months, unless the IPE indicates that more than eighteen
months of service is necessary for the consumer to achieve job stability prior to transition to extended services.

The eighteen months do not have to be consecutive. Months of unemployment are not counted. For consistency purposes, any portion of a month during which a consumer is employed is counted as a whole month.

9.4.12 Co-Workers as Job Coaches

Federal regulations authorize a variety of persons to provide necessary training to the consumer during employment, such as, SE vendor job coaches or employment specialists, co-workers and any other qualified individuals.

If an employer prefers to have a co-worker provide the job skills training (rather than the SE vendor), then arrangements should be made to reimburse the employer for the service provided. Counselors should not pay the SE vendor for this service if it is provided by the employer. In cases where job coach service is provided by someone other than the SE vendor, the Supported Employment Service Agreement should be amended to reflect this fact.

9.4.13 Traditional O J T Payments to SE Employers Not Allowed

VR agency O J T payments are not used in SE. The intent of the federal SE funds is to pay for the costs associated with training the most significantly disabled consumers for competitive jobs. Traditional VR agency O J T payments to offset the employer’s cost to train a consumer and payment for a job coach or employment specialist services cannot be made for the same activity.

9.4.14 Reassessment

After a job placement has been made, reassessment of the case could be indicated. Reasons might include unsuitable employment or a change in the consumer’s medical condition.

9.4.15 Transition to Extended Services

In the initial stages of training during employment, a consumer may need a considerable number of SE service hours. As the consumer becomes more self-sufficient, the number of service hours required drops to a level of stability (job coach fading).

Not all consumers will require the full eighteen months of VR funded training before the case is transitioned to extended services. At any time during the eighteen months when the consumer has received job skills and other needed training necessary to become stable in employment, the case should be transitioned
to the SE vendor for provision of extended ongoing support services. Reimbursement from VR ceases at the point of transition of service responsibility to the vendor.

The responsibility for extended services is transitioned to the SE vendor when all of the following criteria have been met:

- The consumer’s level of job performance and work behavior has stabilized
- All other needed training and services have been provided
- All needed supports have been established for optimal community inclusion
- The consumer’s requirement for hours of service provision has reached a plateau
- VR and SE vendor staff concur that timing is appropriate for transition of case responsibility to the SE vendor

9.4.16 Supported Employment Outcome

Job placements are considered supported employment if, at the time of transition to extended services, the consumer is working in a community integrated competitive job at the number of hours established as the goal in the IPE, paid according to the Fair Labor Standards Act, and receiving extended support services as specified in the IPE.

9.4.17 VR Case Closure

Following transition of case responsibility, VR counselors must allow for a minimum of 90 days of consumer employment stability before the case is closed from the VR rolls as successfully rehabilitated.

Vending Facility Program – Chapter 10

10.1 VFP OVERVIEW

10.1.1 Introduction

The Vending Facility Program was established through the Federal Randolph-Sheppard Act and its subsequent amendments and Arkansas Act 201 of 1969. This program is the largest resource of employment for blind citizens of Arkansas who have the necessary aptitudes and skills to manage a small business or food facility operation. Food facilities managed by blind vendors are located throughout the State of Arkansas in Federal, State, and private buildings as well as industrial plants. The Vending Facility Program provides vocational evaluation and training opportunities in both a classroom and on-the-job setting in the area of food facility management.

10.2 VFP PROCESS
10.2.1 Applying for VFP

Consumers interested in VFP proceed through the VR process like any other consumer.

The following criteria must be met prior to the time that the person is admitted to the Vending Facility Program for evaluation and/or training. These criteria are based on Federal regulations of the Randolph-Sheppard Act and DSB rules.

The applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Be legally blind
- Be a citizen of the United States
- Possess either a high school diploma or a GED certificate; in the absence of either of these, a score of 7 on the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) or a score on an equivalent test which indicates general level of educational achievement will be acceptable
- Possess necessary skills to travel independently and become oriented to new environments utilizing reasonable assistance
- Have necessary personal hygiene and grooming skills which are acceptable to the general public
- Have the ability to write Braille at a level proficient enough to record basic information and to read Braille at a level which will enable him/her to assimilate classroom training materials, or read and write in large print, or use recorded and taped materials to assimilate lesson materials and to maintain business records

10.2.2 Required Documentation

The following documentation will be required before entering the program:

- Documented evidence supporting the fact that the applicant meets the above stated criteria. A report from an orientation and mobility specialist is required. Training reports from Lions World Services for the Blind are acceptable.
- Ophthalmological report.
- General medical examination, as well as any other medical information that is available regarding other disabilities.
- A copy of the completed DSB-8006, Information and Referral Form.
- Profile or report of an interest inventory such as the Kuder, Hall or Strong or other accepted vocational interest inventories.
- Outline of person's previous work history. If no work history, then some description of the individual's activities in volunteer and civic organizations, etc.
• A brief statement in the words of the client stating why he wishes to enter the Vending Facility Program.

10.2.3 Pre-Training Interview

After receiving the above listed information, a pre-evaluation intake interview will be scheduled with the consumer, the rehabilitation counselor, the VFP training specialist and the VFP administrator. This interview will provide the consumer with pertinent information about the Vending Facility Program and ensure that the consumer has a good understanding of the requirements necessary for success in the program. If all requested information is in place and the consumer and the involved staff are in agreement, the consumer will be required to sign a training agreement and will be accepted for entry in the training program. A math placement test will be administered by the Vending Facility Program prior to or at the beginning of training.

10.2.4 Former Vendors

Former vendors interested in re-entering the program must reapply through a DSB VR counselor and, if eligible, may be referred by the counselor under the same guidelines as for new trainees. Decisions for acceptance for training will be based on the same criteria as for new trainees, their former work history in the program, and requires repayment of deficits not previously repaid.

10.2.5 Training

The training program shall consist of at least 4 weeks of classroom training including documented testing. The training specialist shall submit a monthly training report in writing to the referring counselor. The remainder of the vending facility training shall consist of on-the-job training (5 weeks) in a vending facility location or locations throughout the State of Arkansas in order that the trainee shall be given the widest possible experience and trained in all aspects of the Vending Facility Program. Training programs will be scheduled a minimum of two, and if possible, three times a year.

**NOTE:** The trainee is not paid during the training period by the Vending Facility Program.

10.2.6 Tuition

Tuition for the Vending Facility Program evaluation and training is $10.00 per day or $200 per month. Authorizations for tuition should be made and sent to the Vending Facility Program. This fee is paid to the vendors providing on-the-job training.

If maintenance is to be provided, it should be arranged for by the counselor, an authorization issued to the VFP and coordinated through the training specialist. If
the consumer is to be provided with personal items needed while in training, e.g. additional clothing, those items should be purchased by the counselor prior to the day on which the consumer enters training.

10.2.7 Progress Reports

The VFP training specialist will submit training progress reports to the consumer's counselor at the end of each month. Any unplanned deviation in the consumer's program of training or termination of training will be reported to the counselor immediately. The counselor will be notified when the consumer successfully completes training so that any assistance needed for initial employment may be planned.
I. Client's Name_______________________________ Telephone_________________

Address________________________________________________________________________

Date of Birth_________________ Social Security___________________ Sex______

Race__________ Marital Status___________ High School Diploma Yes ___ No ___

Highest Grade Completed  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  11  12  13  14  15

GED _____ College Degree ________ Emergency # ________________________

II. Legally blind Yes____ No____ Other disabilities_____________________________________

Current Medication________________________________________________________________

Last job________________________________________________________________________

Has client had mobility training? _____ DSB____ LWSB____ Other______________

Basic mathematical skills:  Good_____ Average_____ Poor_____

Communication skills:  Reads print_____ Reads Braille_____ Neither_____ 

Uses low vision aids:  Yes_____ No_____ Type________________________________________

Counselor's assessment of client's personal adjustment. ______________________________

Grooming and hygiene________________________________________________________________

Date client is available for training____________  Client's statement of why he _______________

selected vending facility management as a vocational objective:________________________

________________________________________________________

Client's signature:__________________________

Counselor's signature:________________________

Date:____________________

DSB-12A
Vending Facility Training Program Checklist

Criteria

1. Legally blind
2. Citizen of U.S.A.
3. High school diploma, GED or equivalent
4. Client can travel independently
5. Ability to:
   A. Read and write Braille or
   B. Read and write print or
   C. Use recorded and taped materials

Documentation

1. VFP Application for Evaluation and Training
2. Orientation and mobility report
3. Ophthalmological report
4. General medical report (current)
5. Client Referral and Survey Information, DSB-8006
6. Client's profile or interest inventory
7. Client's work history
8. Client's statement for entry
9. Other pertinent information
10. Audiological examination report, if needed
11. Any other special medical or visual reports, if needed
12. Any psychological and/or vocational test results, if needed
13. Final summary report from training facility, if needed
14. Mobility assessment and/or IL assessment if available

DSB-12B
11.1 OVERVIEW

11.1.1 Introduction

Employment assistance and follow-up of agency consumers are integral parts of the rehabilitation process. The responsibilities for establishing a vocational objective and providing the services related to it, including satisfactory employment, are expressed in regulations. The regulations also require that vocational rehabilitation programs implement these functions.

11.1.2 Definition

Employment assistance is the planning of services to prepare a consumer for work, assist in obtaining suitable employment, and/or assist in maintaining employment.

11.1.3 Philosophy

The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind maintains the philosophy that the rehabilitation process is not complete until the individual has achieved a vocational objective commensurate with the individual’s abilities, aptitudes, interests, aspirations, and limitations.

11.1.4 Strategy

A successful employment assistance program emphasizes the importance of the delivery of effective employment assistance services and development of employment resources.

NOTE: Employment assistance begins with the consumer’s application for VR services and continues through each step of the rehabilitation process.

11.1.5 Purpose

The Division asserts that all persons who are blind, statewide, that are in need of employment assistance are entitled to services. Through this commitment employment of individuals who are blind will be in keeping with their aptitudes and interests, new areas of employment will be developed, and employers will be made aware of the abilities of individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

11.1.6 Benefits of Employment
DSB strives to provide vocational rehabilitation services and assistance that enable consumers to realize independent and meaningful lives. Employment provides for most individuals a means of social acceptance, self-realization, and attainment of materialistic needs and desires dictated by each person’s values.

Employment then becomes not an end in itself, but a means through which a broader goal is achieved. However, work that holds no promise, provides no personal satisfaction, creates frustration, or demands too much or too little of the worker obstructs the attainment of these broader goals. Work of this nature likely will prevent the individual from successfully maintaining and progressing in employment.

11.2 VR COUNSELORS RESPONSIBILITIES

11.2.1 Introduction

The vocational rehabilitation process differs from other types of counseling in that it focuses on the realistic achievement of suitable employment by the individual who is disabled. The vocational rehabilitation counselor has responsibility for all consumers on their caseload from referral through employment and follow-up.

11.2.2 Goal

The goal of job development and placement is to enhance the quantity, and more importantly, the quality of employment for individuals who are legally or totally blind.

11.2.3 Degree of Assistance

The degree of consumer participation is dependent upon the consumer’s needs and capabilities. The consumer’s IPE reflects the mutually agreed upon delegation of these responsibilities.

The VR counselor should determine the capacity of the consumer to locate his/her own employment, but this does not exclude the counselor from providing information, referral, and any other assistance that might increase the consumer’s employability.

11.2.4 Knowledge of Employment Legislation

Counselors will maintain a current knowledge of federal, state, and local labor laws, and tax credits, such as earned income tax credits, childcare credits, Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC), etc.

11.2.5 Knowledge of Business Community

Counselors will maintain a current knowledge of the following:
• Job opportunities and labor market trends in the area
• New businesses coming to the community
• Changes in the status of companies currently located in the community

11.2.6 Marketing

Marketing activities for DSB are intended to make the community and the employment sector aware of program services, activities, and goals. Marketing has two elements:

• Marketing DSB (its purpose, services, strengths, and accomplishments)
• Marketing the consumers (their skills, abilities, and capabilities to meet employer needs)

Marketing can be done directly or indirectly. Marketing includes, but is not limited to: face-to-face contacts with employers; mail-outs (introductory letters, notes of appreciation, newsletters, and fact sheets); involvement with the Chamber of Commerce; press releases; networking with other public and non-profit employment agencies; and speaking to civic organizations.

DSB office staff can assist counselors in job development and job placement by sharing potential job leads with the counselor. The staff can provide information of job openings or new businesses that they may know. When a staff member explains the program to a consumer, he/she is marketing DSB, its services, and its purpose. When a DSB employee tells a relative or community member about DSB, he/she is giving that person an image of the program.

Many approaches can be taken to persuade someone to accept an idea (DSB’s purpose) or product (in this case a consumer). Marketing involves a degree of trial and error to find which approach will work with a specific employer. Counselors can familiarize themselves with marketing/sales techniques by researching the volume of information available on the subject.

Research about the local labor markets, the economy, and the caseload can be used to select or prioritize employers to contact. Small businesses should not necessarily be overlooked in favor of large companies. It is important that contact eventually be made with all or as many employers as possible in the area. Counselors should not be disappointed or expect every marketing contact to result in a job order. Counselors should work toward name recognition for DSB and develop a long-term relationship with the employer.

11.2.7 Networking with Employers

Counselors shall develop relationships and network with employers. It is highly recommended that counselors offer to speak to civic groups, Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations that have members who are employers and
business owners. Counselors are encouraged to become members of such groups. Frequent contact and communication can build trust with employers and can provide natural opportunities to talk about their companies, job openings, the work of a VR counselor, and the positive aspects of hiring DSB consumers.

11.2.8 Networking with Other Groups

Counselors shall develop relationships and network with agencies and organizations that assist individuals in seeking employment, such as:

- Department of Human Services
- Department of Workforce Services
- Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
- local mental health agencies
- Lighthouse for the Blind
- Goodwill Industries
- college/university placement offices
- Veteran’s Administration
- unions
- civic clubs
- organizations for people with disabilities

Some communities have interagency associations or similar groups that meet to exchange information about programs, services, and needs. Counselors are encouraged to participate in interagency associations, if applicable, and to make appropriate referrals to assist consumers with employment or services.

11.2.9 Other Employer Contacts

In addition to networking through organizations, it is important that the counselor makes individual contacts with employers. Employer contacts serve to:

- Expand the counselor’s knowledge of employment opportunities
- Provide an understanding of the company’s employment needs and requirements
- Improves the vocational guidance the counselor is able to offer consumers
- Increase the employer’s awareness of the capabilities of DSB consumers

11.2.10 Employer Contact File

Counselors should keep an employer contact file or database containing information about local companies and potential employers. An employer contact file is used for keeping information about the company, the contact information for the person who hires, the results of calls and/or visits to employers, employer needs and requirements, and follow-up plans.
NOTE: Counselors also should keep a list, card file or database of job-ready consumers.

11.2.11 Public Sector Employment

In addition to private sector employment, counselors should be knowledgeable about state and federal employment opportunities and provide this information to consumers seeking jobs.

11.2.12 Awareness Training

The employment of individuals who are blind or visually impaired is directly related to the employer’s awareness of the skills and abilities of persons who are blind in general and the ability of a person who is blind to function in a specific job.

Therefore, counselors should strive to educate employers about the capabilities of persons who are blind or visually impaired. In addition to individual employer contacts and speaking to groups, counselors may consider having a training session for human resource officers, supervisors, and employers in their area. If possible, counselors could invite employers who have hired employees who are blind or visually impaired to participate. Some employers may have never met anyone who is blind or visually impaired. It may be beneficial to share etiquette guidelines with employers or to have some employed consumers speak to the group of employers at the training.

11.3 REHABILITATION ENGINEERING

11.3.1 Introduction

Rehabilitation engineering is provided to assist a consumer in reaching a vocational goal.

11.3.2 Elements of Rehabilitation Engineering

Rehabilitation engineering includes job analysis, job modification, job restructuring, technical information, and applications of technology.

It may be necessary to incorporate one or more of these elements to overcome a barrier to employment.

11.3.3 Job Analysis

In a thorough job analysis the counselor will determine the purpose of the job; identify and analyze the tasks; determine the qualifications, skills, and abilities necessary to perform each task of the job; evaluate the environment within which the job is located; and determine whether rehabilitation engineering is necessary.

During a thorough job analysis, the counselor may identify some aspects of the job that present problems for the consumer and constitute a potential job barrier. At
this point, a decision must be made as to whether rehabilitation engineering may assist in eliminating that job barrier.

11.3.4 Job Modification

A job modification enables a consumer to execute the tasks in a safe and productive fashion by altering some aspect of the work site.

11.3.5 Job Restructuring

Job restructuring alters the tasks to enable the consumer to perform each one safely and productively.

11.3.6 Technology Information

Technology can eliminate barriers to employment. The counselor should maintain knowledge of current technology which might enable the consumer to accept a job and remain employed.

11.3.7 Devices

The counselor should consider whether application or implementation of a device would result in a consumer being able to perform a job task and thereby, become employable. Any conclusions should be discussed with the consumer and a mutual decision, based upon informed choice, should be made.

11.3.8 Counselor’s Responsibilities

The counselor will:

- consult with the employer and the consumer regarding the modification or restructuring of a job to enable an individual who is blind or visually impaired to perform the job successfully,
- refer situations regarding more sophisticated rehabilitation engineering to appropriate resources, and
- implement technology whenever it is needed to enhance the quality of employment for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

11.4 JOB READINESS

11.4.1 Introduction

Job readiness is the possession of marketable skills and a pattern of acceptable work behavior.

11.4.2 Assessment

An assessment of job readiness includes consideration of the consumer’s medical, psychological, educational, socio-economic, and work history.
Job readiness assessments identify barriers; services needed; job skills, abilities, and capacities; and other assets and limitations of the consumer. The job readiness assessment measures the employability of an individual at the time of assessment. Job readiness should increase throughout the vocational rehabilitation process.

### 11.4.3 Job Readiness Criteria

Job readiness criteria includes, but is not limited to age, adjustment to disability, mobility, personality, supervision, motivation, work habits, physical and mental condition, and vocational training.

- **Age** – The consumer must be of a legally employable age. Counselors should not overlook consumers who are in their early teens or an advanced age.
- **Adjustment to disability** - The consumer must be adjusted to their disability, insofar as possible, having achieved reasonable skills to compensate for limitations. The consumer’s adjustment should include an understanding of the wide range of job opportunities available to people who are blind or visually impaired.
- **Mobility** – The consumer must be mobile to the extent that the consumer can travel to and from work as independently as possible and within a work setting safely.
- **Personality** – The consumer must be able to get along with others, especially in a work situation. The consumer also must be able to adjust to pressures and responsibilities of the job. These characteristics may be determined through work adjustment, simulated work setting, psychological testing, observation by the rehabilitation teacher, vocational evaluation, or observation of consumer behavior throughout the process.
- **Supervision** – The consumer must be able to recognize and respond appropriately to supervision.
- **Motivation** – The consumer must be motivated to accept responsibilities of a chosen vocation such as relocation, if necessary, transportation, availability of jobs, and work conditions. Other forms of income, e.g. SSI, SSDI, VA, etc., may affect the consumer’s motivation.
- **Work and personal habits** – The consumer must be acceptable to employer with regard to timeliness, good attendance, productivity, grooming, and general appearance.
- **Physical and mental condition** – The consumer must be unhindered by any physical and/or mental problems which preclude pursuit of a chosen vocational objective.
- **Vocational training** – The consumer must be adequately trained or willing to accept training when it is a prerequisite to employment.

### 11.4.4 Job-ready List
Counselors should keep a list, card file, or database of job-ready consumers to refer to employers. This information should include the person’s name, contact information, his/her skills, and his/her employment goal. In addition to using the information to refer consumers to job openings, it is also possible to use this list to prioritize which employers/companies to contact to develop jobs.

11.5 PREPARING THE JOB APPLICANT

11.5.1 Thorough Diagnostics

Thorough diagnostics are a prerequisite to vocational counseling. Such diagnostics may include:

- Eye examination
- General medical examination
- Psychological evaluation
- Vocational evaluation
- Rehabilitation teacher evaluation
- Counselor observations and evaluation

11.5.2 Interpretation and Evaluation of Diagnostics

Once diagnostic information has been conveyed, the counselor and the consumer will be better prepared to search for a career compatible with the consumer’s interests and aptitudes.

11.5.3 Identification of Service Needs

Based on the results of the thorough diagnostics and continued observations, a determination is made of the consumer’s needs and capabilities. The consumer’s functional level determines the scope and nature of the employment services provided.

Functional levels include:

- Basic skills
- Job specific skills
- Experience
- Credentials
- Career and self awareness
- Job seeking skills
- Independent living skills
- Personal adjustment
- Resources and personal support systems
- Consumer’s knowledge of adaptive devices
11.5.4 Delivery of Services

The counselor and consumer plan appropriate and needed services to fulfill any job readiness criteria by:

- Evaluation of career alternatives
- Selection of a vocational goal
- Determination and delivery of training
- Periodic evaluation
- Continued counseling

11.6 EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROCESS

11.6.1 Introduction

The employment assistance process can start with the employer or the client.

For example:

1. If the counselor learns about a job opening from an employer, he/she can search his/her job-ready consumer file (see 11.5.5) for consumers matching the employer’s needs. In this situation the counselor would be starting the employment assistance process with the employer.

2. If the counselor identified a job-ready consumer with auto mechanic skills, then the counselor would begin contacting garages and the service departments of car dealerships to develop a job for the consumer. In this situation the counselor would be starting the employment assistance process with the consumer.

11.6.2 Employment Assistance Process

The following steps describe the employment assistance process starting with the consumer. This list of steps is not intended to hinder the counselor in developing creative and innovative approaches in the delivery of employment services.

**NOTE:** If you were starting the employment assistance process with the employer, you would do Step 1 to identify the consumers, Step 6 to match them to the job opening, and then Steps 7, 8, and 9.

1. Step 1 – Identification of Consumers’ Skills, Abilities, and Capabilities

Counselor evaluates the caseload to identify the kind of jobs that would be appropriate for the consumers on his/her caseload, starting with the job-ready consumers.
2. Step 2 – Identification of Employers

Counselor identifies companies/businesses that have jobs that are compatible with the employment needs of the consumers and learns who has the power to make hiring decisions within the companies.

Resources to identify potential employers include, but are not limited to:

- Arkansas Directory of Manufacturers
- Company annual reports
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Department of Workforce Services
- Counselor’s personal knowledge and employer contact file
- Yellow Pages® of the telephone book

3. Step 3 – Employer Contacts

Counselor makes personal contact with potential employers and establishes ongoing relationships with employers.

**NOTE:** The concept of hiring consumers who are blind or visually impaired may be new to some employers. The counselor can inform these employers about the abilities and capabilities of consumers and how they can be productive employees. This may require several visits to build interest and trust. This may be a good opportunity to suggest placement of a consumer in on-the-job training at the company.

The counselor should remember that not all contacts are productive.

4. Step 4 – Evaluation of Employer Contacts

After the employer contact, the counselor will need to evaluate his/her approach to the employer, the appropriateness of the work setting, the potential for job openings, the employer’s openness toward hiring individuals who are blind or visually impaired or the potential to change his/her attitude, and what modifications, if any, might be needed.

5. Step 5 – Successful Contact

The employer contact increases the employer’s awareness of DSB and its services; increases the employer’s knowledge of the skills and abilities of consumers who are blind or visually impaired; and results in a job order from the employer.

**NOTE:** It may take several visits to accomplish this.
6. Step 6 – Job Placement

In order for job placement to occur, the counselor needs to identify an employer with a job opening and a qualified consumer who is blind or visually impaired.

Successful job placement is dependent upon selectively matching the qualifications of an applicant with the requirements of the job. Such efforts by the counselor maximize the probability of successful employment for an individual who is blind or visually impaired.

7. Step 7 – Pre-job Orientation

After the employer hires a consumer, the counselor and the consumer need to discuss the following:

- Modification or purchase of equipment
- Preparation of materials
- Orientation to the work environment
- Training in the use of adaptive equipment
- Employer/peer awareness presentations
- Any other needs the consumer may have

A thorough analysis of the consumer’s pre-job needs and the subsequent provision of services to resolve those needs will minimize the pressures experienced by consumers in starting a new job, and maximize the probability of success.

8. Step 8 – Initiation of the Job

The first day on the job is critical since a number of small details that may not have been identified prior to the start of work may arise. The counselor’s presence may be needed so that these problems can be addressed and resolved immediately.

9. Step 9 – Follow-up

The majority of job failures are a result of poor follow-up activities. Therefore, the counselor must inform the employer and the consumer that assistance is available upon request. The counselor must contact the employer and the consumer periodically to monitor the situation so that problems may be prevented or resolved.
Training and Other Support Services – Chapter 12

12.1 TRAINING—OVERVIEW

12.1.1 Introduction

Training is a service rendered to those consumers who require initial or additional knowledge or skills to enter employment consistent with their knowledge, aptitudes and abilities, and compatible with their physical or mental impairments.

Before training is provided, counselors should be certain that the case folder contains sufficient documentation of the consumer’s aptitude and interests in achieving the selected vocational objective.

12.1.2 IPE Documentation

Any training arrangement, made by a counselor or any other agency or organization, is considered to be training and should be written into the IPE. This is true even if no tuition or fee is involved.

12.1.3 Economic Needs

An economic needs assessment will be used to determine if the individual can pay any costs of VR services for academic training, and if so, how much. An individual’s economic need will not be used to determine eligibility for VR services or payment for other VR services.

12.1.4 Least Costly Alternative

When a consumer chooses a more expensive good or service from among alternatives that all fully meet the consumer’s vocational rehabilitation needs, the Division of Services for the Blind will not be responsible for those costs in excess of the least costly alternative.

12.1.5 Use of Comparable Services and Benefits

Whenever possible, maximum utilization must be made of public training facilities and other appropriate comparable services and benefits.

12.2 TYPES OF TRAINING

12.2.1 List

There are eight basic types of training:

10. Vocational
11. Work adjustment
12. On-the-job
13. Correspondence
12.2.2 Vocational Training

Vocational training is any form of instruction designed to provide knowledge and skills required to perform the tasks involved in an occupation.

12.2.3 Work Adjustment Training

Work adjustment training is training that assists individuals to understand the meaning, value and demands of work; modifies or develops attitudes, personal characteristics and work behavior; and develops work tolerance.

12.2.4 On-the-Job Training

On-the-job training is training that is received in an actual work setting and provides specific skills and knowledge related to that particular occupation.

12.2.5 Correspondence Training

Training by correspondence is training done via mail or computer, perhaps with testing at a designated location or online. It may be provided by recognized educational institutions, or other reputable sources specializing in this type of training.

When using such training, the counselor determines if the providing facility is reputable.

12.2.6 Personal/Social Adjustment Training

Personal/social adjustment training is training that assists an individual in improving skills which, while not vocational, do impact on the chances of obtaining and retaining a job. This training is available through rehabilitation teachers or facilities.

12.2.7 Rehabilitation Center Training

Rehabilitation center training is training that is provided in a campus or residential setting and includes aspects of medical care, restoration, and rehabilitation along with vocational training.

Consumers should be encouraged to use in-state rehabilitation centers when possible. If the consumer requests that a counselor pay for attendance at a rehabilitation center which is in another state, the counselor may approve such training after discussing with the consumer the reasons for their request,
counseling with consumer, and relating the information to the consumer’s training needs and VR goals.

When counseling the consumer, consider the difference in programs, the appeal of the center choice, the average length of training time at each center, how each center deals with any special needs, and costs for same type of training.

12.2.8 Academic Training

Academic training is training that is provided by colleges and universities. This type of training should normally be provided through in-state public colleges and universities. Except in highly unusual cases, private colleges and universities will not be utilized unless someone other than DSB is paying part of the tuition. An unusual case would exist when a consumer wanted to pursue a course of study which was not offered at a public college/university, e.g. theological training.

12.2.9 Job Coach Services

Job coaching is training provided to a consumer to reinforce and stabilize the consumer in employment. It often involves individualized attention and oversight by the trainer in a work environment.

12.3 VOCATIONAL TRAINING

12.3.1 Vocational Training

Vocational training is any form of instruction designed to provide knowledge and skills required to perform the tasks involved in an occupation.

12.3.2 Length of Vocational Training

The length and extent of training is determined by the vocational objective selected by the consumer and the amount of training determined to be necessary to prepare the consumer for the vocational objective.

12.3.3 Attendance and Progress

Consumers are expected to attend classes regularly and make continuous progress toward completion of their vocational training.

12.3.4 Private versus Public

Consumers may choose between private trade schools and area vocational schools, but if they choose a private school, they must pay any cost difference.

12.3.5 Out-of-state Vocational Training

If a consumer chooses to attend an out-of-state vocational school, the maximum amount payable would be the same as that which would have been paid in-state. The consumer would be responsible for paying any cost difference.
If the training is not available within the state, DSB may pay the amount charged by the particular out-of-state vocational school.

12.3.6 What Specific Services Are Available

Services available to vocational students may include:

- Reader services
- Maintenance
- Equipment
- Diagnostic testing
- Academic and vocational planning
- Payment of tuition and fees, under certain circumstances given in policy
- Books and supplies under certain circumstances given in policy

12.3.7 Changing Vocational Objectives

Students must request approval from their counselor to change their vocational school objective or course of study. The student must provide justification for the change. Each case is determined on an individual basis, but counselors should use caution in approving a change of vocational studies, especially as the student nears completion of his/her original goal. In this situation, counselors should use their experience and judgment; their knowledge of the student; and their rapport with the vocational school.

Approval of a change of vocational studies would require a change in the IPE.

12.4 ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

12.4.1 Introduction

On-the-job training (OJT) is training received in an actual work setting and provides specific skills and knowledge related to that particular occupation. Upon successful completion of the training, the employer/trainer intends to hire and employ the individual/trainee as a regular, competitively employed employee at competitive wages.

12.4.2 Reasons for Providing OJT to Consumers

OJT may be offered to consumers to:

- sharpen skills,
- augment work history with relevant work experience and references,
- provide a local training setting for consumers unwilling to relocate for training, and
- provide alternative training experience when a vocational objective cannot be met through a conventional training facility.
12.4.3 Advantages

OJT has the flexibility to be cost-effective training, offered in any needed time frame, and a safe testing ground to experience the demands of a particular job.

12.4.4 Marketing Strategy

OJT is a useful tool for the VR counselor to use when developing job opportunities for consumers. It can be used and promoted in conjunction with other marketing strategies.

12.4.5 Employer Benefits

The employer benefits of OJT include the opportunity for employers to learn the skills and functional abilities of a consumer, interaction among the consumer, VR counselor and employer, and their mutual responsibilities, and value of hiring a consumer they have trained.

12.4.6 Approval for Exceptional OJT

Approval from the Program Administrator for Field Services is needed when OJT includes highly complex training, extends beyond six months, and/or involves additional costs beyond the guidelines of this section.

**NOTE:** Approval may be sought by justifying the OJT plan in a memo sent to your immediate supervisor.

12.4.7 Equipment for Training

Equipment may be purchased for a consumer’s OJT if there is a reasonable expectation that the consumer will become employed upon completion of OJT.

All equipment purchased for OJT will remain the property of the Division.

12.4.8 OJT Agreements

When developing OJT agreements, the VR counselor should pay the minimum wage up to $10.00 an hour depending on the current labor market practices for that job description.

12.4.9 OJT Guidelines

Consider the following when developing OJT agreements with employers using the Services Agreement Form found at the end of this section and in the forms section of this manual.

- **Financial arrangements:**
  - How much money will be exchanged?
o When will it be paid (dates)?
  o To whom will it be paid?
  o From whom?
  o What changes or circumstances would affect renegotiation?

- The training plan:
  o What specific services will be provided by the Division?
  o What specific services the OJT trainer will provide?
  o How does the training relate to the consumer’s vocational goal?
  o When and how will OJT progress reviews be conducted?
  o Who will provide the necessary liability insurance?

12.5 JOB COACH SERVICES

12.5.1 Introduction

Job coaching is training provided to a consumer to reinforce and stabilize the consumer in employment.

12.5.2 Reasons to Provide Job Coach Services

Job coach services may be provided to any VR consumer who needs more specialized or intensive training than is available from the employer or within a conventional rehabilitation facility. Job coaching is especially useful as a marketing tool for employers who are uneasy about hiring a person who is blind or visually impaired.

12.5.3 Benefits to the Employers

The benefits of job coaching services to the employer are training at no cost to the employer and follow-up to assure stabilization of the consumer on the job.

12.5.4 Who May Provide Job Coach Services?

The following are considered as sources for provision of job coach services:

- Rehabilitation facilities
- Employers or co-workers at the job site
- Individuals who DSB hires for this purpose based upon their resumes outlining their skills and experience appropriate to functioning in this capacity
- Volunteers who are knowledgeable about the job and have the skills necessary to be a job coach

12.5.5 Other Job Coach Services
In certain circumstances, the job coach may provide other services such as securing housing, transportation assistance, contacts with family or other representatives of the consumer, and contacts with suitable professionals and advisors. Such services can be provided when necessary to reinforce and stabilize the consumer in employment. VR counselors can provide these services.

12.5.6 Guidelines for Payment

VR counselors may approve up to 200 hours of job coach services per consumer. Any other extensions would require approval by the Program Administrator for Field Services and may require a re-evaluation of the placement.

Job coach services may not be provided to a consumer while on-the-job training is being provided to that consumer.

12.5.7 Non-Supported Employment Job Coaches

With non-supported employment cases, the job coach services occur and are completed during active statuses. The consumer functions independently on the job at the completion of job coach services. The service is short term.

The counselor is required to assess the skills of a job coach in relation to a consumer’s need. Job coach services are reimbursed at a rate up to $16.00 per hour plus mileage. The counselor may approve up to $25.00 per hour for job coaches with special skills, e.g., working with deaf/blind or head-injured consumers. Any exceptions would require approval of the Program Administrator. The Program Administrator can approve per diem at current state rates if overnight travel is required and approved.

The service provider must provide a training report and a daily travel and mileage log.

12.5.8 Supported Employment Job Coaches

With supported employment cases, job coach services can only be purchased through organizations which have fiscal capability to commit to providing and arranging for ongoing support after VR services are completed and VR funding ceases.

Job coach services in supported employment can include the following:

- Assessment of appropriateness for supported employment as part of thorough diagnostics
- Job development and job placement
- Job skill training at the work site
- Observation and supervision of the consumer at the work site
- Follow-up services such as regular contact with employers, parents, etc.
- Assistance with housing and transportation
See Chapter 9 of the VR Manual for details of the Supported Employment Program.

**12.6 ACADEMIC TRAINING**

**12.6.1 Introduction**

It is the policy of this agency to provide academic training for the purpose of reaching a specific goal. This training is limited to a course of study related to the individual’s vocational objective, and the attainment of a college/university degree required for entry-level employment in that chosen field.

**12.6.2 Duration of Academic Training**

As long as the consumer meets other requirements in policy, DSB will pay its portion of academic training expenses for up to 5 consecutive years to assist a consumer in obtaining a bachelor’s degree necessary to reach the employment goal listed on his/her IPE.

**NOTE:** The only exceptions to this time frame are medical emergencies or other circumstances beyond a consumer’s control. Any change in the timeframe would require the Program Administrator’s written approval.

**12.6.3 Advanced Degrees**

Academic training beyond a bachelor’s degree may be provided only if it is necessary for employment and requires the Program Administrator’s written approval. This determination must take into consideration the nature of the consumer’s disability, individual needs, the labor market, and job requirements.

**12.6.4 Second Degrees**

There are two circumstances in which DSB will pay its portion of academic training expenses for a second bachelor’s degree including:

- If the individual became a DSB consumer after already having one bachelor’s degree and is no longer able to do that type of work.
- If the consumer’s vision has diminished to the extent that he/she can no longer do the type of work for which he/she originally trained.

**12.6.5 What Specific Services are Available?**

Services available to college and university students may include:

- Reader services
- Maintenance
12.6.6 Important Considerations

Any individual wishing to obtain DSB assistance for college/university training must be able to show a satisfactory record of prior academic achievement and a high level of proficiency in all areas of personal adjustment.

12.6.7 Evaluation of Consumer Potential

To adequately assess an individual’s capabilities regarding academic training, the counselor will have in the record of services prior to the consumer entering college/university:

- a copy of the consumer’s college/university admission letter, or
- transcripts of previous academic work (high school or undergraduate),
- any psychometric/psychological tests which are available,
- a rehabilitation teacher summary or rehabilitation facility report, and
- a low vision examination (optional).

**NOTE:** If supervisory approval has been received for graduate school or any academic work past the first bachelor’s degree, then a copy of the college/university transcript and a copy of the admission notice into the graduate program must be in the folder.

12.6.8. Questionable Academic Performance

If the individual’s history includes a record of marginal or poor academic performance, the counselor is advised to obtain diagnostic tests for help in identifying causes of deficient performance, evaluating continued existence of problems, and developing a remedial plan of action.

12.6.9 What is “Full-time” Course Load?

A “full-time” course load consists of at least:

- 12 semester hours for undergraduate school
- 9 semester hours for graduate school (unless completing a thesis/dissertation)
- 3 hours per summer semester
NOTE: Counselors may make an exception if the consumer is a graduating senior or is medically unable.

12.6.10 Counseling the Potential College or University Student

The counselor will make every effort to assist the consumer in exploring vocational objectives, offer information in choosing a college/university to fit a vocational goal, relate the chosen objective to an appropriate major field of study, link specific objectives and the major field of study with employment, and encourage consumer independence in seeking admission to college/university.

12.6.11 About CLEP

Counselors should encourage students with the potential, based on past academic performance and courses taken, to take the College-Level Examination Program® (CLEP) tests to reduce the time it takes to earn a college/university degree.

CLEP provides students with the opportunity to earn college/university credit and demonstrate college/university-level achievement through a program of exams in undergraduate college/university courses. There are 2,900 college/universities that grant credit and/or advanced standing for CLEP exams.

In talking to consumers who are interested in attending colleges/universities, counselors should point out the benefits (listed below) to taking CLEP exams. By taking one or more CLEP exams in the student’s strong subjects, he/she will:

- **Save time.** Get college/university credit for what he/she already knows. Be rewarded for what he/she has learned through independent study, advanced high school courses, noncredit adult courses, or professional development.

- **Save money.** Compare the cost of a CLEP exam to hundreds or even thousands of dollars in tuition.

- **Make college/university more interesting.** Move right into advanced courses.

- **Graduate on time.** CLEP can help a student to the finish line if he/she is a few credits shy of graduating.

- **Satisfy a proficiency requirement.** Demonstrate he/she has already mastered the content of, for example, a basic math or language course.

12.6.12 Other Counselor Responsibilities

The counselor will explain academic training policies and requirements to the consumer and have him/her sign a Student Responsibilities Relating to Academic
Training Form. A copy of the signed form will be given to the consumer and the original placed in the case record.

The counselor must record the specific courses and hours taken by a consumer at the beginning of each semester. The counselor will adjust payments for reader service according to any changes in the consumer’s course schedule.

**NOTE:** Where feasible, the VR counselor may make arrangements with the college/university to obtain any required information.

### 12.6.13 Notification of Intent

Every new student must notify his/her VR counselor by July 1 prior to his/her first semester of his/her intent to enroll at a college/university.

Continuing students must notify their VR counselors at least 30 days prior to the start of each semester or summer session of their intent to attend college/university.

### 12.6.14 Other Consumer Responsibilities

Once admitted to college/university training, the following is required of the consumer:

- Maintain and complete a “full-time” course load each semester. (Counselors may make an exception if the consumer is a graduating senior or is medically unable.)
- Maintain a “C” average within a given semester.
- Provide the VR counselor with class schedule, proof of PELL grant application/outcome, add/drop sheets, and grade slips.

### 12.6.15 Penalties

Failure to provide information will cause delays in service and may prevent payment of expenses. If the student is consistently late or neglectful in providing required information, the VR counselor may use his/her discretion whether to place the student on probation. **Grade slips must be provided to the counselor before payment can be authorized for the next semester.**

### 12.6.16 Attendance and Progress

Consumers are expected to attend classes regularly and make continuous progress toward completion of their academic training.

### 12.6.17 Criteria for DSB Support, Probation, and Reinstatement

If a consumer fails to complete a full-time course load with a “C” average during a semester, then the consumer will be placed on probation for one semester and DSB academic support will be continued. Written warning will be sent to the student and probationary terms will be addressed on the IPE.
If a consumer fails to complete a full-time course load with a “C” average during a probationary semester, then DSB support will be terminated. Probation may be extended one additional semester with supervisory approval if extenuating circumstances hindered the student. The consumer’s vocational goal and college/university potential will be re-evaluated and the consumer may continue college/university assuming all costs. DSB academic support may resume upon completion of successful “C” average full-time course load.

If the consumer achieves a full-time course load with a “C” average during a probationary semester, the consumer will be removed from DSB probation and DSB academic support will continue.

If a consumer is suspended by the college/university, then all DSB academic services will be terminated and the rules of the college/university apply for readmission and the consumer assumes all costs until completion of one successful semester with a “C” average.

12.6.18 Unusual Circumstances

If it is believed that extenuating circumstances warrant an exception to the policies regarding DSB support, probation, and reinstatement, the counselor must present a written request of such to the Field Supervisor, and obtain written approval of the request.

12.6.19 Setting Realistic Goals on the IPE

The counselor must be mindful to specifically outline both consumer and counselor responsibilities on the IPE. Counselors will not sign off on an IPE with a Bachelor’s degree that will not lead to employment, but is more for self-enrichment. Counselors will encourage the consumer to set realistic employment goals. Tools, such as aptitude and interest tests, may be useful in assisting consumers in finding a suitable career. These tools are sometimes available free of charge on the Internet.

12.6.20 Changing Majors

Students must request approval from their counselor to change majors and provide justification for the change. Each case is determined on an individual basis, but counselors should use caution in approving a change of majors, especially as the student nears completion of his/her original goal. In this situation, counselors should use their experience and judgment; their knowledge of the student; and their rapport with the college/university counselors. Approval of a change of majors would require a change in the IPE.

If changing majors causes the consumer to take additional hours beyond the number originally planned, DSB will not pay for the excess hours, unless the
change of majors was due to circumstances beyond the student’s control. 
Examples:

- A consumer completes 115 hours toward a business degree, which takes 129 hours to graduate. She only needs 14 hours. However, she decides to change majors to journalism. She needs 20 hours in her major courses before she can graduate. This produces a difference of 6 hours that DSB will not pay.

- A consumer has to take 134 hours to graduate from his college/university with a degree in horticulture, and he already has 124 hours. The consumer is only 10 hours from meeting his graduation requirements. However, he decides to switch to a degree in elementary education. The consumer must now take 30 hours in his new major and complete practice teaching requirements. The difference would be 20 hours plus the practice teaching costs/fees. DSB would not pay for the extra 20 hours or the practice teaching fees.

- A consumer completes 60 hours and he decides to change majors. Most of his hours were required basic courses; his university will count his other hours toward his college minor or as electives. His future courses will be in his new major. Changing majors did not affect the number of hours he needed to graduate. Therefore, the amount the DSB would pay toward his college expenses did not change.

12.6.21 Private Versus Public

Consumers may choose between a private college/university and a state college/university, but if they choose a private one, they must pay any cost difference.

12.6.22 Out-of-State Tuition and Fees

If a consumer chooses to attend an out-of-state college/university, the maximum amount payable would be the same as that which would have been paid in-state. The consumer would be responsible for paying any cost difference.

If the training is not available within the state, the agency will pay the academic training expenses charged by the particular out-of-state college/university for a full-time student. Comparable benefits and other policy criteria would still apply.

12.6.23 Tutoring and Remedial Classes

DSB will only pay for a limited amount of tutoring. Counselors should use their judgment and knowledge of the student in determining whether to pay tutoring expenses for classes.
DSB will only pay for a total of six (6) semester hours of remedial work. These remedial hours must be completed during the first academic year. The counselor will include a statement to this affect on authorizations for college/university tuition. Any exceptions would require approval from the Program Administrator.

12.6.24 Excluded Fees

The following college/university fees will not be paid by DSB:

- Late fees
- Parking fees
- Auto registration/decals
- ID card replacement
- Drop/add course change fees
- Fees for checks returned for insufficient funds
- Overdue library fees
- Non-resident fees
- Withdrawal from college/university fees

12.6.25 Covered Fees

Examples of covered fees include, but are not limited to:

- General education fees
- College/university assessment fees
- First college/university ID card
- Technology fees
- Required campus Post Office fees
- Student activity fees (including required athletic fees)
- Fees for campus publications
- Student health fees
- Student government fees
- Classroom equipment fees and lab fees for classes related to the consumer’s vocational goal
- Special course/program fees related to the consumer’s vocational goal
- Transcript fees
- Student teacher supervision fees for consumers doing their practice teaching (except if this is a result of changing majors, see VR 12.22)
- Graduation fees

12.7 ECONOMIC NEEDS

12.7.1 Introduction

A sliding fee scale based on income will be used to determine the portion of academic training expenses DSB will pay and the portion the consumer will be
responsible for paying. An individual’s economic need will not be used to
determine eligibility for VR services or payment for any other VR services.

**NOTE:** Students enrolled prior to July 1, 2003, will be exempt from this
requirement as long as:

- There is no break in course work.
- The student maintains a full-time student caseload
- The student maintains a minimum grade point average of 2.0.
- The student complies with all existing policy requirements.

### 12.7.2 Income Disregarded Services

The following academic training services are provided without regard to income:

- Assessment
- Eligibility determination
- Counseling and guidance
- Vocational planning
- Reader services (although comparable benefits policy will apply if the
college/university provides this service)

### 12.7.3 Exemptions

**SSDI and SSI recipients are exempt from financial needs assessment.**

### 12.7.4 Financial Resources

This policy is based on the idea that students (and their parents or spouse) have the
primary responsibility for paying for their postsecondary education. Students will
be classified as dependent or independent. If the consumer is classified as an
independent student, only the gross income of the consumer and the consumer’s
spouse, if married, will be considered. The consumer will be considered an
independent student if at least one of the following applies to him/her:

- Is age 26 or older
- Is married
- Is enrolled in graduate school
- Has his/her own legal dependents other than a spouse
- Is an orphan or ward of the court (or was until age 18)
- Is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces (includes a student who attended a
  military academy, but was released under a condition other than dishonorable).

All other consumers will be classified as dependent students, and the financial
resources of the consumer and the consumer’s parents will be considered.

Income will not be adjusted for items such as rent, utilities, business expenses,
number of people in the home, etc. Consumers wanting assistance for academic
training benefits will need to provide proof of income to their counselor prior to approval. This may be in the form of pay stubs or income tax data.

12.7.5 Refusal to Disclose Economic Resources

A consumer has the right not to disclose his/her income. When a consumer declines to provide this information, it will be assumed the consumer has resources in excess of the agency’s economic resources table and would not be eligible for payment of VR services related to academic training.

12.7.6 Sliding Fee Scale

Consumers whose considered income before taxes is $60,000.00 or below are eligible for up to 100% of their academic training expenses to be paid in accordance with other policy guidelines, such as comparable benefits. Consumers whose considered income is greater than this will be required to pay a portion of the costs of their academic training based on the sliding fee scale below:

- $60,000.01 to $70,000.00 eligible for up to 75%
- $70,000.01 to $80,000.00 eligible for up to 50%
- $80,000.01 to $100,000.00 eligible for up to 25%

Consumers whose considered income is above $100,000 will not be eligible for payment of academic training expenses, except for the list of income-disregarded services listed in 12.7.2.

12.7.7 Calculations of DSB Payment

Below is an example for calculating payment amounts for academic training based on an average semester at an Arkansas public college/university.

Add allowable expenses:
$2,000 tuition
1,400 dorm room/housing
900 cafeteria meal plan
450 books
500 supplies and lab fees
200 covered fees (see list 12.6.25)
$5,450 total allowable expenses

Use the sliding fee scale in 12.7.6 to calculate the portion of academic expenses DSB would pay. For the example, use an income of $65,000. At this level, DSB would pay up to 75% of the allowable academic expenses, which comes to:

$5,450 total allowable expenses
x 75%
$4,087.50 DSB would pay if there were no comparable benefits
Add the amount of comparable benefits:
$1,350.00 PELL grant
- 500.00 scholarship
$1,850.00 in comparable benefits

Subtract the total amount of comparable benefits from the portion of expenses DSB would pay:
$4,087.50
- 1,850.00
$2,237.50 remainder after applying comparable benefits

Add reader services, and the total is what DSB will actually pay that semester:
$2,237.50
+ 250.00 reader services
$2,487.50 the amount DSB will pay for the semester

**12.7.8 Determination of Economic Need vs. Comparable Benefit**

A “comparable benefit” is not the same as “determination of economic need.” In determination of economic need, the objective is to set the conditions for equitably determining the amount, if any, an individual is expected to participate in the cost of academic training. In the area of comparable benefits, the objective is to give full consideration to alternative funding sources prior to spending VR funds to purchase consumer services.

**12.8 COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS**

**12.8.1 Introduction**

Comparable services and benefits are defined as those resources that may be available to help meet, in part or whole, the cost of services provided to an individual. In this section, comparable services and benefits means any resource available to assist a consumer throughout college/university training, whether it be undergraduate or graduate.

**12.8.2 Examples**

The following funds are examples of comparable services and benefits:

- PELL grants
- Veterans Administration benefits
- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Scholarships
- Organizations for students with disabilities
NOTE: Repayable loans should not be considered as a comparable benefit or resource.

12.8.3 Maximum Effort
No academic training services provided at a college/university shall be paid for with VR funds unless maximum efforts have been made by the VR counselor and the consumer to secure assistance, in part or in whole, from other sources to pay for such training.

12.8.4 Consumer Responsibilities
It is the consumer’s responsibility to:

- notify the VR counselor of his/her intent to go to college/university,
- contact the financial aid officer at a college/university to determine what grants or scholarships may be available,
- apply for SSI or SSDI, and
- complete any necessary paperwork required to apply for such grants or scholarships, including PELL grants.

NOTE: The consumer must provide proof of application for a PELL grant by July 1, prior to the start of academic training each school year. The VR counselor shall not authorize payment for academic services unless this proof is provided.

12.8.5 The PELL Grant
The PELL Grant is sponsored by the Department of Education and allots a specified amount to be applied toward specific educational costs.

RULES:

- Like any other comparable service and benefit, a PELL Grant must be applied to the educational process prior to the expenditure of agency funds.
- Services are not to be denied pending receipt of a PELL Grant, but are contingent upon making application if eligible.

12.8.6 Securing a PELL Grant
The consumer obtains an “Application for Determination of Basic Grant Eligibility” from any post-secondary educational institution, completes the application, with assistance if needed. The consumer then submits it to the educational institution that the consumer plans to attend.

The Department of Education evaluates and makes an eligibility determination. Notification is then sent to the applicant and school at which the applicant attends or plans to enroll.
If the application is approved, the school calculates the amount of the grant and specific cost to which grant funds may be applied.

12.8.7 Counselor’s Role

The counselor:

- informs each consumer about the PELL Grant and other financial aid,
- assists the consumer in completing the application if necessary,
- works closely with the financial aid officer/representative of the institution in finalizing the details of the grant, etc. (how it will be applied to educational costs, e.g., books, tuition, housing) and assuring that all available resources are utilized in the most efficient manner, and
- verifies and documents that each consumer has applied for a PELL grant and other financial aid prior to issuing any authorizations.

**NOTE:** No academic training services at a college/university shall be paid for with agency funds unless maximum efforts have been made to secure grant assistance, in whole or in part, from other sources to pay for the training.

12.8.8 Reader Services

Through contacting the Disabled Students Coordinator at the college/university, the counselor or consumer may determine if the college/university has funds for reader service and tutoring or if it has volunteers.

12.8.9 Recordings for the Blind

Recordings for the Blind is frequently used as a resource to obtain recorded material.

12.8.10 Who May Use the Service?

Recorded materials are available through Recordings for the Blind for agency staff and agency consumers.

12.8.11 How to Order

An individual must be registered with Recordings for the Blind and have a borrower identification number assigned before an order can be processed. To place an order, send the following information:

- Consumer name
- Consumer’s borrower identification number
- Consumer’s current mailing address
• Title and subtitle of the book
• Full name of author(s)
• Copyright date
• Edition
• Grade level if applicable.
Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind

SERVICES AGREEMENT

This agreement made this ________ day of __________________ 20 ______ is entered into by the Division of Services for the Blind (hereinafter referred to as the “Division”) and ___________________________________________ (hereinafter referred to as the “Service Provider”) to provide services to Division consumer _______________________________________ in the following areas __________________________________________________________.

It is agreed that no changes or additions to these services may be made by the Service Provider without the written consent of the Division.

This agreement is effective from __________ to __________. If for any reason services are discontinued before completion, the Division shall be fiscally responsible for only that portion of the agreement, which is fulfilled.

The Division agrees to pay the Service Provider a fee of $__________ per __________. The total amount of fees paid under this agreement shall not exceed $__________ and the service period of _________________________. Either party may terminate this agreement by providing the other party seven (7) days written notice.

For payment processing, the Service Provider will submit a statement of services rendered and a consumer progress report to the Division on a monthly basis. The statement and the report must be in a form acceptable to the Division.

When the Division has authorized travel in providing the services defined in this agreement, reimbursement shall be in accordance with the State Arkansas Travel Regulations as they apply to employees of the state, and as implemented by the Division.

Other obligations applicable to the agreement are: ________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________

By: __________________________________  By: __________________________________
Counselor (signature)                                   Date          Service Provider (signature)                    Date

Supervisory approval if required                 Date           Service Provider (Print)

Rev. 07-03
Student Responsibilities

Relating to Academic Training

My DSB Counselor has discussed DSB policies and services regarding college/university training with me, and I understand the information. DSB will pay its portion of academic training expenses for up to 5 consecutive years as long as I remain eligible and follow policies. The following covers my primary responsibilities:

- notify my counselor at least **30 days** prior to the start of each semester of my intent to attend college/university (by July 1 for new students)

- provide proof of application for a PELL grant by **July 1**, prior to the start of academic training each school year

- take CLEP tests, if requested
  
  - provide requested information, such as grade slips, schedules, class changes, and financial information (Failure to provide information will cause delays in service and may prevent payment of expenses or result in probation. Grade slips must be provided to the counselor before payment can be authorized for the next semester.)

  - maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average each semester

  - complete a “full time” course load each semester

  - request approval for changing majors

  - pay fees and training expenses not covered by DSB

I understand if I do not fulfill these responsibilities, it will impact my academic services from DSB.

_______________________________  _______________
Student or Representative’s Signature   Date
7-03
Student Responsibilities 
Relating to Graduate Academic Training

My DSB Counselor has discussed DSB policies and services regarding graduate school college/university training with me, and I understand the information. DSB will pay its portion of academic training expenses for up to 3 consecutive years as long as I remain eligible for the program in which I entered and maintain the GPA required of my college. The following covers my primary responsibilities:

- notify my counselor at least 30 days prior to the start of each semester of my intent to attend college/university

- provide proof of application for any available financial aid grants prior to the start of academic training each school year

- provide requested information, such as grade slips, schedules, class changes, and financial information (Failure to provide information will cause delays in service and may prevent payment of expenses or result in probation. Grade slips must be provided to the counselor before payment can be authorized for the next semester.)

- maintain the minimum grade point average required by my program each semester (usually a 3.0 in graduate school training)

- complete a “full time” course load each semester, 9 semester hours for fall & spring, 6 semester hours for summer

- No change of major will be approved in graduate school training

I understand if I do not fulfill these responsibilities, it will impact my academic services from DSB.

________________________________________  _______________
Student or Representative’s Signature  Date

9/22/2014
13.1 POLICY OVERVIEW

13.1.1 Policy Overview

This chapter provides guidelines for the provision of eligible consumers to establish a small business venture as an employment outcome. The language in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 makes it explicit that self-employment, telecommuting, and establishing a small business are viable employment outcomes, and the Division of Services for the Blind can provide the necessary services to support those outcomes when the guidelines in this policy are strictly followed.

13.1.2 Introduction

An individual’s desire to start his own business may cause him to overlook important factors which may impact on the success or failure of the business. Business ownership is a balance between the reward of success and the risk of failure. Only the owner can define what success means but failure is obvious.

For long-term success, the business must generate enough sales to pay all expenses and provide the owner with an adequate reward of at least minimum wage. The self-employment venture should be expected to be the major source of income for the individual. The small business should produce an adequate return on the amount of time and money invested. (An adequate return is equivalent to the consumer working at least 20 hours per week and earning at least minimum wage.) If it cannot be reasonably determined that the business will provide an adequate return, then the business is not a viable option.

Typically, the time it takes to start a business is longer than anticipated, and the expense usually exceeds the original estimate. Even after the business begins operations, it often takes longer to build sales in a new business than the owner expects. In the meantime, the many costs continue whether or not sales occur. These factors need to be taken into account and plans made to overcome the problems.

The use of professionals for specialized advice will help the consumer and counselor avoid costly mistakes. More money can be spent on correcting mistakes than it would cost to hire the professionals.

In order for a business to survive and grow, a lot of time and effort must be spent in planning, and all aspects of what it takes to make the business successful must be taken into account.
13.1.3 Definition of Self-Employment

Self-employment is an employment outcome in which the individual owns, manages, and operates a small business for the purpose of making a profit of least minimum wage. A self-employed individual is not considered to be an employee of another person, business, or organization. A manager in the Vending Facility Program, which Division of Services for the Blind oversees, is not considered as self-employment.

13.2 ROLES AND ASSESSMENTS

13.2.1 VR Counselor’s Role

After determining eligibility and it is decided the consumer will pursue a self-employment venture, the counselor will refer clients with new small business ventures to the small business coordinator. The counselor in conjunction with the small business coordinator will provide assessment and guidance services throughout the process. The counselor plays a vital role in counseling the consumer regarding the risks, consumer responsibilities, and benefits of self-employment. It is the responsibility of the counselor in conjunction with the small business developer to support the self-employment outcome by helping the consumer:

- determine and obtain training needed to operate a successful business venture, including the basic blindness skills needed to be independent;
- make informed decisions; and
- locate financial resources, other than VR funds, to support the small business venture.

Self-employment is intended to result in the consumer’s financial independence and is expected to be the major source of income for the individual. It is crucial that termination of government benefits and earning sufficient funds to maintain competitive employment standards be discussed with the consumer.

13.2.2 Consumer’s Role

It is the goal of DSB to assist the consumer in making the business venture a success. Therefore, it is imperative that the counselor and consumer work together as a team to achieve this goal. To be fully engaged in the VR process, the consumer must take responsibility for the following:

- Exercise informed choice
- Participate in the planning and problem solving
- Make, implement, and take ownership of decisions
- Identify needed resources
• Determine what resources and supports are available
• Research information for the business plan
• Determine any potential training needs
• Identify a business location
• Sign lease or rental agreements (DSB staff is not authorized to sign these types of agreements because the lease is between the consumer and property owner)
• Obtain and complete applications for all required certificates, licenses, and permits needed to operate the business (counselors can assist with these applications when necessary)
• Insurance
• Ensure compliance with all zoning laws
• Develop a contingency strategy to negate any losses if the business is not successful
• Work to make the business a success

13.2.3 Assessments

Eligible consumers interested in a self-employment venture should be assessed in three areas including:

• **Vocational goal assessment** – The chosen employment outcome must be consistent with the individual’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. The consumer’s skills, interests, interpersonal skills, related functional capacities, training, work experience, vocational aptitude, and available community and business support should be assessed by the counselor prior to the referral to the small business coordinator.

• **Aptitude for self-employment** – The counselor in conjunction with the small business coordinator should assess the consumer’s aptitude for self-employment. Classes offered locally through resources such as the Small Business Administration should be considered especially if the consumer has never been self-employed in the past. These classes can give the consumer insight into challenges they may face before making a final decision to commit to self-employment as an employment outcome.

• **Feasibility study** – The counselor and consumer must complete a preliminary business feasibility study before a small business venture can be accepted as a vocational outcome.
13.3 SMALL BUSINESS PROCEDURE

Procedure for Small Business Development

13.3 a. Pre-plan stage for individual small business cases:

1. Have the counselor meet with the client and write down the details of what the person is interested in doing, what the person’s education/background/skills are in that field and with small business (complete pgs. 12 to 30 in the Operation JumpStart manual.) Review pages 112.5 and 112.6 on products and services from the Operation JumpStart manual. This information is forwarded to the supervisor for review and discussion.

   a. If the counselor and the supervisor agree after discussion that the products and services have been thought out, the client is then appropriate for a referral to the Small Business Coordinator. (complete Step 1 first)

   b. A market analysis and a *feasibility study will be conducted by the Small Business Coordinator. Pages 112.2, 112.5, and 112.17 from Operation JumpStart will be used.

   or

   c. If the counselor and supervisor do not agree that the client has the products and services well thought out, or the person lacks the education/background/skills to follow through with a business, the client is not an appropriate small business referral at this time.

   d. The client can be directed to the SBA, SCORE, or trial runs to evaluate skill and ability.

2. The small business committee will meet and decide if arrangements for a professional agency to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study are needed (depending on the complexity of the project).

3. Once the feasibility of the business is determined, the Small Business Coordinator will begin working with the client on the Business Plan. The Small Business Coordinator will consult with the small business committee throughout the process. The small business committee consists of the Supervisor over small business, The Business and Technology Program Administrator, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor over the case, and the Supervisor of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

4. The business plan draft is turned into the small business committee for review and approval. The plan should include all items listed on page 349 Table of Contents in the Operation JumpStart manual. It should take into consideration the costs and implementation of delivery & allocation of service/product, accounting, marketing, legal needs, insurance, and funding needs beyond what DSB can provide. The committee will look at the profitability of the goal,
compliance with RSA regulations, compliance with State policies and DSB policy and procedure.

Once the committee approves the plan it will be sent to the Field Administrator for final approval. The business plan will be forwarded to the counselor and supervisor for implementation.

13.3 b. Needed in every region for type of small business, Special duties of the Small Business Coordinator

1. Look for businesses in every region of the State that provide market research and market analysis. The client needs to understand what is the market for my product or service?
2. What agencies or businesses are available in my area to assist in the development of a small business plan?
3. Accounting- Who will do the bookkeeping and taxes for the business? Who is available in the area?
4. Legal Structure- What legal structure does the person want? Who will set up my legal structure and advise me on the legal differences b/t the choices? Who will set up my Tax Identification Number? What licenses, permits, or certifications do I need?
5. How do I go about registering my business name in Arkansas?
6. What are the typical out-of-pocket expenses for insurance? What insurance companies cover small business?
7. What are my marketing choices? What are the typical costs for standard marketing tools like: cards, flyers, Internet advertising, magnets, radio spots, commercials?
8. What other funding sources are available?

13.3 c. What is meant by Feasibility and Feasibility Studies?

*Feasibility will include determination of the cost of starting up the business and profit needed, projecting sales, pricing, cost and breaking even sections of the Operation Jumpstart manual. The need for outside consultation will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

The following questions must be addressed before making a decision that the business is feasible:

- Competition, “Is there a need or room for a business of this nature in the area?”
- Who will be your customers and how far away in the surrounding area will the business draw them? (Small businesses generally cannot draw customers from more than sixty miles away.)
- Is there a demand for this product or service?
- Does the consumer have any prior knowledge or experience in the chosen field?
13.3.1 Steps in Moving Towards a Small Business Plan (for new start-up businesses only)

13.3.1 Step 1

Examine the consumer’s motivation for starting a business.

Although businesses are started each day, owning and operating a business is not for everyone. If the consumer opens a business without an honest evaluation of the motives behind starting the business, he may find himself unhappy and disillusioned. Before opening a business, the following should be considered:

- The personal objectives of the consumer
- The consumer’s talents
- The consumer’s personality traits

13.3.2 Step 2

The counselor should provide guidance and assist the consumer in choosing a suitable business.

Before starting any business, the consumer must answer one question, “What kind of business should I start?” No one else can answer this question. Businesses of all types are both successful and unsuccessful. A business generally succeeds or fails based on the customer market, the skills of the owner and workers, and the quality of the products, not because of the type of business.

When choosing a suitable business, the consumer and counselor must consider the consumer’s experience, talents, and interests.

A consumer’s experience is one of the most important aspects to consider when starting a new business because past experience in that particular field will help in understanding your customer market and avoid costly mistakes.

13.3.3 Step 3

A sampling of topics that should be honestly considered is:

- Does the consumer have enough money to start the business without going into debt?
- If money has to be borrowed, does the consumer have some cash, collateral, and own other pledgable assets?
- Is the consumer willing to risk these assets to borrow money? If not, where will the money come from?
- Can the business generate enough cash to pay its expenses as well as a
desired level of profit?
- Are the consumer’s management skills adequate to oversee and develop the business operation?
- Is there really a demand for the product or service?
- Has the market demand been researched?

**NOTE:** You need to know if the idea is feasible before you progress past this point in starting a business. This is the mission of the Small Business Coordinator in conjunction with the Counselor.

### 13.3.4 Step 4

After the first three steps have been completed and it has been determined that the selected business is feasible, the following start-up requirements must be met:

- Determine which legal forms are necessary to establish a legal business entity.
- Determine which permits, licenses, rules, and regulations are applicable to the proposed business.
- Determine the types of records you will have to keep for tax purposes.
- Determine professional needs such as legal, accounting and tax, insurance, and banking.

Common pitfalls to be avoided include

- thinking someone else will do the work for you,
- entering into verbal agreements,
- paying licenses and fees before adequate funds are secured to start the business, and
- thinking it will cost less and take less time to get into the business than it actually will.

### 13.3.5 Step 5

Develop a business plan.

A business plan is a strategic plan for development and operation of a business. This plan should be used to

- help with the management of the business,
- help the consumer and counselor think through the development of the business to insure that all the options and potential difficulties have been considered,
- evaluate progress against your business goals, and
- develop financial proposals.
13.3.6 Step 6

Developing and obtaining financing.

Most businesses will fail if the consumer does not have enough money to keep the business going during the early stages. After all necessary purchases have been made to initially get the business into operation, the consumer must have enough money to run the business until the cash flow generated by the business will support expenses. These expenses will cover both the expense of operating the business and the living expenses of the consumer. This does not mean that DSB will cover all expenses connected with the starting and operating of a business until it begins to make a profit.

DSB’s role is not to become the sole funding source for self-employment, and as with all VR cases, comparable benefits must be explored and pursued before expenditure of DSB funds. DSB asks the consumer to contribute to the start-up costs of the business in order to make the consumer a stakeholder with a vested interest in the success of the small business and to encourage diligence, perseverance, and commitment. The consumer’s contribution may be satisfied in whole or in part by in-kind contributions (personal assets provided by the consumer, which may include items such as tools, furniture, supplies, and business space) and funds acquired or to be acquired from other sources.

If all the required steps in the following section (Business Plan) have been followed and it is reasonable that the business will be successful, DSB will assist with funding the initial start-up cost. Technical assistance purchases are exempt from the initial start-up cost. Items which are considered technical assistance are the cost to develop a business plan and feasibility study.

The costs of any assistive equipment, such as a CCTV, computer with speech or large-print program, scanner, or note taking device are regular VR expenses and standard technology purchasing procedures should be followed.

The following chart shows the amount DSB will fund for the initial start-up cost for self-employment ventures with approved business plans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Start-Up Cost</th>
<th>DSB Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10,000.00 or less</td>
<td>Up to $10,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $10,000.00</td>
<td>$40,000.00 40% of total transaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Authorizations are to be made directly to vendors for small business purchases. In the event that a direct vendor is not available, the total amount of authorizations made directly to clients for small business services cannot exceed $5000.00.
The funding of any business proposal will depend upon the needed funds being available within the current fiscal year after all other resources have been exhausted. Exceptions to the total cost of the venture must be approved by the Field Administrator.

13.3.7 Step 7

Finalize all start-up requirements. After all planning is completed and funding has been secured, all contracts and lease agreements will be signed. Various licenses, permits, and fees will be paid and utility services will be secured.

13.4 BUSINESS PLAN

13.4.1 Introduction

In all cases where it is the intention of the consumer and counselor to start a small business, a business plan must be developed along the guidelines which are listed in this section. This plan should be tailored to fit the personality and circumstances of the business and consumer.

13.4.2 Development of the Business Plan

The Small Business Coordinator will ensure that the business plan is completed for those who have feasibility studies that were accepted. (See Attachment A in this chapter for a business plan outline.)

13.4.3 Submission of the Business Plan

After the business plan has been completed, it will be submitted to the DSB Self-Employment Committee for review and approval. The committee consists of the Supervisor over small business, The Business and Technology Program Administrator, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor over the case, and the Supervisor of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Final approval is conducted by the Field Administrator.

13.5 OTHER IMPORTANT POLICY FACTORS OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT

13.5.1 DSB Exclusions for Self-Employment Business Ventures

The consumer seeking a self-employment business venture must be informed that DSB will not purchase any of the following:

- Real estate or purchase of permanent buildings
- Construction of buildings
- Signing of leases – counselors are never authorized to sign a lease or rental agreement
- Refinancing or payment of existing debt
- Providing services for a consumer in more than one business
• Payment of any goods or services purchased prior to the approval of the business plan, signed IPE or amendment listing the approved services, and an authorization is issued
• A business that is speculative in nature such as investments in real estate
• Bonding fees
• Firearms to be used for safety measures
• Franchise rights (McDonald’s, Wendy’s, etc.)

The cost of any of the above mentioned items that are necessary to the business may be included in the total cost of the business venture reported in the business plan, and may be considered a part of the consumer’s contribution.

13.5.2 Follow-Up

The counselor should keep in close contact with the consumer to monitor the progress of the business venture. It may be determined that further counseling or resource information is needed to protect the agency’s investment and increase the consumer’s success.

13.5.3 Closing the Case as Rehabilitated

As with all VR cases, before closing a case in self-employment as successful, the counselor must ensure all requirements for case closure have been met. At this point all planned services should have been completed. The counselor must make certain the business has achieved stability and no further services are needed. The financial statement should show that the consumer is making enough money to cover long-term costs without external assistance. In many cases, this requires the business to be in operation at least one year. The business **must** be in operation at minimum of 90 days before case closure.

In the event there are items purchased by DSB that are no longer being used in the business by the consumer, the counselor should make arrangements to pick up those items.
Business Plan outline

Why do I need a business plan?

The business plan is a key component for a successful business. A plan is vital because it:

- Provides an organized system for researching your business
- Drastically increases your chances of success
- Provides a game plan for your business to follow
- Provides insight into your business to facilitate funding and investment

Aside from these general business plan objectives, remember that every plan is unique. Don’t struggle with trying to make your plan “fit” into the generic mold. Always customize your plan to your specific business objectives. Be clear, concise, and detailed. Focus on the quality of the content, rather than the quantity of pages.

This business plan outline serves as a guide to how to format your business plan. Each section contains questions that focus your attention to important aspects of the plan. Do not simply answer the questions. Provide detailed information on each issue in narrative form. Finally, this outline can be altered to fit your preferences. Sections may be rearranged to fit your needs.

Once complete, the business plan should identify the expectations you have for your new or existing business. If you plan to utilize the plan to obtain financing, the completed plan should "tell the story" of your business to a potential lender. The plan should serve as a stand-alone document in that all business issues are addressed without requiring additional verbal explanation. Review your plan regularly and make appropriate changes when your plans and strategies change.

Writing a Business Plan:

The following is a suggested business plan outline.

I. Cover Page

Provide your company name, address, and contact information along with owner name(s) and contact information for primary contact.

II. Table of Contents

Include a table of contents as a quick reference to topics discussed in your plan.

I. Cover Page
II. Table of Contents
III. Executive Summary
IV. Financing Proposal
V. Company Description
VI. Industry Analysis
VII. Products & Services
VIII. Market Analysis
IX. Management & Organization
X. Operational Plan
XI. Financial Plan & Projections
XII. Supporting Documents
III. Executive Summary

WRITE THIS LAST! Summarize your business plan in two pages or less. Be enthusiastic and concise. Include business goals, objectives, and monetary amount desired if applying for a loan.

IV. Financing Proposal

Explain how you intend to obtain capital and the amount required. What are your desired terms? How do you plan to utilize the funds? Include any collateral you have available. What is the owner's equity/cash contribution?

V. Company Description

What does your company do? Give a brief company history. Include a description of your products and services. Who are your customers? Describe your business location and facilities. What are your key strengths? List the owners and the legal structure. Why did you choose this type of structure? What, if any, are the planned changes for the company? Describe the goals and objectives of the company.

VI. Industry Analysis

What are the characteristics of your industry? State whether it is growing/declining/ changing. What is the size of your market? Research your share of the market. Is it growing? Are more firms entering the industry and becoming increasingly competitive? List any current barriers to entry (e.g. licensing, permits). List strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the industry/firm.

VII. Products & Services

List and describe your products (or services). What are your distribution channels? Include details concerning your competitive advantage. Provide the pricing structure for your products/services.

VIII. Market Analysis

Use statistics, demographic research, and industry information where appropriate. Be as specific as possible. Remember to cite your sources.

Product

Describe the product or service from your customer's point of view. What do customers like and dislike about your products/services? What services are offered as part of the product (delivery, service, warranty, support, and/or refund offers)?

Customers

Describe your customers, their characteristics, and location. Why do they trade with you? What do they like about your company?

Competition

List major competitors - describe size, location, and reputation. Compare your goods and services with theirs. What are their major advantages? What are yours? What value do you bring to customers that competitors do not?

Location

Include your location needs. What kind of space do you require? Is it leased or owned? Why is the area desirable? Why is the building desirable? Is it easily accessible? Is the street lighting adequate? Research market shifts or demographic shifts when choosing your location.
Marketing Strategy

**Explain your pricing policy.** How do you promote, advertise and sell? How do you distribute or deliver your products/services? What customer services will you offer?

Customer Demand

**Using the information obtained in the previous sections of the marketing plan, calculate a forecast for demand for your product/service.** How many customers do you plan to have in one year? Five years?

IX. Management & Organization

**Who has management responsibilities?** Include the resumes of key managers as supporting documents. Include position descriptions for all key employees. List important advisors, such as attorney, accountant, banker, insurance agent, and advisory board or board of directors. Include estimated financial costs and necessary services provided.

X. Operational Plan

Production/Service

**Discuss methods of production or service delivery, product or service development, quality control, inventory control.**

Credit Policies

**What is your credit policy?** Do/will you sell on credit? What are the terms? Explain how you perform a credit check. What are your collection policies?

Personnel

**How many employees are required?** What skills are necessary? Define the pay and personnel policies. Are there any position descriptions and/or training programs?

Equipment, Technology, & Inventory

**How much inventory is needed?** What is its value? Why is that amount of inventory appropriate for your business and location? List your major suppliers and discuss any terms they extend to your business. What equipment and technology is necessary to operate the business?

Legal

**Research and understand all legal issues.** (Licensing, bonding, permits, insurance, zoning, government regulations, patents, trademarks, copyrights, etc.)

Exit Strategy

**Describe exit strategies should the firm perform lower than expectations (personal or business).** Will inventory be liquidated? Will you close the business or sell?

XI. Financial Plan & Projections

The financial plan provides the numbers that correspond to your written plan. Historical and/or projected figures should be included. In addition, you should always include a narrative explaining the assumptions you used to arrive at the dollar value of sales, expenses, etc. You must demonstrate that your numbers are reasonable. *Detailed financial information is critical to the business planning process.*

Start-up Expenses and Capital

**Carefully calculate and categorize all start-up expenses including inventory, rent, etc.** For example, what amount will be needed for renovations and equipment? Remember to include any cash you may need to operate and pay bills until the business begins generating cash. Provide a detailed list of equipment, furniture, and/or fixtures to be purchased. Include actual price quotes for larger items.

Financial History

If yours is an existing firm, include the income statements, balance sheets and/or tax returns for the past three years.
Profit and Loss Projection (Income Statement)

Include a monthly profit and loss projection for at least 12 months of business operation. Be sure to provide a written explanation of assumptions used to develop your projections.

Cash Flow Projection

Include a monthly cash flow projection for at least 12 months of business operation. The cash flow projection differs from the profit and loss statement. Cash flow statements illustrate how much and when cash flows in and out of your business. Be sure to provide a written explanation of assumptions used to develop your projections.

Projected Balance Sheet

Your plan should include a projected balance sheet showing assets (things owned), liabilities (debts) and owner’s equity. If yours is a start-up business, the balance sheet should show your financial position on opening day.

XI. Supporting Documents

Personal résumés for owners and management

Letters of reference

Personal financial statements from all principals

Contracts and/or letters of intent from suppliers and customers

Copies of leases, licenses, permits, or any other legal documents

Any document referred to within the plan but not included in body
Guide to Writing a Business Plan

Your business plan is a working document. It is not meant to be written and then forgotten. You should review it regularly and if necessary change it to ensure your plan (and your business) stays focused on the objectives.

Use this template to write your own short business plan.

The text in RED is instructional. You should delete it before printing or sending your plan.

Any text in blue indicates a link to a webpage or document. Press control and click anywhere in the link to launch the page. You should delete these links before printing or sending your plan.

Keep your sentences short and concise. Use bulleted lists to highlight key points.

Break up your paragraphs with extra headings if necessary.

This template works best when used in Microsoft Word ’97-2007

<your logo here>

<Business Name>
Business Plan

<Business Address>

Prepared By:   <Your Name>

Table of Contents

1. Business Overview ........................................................... 1
2. Products/Services ............................................................. 1
3. Market Analysis ................................................................ 2
4. Competition .................................................................... 2
5. Marketing Strategy ............................................................ 3
6. Business Structure & Management ........................................ 3
7. Finances ........................................................................ 4
8. Action Plan ..................................................................... 5
9. Appendices ..................................................................... 6
1. Business Overview

Include in your overview:

- what your business does, your products or services
- how long you have been operating
- the industry you’re in
- point of difference over your competitors—such as different location, cheaper price or better service—and key benefits to your consumers
- where the business will be in two-to-five years and how this will be achieved, e.g. your position financially and in the market place (you may need to complete this after you’ve worked through the other sections)

Get help about defining your business

Type your overview here.

2. Products/Services

Describe what you are going to offer your customers, including:

- exactly what you are going to sell or provide and how it will be produced
- branding and packaging (where applicable)
- ongoing product or service development
- your product/service’s features and how they compare to major competitors
- the price and how you have determined it (by considering production costs, labour and other overheads)
- any dealings with supplier/s

Tip

Get information about defining your product

Type your products/services here.
3. Market Analysis

Research your market and industry. Consider the following sources: industry profiles on IBISWorld, trade magazines, government reports, consumer surveys, running focus groups, identifying your competitors etc.

Briefly outline what market your product/service will serve and why. For example, if you plan to publish a magazine, you need to know about publishing trends, online competitors, other publications that cover your market (including their circulation, advertising rates, reader profiles) and identify a viable gap to fill.

Make sure you include:

- who will buy your product or service
- where your market is located: local, regional, state, national or international
- the state of the market: is it growing, declining, segmented?
- market influences such as seasonal price fluctuations or trends
- the price range: based on your target market will it be high, low or in the middle

Tip

Get more help about conducting market research

Type your market analysis here.

4. Competition

List details about your competitors including:

- who and where they are
- how you'll position your product or service against them
- your product/service features against theirs and what gives you a competitive edge
- the benefit/s of your service/product to the consumer
- comparison of your pricing, promotion and distribution

Tips

- Get more help about researching your competition
- To help you assess your strengths and weaknesses against your competitors, complete the Competitor Analysis Template, Appendix I

Type competitor information here.
5. Marketing Strategy

Show how consumers will find out about your product/service including:

- where, how and when you will promote your product/service such as shopping centre promotions, point of sale, viral marketing, billboards, loyalty schemes, etc
- what type of printed materials you’ll create
- your website or online presence
- details and cost of advertising including print, online, TV and radio
- product/service launch plans
- how you will measure the success of your marketing strategy and various promotions
- how pricing will encourage sales (e.g. selling in bulk)

Tips

- [Get more information about marketing](#)
- To help you assess which marketing strategies will best reach your target market, complete the Strategic SWOT Analysis Template, Appendix II

Type your marketing strategy here.

6. Business Structure and Management

Describe the ownership structure (such as sole trader, partnership, company) including:

- reasons for chosen structure
- any trademarks, patents, web addresses and other intellectual property you need to protect
- owners and any legal agreements you may need
- any key staff, their involvement, responsibilities and expected salaries
- your exit strategy

Tip

[Get more information about business structures](#)

Type your business structure and management details here.
Summarise your financial situation including:

- how you'll finance your business, e.g. business loan, personal funds, investment capital
- costings, including your start-up costs, salary and fixed overheads
- financial projections including how much you will need to make to break even, when you are likely to make a profit and growth expectations

Type your financial summary here.

Validate your summary by completing these financial templates and attaching them to the end of your business plan. Download these templates and guides and save them separately.

- **Establishment Costs Template** (MS DOC 40Kb)
  These are your start-up costs which will not be repeated, e.g. setting up premises, licences, buying equipment, market research, etc

- **Financial Statements** (XLS 298Kb)
  Use this template to produce financial statements such as profit and loss, balance sheet or cash flow statements

- **Cash flow forecast template** (XLS 332Kb)
  Use this automated cash flow worksheet to forecast and record cash flow. The worksheet will update your figures as you type. If you're not sure how to use this worksheet, there's a plain English explanation of cash flow

Tips

- Get more information about financial management
8. Action Plan

Your action plan is the most important part of your business plan. It manages how you’re going to achieve your business plan objectives, so review it regularly and use it to control your activities. List the actions by key areas such as:

- establishment
- legal
- finance
- marketing

List the key tasks to be done, by whom and by when. Don’t make them too detailed or they become unworkable. If you don’t achieve a task, reschedule it, but if it’s still not done by the second date, ask why. Is it too large? Is it unclear how it will help the business? Do we have the skills to do it? See example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Objectives</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>By Whom</th>
<th>By When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishment</td>
<td>Register business and trademark</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>15 Dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research and purchase licences</td>
<td>FB</td>
<td>15 Dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalise premises</td>
<td>- Rental agreement</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>1 Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Redecorate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Finalise office set up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Consult with lawyer</td>
<td>FB</td>
<td>15 Dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalise contracts</td>
<td>FB</td>
<td>15 Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sign</td>
<td>TS/CP/TGJ/FB</td>
<td>1 Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Determine fixed overheads</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>15 Dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Get costings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meet with accountant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine financial objectives</td>
<td>FB</td>
<td>1 Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identify amount to reduce loan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalise cash flow plan</td>
<td>CP/TGJ/FB</td>
<td>1 Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Review P&amp;L with managers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalise initial finance</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>1 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review finance documents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Determine sales and marketing objectives</td>
<td>FB</td>
<td>1 Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify sales in each quarter for first year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine launch plan</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>1 Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outline plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agreement and decision on implementation</td>
<td>TS/CP/TGJ/FB</td>
<td>1 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create a brochure</td>
<td>TGJ</td>
<td>15 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree concept</td>
<td>TGJ</td>
<td>15 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approval of copy</td>
<td>TGJ/CP</td>
<td>30 April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>TGJ</td>
<td>10 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distribute brochure</td>
<td>TGJ</td>
<td>1 June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix I: Competitor Analysis
Use this table to list your competitors and how you compare against them. Think about how your business can improve on what they are offering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competitor</th>
<th>Date Established</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Market share (%)</th>
<th>Value to customers</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Their name</td>
<td>When they started</td>
<td>Staff #s or turnover</td>
<td>Estimated percentage of market share</td>
<td>Their unique value to customers, e.g. convenience, price, quality, service</td>
<td>Their main strengths</td>
<td>Their main weaknesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix II: Strategic SWOT Analysis

A strategic SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis will help you turn your knowledge into strategy which you can then turn into actions. It provides direction to the business and its marketing strategies.

Use this table to describe your businesses strengths, weaknesses etc and develop strategies that will help you eliminate or mitigate them. Lists ways you can capitalise on your strengths and take advantages of opportunities.

Consider turning the strategies into actions using your Action Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advantages the business can exploit, e.g.</td>
<td>Areas of the business that need to be acted on, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• good customer service</td>
<td>• poor website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• innovative edge</td>
<td>• not enough staff training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• unique products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Strategies using strengths to address opportunities</th>
<th>Strategies to reverse weaknesses to address opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketplace areas that can be built on, e.g.</td>
<td>Ways to take advantage of business strengths, e.g.</td>
<td>Ways to ensure weaknesses don't hamper opportunities, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• gaps in the market</td>
<td>• promoting good customer service to attract competitor’s customers</td>
<td>• hiring an experienced trainer to upskill staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• competitor closure</td>
<td></td>
<td>• provide better customer service, something no one is offering well at the moment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threats</th>
<th>Strategies to counter threats with strengths</th>
<th>Strategies to fix vulnerabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External issues that could affect the success of the business, e.g.</td>
<td>Ways to use business strengths so threats are not a problem, e.g.</td>
<td>Ways to address areas where the business may be vulnerable, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• decrease in consumer demand</td>
<td>• launching new product to revitalise consumer demand</td>
<td>• utilising new technologies or social media to reach potential customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sudden increase in costs</td>
<td></td>
<td>• adapting green practices to minimise costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14.1 OVERVIEW

14.1.1 Introduction

The vocational rehabilitation of any individual whose primary disability is blindness must consider the total functioning of the individual. An individual’s skills and adjustments to the disability or disabilities are directly related to employability and employment. Independence is a relative concept which must be defined personally. Each individual has needs, wants, skills, abilities, and goals. Differing personalities and social, ethnic and economic backgrounds must be noted and respected as consumers define independence for themselves.

14.1.2 Role of Vocational Rehabilitation Teaching

Vocational Rehabilitation Teaching provides VR as well as independent living services to assist consumers in gaining adaptive skills necessary to maintain themselves and their residence, access the community, and/or enter, maintain or return to a job.

Vocational Rehabilitation Teaching provides specialized teaching services focusing on visual disabilities to consumers, their families, educators, and others supportive of the consumer’s independent living and work related goals.

14.1.3 Teamwork

Working in partnership with the consumer, the focus will concentrate on services that will boost the consumer’s ability to control their own life, to make informed choices, to assist in working independently in a work setting or to function independently as a homemaker in their own home.

Teamwork between the counselor and the consumer in the joint planning of services, consumer contacts, and sharing of information is both necessary, and will be consistently stressed and monitored by the supervisor.

14.2 VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION TEACHING POLICY

14.2.1 Definition

A thorough independent living/vocational assessment can be done by the counselor or an outside certified vendor, depending on the severity of the client’s need. This assessment will incorporate findings, solutions, recommendations, technical services if needed, duration of teaching, functional limitations, and appropriate counseling and guidance as it relates to employability.
14.2.2 Who Receives a Vocational Rehabilitation Teaching Assessment

All individuals who present indicating a need for vocational rehabilitation teaching should receive an initial functional assessment. The vocational rehabilitation teaching assessment can be conducted once eligibility has been determined, or at the initial consultation.

14.2.3 How and When the Counselor Refers

The counselor is required to provide an outside vendor of rehabilitation teaching services with a written referral as soon as possible after eligibility is determined, the referral will include the following information:

- Name
- Date of referral
- Social Security Number
- Where the referral can be contacted (physical address; work address, email or Facebook© information)
- Telephone number where the consumer can be contacted to include land-line phone, cell phone, relative’s phone, and work phone if applicable.
- Date of Birth
- Sex
- Copy of current eye exam (if one is available). Other pertinent medical information (secondary disability) if available or pertinent
- Any questions or concerns the counselor deems important or that needs to be addressed during the VRT’s assessment/evaluation
- Any functional limitations observed and noted during the interview with the consumer

14.2.4 Referral to a Vocational Rehabilitation Teaching Vendor

Along with the referral form, the counselor will forward to the VRT any available assessments and pertinent visual, physical, or any other examination results that would enable the VRT to understand the primary and/or secondary disabling conditions. Any other diagnostics available will be provided to include psychiatric, cognitive, and/or mood disorders. Any pertinent information from a closed case on the applicant will also be provided.

The VRT will assess all available information prior to contacting the applicant.

14.2.5 Applicant

An applicant is an individual referred for services who has signed an application for VR services.
14.2.5 During Application Status

In application Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor has the authority to complete a functional assessment to measure specific areas of skills, needs, and functional limitations. This will involve assessing the consumer’s independent living and vocational assets as well as deficits. This concrete information will be compiled into specific solutions, strategies, and recommendations and will be part of the IPE development between the consumer and counselor. At this point, the Counselor and the Consumer will decide if an outside vendor is required due the severity of the needs, or if the counselor will perform the rehabilitation teaching assessment and training.

14.3 VRT THOROUGH DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

14.3.1 What is a Thorough Diagnostic Assessment?

The Vocational Rehabilitation Teaching thorough assessment addresses questions and concerns of the consumer/counselor at the time of application. The assessment will also address:

- The functional limitations of the applicant as a result of the disability, as well as measurable time-based solutions and recommendations to remove or reduce the limitations.

- The assessment will address and document contacts or interviews with consumer and significant others.

- The assessment will address the consumer’s ability to adapt themselves to their environment in relation to their disability both primary and secondary.

- The assessment will address and document the outcome of prior training in adaptive skills in order to evaluate consumer’s willingness and capability to acquire and apply new skills to identified needs.

- The assessment will address and document skills in the area of technology and document consumer’s ability to utilize and/or acquire the skills required in a competitive employment setting. (NOTE: Purchased technology aids will not be considered without adequate documentation from the counselor or Rehabilitation Teacher and referral and recommendations to the DSB Technology Specialist.)

- All required state purchasing policies as well as DSB policies are to be followed if providing any technology services (See State Procurement Policy and DSB Policy on purchasing.)

NOTE: The detailed assessment report will be shared with counselor to be included in plan development. This report will outline the on-going involvement with consumer until completion of plan where consumer has been employed competitively in an integrated setting with a salary commensurate
with non-disabled employees and successfully closed or closed not rehabilitated.

14.3.2 Use of Training as a Diagnostic Tool

Training as a diagnostic tool is used to assist the teacher in determining the consumer’s most efficient way of learning and motivation to apply skill to mutually agreed upon needs.

Training with an adaptive device with the consumer allows the teacher to determine consumer need and plan for provision of services once the VR plan is initiated.

14.4 REHABILITATION TEACHING AS A SERVICE ON THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT

14.4.1 Rehabilitation Teaching Services

When all diagnostics (diagnosis) have been completed and the need for rehabilitation teaching services determined, the contracted vendor will provide written input to the counselor to assist in determining the services required on the IPE. The plan will be developed with the counselor and consumer following the determination of consumer needs in order to reach a vocational goal.

The recommendation will list any needed services, any planned purchases, and a time frame for completion.

14.4.2 Objectives

The objectives of the IPE are to formalize case planning for the provision of RT services directed toward the consumer’s vocational goal, and to ensure consumer understanding of the provision of planned services by the VRT toward the goal of employment.

14.4.3 Consumer Participation in Plan Completion

The consumer through informed choice will participate in the writing of the plan, receive a copy at completion, and is informed in writing when all planned services are complete.

14.4.4 When to Amend

The original plan will be amended when the projected date of completion is extended, and/or there is a need for a change in planned services. The vendor will make written recommendations to the counselor if additional RT services are required.

14.5 CASE NARRATIVES

14.5.1 Documentation of Case Record
The counselor will document the case record to record the progress of the case. Documentation will be required as RT services occur. Rehabilitation Counselors must ensure that they are meeting and making progress towards the vocational goal every 90 days. This may include RT services. This documentation will also be filed in the VR record of services.

14.5.2 What to Document

The counselor will document in the record of services when there is an interruption of services, the reason for consumer contact, the outcome of service provided toward consumer goals, and the primary status of the service being provided.

14.6 EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE AND THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION TEACHER (VRT)

14.6.1 Overview

The teacher supports the achievement of the vocational goal of consumers who are blind or blind/multi-handicapped. The teacher’s role is an integral part of the overall employment process whether the consumer’s vocational goal is homemaker, self-employment or work outside the home.

14.6.2 Vocational Goal

The vocational goal is determined by the consumer and the counselor with input from the VRT as needed. Once the determination is made, all services will be directed toward the achievement of that goal.

14.6.3 Definition

Employment assistance services by teachers will be in the planning and provision of services to assist the counselor in the following:

- Assisting VR Counselor and consumer through informed choice to determine a suitable vocational objective
- Preparing a consumer for work (job readiness)
- Determining and/or obtaining suitable employment for consumers, and/or maintaining employment of the consumer
- Assisting counselors in locating suitable employment through direct employer contact
- Providing employment benefits counseling by both the VR Counselor as well as the Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher

**NOTE:** Any services provided by the teacher will be considered employment assistance services since this is the ultimate goal of the consumer.
14.6.4 Goals

The goal of VRT employment assistance services is to support the consumer’s achievement of the vocational goal by planning with the counselor and consumer to meet the consumer’s need and facilitating assessment and skills training impacting on the individual’s job readiness.

14.6.5 Consumers Served

Consumers receiving services from the teacher are receiving employment assistance.

14.6.6 Extent of Services

The extent of teacher employment assistance services will vary depending on the needs of the consumer, vocational goal of the consumer, and the outcome of planning between the counselor and teacher.

14.6.7 Nature and Scope of Services

The consumer’s level of independent living skills will have a major impact on the consumer’s employability. In some cases consumers will not be successful in obtaining or maintaining employment due to deficits in

- grooming,
- health maintenance,
- time management and organization,
- expressive and receptive communication,
- interpersonal skills,
- mobility,
- use of leisure time,
- problem solving,
- attitudes conducive to work or
- limited natural supports.

Employment assistance services are available from the teacher in

- home management,
- aspects of job readiness,
- communications,
- visual efficiency,
- personal management,
- social skills, and/or
- participation in community resources.

Services in the area of job readiness assist the counselor in planning for services to provide needed skills, and determining the consumer’s job readiness.
Once determination is made regarding the consumer’s job readiness using resources including the teacher, employment assistance services from the teacher can include the following:

- Provision of teacher training directed toward the actual job duties of the consumer
- Identifying and assisting the counselor in obtaining aids and appliances necessary for use by the consumer on the job
- Accompanying counselor to employer contacts, i.e., plant tours
- Orienting the consumer to the work site
- Assisting the counselor with job analysis
- Assisting the counselor with adaptation of the work place
- Acting as a resource to the counselor in developing training and using community resources supportive of the consumer’s employment.

14.6.8 Clarification of the VR Teacher Role

Employment assistance services from the teacher do not include responsibility for the following:

- Establishing the vocational goal with the consumer; however the VRT can assist the counselor and consumer with informed choice toward employment
- Changing the vocational goal of the consumer,
- Making the final determination as to the consumer’s job readiness,
- Providing employment assistance services prior to planning with the counselor

14.5 COUNSELOR AND TEACHER JOINT PLANNING SESSIONS

14.5.1 Purpose

The purpose of the joint planning session between the VR Teacher and VR Counselor is to formulate a comprehensive, coordinated plan with each consumer by identifying and clarifying consumer strengths and deficits impacting on consumer’s employability, and formalizing and planning action to be taken.

14.5.2 When

Employment assistance services provided by the teacher must be planned with the counselor in a face-to-face meeting, on an individualized consumer basis, and documented within the consumer’s case narratives.

To individualize and coordinate consumer service delivery on an ongoing basis, regular planning sessions will be needed and documented within case narratives.

Documentation of the planning session should consist of the date and content of the meeting and decisions made as a result of the meeting. An IPE amendment may be required as a result of any joint meetings between the counselor, teacher, and consumer, if any decision warrants additional services.
14.5.3 Content

All joint planning between the VR Counselor and VR Teacher should result in a plan that is supportive of consumer employment. The content is directed toward that goal, increases the VR Counselor’s knowledge about the consumer’s capacities, behaviors, and limitations, and increases the VR Teacher’s knowledge about employment for the consumer.

14.5.4 Conclusion

Joint planning of employment assistance services between the VR Counselor, VR Teacher, and consumer will help ensure that the best interest of the consumer has been met. DSB utilizes trained counselors for the provision of rehabilitation teaching services as well as outside vendors, depending on the severity of need of the client.

Post-Employment Services – Chapter 15

15.1 OVERVIEW

15.1.1 Introduction

Post-employment services are those services provided after a consumer has been determined to be rehabilitated to assist the consumer in maintaining employment. The goal of post-employment services is to help the consumer reach a level of self-sufficiency, job retention, and job stability in the career of their choice.

15.1.2 Purpose

Consumers placed in jobs may experience problems which emerge or persist after a period of time. Post-employment services are designed to respond to consumers’ problems and supplement services provided to consumers previously planned on the IPE.

15.1.3 Policy

As part of the rehabilitation process, all consumers must be informed of the purpose of post-employment services, their eligibility for such services, and their right to contact the counselor if any problem arises which jeopardizes their job.

15.1.4 Eligibility

A consumer may be considered for post-employment services if the consumer has been determined to be rehabilitated, needs help in maintaining employment, and has an employment-related problem which does not entail a complex or comprehensive rehabilitation effort, or addresses a new and distinct vocational handicapping condition.

15.1.5 When to Reopen a Case
Consideration should be given to reopening the case in Status 02 if any of the following conditions are met:

- Consumer requires complex or comprehensive services
- Consumer’s problem regarding employment addresses a vocational handicapping condition that is new and distinct from that condition addressed in the original IPE
- Consumer has a new vocational goal which would require extensive additional training
- Provision of post-employment services will exceed 12 months
- Consumer’s case has been closed over one year

15.1.6 Post-Employment versus Reopening

When determining whether to provide additional services in post-employment status (32) versus reopening the case, the counselor must consider the current validity of previous data, whether previous rehabilitation efforts have lost relevancy or significance, and any new vocational goal that would require training skills.

15.1.7 Use of the IPE

Post-employment services must be recorded on the IPE.

15.1.8 Comparable Services and Benefits

The counselor must make full use of all comparable services and benefits, both public and private, to reduce or eliminate the need for payment for post-employment services and document accordingly.

15.1.9 Moving to Post-Employment (Post Employment Services) in BSIS

BSIS moves all closed cases to the Closure Table at the end of the federal fiscal year, and these cases can no longer be accessed. For this reason cases closed in Status 26 that need to be moved to Post Employment Services must be moved before the end of the federal fiscal year (September 30).

15.2 SCOPE OF POST-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

15.2.1 General Criteria

Post-employment services must be incidental to the original handicapping condition, ancillary to the services provided through the consumer’s IPE, and related to the previously planned vocational goal.

15.2.2 Examples

The following are examples of using post-employment services:
Example 1:

A blind consumer is placed in a competitive industrial position. The case has been closed for eight (8) months. The company moves to a larger location which places the consumer’s job in jeopardy because there is no public transportation to the new location and the consumer could not find the job station even if he/she could get there.

Course of action:

The counselor may provide temporary transportation through comparable services and benefits or purchase of services or orientation services. These services must be included the post-employment IPE.

Example 2:

A counselor anticipates, prior to closure or at the time of employment, that a visually impaired, mentally disabled consumer will need personal adjustment counseling over an extended time period to maintain employment.

Course of action:

The counselor may provide counseling, guidance, and other services appropriate to improving the consumer’s personal adjustment and ability to keep a job.

Example 3:

Over time a counselor observes a consumer who has been trained and placed as a computer programmer. Computer technology is complex and changes rapidly. A seemingly minor change, especially if it affects hardware, might jeopardize the continued employment of the consumer in this field unless the consumer is provided supplemental training.

Course of action:

The counselor may provide supplemental training and/or equipment alteration to help the consumer perform the job.

15.3 RULES GOVERNING POST-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

15.3.1 Introduction

Any time a counselor has a question regarding the use of post-employment services, the counselor should consult the supervisor before making a decision.
If a case has been in Post Employment Services and the counselor determines that the case must be reopened in Status 02, then the case is first closed in Closed from Post-Employment.

15.3.2 Rule One
The counselor may provide post-employment services if a consumer experiences a minor setback or recurrent problem resulting from or related to a pre-existing condition served by the IPE.

**NOTE:** The counselor may not provide post-employment services for acute conditions unrelated to the original disabling condition.

15.3.3 Rule Two
The counselor may provide post-employment services to help a consumer find more suitable employment commensurate with the consumer’s abilities.

**NOTE:** The counselor may not provide post-employment services solely to upgrade a consumer’s financial status.

15.3.4 Example
After a period of satisfactory adjustment to employment, a consumer may have the potential to work in a closely related job without going through extensive training. The provision of post-employment services would enable the consumer to make a satisfactory transition into a position more suited to the consumer’s capabilities.

15.3.5 Order of Selection
In the event DSB must go under an Order of Selection, the counselor must follow the Order of Selection for payment of post-employment services the same as he/she would for any other consumer.

15.4 CASE RECORDING OF POST-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

15.4.1 Introduction
Once the counselor determines the appropriateness of post-employment services, proper case recording must be followed. To record services, the counselor must develop an IPE post-employment program, and document post-employment services on the IPE form.

15.4.2 IPE Post-Employment Program
The IPE post-employment program will include documentation supporting the need for post-employment services, what services will be provided, and how the program will be monitored.

15.4.3 Transfer

Cases in post-employment, Post Employment Services, cannot be transferred out.

15.4.4 Termination

The decision to terminate post-employment services should be made on an individual basis in consultation with the consumer, and based on the counselor’s professional judgment.

15.4.5 Termination Criteria

When making such a judgment, counselors will consider whether the following criteria have been met:

- The precipitating problem which required post-employment services has been satisfactorily remedied.
- The consumer has attained sufficient independence to function without continuing post-employment services.
- The consumer’s prospects of job security are good due to job performance, job satisfaction, and acceptance of the employment setting with respect to employee benefits and opportunities for job development and advancement.
- The consumer holds a position at a level suited to the consumer’s capabilities.
- Within the particular locality and labor market the consumer has a chance to advance through self-initiative.
- The consumer’s condition or situation becomes such that post-employment services cannot help in maintaining employment.

15.4.6 Outcome of Services

Closure from post-employment services must be documented on the Closure Form.

15.4.7 Post-Employment Assessment

Each IPE will contain an assessment of the expected need for post-employment services and provide for a reassessment of the need for post-employment services.

Standards for Service Delivery and Case Recording – Chapter 16

16.1 OVERVIEW
16.1.1 Introduction
State and federal regulations along with agency policy require that certain information be contained in each consumer’s record of service. The extent of the information needed varies in relation to where the consumer is in the VR process.

16.1.2 Purpose
The purpose of this manual section is to provide field staff with standards for case recording which meet agency standards.

**NOTE:** Do not duplicate any information that is otherwise documented in the record of service.

16.2 CASE NARRATIVES

16.2.1 Purpose
The case narrative allows recording of significant consumer/staff interaction and critical steps in advancing the rehabilitation process from the time of initial consumer contact through closure.

16.2.2 What to Include
Only significant events or developments related to the case should be recorded in a narrative. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Consumer perceptions and expectations
- Counseling efforts
- Rationale for providing services in special or exceptional situations
- Specific extensions of time agreed upon for the completion of determination of eligibility
- Explanation of a status change
- Explanation of cases in a particular status for unusual lengths of time
- Discrepancies in medical or diagnostic recommendations and counselor decisions
- Loss of contact with consumer and attempted efforts to contact
- Significant changes in consumer situation (disability, family, financial situation, etc.) which might affect the program
- Changes in the availability of comparable services and benefits and efforts to secure these benefits
- Status changes (if not explained elsewhere, as in closures)
- Employment assistance activities (including employer contacts made on behalf of the consumer)
- Explanations of how services in the consumer’s IPE contributed to his/her employment outcome
- Verification of earnings for individuals who obtain competitive employment and are compensated at or above minimum wage and that the wage and level
of benefits are not less than that customarily paid by the employer
• Notation of case transfer

16.2.3 What not to Include

Do not include in a narrative:

• Statements containing medical or psychological labels describing a consumer unless appropriate documentation is in the record of service; if there is appropriate documentation, quote the documentation
• Any judgmental statements without proper documentation
• Duplicate information

16.2.4 Key Point

Case narratives should be concise, relevant, and must address who, what, when, why, where, and, sometimes, how.

Example:

• Who--I counseled Mr. Bill Jones
• When--on 7/21/2011
• Where--at Joe’s Print Shop
• Why--to see if he and his employer were mutually satisfied
• What--Mr. Jones and I discussed his employment and he indicated he was very happy with his job

16.2.5 Summaries

While most contacts with consumers should be recorded, it is permissible to summarize in one entry the information secured or action taken in the course of several contacts if this period does not extend past two weeks. The case narrative date should be the date of the last contact.

NOTE: An important event should have its own narrative.

16.2.6 Method of Recording

Case narratives must be written so that other staff such as supervisors, administrators, other VR counselors, rehabilitation teachers, or RSA audit staff reading the record can get an accurate understanding of the consumer and the development of the case.

16.2.7 Counseling Sessions
Counseling sessions are recorded in the case narratives. These may include a description of the purpose and the results of the counseling session, focus on the progress or lack of progress being made in relation to consumer's program, indicate any changes in attitude, if any, since the last contact, and describe efforts that the consumer and/or staff will take prior to the next contact.

16.2.8 Employment Assistance Activities

Any and all employment assistance activities must be recorded in the case narrative. These include, but are not limited to:

- Making employer contacts on behalf of a particular consumer
- Referring a consumer to the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services
- Working with a consumer on resume writing or interviewing skills

16.2.9 Narrative Example of Employment Assistance

Employment Assistance Activity: On this date, counselor contacted Mr. John Smith at Best Foods, Inc. regarding a position of computer operator for Ms. Simms. Mr. Smith was very receptive and indicated he would like to interview Ms. Simms on 07-15-2011 at 1:00 p.m.

16.3 NARRATIVE DOCUMENTATION

16.3.1 Initial Interview Narrative

The Initial Interview Narrative builds the foundation and sets the platform for the documentation of the case service record. It gives the reader a snapshot view of the consumer’s history, perceptions, and living and work situations at the initial intake. The following outline should be followed when completing the Initial Interview Narrative:

- Opening Paragraph – Include the referral, initial contact, and first face-to-face meeting dates; who referred the individual, and where you met with the consumer. State that the consumer is being placed in Status 02 on this date and has signed an application for services.
- Consumer’s Statement of Disability – State the consumer’s perception of the problem including the consumer’s perception of the disability, consumer’s perception of handicap to employment, any proposed solutions, and any future goals.
- Family Arrangements and Income – List the consumer’s type of residence (private home, institution, half-way house, etc.), others who live in the home, and the household income and its source.
- Education – List the individual’s high level of education at application.
- Work History – State the individual’s work history for the past ten years if possible.
• Similar Benefits – List all benefits the consumer has at the time of application. This may include, but is not limited to, medical insurance, VA benefits, PELL Grant, scholarships, Workers’ Comp, SSI/SSDI, and T.E.A.

• Presumed Eligibility – If the individual receives SSI or SSDI due to visual problems, AND meets Criterion II (requires VR services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment), the counselor must presume the applicant eligible for VR services and immediately proceed with the case. An applicant’s history and counselor observation that the person is obviously totally blind and has received previous services from DSB, or the person has bilateral ocular prostheses also give the counselor reason to presume eligibility.

• Informed Choice – State how informed choice was explained to the applicant.

• Explanation of Services – Document that the following items were discussed and explained to the applicant:
  o Services available through DSB
  o What DSB can and cannot do
  o Confidentiality of information
  o Eligibility guidelines
  o Consumer’s rights and responsibilities
  o The appeal process and how to contact the supervisor and CAP personnel if needed. State that the applicant signed the CAP form and was given a copy.
  o Arkansas Information Reading Services
  o NFB Newsline
  o Talking books
  o Voter registration
  o Consumer organizations

**NOTE:** The Initial Interview Narrative is required in all cases.

16.3.2 Status 06

Make a statement to indicate that a DSB-1 (Certification of Eligibility for Trial Work Experience/Extended Evaluation) was completed and the consumer was placed in Status 06. Indicate that a plan has been developed and what evaluations are being obtained. Examples of evaluations include medical, psychological, vocational, educational, and other diagnostics.

16.3.3 Eligibility Determination Narrative

The Eligibility Determination Narrative documents whether or not the applicant meets eligibility guidelines to receive services from DSB. This narrative also documents the reasons the applicant is determined eligible or ineligible for VR services. A summary of the visual exam report and other medical and psychological reports related to a secondary disability, as appropriate, is included
in this narrative topic as well. If the person is eligible for VR services, functional limitations must be addressed here.

Make a statement to indicate that a DSB-1 was completed and the consumer was placed in Eligibility Status. When the counselor is unable to address factors to the degree necessary to determine a vocational goal and the nature and scope of services, a more thorough diagnostic study must be done. This study should be of sufficient depth to enable the development of a comprehensive IPE. Document the rationale for doing such studies and the progress toward completing the diagnostics.

Examples of additional studies might include the following:

- Specialty medical
- Psychological
- Vocational
- Educational
- Other diagnostics deemed necessary

Any potential problems in the areas above will be the basis for discussion with the consumer in determining the vocational goal and the nature and scope of services.

**NOTE:** The Eligibility Determination Narrative is required in all cases.

### 16.3.4 Comprehensive Assessment Narrative

CFR 34, Section 361.45 (Development of the Individualized Plan for Employment) requires that DSB “conduct an assessment in order to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs for each eligible individual to whom the state is able to provide services.” The purpose of this assessment is to determine the employment outcome and the nature and scope of services to be included in the IPE. Required headings in this narrative include the following:

- Personal adjustment
- Vocational adjustment
- Social adjustment
- Ability to acquire new occupational skills
- Capacity for successful job performance
- Selection of objective
- Employment opportunities
- Engineering services
- How is the employment outcome consistent with the consumer’s unique strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice?
- Plan for achieving goal
NOTE: The Comprehensive Assessment Narrative is required for all cases being moved into Status 12.

16.3.5 IPE Development

The IPE Development Narrative is a **required** narrative for all cases being moved into Status 12. This narrative must include the consumer’s involvement in developing the IPE, the consumer was given a CAP Form and that the Client Assistance Program was discussed with the individual, and the choices the consumer was given and decisions he or she made.

16.3.6 Documentation of Services Provided

There must be sufficient documentation in the case service record to show the consumer’s need for the service and that the consumer received the service. For training cases, this would be grades or training reports. For physical restoration cases, this would be physician’s reports from eye examinations and post-op reports. For purchase of goods, this would be invoices and narrating that the goods were received and delivered to the individual and that the individual was taught to use the goods.

**NOTE:** All purchased services must have an invoice attached to the pay copy of the authorization and a copy filed in the case service record.

16.3.7 Documentation of Counseling Sessions

Counseling sessions are recorded in the case narratives. These may include a description of the purpose and the results of the counseling session, focus on the progress or lack of progress being made in relation to the consumer’s program, indicate any changes in attitude, if any, since the last contact, and describe efforts that the consumer and/or staff will take prior to the next contact.

**NOTE:** When counseling and guidance is included as a service on the IPE, counseling sessions MUST be documented in narratives.

16.3.8 Closing Narrative

The closed narrative must address:

- Date of closure
- Reason for closure
- Services that were provided
- CAP
- Informed choice
- Explanation of how services in the IPE contributed to an employment outcome/successful closure
- Verification of earnings for individuals who obtained competitive employment and are compensated at or above minimum wage and that the
wage and level of benefits are less than that customarily paid by the employer

- Explanation why any planned service in the IPE was not provided
- Position held, hours worked, earnings, and employer

If case is being closed because you are unable to locate the consumer, state the attempts that were made to contact the consumer.

Note that the consumer was notified in writing of closure; if not notified, state why not, e.g., death, terminal illness, etc.

Note if consumer was referred to another agency.

16.3.9 Informed Choice

Beginning with Status 02 and continuing through to case closure, counselor should list a complete record of how the consumer was given informed choice. This record should include the choices the consumer was given and the decisions that he/she made.

16.4 CRITERIA FOR CLOSING CASES FROM STATUS 02

16.4.1 Basic Criteria

Criteria for terminating cases in Status 02 are:

- One or more of the basic conditions for eligibility for VR services are not met.
- Reasons other than eligibility exist.

16.4.2 Basic Documentation

All closed cases must have documentation in the record of service describing and supporting the reason for the closure and referral action to other resources, if appropriate.

16.4.3 Rule

Cases closed for “other reasons” must be restricted to reasons that do not appropriately fit into more definitive categories.

16.5 CRITERIA FOR CLOSING CASES FROM TRIAL WORK EXPERIENCE/EXTENDED EVALUATION

16.5.1 Basic Criteria

Criteria for closing cases in Status 08 from Trial Work Experience/Extended Evaluation (06) are:

- There is no reasonable likelihood that a vocational rehabilitation objective can be achieved.
• The individual’s needs have changed.

16.5.2 Note

Trial Work Experience/Extended Evaluation must be terminated at the earliest time it can be determined that either of these conditions exists. (This determination may occur prior to expiration of an eighteen-month evaluation.)

16.5.3 No Reasonable Likelihood

Trial Work Experience/Extended Evaluation must be terminated when it has been determined that there is no reasonable likelihood that VR services may render the individual able to engage in a gainful occupation, or for reasons other than ineligibility.

16.5.4 Needs Have Changed

When an individual’s needs change and it can be determined that Trial Work Experience/Extended Evaluation can be continued without interruption, then the program is changed.

When an individual’s needs change to the extent that an interruption of services becomes apparent, then an assessment, using additional diagnostic studies where necessary, is made to arrive at one of the following three decisions.

16.5.5 When Services are Interrupted

If the interruption is short and temporary, and would not preclude continuation of the same or amended extended evaluation plan during the same certification period, then leave case in Status 06.

If the interruption is such that the remaining period of extended evaluation would not be sufficient to meet its objective, and closure of the case is necessary until the basic conditions for acceptability can be re-established and extended evaluation is needed to determine rehabilitation potential, then close case in Status 08.

If the interruption was caused by circumstances which clearly indicate that there is no reasonable expectation that VR services may render the individual fit to engage in a gainful occupation, then close case in Status 08.

16.6 CRITERIA FOR CLOSING CASES AS “REHABILITATED”

16.6.1 Basic Criteria

Criteria for terminating services to a consumer in Status 26 and reporting the consumer as “rehabilitated” are:

• The program of rehabilitation services has been completed insofar as
necessary or possible.
- Substantial rehabilitation services have been provided to the consumer by DSB.
- The consumer is engaged in a suitable occupation at least 90 days, which is also in an integrated setting.

**NOTE:** Consumer must meet all three of these criteria.

### 16.6.2 Integrated Setting Definition

The definition of an integrated setting is:

- A setting typically found in a community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non-disabled individuals other than non-disabled individuals who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals, AND

- with respect to an employment outcome, means a setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non-disabled individuals other than non-disabled who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals to the same extent that non-disabled individuals in comparable positions interact with other persons.

### 16.6.3 Implications of Integrated Setting Definition

Counselors should not decide that an employment situation is not an integrated setting based on just the name of the employer. Jobs should be viewed on a case by case basis if there is question of integration. To be integrated, the:

- individual is employed in a type of job available to the general public in the community and is doing the same job in the company as individuals without a disability
- individual is employed under the same working conditions as others without a disability in similar positions (e.g. rest room facilities, lunch or break arrangements, entrance/exit)
- individual has ongoing interaction with other workers, supervisors and the general public to the same degree as workers without disabilities in the same or comparable occupations
- general working conditions reflect integration with other workers rather than separation/segregation

### 16.6.4 Notification to Consumer

It is the responsibility of the counselor to inform consumers in writing when the case is closed.

### 16.6.5 Accepting Employment Prior to Completion
In some cases, the consumer may identify an employment opportunity prior to completing the planned program of services. This employment may occur as a result of uncontrollable circumstances, changes to more immediate goals, or finding acceptable employment.

The consumer and counselor may jointly decide that it is necessary or appropriate for the consumer to accept this employment opportunity.

16.6.6 Changed Program

If the employment opportunity is a different type of goal, then the planned program of services should be re-evaluated to determine if there is an additional need for services. If so, the program should be amended to show this new employment goal and the additional services needed to assist the consumer to obtain or maintain this employment opportunity.

If the reassessment determines that additional services are not needed, as jointly decided by the consumer and counselor, then services may be terminated and the case closed. The consumer would be considered “rehabilitated” since all the services needed for the consumer to be successful in obtaining or retaining this job have been planned and provided.

16.6.7 Substantial Rehabilitation Services

A substantial rehabilitation service is defined as any vocational rehabilitation service provided within a counseling relationship that contributes to the achievement of an employment outcome consistent with the informed choice of the individual.

The substantiability of the service can best be determined by its impact on the consumer’s vocational rehabilitation, not on factors such as a fixed number or amount of services, expenditures, counseling hours, or contacts with the consumer. In order for the counselor to show substantial services in a case, the counselor must document the relationships of the provision of services, the criteria for evaluation of the intermediate objectives or steps needed to reach the vocational goal, and the counseling necessary for successful closure of a case. Documentation of substantiability of services in the case file is an ongoing process. The case narratives must show the individual’s participation and the services provided enabled the individual to become employed.

16.6.8 Suitable Occupation

An occupation is generally considered suitable when, after a reasonable period of employment (90 days is considered minimum), the following conditions have been met:

- The consumer and employer are mutually satisfied.
- The consumer is maintaining adequate interpersonal relationships and acceptable behavior in the job environment.
• The occupation is consistent with the consumer’s interests, capacities, and informed choice.
• The consumer possesses acceptable skills to perform or continue to work satisfactorily.
• The employment and working conditions will not aggravate the consumer’s disability, and the consumer’s disability in the job situation will not jeopardize the health or safety of the consumer.
• The wage and working conditions conform to state and federal statutory requirements.
• The employment is regular, reasonably permanent, and the consumer receives a wage commensurate with that paid other workers for similar work.

16.6.9 When All Conditions Are Not Met

In some situations, a case may be justifiably closed even though some of the conditions are not completely apparent.

Example: A consumer may desire to accept or remain on a job which, in the opinion of the counselor, is not compatible with the consumer’s physical, mental and educational abilities, or the job is not sufficiently permanent to assure continued self-support. Good counseling procedure recognizes the consumer’s right to make such choices. The counselor’s obligation is to

• help the consumer understand the situation,
• give the consumer adequate information upon which to base decisions,
• encourage the consumer to pursue a more suitable plan and objective, and
• document assistance on the IPE.

16.6.10 When One or More Conditions Are Not Met

When a consumer accepts a job which fails to meet one or more of the criteria for suitability, the counselor must assure that

1. explanation has been given to the consumer concerning the unsuitable aspects of the job,
2. the consumer has made the job choice in light of all the facts, and
3. the consumer has been informed of the option to reapply for VR services if the job does not prove suitable or the need arises for further services.

NOTE: The case record must clearly indicate the justification for closing the case under these circumstances including alternatives that were considered.

16.7 HOMEMAKER CLOSURES

16.7.1 Introduction
Historically, there have been many problems in determining what constituted a valid homemaker closure. This section contains descriptions and definitions that will aid the counselor in determining what constitutes a valid homemaker closure.

**NOTE:** Counselors can have no more than 20% homemaker closures in any given federal fiscal year.

### 16.7.2 Definition

A homemaker is an individual who has the skills and abilities to maintain a home and actively functions in that capacity.

### 16.7.3 Eligibility Criteria

The first important determination must be eligibility. In many cases, an individual may have a disability and meet the first eligibility criterion.

However, when addressing the second criterion, for example, there is a distinct difference between provisions of medical care so that an individual can stay at home, and physical restoration under a vocational rehabilitation program to aid the person in maintaining or attaining employment (which, in this case, is homemaking).

### 16.7.4 Changes in Vocational Objective

A consumer who decides to stay home may become a candidate for a homemaker closure if the agency actually provided a substantial vocational rehabilitation service, this service contributed significantly to the consumer’s vocational adjustment, and the consumer meets the definition of a homemaker.

### 16.7.5 Family Status

Family status refers to the number of people in the family. When determining a homemaker closure, it is a fairly straightforward decision when an individual is responsible for the homemaking activities of an entire family. However, for individuals who live alone, the counselor must differentiate between self-care and home management activities.

### 16.7.6 Self-Care Activities

Examples of self-care activities include:

1. Grooming skills
2. Personal hygiene
3. Care of hair
4. Makeup
5. Shaving
6. Care of clothing
7. Social skills
1. Eating skills
2. Posture
3. Table manners
3. Communication skills
   • Legible signature and/or handwriting
   • Braille or writing
   • Dialing a telephone
4. Orientation and mobility skills
   • Long cane travel
   • Orientation at home
   • Orientation outside home and neighborhood
   • Personal safety

These are all examples of activities of daily living which, while being essential for consumers to learn, do not constitute the responsibilities of a homemaker.

16.7.7 Home Management Activities

Examples of responsibilities of a homemaker may include:

5.meal preparation
6. marketing/shopping
7. baking
8. bed making
9. sewing
10. laundry
11. washing dishes
12. hanging clothes
13. child care
14. cleaning

16.7.8 Rule

An individual’s family status and anticipated earnings are not conditions for eligibility for homemaking.

16.7.9 Single Person Households

A man or a woman who lives alone, needs services related to the maintenance of a home, and is actually performing the duties necessary may be closed a homemaker.

16.7.10 Secondary Gain

A situation in which an individual who has been closed as a homemaker, is now running a home, and can thereby free another family member to engage in competitive employment describes a secondary gain upon which eligibility is not contingent.

16.7.11 Documentation
The case record must contain evidence that the homemaker is actually performing these home management activities in the home.

16.7.12 Valid Closure

A valid homemaker closure is a VR closure in which a consumer is closed Status 26, after the provision of VR services, and at closure the consumer is performing a minimum of seven of the following home management activities:

- Meal preparation
- Sewing
- Washing dishes
- Child care or care of a family member
- Marketing/shopping
- Laundry
- Cleaning
- Home maintenance/repair
- Accessing mail/attending to correspondence/paying bills
- Yard work
- Home finances, including money management and budgeting
- Accessing transportation
- Other, identify and explain

16.7.13 Reminder

Just because an individual has the ability to perform these work activities does not in itself indicate a homemaker closure. The individual must, on a day to day basis, actually function as a homemaker, and there should be an observable relationship between services provided and the consumer’s performance of homemaker duties.

16.7.14 Definition: Unpaid Family Worker

An unpaid family worker is a person who works without actual cash reimbursement on a family farm or in a family business operated by one or more members of the consumer’s family and has received substantial services which assisted in enabling the consumer to perform such activity.

16.8 CRITERIA FOR CLOSING CASES AS “NOT REHABILITATED”

16.8.1 Basic Criteria

Cases may be closed as “not rehabilitated” when it is determined that a suitable occupation cannot be achieved. Such closure may be categorized as either Closed, Other Reasons, Before IPE Initiated (closed, before IPE initiated) or Closed Rehabilitated (closed, after IPE initiated).

16.8.2 Closed, Other Reasons, Before IPE Initiated Closures
Situations will occur which may necessitate closing a case (from 10 or 12) before services are begun under an IPE. A determination that a suitable occupation cannot be obtained must be based upon all facts and circumstances and documented in the case record.

16.8.3 Notification to Consumer

It is the responsibility of the counselor to advise the consumer by letter, with a reasonable explanation concerning the case closure action.

16.8.4 Decision Not to Follow Through

An individual for whom eligibility has been determined and a rehabilitation program is being developed or has been formulated, may decide not to follow through with a program of services. Before closing such a case, the counselor must assure that the individual understands the purpose of the program and the services that are available, and then inform the consumer that he or she may reapply for services at a later date.

16.8.5 Consumers Who Move

Contact with a consumer may be lost before a rehabilitation program is formulated or services have begun as a result of the consumer’s changing residence. Caseload management involving sufficient consumer contact will keep such occurrences at a minimum.

16.8.6 New Developments

In some instances, after an individual has been determined eligible, but before services are begun, new information or complications will require reconsideration of the consumer’s prospects of attaining a gainful occupation and, after further evaluation, the counselor may determine that such attainment is not possible.

16.8.7 Referrals To Other Agencies

When a consumer can appropriately be referred to another agency, such referral involves more than merely advising the consumer to make application to the other agency. Counselors should discuss possible referral with the consumer, transmit essential case data to the other agency if requested in writing by the consumer, and provide additional assistance as required to best meet the needs of the consumer.

16.8.8 Closed Rehabilitated Closures

After services have been initiated under an IPE (Status 14-24) various circumstances may prevent the attainment of a suitable occupation. When such a decision is reached after full consideration of all pertinent facts, services are discontinued and the case closed in Closed Rehabilitated.
NOTE: All case service procedures as described above (under Closed, Other Reasons, Before IPE Initiated closures) apply as well to cases closed after initiation of the IPE.

16.9 UPDATING CASE RECORD

16.9.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish procedures for updating case files deficient in documentation.

16.9.2 Documentation Requirements

Many documents in the case record are DSB requirement; however, there is some documentation that is required in federal legislation. This includes the following:

- Application for Services
- Certificate of Eligibility (DSB-1)
- I P E (DSB-8017)
- Preliminary diagnostic studies
- Eligibility for comparable services and benefits
- Confidentiality statement

16.9.3 Rule

It is not against agency policy or federal regulations to update a service record so that it accurately reflects the services and progress that a consumer has made in his or her rehabilitation program. Such updating is to be clearly explained in case narratives. A reasonable explanation of facts and rationale for actions taken is to be entered in the narrative to preclude any implications of falsifying records, fraud, etc.

16.9.4 Procedure for Updating

To update documentation include:

- Date: When the documentation should have taken place.
- Signature: Name and title of person completing update; also, if applicable, the name of the previous worker.
- Date of the corrective action.

Example: In reviewing this case, I noted that, although the consumer was certified eligible for services 02-15-10, no Certificate of Eligibility is in the case record. Therefore, a COE is being entered at this time for the previous counselor.

16.9.5 Procedures for Updating Other Caseload Materials

When any other caseload information is missing, such as training reports, the counselor attempts to obtain copies of those reports; however, if copies are not
obtainable, the counselor states in the case narrative that these items are missing from the record.

**Transition Services and Pre-Employment Transition Services—Chapter 17**

**17.1 KEY TERMS**

**Transition**

Transition services are activities designed for a student to promote movement from school to post-school activities. These activities must be coordinated, goal-oriented, and based on the student’s needs and interests. The services include post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and/or community participation. Transition services must promote or facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the student's individualized plan for employment (IPE). *Based on 34 CFR Section 361.5(b)(55)

**Pre-Employment Transition Services**

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are provided to individuals meeting the student with a disability definition. Individuals not meeting this definition can receive the same services; however, they are not counted as Pre-ETS and should only be paid with VR budget, not Pre-ETS budget.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defined a total of 14 Pre-ETS categories. Five of these categories are required and the other nine categories can be considered after the required services are considered or provided. WIOA requires that 15 percent of federal vocational rehabilitation funds be spent on Pre-ETS services.

**504 Plan**

A school's written statement of services provided in accordance with Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is called a 504 Plan. Section 504 requires school districts that receive federal funding to provide a "free and appropriate public education" (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Appropriate educational services are designed to meet the individual needs of such students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met. *Based on 34 CFR Part 104, Subpart D, Sections 104.31–104.39

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

The school's written plan to meet educational goals and objectives for a student with a disability is called an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The IEP must
include a statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. It must also include how the student's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, that is, the same curriculum as for students without disabilities. *Based on 34 CFR Section 300.320

**Student with a Disability**

A student with a disability is defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) as anyone age 16-21 years old who is attending school, receiving services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Special Education) or are considered 504 eligible (including those individuals who are working with Vocational Rehabilitation or VR).

If an individual is 22, he or she will only meet the student with a disability definition if his or her 22nd birthday falls on or after September 1. In that case, the individual will meet the definition through August 31 of the following year.

The only group of consumers who will receive services considered Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are those who meet this WIOA definition. The same services can be provided to those not meeting this definition; however, they are not counted as Pre-ETS and should not be paid with Pre-ETS budget.

**Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (TVRC)**

A TVRC is a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor who works with a specialty caseload of primarily transition-age consumers at assigned high schools. Vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) do not have to be designated TVRCs to work with transition consumers.

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is a federal law that became effective in 2014 and reauthorizes and amends the Workforce Investment Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The law consists of five titles, and Title IV pertains to requirements for the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

The underlying principle behind Title IV is that too many individuals are leaving high school unprepared for work and independence. With that in mind, WIOA prescribes certain service provision requirements discussed below.

**Youth with a Disability**

Youth with a disability is defined as anyone ages 14-24 with the most significant disabilities. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that
50 percent of our Supported Employment funding be spent on the provision of Supported Employment services for youth with disabilities.

**Minor**

A minor is an individual who is under 18 years old and is not or has not been married. Also under this definition a minor has not had minority status removed for general purposes.

**17.1.2 Overview of Transition and Pre-Employment Transition**

DSB provides transition services to eligible students with disabilities through the adult Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program to prepare blind and visually impaired students and youth to move from receiving special education services and services required under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, to receiving VR services.

References to the counselor in this chapter apply to any counselors (VRCs) or transition vocational rehabilitation counselors (TVRCs) working with transition consumers.

DSB provides pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) to individuals meeting the student with a disability definition. The primary focus of DSB should be on those individuals who are ages 16-22. Individuals not meeting this definition can receive the same services; however, they are not counted as Pre-ETS and should only be paid with VR budget, not Pre-ETS budget.

**17.1.3 When to Open a Case**

Transition cases should be treated the same as any other case. Counselors are not to open a case unless they are going to write an IPE within 90 days after certifying eligibility (see Section 7.1.12). Pre-employment transition services do not require a case to be opened; however, cases can be opened on Pre-ETS clients, provided that the core services are being provided.

**17.1.4 Notice of Eligibility**

Upon determination of eligibility, the counselor will notify the minor consumer and his/her parent or representative and proceed with program planning.

**17.2 SERVICES**

**17.2.1 TRANSITION SERVICES**

Transition services, by their nature, must be individualized and adjusted to the specific needs, environments, supports, and skills of each consumer. Transition services may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Counseling
• Assessment and vocational assessment
• Vocational planning
• Orientation and mobility
• Academic recommendations, including tutoring and instructional adaptations
• Instruction including ADL, self-advocacy, and social skills
• Advocacy
• Adaptive technology
• Rehabilitation engineering
• Reader service
• Transportation
• Work experience including summer employment and job shadowing
• Physical restoration
• Community experiences

17.2.2 Technology Purchases

The counselor can only purchase assistive devices and adaptive equipment if the items are needed for post-secondary education or long-term employment. If a student needs assistive devices or adaptive equipment for his/her participation in secondary school, the public school, under the ADA, should provide the equipment necessary for the student’s participation. (Devices unrelated to education or vocational rehabilitation will be the responsibility of the parents/guardian. For example, devices for home or recreational purposes should not be considered.)

17.2.3 PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are provided to individuals meeting the student with a disability definition. WIOA defines a total of 14 Pre-ETS categories in the WIOA section 422. Five of these categories are required and the other nine categories can be considered after the required services are considered or provided.

The five required Pre-ETS categories are:

1) Career Exploration;
2) Work-based Learning, including internships;
3) Counseling on post-secondary training opportunities;
4) Work readiness, including skill related to independent living and social skills; and
5) Self-Advocacy.

The additional nine possible Pre-ETS categories address the following:

1) implementing effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces;
developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary educational experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment;

3) providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities;

4) disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of the WIOA;

5) coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);

6) applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of the WIOA;

7) developing model transition demonstration projects;

8) establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving states, local educational agencies, designated state units, developmental disabilities agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goals of the WIOA; and

9) disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally unserved populations.

Note: Supported Employment, including all assessments and benchmarks, is not a Pre-ETS service.

Pre-ETS can be provided to individuals who are eligible, or potentially eligible.

When services provided do not involve expenditure of funds, consider whether the counselor's time can be counted as Pre-ETS. As long as the counselor's time was spent on one of the defined Pre-ETS areas, for individuals meeting the student with a disability definition, it can usually be counted. Examples include time spent planning a transition fair, time spent traveling to meet with students for the purpose of providing Pre-ETS, or time spent attending a transition-related training. When questioning whether an activity should be counted, the counselor should speak with his or her supervisor.

17.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

17.3.1 School’s Responsibilities

Public schools have primary responsibility for ensuring and providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for children. The Special Education Unit will establish and maintain policies and procedures and provide technical assistance to local education agencies to assure the following:
• Individuals who are blind, severely visually impaired, or deaf-blind have been provided with pre-requisite academic, personal adjustment and pre-vocational skills prior to being referred to DSB.

• It also provides for placements of individuals who are blind, severely visually impaired, or deaf-blind are based on an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and that the student will be served in the least restrictive environment.

• Schools will involve DSB staff in writing IEP’s for children who will be referred for appropriate services. Schools will initiate and/or cooperate in the development of graduation plans, Tech Prep programs of study, vocational components and transitional goals of the IEP, and the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE).

• Comprehensive services will be provided and may include, but are not limited to, evaluation/assessment services, instructional services, and support services.

• Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Special Education shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of services, programs, or activities conducted by Special Education and/or local educational agencies.

**NOTE:** Counselor must obtain the student’s current IEP and have it filed appropriately in case file.

**17.3.2 IEP Meeting**

The counselor will attend all IEP meetings scheduled for the minor consumer.

**17.3.3 Counselor’s Other Responsibilities**

The counselor will be responsible for the following:

• Providing information, support, and guidance to students, parents, and schools to promote a smooth transition
• Attending students’ Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings
• Assisting students in developing their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
• Assisting students in technology decisions
• Assisting students in career exploration

**17.3.4 Family’s Role**

When family support is available, family involvement in the transition process will significantly enhance both transition planning and a successful outcome. Each family has a unique set of family values and cultural influences that will affect their concerns, opinions, and requests. The family’s role in the vocational
rehabilitation process is to assist the consumer in identifying and describing consumer and family needs and express expectations for services. The family will also assist and encourage the consumer to act as primary coordinator for all services to the consumer and the family, and assist the consumer in becoming an effective self-advocate.

17.4 WORK AND TRANSITION

17.4.1 Knowledge of Work Laws

VR Counselors will keep current in their knowledge of state and federal labor laws that affect minor consumers. This knowledge will include, but is not limited to: knowing and understanding minimum ages for employment, the number of hours a minor is allowed to work, requirements for lunch/breaks, and restrictions for certain types of jobs.

17.4.2 Work Based Learning- a Pre-ETS Service for Students with Disabilities

This type of work introduces the student to the world of work, offers the student opportunities to earn money for educational purposes, gives the student an inside look at a potential career, can provide a sense of independence and self-esteem, teaches responsibility, can increase the student’s maturity, increases their experience in interacting with the general public, and provides networking opportunities.

VR Counselors can assist minor consumers seeking part-time or summer employment by, but not limited to, providing counseling, recommending places the students might apply for work, advising student on how to fill out a job application, and assisting the student in developing a resume. These services fall under Pre-ETS services for those students in high school.

Physical Restoration Services - Chapter 18

18.1 OVERVIEW

18.1.1 Definition

Physical restoration services are those medical and medically related services that are necessary to correct or substantially modify within a reasonable period of time a physical or mental condition.

18.1.2 Services

Physical restoration services include:

- Medical treatment
- Psychiatric treatment
- Surgical treatment
- Dental treatment
- Physical and occupational therapy
Medications*
Prosthetic appliances
Treatment of medical complications and emergencies, either acute or chronic, which are associated with, or arise out of, the provision of physical restoration services or are inherent in the condition under treatment
Hospitalization (both inpatient and outpatient care) and clinic services
Physical rehabilitation in a rehabilitation facility
Convalescent care
Nursing services
Medically directed speech or hearing therapy
Other medical or medically related rehabilitation services
Low vision services

*Medication recommended whether taken orally or injected (i.e., Avastin) will be purchased as recommended by a physician. The counselor should assist the consumer in finding alternate payment streams to assist the consumer. The counselor cannot arbitrarily decide whether to provide payment of medication if recommended by the consumer’s physician.

Drugs and supplies incidental to surgery and/or treatment will be provided on a limited basis. Prescription medication and supplies shall be provided for no longer than three months. This three month period will give the consumer time to find other sources of payment for medicines. A possible source is www.PAPRX.com .

18.1.3 Statuses

Physical restoration services may be provided under an approved plan for services.

18.2 ELIGIBILITY

18.2.1 Substantial Impediment

DSB will assist consumers to receive physical restoration services who have:

- a substantial impediment to employment,
- a good potential for completing the planned program, and
- a need for vocational services.

“Substantial impediment to employment” for this purpose means those individuals who are severely disabled and who have no skills to perform work in line with their abilities. Generally, this will include persons who:

- are blind or severely visually impaired,
- have a severe physical or mental impairment which limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills), and
are expected to require multiple vocational services over an extended period of time.

**NOTE:** Both Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income recipients are considered “severely disabled” for the purposes of providing physical restoration services.

**18.2.2 Conditions for Eligibility**

Individuals determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services are those who have a condition which is not acute or transitory, or of so recent in origin that the resulting functional limitations, limitation of activities, and the extent to which such limitations affect occupational performance cannot be identified. In other words, the condition must be stable or slowly progressive and have a favorable prognosis that after services are completed the individual can remain in, or become engaged in, a wage earning situation.

**18.2.3 Trial Work Period**

Individuals who are in a trial work period may be furnished physical restoration services without the need for determining that the physical or mental condition is stable or slowly progressive.

**NOTE:** Physical restoration services may be expected to eliminate or substantially reduce the handicapping condition within a reasonable period of time.

**18.3 SERVICES**

**18.3.1 Prior Approval**

All surgery other than eye surgery must be prior approved by the counselor’s immediate supervisor.

**18.3.2 Refusal of Services**

Refusal of physical restoration does not in and of itself constitute the basis for denial of other services needed to complete the consumer’s rehabilitation program. The counselor should, however, determine whether the consumer would be able to engage in competitive employment without the surgery.

**18.3.3 Services Purchased in State**

DSB will pay for all physical restoration services that are properly authorized. This agency has established a fee schedule designed to ensure a reasonable cost to the program for each service. The fee schedule may not be used to deny any individual a necessary service. DSB may not place absolute dollar limits on specific service categories or on the total services provided to an individual.
The rate of payment will be according to the vendor’s stated fee up to, but not to exceed, the maximum amount determined by the current fee schedules. The counselor may authorize up to three post-operative visits if it is decided they are needed.

**18.3.4 Services Purchased Out-of-State**

If DSB purchases physical restoration services out-of-state, the rate paid for such services may equal, but not exceed, that paid by the local Rehabilitation Service or other comparable public agency of that state. **NOTE:** Texarkana, Texas is considered in state.

DSB also will use physicians and facilities that are used by the Rehabilitation Service or other comparable public agency of that state. If information concerning fees is not available, the counselor will contact the nearest appropriate agency. If information regarding fees is not available there, the counselor will contact the nearest appropriate Vocational Rehabilitation Office to find the rate that the particular agency pays for the needed service. When an appropriate fee schedule is not available for a procedure being performed out-of-state or in those rare situations that an in-state vendor will not accept payment not to exceed the current fee schedules, the counselor may be required to negotiate a special rate. **In these cases the rate may not exceed the current Medicare fee schedule minus 20% and must be pre-approved by the counselor’s immediate supervisor. All fees, however, can be negotiated to pay a lesser amount.**

**18.3.5 Medical Payments**

After the initial diagnostic medical examination and the eligibility certification, payments may be made to a physician (general practitioner or specialist), clinic, dispensary, or hospital for services rendered in the treatment of the consumer. The counselor can also pay for medications and medical supplies incidental to such treatment.

**NOTE:** Medications may only be purchased in conjunction with a surgical procedure or to treat a short-term illness to enable a consumer to return to work or training. Medications will not be purchased for long-term illnesses. A short-term illness for the purpose of this policy is one that is expected not to last over **90 days.**

**18.3.6 Psychiatric Treatment**

Payments may be made to a specialist in neuropsychiatry or to a psychiatric clinic or hospital for psychiatric treatment after the initial psychiatric diagnostic examination. In the case of long term mental illness counselors should determine if this is the primary disability. If so, the case should be referred to the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services.

**18.3.7 Surgical Treatment**
Payments may be made for preoperative care, surgical operations, and postoperative care. This is in addition to the 15 days of required postoperative care that is to be provided as a part of the surgical fee. Payments will be made according to the physician’s quoted usual, customary, and prevailing fee, not to exceed DSB’s fee schedule.

18.3.8 Anesthesia

Payments may be made to anesthetists and anesthesiologists not included in the hospital costs. Counselors will pay $42.00 a point for anesthesia and $42.00 per unit of time.

A unit of time can be up to 15 minutes. Therefore, if a procedure required 16 minutes, the counselor would pay for two units at $42.00 per unit.

To determine the amount DSB will pay for a procedure, multiply the point value of the procedure times the $42.00 cost per point. Then multiply the number of units times the $42.00 cost per unit of time. Then add the two totals together.

For example, if the counselor were to pay for 10 points and 9 units, the payment would be $798.

- $42 per point x 10 points = $420
- $42 per unit x 9 units = $378
- $420 for the points + $378 for the units = $798 payment

18.3.9 Physical and Occupational Therapy

Payments for physical therapy services other than those furnished as a part of hospital or clinic treatment may include payments for such services as massage, heat treatment, water treatment, etc. Physical therapy may be done in the consumer’s home, convalescent home, center, workshop or elsewhere.

Occupational therapy is an activity, mental or physical, prescribed by a physician for remedial value. It covers a wide range of tasks, such as weaving, woodworking, leatherwork, photography, metal work, and other crafts, when prescribed as treatment.

DSB will pay for physical or occupational therapy only upon the recommendation of a medical specialist and when the treatment is given under the direction of a medical specialist.

Similar benefits should be explored for alternative funding if possible. Any long term therapy should be approved by the counselor’s immediate supervisor and documented thoroughly within case records.

18.3.10 Counselor’s Responsibility

The counselor has the responsibility for making such arrangements as necessary for providing all physical restoration services. DSB will not pay for any procedure
that has not been authorized prior to the completion of IPE and with full cooperation of consumer consistent with informed choice. The VR Counselor will plan and authorize all services prior to implementation. All doctors, medical facilities, and/or consumers will be provided this information.

18.3.11 Surgical/Medical Insurance

Benefits from insurance policies that cover any planned surgical and medical services must be used. It is the counselor’s responsibility to inform the physicians/medical facilities, and/or consumer that DSB will pay only that part of the surgery not covered by the insurance policy. DSB can only pay the applicable co-pay plus the deductible.

18.3.12 Consultation

For diagnostic or second opinion purposes, another specialist can be pursued on a consultative basis.

18.3.13 Hearing Aids

DSB can purchase hearing aids for consumers from licensed dealers or physicians skilled in diseases of the ear after a hearing evaluation by a physician and a hearing aid evaluation by an audiologist. The audiologist’s hearing aid evaluation report must specify, in addition to the types of hearing aid, the specific brand name and model and when applicable, internal and/or external adjustment for a hearing aid being purchased by DSB. The hearing aid evaluation will be sent to the counselor with the prescription, including the model, brand, bidders to be used, and the price to the agency. Any deviation from this procedure must have the approval of the Program Administrator.

18.3.14 Eyeglasses, Contact Lens, Artificial Eyes, Optical Aids

Eyeglasses, contact lenses, artificial eyes, and optical aids may be purchased. Before purchasing any of these items, the counselor must have a current eye examination report (not more than three months old) by an ophthalmologist or optometrist with the recommendation for the eyeglasses, contact lens, artificial eyes, or optical aids.

These items may only be purchased when they are determined to be a necessary part of completing a consumer’s comprehensive rehabilitation program (IPE). The purchase of eyeglasses and contact lenses must be for their use as a functional prosthesis and not for cosmetic effect.

Artificial eyes and dark glasses may be provided for cosmetic purposes as part of a consumer’s IPE.

On all prosthetic devices, whether for functional use or cosmetic reasons, only the least expensive or stock items will be purchased unless otherwise indicated by the report of an optometrist/ophthalmologist.
18.3.15 Bioptic Lenses for Driving

The Arkansas Code Annotated 27-16-704 requires “applicants for a non-commercial driver’s license to have a minimal uncorrected visual acuity of 20/40 for an unrestricted license, and a minimal corrected visual acuity of 20/70 for a restricted license. In addition, the applicant’s field of vision must be at least 140° with two functional eyes, or at least 105° with one functional eye.”

Bioptic procedure for Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind:

1. Contact Jones Eye Clinic at 501-526-5770 for an ophthalmologic evaluation to determine visual acuity and field of vision. The medical doctor will determine whether the patient qualifies based on Arkansas law.
2. If the individual meets criteria, the bioptic device for driving purposes can be ordered through the Optical Shop at Jones Eye Clinic. It has to be fitted precisely and is mounted on their prescription.
3. When the Bioptic device comes in, return to the Optical Shop for final fitting.
4. Schedule outpatient OT for training with its use. OT training with a certified driving instructor can be done at the following sites:

**Tennessee**

Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center

Phi Beta Phi Rehabilitation Institute

Driver Evaluation Program

Medical Center East south Tower

1215 21st Avenue South, Suite 9211

Nashville TN 37232-8590

615-936-5049

Fax 615-936-5063

[www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/pibetaphirehab](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/pibetaphirehab)

**Texas**

Strowmatt Rehab Services, Inc. 11020 Old Katy Road, Ste. 217

Houston, TX 77043
5. When competent, encourage “in the vehicle" training.
   Schedule Driver’s Education training for new drivers. Jones Eye can be arranged to ride along with prior notification to cover the Bioptic use while the driving instructor provides general education/training.

**18.4 CONTINGENT PROGRAM**

18.4.1 Contingent Program

If physical restoration services are to be provided at great distances from the consumer’s home or beyond the counselor’s territory, creating travel and communication difficulties, the services may be expedited by the use of a contingent program. The contingent program:

- requires the completion of every evaluation step and case procedure and
- the provision of service is contingent upon the doctor’s agreement with the tentative diagnosis that is made and his recommendations. Planned services are to be rendered only if his findings agree with those on which the program has been based.

When a counselor desires to use a contingent program, he/she must complete the case record, write a program, either original or supplemental, and issue the necessary authorizations to the vendors of service.
Accompanying the authorization to the doctor must be an explanation of the contingent nature of the program. The counselor should provide exact copies of his/her medical reports to the doctor, so that he is made aware of the tentative diagnosis and the basis for the proposed services. He shall be informed that the planned services are to be rendered only if his findings agree with those on which the program has been based, namely, that in his opinion the proposed service will either remove or substantially reduce the disability.

The counselor must inform the doctor about arrangements for hospitalization or outpatient surgery. Also, the counselor may give the surgeon the authority to select the anesthetist; this can be done by written or verbal communication.

**Procedures – Chapter 19**

**19.1 REFERRALS**

**19.1.1 Definition**

A referral is a contact to DSB made by an individual, or on behalf of an individual, by letter, phone, e-mail, walk in the office, or any other means. If possible, the following information should be obtained at the time of referral:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Gender
- Date of referral
- Source of referral
- Reported disability
- Social Security Number

**19.1.2 Developing Referral Sources**

Case finding is the process of locating persons who may need and be eligible for services from the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). All rehabilitation counselors, rehabilitation teachers, and rehabilitation assistants share equal responsibility for these activities. Staff members should follow-up with referral sources often and maintain open communication.

Counselors, teachers, and assistants should develop working relationships with physicians, divisions of the Department of Human Services, WorkForce Centers, county health nurses, public officials, schools, and county and state employees in the area served by each field office as well as other potential referral sources such as consumer groups.

**19.1.3 Initial Contact**
All referrals will be contacted by phone within 24 hours to arrange for personal contact (face-to-face meeting) by the appropriate counselor. Personal contact will take place within ten (10) days of the original contact with the referral. In the absence of the counselor or teacher, the assistant will make contact with the referral by phone or letter and explain that the counselor will schedule an appointment upon return to the office.

19.1.4 DSB-8065

The DSB-8065 (referral information form) is the form used to record the initial information on a new referral. When a referral is taken by phone, the DSB-8065 is to be completed and given to the appropriate counselor. Referrals will be assigned to a counselor according to consumer’s residence. The DSB-8065 is also used to make referrals within the agency from one program to another. Should the referral move into Status 02, the DSB-8065 is to be filed in the consumer’s case service record. If the referral does not move into Status 02, it should be placed in the counselor’s closed referral file.

SSDI and SSI (to be completed)

19.2 VR CASE PROGRESSION

19.2.1 Entering Status 02 (Applicant)

After a referral has been received on a potential consumer, the following should be completed in order to put the individual in Status 02:

- The DSB-8006 (Consumer Information Application) must be completed and signed by the applicant.
- Before the application is signed, the consumer should be informed of CAP, Arkansas Information Reading Service (AIRS), Talking Book Service, consumer groups (ACB and NFB), and Voter Registration.
  - Secure a signed CAP Form (DSB-8033).
  - Secure a signed Voter Registration Form (whether they want to register or not).
  - Inform the consumer of his/her rights and responsibilities and what DSB can and cannot do.
- As part of the DSB-8006, the consumer must initial the appropriate statement in the felon and illegal drug abuse/drug abuse section.
- The counselor is responsible for informing individuals through the application process that the individual must intend to achieve an employment outcome in order to receive VR services.
- Enter the consumer’s information in DSB’s case management system.
- Enter case narratives including the Initial Narrative*. Document referral date, initial contact date, and application date. Informed choice MUST be documented.
**NOTE:** The application date on the Referral Screen should match the date the consumer signed the DSB-8006.

19.2.2 While in Status 02

While in Status 02, the counselor gathers all pertinent information needed to determine eligibility or ineligibility as appropriate.

- Refer the applicant to the VRT for a VRT assessment.
- Complete the DSB-8021 (Release of Information). Use this document to obtain medical/psychological information on the individual.
- Obtain a DSB-8012 (DSB Eye Report) or a letter from a doctor giving the applicant’s visual acuity and/or visual fields, diagnosis, prognosis, and recommendations. The doctor must sign the eye report/letter.
- Any other pertinent medical information which could impact the consumer’s employment outcome. This could include, but is not limited to, information regarding a secondary disability.
- Complete any necessary authorizations.
- Enter case narratives documenting all information relevant to the progression of the case.
- Send a letter to the referral source thanking them for referring the consumer to DSB (this is not required, but a professional courtesy.)

19.2.3 Time Limit for Status 02

RSA requires that eligibility for services be determined within 60 days from the date of application.

19.2.3 Extension for Status 02

Occasionally, unforeseen circumstances prevent the counselor from determining eligibility within the required 60 day timeframe. If it is necessary to keep the consumer in Status 02 longer than 60 days, an Extension Letter must be completed by the counselor and signed by the applicant before the 60 days have expired. This form is found in the case management system. Thirty (30) days is the maximum for the extension.

19.2.4 Entering Status 04 (Order of Selection)

Currently, DSB is not under an Order of Selection and Status 04 is **NOT** to be used. Counselors are to adhere to this section **ONLY** when DSB is under an Order of Selection.

The consumer **MUST** be determined eligible for services and an Order of Selection assigned before moving to Status 04. To move to Status 04, the counselor must update the case management system and enter appropriate case narratives including Eligibility Determination and Order of Selection topics.
19.2.5 Status 06 (Trial Work Experience/Extended Evaluation)

To move a consumer to Status 06, the following must be completed:

- Complete the lower portion of the DSB-1 (Certificate of Eligibility). The Certificate of Eligibility must be signed and dated by the counselor and placed in the individual’s case service record.
- Complete the DSB-8017 (IPE) for Status 06 and enter it in the case management system.
- Secure any other pertinent medical information and/or assessment which could impact the consumer’s employment outcome.
- Update the case management system (Completed Application Screen—enter a date in the Extended Evaluation Date field and NOT the IPE Date field.)
- Complete any necessary authorizations.
- Enter appropriate case narratives to document the progression of the case.

**NOTE:** The Extended Evaluation Date on the Completed Application Screen should match the signature date on the IPE.

19.2.6 Presumption of Eligibility—SSDI/SSI Recipients

Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients are considered to be individuals with a significant disability and presumed eligible for VR services, if the intent of the individual is to achieve an employment outcome. The employment outcome must be consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual. The counselor is responsible for informing individuals through the application process that the individual must intend to achieve an employment outcome in order to receive VR services.

**NOTE:** The individual who is presumed eligible as a recipient of SSDI/SSI and who intends to achieve an employment outcome is eligible for VR services unless clear and convincing evidence demonstrate that the individual is incapable of benefiting from VR services in terms of achieving an employment outcome due to the severity of the disability.

The counselor will obtain verification of SSDI/SSI benefits and a copy will be placed in the individual’s case service record. Examples of verification include awards letter, benefit’s check, verification from the Social Security Administration, or a verified/valid Ticket to Work. If the applicant is unable to provide appropriate evidence that he or she is receiving SSDI/SSI benefits, the counselor must verify the applicant’s eligibility by contacting the Social Security Administration. This verification must be made within a reasonable period of time that enables DSB to determine the applicant’s eligibility for VR services within 60 days of the individual submitting an application for VR services.
19.2.7 Presumption of Eligibility—Applicant’s History and Counselor Observation

An applicant can be presumed eligible based on his or her history and counselor observation that the person is obviously totally blind AND the person has received previous services from DSB, attended the Arkansas School for the Blind, OR the person has bilateral ocular prostheses. Presumption of eligibility based on applicant’s history and counselor observation must be verified and documented with a case narrative clarifying how the visual disability was determined.

19.2.8 Eligibility Status (Eligibility)

To move a consumer to Eligibility Status, the following must be completed:

- Complete the top portion of the DSB-1 (Certificate of Eligibility). The Certificate of Eligibility must be signed and dated by the counselor and placed in the individual’s case service record.
- Update the case management system to move the consumer to Eligibility Status.
- Gather any pertinent medical information and/or assessments which could impact the consumer’s employment outcome.
- Complete any necessary authorizations.
- Ensure that all case narratives are entered in the case management system. Required narratives include the Eligibility Determination* and VRT Assessment topics.

**NOTE:** The Eligibility Date on the Completed Application Screen should match the date on the Certificate of Eligibility.

19.2.9 Status 12 (IPE Completed)

In order to move a consumer to Status 12 (Plan Completed), do the following:

- The counselor and consumer jointly develop and sign the IPE.
- Enter the IPE in the case management system.
- Update the case management system to move the case to Status 12. This includes the Completed Application Screen, Current Status, Status Date, IPE Date, and Referred to Facility fields.
- Enter case narratives including the IPE Development* and Comprehensive Assessment* topics. Informed choice **MUST** be documented.
- Give the consumer a copy of the signed IPE.
- Inform the consumer of his or her rights and responsibilities and provide a copy of the CAP Form.

**NOTE:** The IPE Date on the completed Application Screen should match the signature date on the IPE.
19.2.10 Moving a Case into Status 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, or 24

When moving a consumer’s case to Status 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, or 24, do the following:

- Update the case management system (Completed Application Screen, Current Status, and Status Date fields).
- Complete any necessary authorizations.
- Enter appropriate case narratives. A case narrative should be entered any time a case is moved into a different status.

19.2.11 Moving a Case into Status 08, 26, 28, 30, or 34 (Closure Status)

When closing a case, make certain the following is completed:

- The counselor must talk with the consumer and discuss case closure BEFORE closing the case.
- All outstanding encumbrances MUST be paid before closing the case.
- Enter the Closure Narrative in the case management system. This narrative includes the following as appropriate for the closure type.
  - Reason for closure
  - Services that were provided
  - CAP
  - Informed choice
  - Explanation of how services in the IPE contributed to an employment outcome/successful closure
  - Verification of earnings for individuals who obtain competitive employment and are compensated at or above minimum wage and that the wage and level of benefits are not less than that customarily paid by the employer
  - Explanation why any planned service in the IPE was not provided
  - Position held, hours worked, earnings, and name of employer
- Complete the Closure Form. The consumer MUST sign the closure form as this denotes agreement/disagreement with the case closure.
- Complete the Closure Letter and send to the consumer.
- Give the consumer a copy of the CAP Form and discuss the option to contact the Client Assistance Program with the individual.
- Update the case management system moving the case into the appropriate closure status. This should be the last step taken when closing a case because once closed, many screens are no longer available on a closed case.

**NOTE:** The Closure Date on the Closed Screen should match the date on the Closure Form.

19.2.12 Case Closed Disability Too Severe Annual Review
An Annual Review is required on a case that has been closed as incapable of achieving an employment outcome due to the severity of the disability. This review need not be conducted if the individual refuses to participate, no longer resides in the state or the whereabouts are unknown, or the individual’s medical condition is rapidly progressive or terminal.

*There is a template in the case management system for these narrative topics.

**19.3 CONSUMER CONTACT**

**19.3.1 Face-to-Face Consumer Contacts**

While e-mail conversation, phone conversation, and correspondence are acceptable ways of making consumer contacts, there are times when face-to-face contact is appropriate and strongly encouraged. Face-to-face contact with the individual should occur at the following rehabilitation points:

- Application
- VRT Assessment
- Comprehensive Skills Assessment
- IPE Development
- IPE Amendments
- Case Closure

**19.3.2 90-Day Consumer Contact**

There must be a minimum of four contacts between the counselor and consumer per year which will include the annual review. The contact should be direct face-to-face, e-mail conversation, phone conversation, or a letter between the counselor and consumer. If contact with the consumer is not possible, the counselor should send a letter to the consumer. This documents the counselor’s attempts to contact the consumer leading to closure of the case due to loss of contact.

**19.4 INFORM THE INDIVIDUAL OF CAP**

**19.4.1 When to Inform the Individual of the Client Assistance Program**

According to 34 CFR 370 and Section 102 of the Rehab Act of 1973, as amended, the individual must be notified in writing of the availability of the Client Assistance Program at the time the individual applies for VR services, at the time the IPE is developed, and upon reduction, suspension, or cessation of VR services. The Client Assistance Program (CAP) Form (DSB-8003) was developed for this purpose and contains information regarding rights and responsibilities of the individual and DSB and the availability of the Client Assistance Program.

**19.5 SIMILAR BENEFITS**

**19.5.1 Use of Similar Benefits**
Full consideration **MUST** be given to alternative funding sources prior to spending VR funds to purchase consumer services. All other funding sources must be exhausted before using VR funds. Any benefit available to an individual under any other program to meet, in whole or in part, the cost of any VR service will be utilized. **This benefit will be considered only to the extent that it is available and timely.**

19.5.2 Use of Financial Aid as a Similar Benefit for Individuals in Training

VR funds cannot be used to pay training costs in institutions of higher education unless every effort has been made to secure financial assistance, in whole or in part, from other funding sources. Evidence that applications were made and the individual will or will not receive assistance must be included in the case service record of all training cases.

Repayable loans are **NOT** to be considered as a similar benefit or resource.

Similar benefits do **NOT** include awards and scholarships based on merit.

Tuition costs at institutions of higher education may be paid with VR funds at a rate not greater than those at the University of Arkansas.

For more information regarding academic training, see Sections 12.6, 12.7 and 12.8 in this manual.

19.5.3 Use of Medical Insurance as a Similar Benefit

As with any other purchased service, all other sources for payment must be exhausted before VR funds can be used for medical services. Medical insurance must be the first source of payment. In all instances where medical insurance is utilized, the counselor will authorize the difference between the insurance payment and the contract fee paid by DSB.

19.5.4 Use of the Veterans Administration as a Similar Benefit

VR counselors should work in partnership with the Veterans Administration to obtain and purchase services for eligible individuals.

19.6 DISTRIBUTION OF CASE SERVICE FUNDS

19.6.1 Distribution of Case Service Funds

The procedure for distributing case service funds is as follows:

- The DSB Director will release case service funds on a quarterly basis and will inform the Assistant Director, Chief Fiscal Officer, and Field Services Administrator of the allotment amounts and appropriate revenue codes.
- The Field Services Administrator will distribute the funds to the caseload carrying personnel according to the caseload size and/or unmet needs of the caseload.
The Field Services Administrator will send an e-mail to the DSB Client Data Center Supervisor listing the counselor’s name, amount of money, and revenue code for the funds being distributed. The counselor and RA will be copied on this e-mail.

The CDC supervisor will make the necessary changes in the case management system giving the counselor access to the funds.

The CDC supervisor will “Reply to All” the e-mail from the Field Services Administrator and inform all those involved that the funds have been entered in the case management system.

19.6.2 Transfer Case Service Funds

The procedure for transferring case service funds is as follows:

- Counselors will notify the supervisor when funds have been depleted and more money is needed.
- The supervisor will request additional funds from the Field Services Administrator who will in turn assess the situation and transfer funds appropriately.
- The Field Services Supervisor will contact counselors who appear to have sufficient monies and find out if all the money has been committed.
- Monies that have not been committed will be transferred to the counselor needing more money.
- The Field Services Administrator will send an e-mail to the Client Data Center Supervisor with a copy to the counselors and RAs involved and list the dollar amounts, revenue codes, and the caseload the money is being transferred to and from.
- The CDC Supervisor will make the necessary changes in the case management system and will “Reply to All” on the Field Services Administrator e-mail informing staff that the money has been transferred.

19.7 AUTHORIZATION AND PAYMENT OF SERVICES

19.7.1 General Rules for Authorizing and Paying for Services

- With the exception of medical exams to determine eligibility (Status 02) and assessments to conduct a thorough diagnostic evaluation (Eligibility Status), all services **MUST** be included in the consumer’s IPE.
- Authorizations must be written simultaneously with, or prior to, the provision of the service or goods. In an emergency, a verbal authorization may be given followed immediately by a written authorization.
- Justification for an authorization/payment will be documented in a case narrative explaining why the services or goods are necessary.
- The counselor is ultimately responsible for authorizations and payments, and therefore, the DSB-1080 (Authorization for Services/Payment) must be
manually signed by the authorizing counselor. Under no circumstances should the rehabilitation assistant sign this form in place of the counselor.

- The counselor cannot approve payment until proof that the service or goods were provided and received. Documentation may include medical reports, training progress reports, grades, attendance forms, receipts or invoices. When paying for a medical exam or procedure, the counselor must first have a report (post-op) from the doctor giving the client’s diagnosis, status, and/or prognosis.
- DHS policy mandates that authorizations and invoices be original, therefore, authorizations and payments should not be faxed. In emergencies, faxed authorizations are permissible; however, the fax must be followed with the original.
- When planning where case service funds will be spent on a quarterly basis, the counselor MUST remember that training costs for which DSB is responsible takes precedence over any other service to be purchased. Counselors must attend to training cases and authorize for applicable costs (tuition, books, etc.) BEFORE authorizing other services.

19.7.2 Procedures for Authorizing Services

- Unless the individual’s case is in Status 02 or Eligibility Status, make certain the service or goods are included in the IPE. If not, an amendment may be in order.
- Consider whether or not similar benefits are available to pay, in whole or in part, for the service or goods. All other sources of funding must be exhausted before using VR funds.
- Ensure the counselor has sufficient funds to purchase the service or goods.
- Written documentation from a physician recommending any medical procedure must be obtained before authorizing the service.
- Written documentation from a qualified low vision specialist or VRT recommending a CCTV must be obtained before authorizing the purchase of the CCTV.
- Written documentation from the DSB technology specialist recommending computer equipment must be obtain before authorizing for computer equipment.
- Make sure the vendor is in the case management system vendor list. If not, a W-9 must be completed and submitted to the DSB Client Data Center.
- Enter the authorization in the case management system.
- The counselor must sign and date the authorization signifying his or her approval of the authorization.
- The Remittance and Vendor File Copies are sent to the vendor. The Case File Copy is kept in the local office until the authorization is ready for payment.

19.7.3 Procedures for Payment of Services
• When the service has been provided or the goods received, verify the individual received the service or goods.
• The vendor must sign and return the Remittance Copy to the local DSB office. The vendor must also submit an invoice documenting the cost of the service or goods.
• The counselor signs and dates the authorization for payment signifying his or her approval to pay for the service or goods.
• A copy of the Remittance Copy and invoice will be sent to DSB CDC to process for payment.
• The original Remittance Copy and invoice will be filed in the case service record.
• All payments for services are mailed to vendors (and clients who are made vendors) in the form of a check from the DSB Central Office. Any exceptions will require prior approval from the Field Services Administrator.

19.7.4 Exceptions to Pre-authorizations

DSB may pay for anesthesia, radiology, and pathology services according to the fee schedule. In most cases, the counselor cannot know if these services will be needed, who the vendor will be, or how long the consumer will be in surgery, so these services cannot be pre-authorized. It is understood that these services may be needed in conjunction with surgery and will have to be authorized after the date of surgery. When this occurs, the counselor must document the reason for this action in a case narrative. Other exceptions to pre-authorizations include eyeglasses, textbooks, medication, a-scans, and medical emergencies.

19.7.5 Authorizations Needed to be Completed in the Absence of the Counselor

DSB understands that there will be times when the counselor will be out of the office due to scheduled or unscheduled leave and problems with consumers arise when an authorization may need to be completed. In the absence of the counselor the rehabilitation assistant will follow the proper chain of command to get the authorization approved and signed in the following order:

1. The counselor’s immediate supervisor, and if unavailable,
2. The field administrator, and if unavailable,
3. The supervisor in charge

After the rehabilitation assistant gets verbal approval from one of the three persons listed above, the RA will enter the authorization in BSIS. The immediate supervisor, field administrator, or supervisor in charge has the ability to access the completed authorization and print it. It can then be signed by the appropriate individual listed above and mailed to the vendor. The RA must document in narratives all actions that were taken to process the authorization.
19.7.6 Post Authorizations

Post authorizing services, while never the norm, is sometime unavoidable. There are several subsets within this area:

Exempt Authorizations: While technically written after the fact, exempt items are to be paid without the need for additional approval by the field administrator. The list of exempt items can be found in 19.7.4.

Emergency/Verbal Authorizations: Emergency authorizations are also rare, but when an emergency does arise and a verbal authorization is required, the counselor will immediately have the RA enter the authorization into the case management system. The counselor will also narrate the nature of the emergency and attach a copy of the narrative to the authorization, thereby eliminating the need for further approval from the field administrator. (Remember that all counselors on probation are required to go through their immediate supervisor informing them of the emergency and seek approval for the authorization.)

End of Year/BSIS Shutdown Authorizations: Staff should make every effort to get all outstanding authorizations paid before the end of the fiscal year. When this is unavoidable, the authorization must be cancelled and re-authorized after new funds are distributed for the new fiscal year. The counselor is required to narrate justification as to why the authorization was not paid before the end of the fiscal year. When entering the authorization into the case management system, DO NOT enter a prior year date in the date of service field. State law requires current fiscal year dates, so the earliest date that can be entered in the service date field is 07/01/ccyy. The actual date of service should be included in the service description field. This does not require additional approval from the field administrator.

During the year-end process (last two weeks of June) when authorizations and payments are not allowed in BSIS, counselors may use the DSB-1080 in Microsoft Office format to authorize services. (Counselors should try to avoid scheduling appointments, etc. for clients during these two weeks if possible.) Once new funding is distributed and authorizations and payments can again be entered into BSIS, the Counselor will narrate the justification for the actions taken and attach the narrative and the MS Office DSB-1080 form to the newly created authorization. This does not require additional approval from the field administrator.

Post Authorizations Requiring Field Administrator Approval: Authorizations completed after the goods and/or services have been provided and do not fall within the scope of exemptions, emergency/verbal authorizations, or end of year, are required to have signature approval of the immediate supervisor as well as the field administrator.

On rare occasion, a case will be closed and the counselor may receive an invoice for a service provided while the case was active and DSB is responsible for the
payment. Counselors will submit written documentation, along with the required information to complete the authorization and the invoice to the field administrator with a copy to the supervisor. The field administrator will instruct the DSB Client Data Center to transfer the appropriate funds from the counselor’s case service allotment to Services to Groups. CDC will then prepare the authorization and payment will be made. The field administrator will sign the authorization/payment copy indicating approval. As stated, this should only happen on a rare occasion as it reflects on the federal reports.

19.8 CONTRACTS

19.8.1 Orientation and Mobility (O & M) Contract

When possible, orientation and/or mobility training will be provided by DSB staff, however, DSB understands there will be times when a client needs orientation and mobility training from a Certified O & M Specialist outside the agency. This service can be negotiated between the VRC and the Certified O & M Specialist at a rate of $58.00 per hour. The number of hours and duration of training must be indicated on the Service Agreement Form (found in the Forms Section of this manual).

Hourly rates include travel. Therefore, vendor will provide an invoice showing the number of hours door to door and stating how much of that time was designated to direct training.

The vendor will provide a follow-up training report to the counselor.

19.8.2 Private Job Placement Contract

Job placement services will be authorized and paid at the following rates:

Upon referral of a consumer for private job placement services, the provider will receive a letter of referral from the counselor and an authorization for $500.00 from the DSB.

After the consumer has been placed in competitive employment at or above minimum wage, authorizations will be issued in the following amounts when the specific goals listed are accomplished. A total of $4,000.00 will be authorized in the following manner:

- $1,000.00 at the time of job placement
- $500.00 30 days after placement
- $2,500.00 90 days after placement and the consumer is still stable on the job

19.8.3 Supported Employment Contract
DSB makes agreements with various organizations to develop SE services. The counselor should use one of these providers or initiate a service agreement with another provider to develop an IPE for supported employment services. The Supportive Employment Service Agreement Form (found in the Forms Section of this Manual) will be used to purchase all SE services from a provider. For further information, refer to Chapter 9 (Supported Employment) in this Manual.

19.8.4 Interpreter Services Procurement

Interpreter services are sign language or oral interpretation services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and tactile interpretation services for individuals who are deaf-blind. Specially trained individuals perform sign language or oral interpretation. Also, included here are real-time captioning services for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. When interpreter services are needed and listed in the IPE, the VRC will contract these services using the Services Agreement found in the Forms Section of this Manual at an hourly rate of $58.00 per hour.

Hourly rates include travel. Therefore, vendor will provide an invoice showing the number of hours door to door and stating how much of that time was designated to direct interpreter services.

19.9 PURCHASING COMPUTER, SOFTWARE AND PERIPHERALS

19.9.1 Guidelines

The mission of DSB’s Tech Lab is to work in partnership with consumers and VR staff to provide technology evaluation, demonstration, training services, technical advice and information that supports the consumer to reach an employment goal.

All computer equipment purchased for DSB consumers must first be assessed and recommended by the counselor. Computer purchases are made when an approved plan for employment includes post-secondary training that will lead to employment or in a situation where a client requires a computer to begin a job in which he/she has been placed.

Before purchasing computer equipment for an individual, the counselor must be certain that the consumer is committed to the training or employment opportunity, the consumer has the ability to learn to use the equipment effectively, and that the use of the equipment will lead to a positive employment outcome.

Computer equipment shall not be purchased for independent living or for recreational needs. Transition students still in high school must use all available services of the school system prior to seeking assistance with computer purchases from DSB. For transition students who will be involved in college or vocational training, computer equipment may be purchased during the last semester before high school graduation.
Technological advances are made quickly these days, and as a result, many devices have been developed that impact training and employment of individuals who are significantly disabled. The DSB Tech Lab will assess the client’s needs and provide specifications on what is available. Staff in the Tech Lab are knowledgeable, highly capable and keep up with the many advances taking place. Under no circumstance shall a counselor purchase any type of computer, software and peripherals without following the procedures listed below.

19.9.2 Steps to Purchasing Computer Equipment

When a counselor and consumer decide that computer equipment is needed in order for the consumer to reach employment, the counselor will complete and send a Technical Evaluation Referral Form to the Rehabilitation Technology Specialist (RTS) requesting an evaluation of the client’s needs. The IPE must include the RTS assessment and purchase of computer equipment.

The RTS will evaluate the consumer to see what type of computer equipment will best meet the consumer’s educational or vocational needs. The RTS will assess different pieces of technology in a specific category to determine which most effectively meets the educational/vocational needs of the consumer.

After evaluation, the RTS will submit a report to the referring counselor with the necessary recommendations. The recommendation from the RTS will include the vendor where the equipment can be purchased as well as a list of the equipment recommended. The RTS will obtain the three bids necessary for the equipment purchase. The lowest bid will be forwarded to the counselor for consideration and authorization purposes. All bid information will be maintained in the Tech Lab Section. The counselor will instruct the Rehabilitation Technician to notify the Tech Lab when the decision has been made to authorize equipment. An email notification will be sent to the RTS indicating the authorization information (client, vendor, amount, date of service, and purchase price). This will alert the Tech Lab staff that equipment will be shipped to the Tech Lab. The counselor/rehabilitation technician will have the computer equipment shipped to the DSB Tech Lab in Little Rock where the computer will be set up and software installed.

Once the computer has been delivered to the DSB Tech Lab, the RTS will notify the counselor of its arrival. At that point the counselor will sign and date the Remittance Copy of the DSB-1080, attach the invoice and submit both to CDC.

19.9.3 Tech Lab Staff Responsibilities

When the equipment is received, it will be checked by the RTS to make sure the equipment is working correctly and/or software programs are loaded on the computer properly, arrangements are made with the consumer or counselor to pick up the equipment and the equipment has been logged in.
When the consumer receives the equipment, the technical support staff will review the equipment to insure he/she understands how to use the equipment, make sure the consumer understands what they are receiving, and completes the DSB Receipt for Equipment and Title Agreement Form and obtains appropriate signatures.

If an interface to a network system is necessary, or any other complications arise at the consumer’s work site, the technical support staff will make arrangements to deliver and set up the equipment.

19.9.4 Counselor Responsibilities After Delivery of the Equipment

Upon delivery of new equipment, the counselor must:

a. Review and make certain the consumer understands the terms and conditions of the DSB Receipt of Equipment and Title Agreement Form. Ensure the consumer was provided a copy and file a copy of the DSB-8024 in the consumer's case folder.

b. Inform the consumer of the extent and limitations of warranties. Advise the consumer that DSB will not purchase extended warranties. Advise the consumer of other options, e.g., consumer purchase of extended warranty, employer purchase of extended warranty. Advise consumer to contact vendors for additional information.

c. Advise the consumer that there are various types of insurance coverage (home owner’s, renter’s policies) that can be obtained to cover the loss of equipment. The Division for Services for the Blind does not provide such insurance.

d. Advise the consumer that with supervisory approval DSB will consider reasonable repair costs for a period of 12 months after receipt of equipment in circumstances where the employer and/or the consumer cannot cover the costs.

e. Advise the consumer that if the equipment is no longer used for its intended purpose (educational/vocational), it shall be returned to DSB.

f. Once it is determine that the equipment is being used for its intended purpose and the consumer is making good use of it, the counselor may release the equipment to the consumer. The Release of Title Agreement portion of the DSB-8024 will be signed by the consumer and counselor and a copy given to the consumer and the original placed in the case service record.

19.10 PURCHASES OVER $5,000.00

To be completed

19.11 RETURNING EQUIPMENT TO DSB

19.11.1 Policy
If it is determined that computer equipment or any other assistive technology
device is no longer needed for the training, employment or pursuit of employment
of an individual, the consumer shall return the equipment to DSB.

The VR counselor shall document in a narrative why the equipment is being
returned to the agency. Computer equipment will be taken to the DSB Tech Lab to
be refurbished. Depending on the condition of the equipment, it may be issued to
another client for use.

19.12 OVERSIGHT

19.12.1 Overview

Division of Services for the Blind has developed policies and procedures to ensure
DSB consumers receive all needed services in a timely and efficient manner. This
section provides information regarding times when approval is needed during the
life of VR cases from a supervisor administrator.

19.12.2 Certificate of Eligibility

During the first twelve months of employment, the counselor must have
supervisor’s approval before certifying all DSB applicants eligible for services.
The supervisor should review the eye report and applicable assessments used to
determine eligibility and provide written approval (either in a narrative or e-mail)
for certifying the applicant eligible.

NOTE: Counselors on probation or who have been written up for continued
inaccuracies in this area may be asked to get supervisory approval before
determining eligibility for a time frame agreed to by the supervisor and
counselor.

19.12.3 Individualized Plan for Employment

Supervisory approval is required on all IPE’s during the first twelve months of the
counselor’s employment. The supervisor should review the case and supply
written approval (either in a narrative or e-mail) to proceed with the IPE.

NOTE: Counselors on probation or who have been written up for continued
inaccuracies in this area may be asked to get supervisory approval before
developing IPEs for a time frame agreed to by the supervisor and counselor.

19.12.4 Closures

Written supervisory approval of all case closures is required. Using a copy of the
most recent Closure Form (in draft), the counselor will print out the Closure Form
for closing the case. The supervisor will review the information and either
approve the closure or make recommendations for corrections.

NOTE: Supervisor approval of all closures is required for all counselors who
carry a caseload. The approval must occur before the case is actually closed.
19.11.5 Academic Training Beyond First Bachelor’s Degree

Academic training beyond the first bachelor’s degree must have the approval of the Field Services Administrator. The counselor will send an e-mail to the Field Services Administrator detailing the reasons the consumer is requesting further training. The Field Services Administrator will either approve or disapprove the request within three working days.

19.11.6 Academic Training Beyond the Five Year Time Frame

Policy states that DSB will pay for academic training for five consecutive years if the consumer meets all other guidelines set forth in this manual (12.6 Academic Training). Approval from the Field Services Administrator is required anytime the consumer requests training beyond the five year time frame.

The counselor will send an e-mail to the Field Services Administrator detailing the reasons the consumer is requesting an extension of the five year time frame. The Field Services Administrator will either approve or disapprove the request within three working days.

19.11.7 Small Business Plan/Self-Employment Venture

Consumers interested in establishing a self-employment business venture as an employment outcome must have the approval of the Small Business Committee. This committee includes the DSB Business and Technology Administrator, Field Services Administrator, and the VR Counselor involved in the case.

19.12 FILING AND RECORDS RETENTION

19.12.1 Case Service Record Overview

Case service records contain very personal information about DSB consumers and should be handled with the highest degree of integrity and protect the openness of the information contained therein. Case service records will be kept in a neat and orderly fashion at all times.

19.12.2 Location of Case Service Records

All active case service records will be filed by status and alphabetically in a secure and confidential location that is accessible to the appropriate counselor, rehab assistant, rehab teacher, supervisor, and administrative personnel.

Closed cases will be filed in a separate location by fiscal year and in alphabetical order.

19.12.3 Folder Labels

Each case service record will be labeled as follows:

County Name CONSUMER LAST NAME, First Name, MI
Street Address
For identification purposes, folders should be color coded by program in each local office.

**19.12.4 Case Service Record Folders**

The case file folder is the official record of service. The case service record will contain all applicable documents—correspondence; narratives; medical, training, and progress reports; authorizations/payments; and all other pertinent information regarding the consumer’s rehabilitation program. All case service records will be maintained uniformly across the State.

In an effort to be consistent statewide in filing techniques, DSB uses customized case service record dividers tailored to meet the needs of the case service record. There are six dividers on the right side and two dividers on the left side of each folder. Every document will be filed under the appropriate divider in chronological order (most recent on top).

**19.12.5 Left Side of Case Service Record**

**Authorizations Index Divider**

- Authorizations/payments/adjustments
- Invoices (with appropriate authorization/payment/adjustment
- Title agreement forms (with appropriate authorization/payment/adjustment

**IPE Index Divider**

- IPE amendments
- IPE

**19.12.6 Right Side of Case Service Record**

** Closure form**
** Closure letter**
**Post-program assessment (Older Blind) copy of page 1**
**DSB-8075 (VR) / DSB-8018 (Non-VR)**

**Narratives Index Divider**

- Narratives
- Annual review forms (place a blue sheet of paper on top of each annual review in order to find them easily)

**Correspondence Index Divider**

- General correspondence
- Referral forms (DSB-8065)
- Release of Information (DSB-8021)
- O & M reports
- Grades, class schedules, PELL grant info, transcripts, financial needs info, etc.
- LWSB/LCB reports
- Training reports
- Job coach information
- E-mails (if not copied into a narrative)
- Authorization for Adjustment Services (RS-315)

Certificate of Eligibility Index Divider

- DSB-1 (VR) / DSB-8003 (Non-VR)
- Extension for Time to Determine Eligibility, if appropriate

Assessment Index Divider

- Functional Skills Assessment (DSB-8060)
- VRT assessment
- RT assessment
- Technical evaluation

Diagnostic Index Divider

- Visual reports
- General medical reports
- Hearing reports
- Psychological reports
- Post-op/post-treatment reports

Application Index Divider

- Application (DSB-8006 or DSB-8007)
- SSA-1365 (Ticket Assignment) (VR)
- SSA Notification Form (VR)
- CAP Form
- Pre-program Assessment (Older Blind) copy of page 1

**19.12.7 NOTE:**

- Only completed forms go in the case service record. For example, you cannot have a blank Release of Information Form that has been signed by the consumer.
- There is no need for duplicate copies of documents in the case service record—like the case file copy and the payment copy of an authorization or
duplicates of invoices. LWSB used to send two copies of each of their reports. There needs to be only one copy of each document.

- Remember, according to the Freedom of Information Act, or if subpoenaed by a court order, **everything** in the case service record must be surrendered when requested. That includes Post-It Notes©, blank forms signed by the consumer, or anything else not intended for the permanent case service record.

**19.12.8 What to do When Two Volumes of a Case Service Record is Necessary**

There are times when a consumer’s case service record becomes full and a second folder must be used. In an effort to prevent the reader from having to refer to volume 1 of the case service record, minimal, but pertinent, information will be copied and filed in the second volume of the case service record including:

- Application Form
- Certificate of Eligibility
- Eye report used to determine eligibility
- Most recent Client Statistical Record (DSB-8075 or DSB-8018)
- All active IPE amendments

**19.12.9 Destruction of Records**

Closed cases must be retained five years after closure before they can be destroyed. Closed cases that are ready for destruction must be shredded. Each DHS county office either has shredders available or a shredder service that comes to the office periodically.

**NOTE:** Case service records eligible for Social Security reimbursement are to be retained indefinitely.

**19.14 EMPLOYEE TRAINING PROCEDURES**

**19.14.1 New Employee Orientation Overview**

New employee orientation is designed to assist new employees in adjusting to their jobs and work environment and to instill a positive work attitude and motivation. The DSB Staff Development Coordinator, with oversight by the DSB Director, has the primary responsibility for the implementation of this policy and monitoring of its activities, and shall solicit and coordinate with supervisors any modifications to these procedures for review and final approval by the DSB Director.

**19.14.2 New Employee Orientation Process**

All newly hired or promoted employees will participate in employee orientation appropriate to their individual circumstances. Orientation will take place in phases to allow the employee reasonable time to absorb information from various sources in a logical sequence. The employee’s immediate supervisor will ensure, and document to the DSB Staff Development Coordinator, that the new employee has
received material or attended sessions concerning orientation within the allotted timeframe.

During Phase I of new employee orientation, the following will take place:

- On the first day of employment, the supervisor will provide and review a copy of the functional job description and timesheet with the new employee.
- Supervisor will provide orientation to the employee’s new position. With written approval by the DSB Director, the supervisor may abbreviate the orientation and training by documenting the employee’s existing skill level.
- The supervisor will discuss the organizational structure of DSB, its governing board, and the coordination of DSB services with other department programs to benefit DSB consumers. The supervisor will also provide links to the policy manual, policies and procedures, and agency forms.
- Each new employee will receive a copy of Vision Problems in the U.S. which discusses the most frequent causes of blindness and their effect upon DSB consumers.
- The immediate supervisor will follow the guidelines set forth in the Administrative Procedures Manual, Chapter 801, Section V. Y. (New Employee Orientation).
- New employees will be provided the link to watch the DHS New Employee Orientation Video as well as the DHS Employee Handbook.
- The new employee will be introduced his or her designated mentor who will assist the new employee during their probationary period. The new employee will “shadow” their mentor for one week to familiarize themselves with their new duties.

Phase II of the orientation process takes place during the first 2-6 weeks of employment. The staff development coordinator works closely with the immediate supervisor to ensure the following training is scheduled and takes place. During Phase II, the new employee can expect to:

- Receive training on DSB’s case management system. This training generally lasts one week, is conducted at the employee’s local office, and is provided by the DSB’s Staff Development Specialist.
- Attend a two day intensive training session on case management.
- Attend 2 four day professional skills training at one of the rehabilitation training centers. The professional skills training is for caseload carrying staff members only and will consist of:
  - Observation and evaluation of the training areas and low vision clinic on site
  - Personal adjustment training under blindfold
  - Hands-on service (teaching, counseling, and testing sessions)
19.14.3 Request for Training

DSB places a high regard on training and encourages employees to participate in training relevant to their job duties. A well developed and highly skilled workforce is prone to creating more and better successful outcomes. It is recommended that employees seek out training opportunities that will enhance and develop skills needed to enrich the employee’s abilities and effectiveness in working with the blind and visually impaired individuals of Arkansas.

The following steps provide guidance when requesting training.

4. The employee will complete the DSB-8004 (Request for Training) Form and submit it to the immediate supervisor for approval. Training requests should be submitted 30 days in advance when possible. Information regarding the training (agenda, brochure, e-mail, etc.) shall be attached to the DSB-8004.

5. The supervisor has two days from the date of receipt to either approve or deny the request for training.

6. The supervisor will submit the approved DSB-8004 and a DHS purchase requisition to the unit administrator for approval. The supervisor will also determine if a letter to the DHS Chief Fiscal Officer, Office of Finance and Administration is required to secure the training, and if so, will submit the letter along with the approved DSB-8004 and DHS purchase order to the unit administrator for approval.

7. If approved, the unit administrator will submit the DSB-8004 and applicable purchase order and letter to the DSB chief fiscal officer for approval.

8. The DSB CFO inserts fiscal codes on the forms and initials to indicate approval. The CFO will submit the documents to the DSB Director/Assistant Director for approval.

9. The original DSB-8004 and DHS purchase requisition will be kept in the DSB Director’s office and a copy given to the CFO, supervisor, employee, and staff development coordinator. If the request for training pertains to educational assistance or requires a registration fee, a copy is submitted to the DSB Finance Unit.

10. If applicable, the fiscal support analyst verifies the letter from the DHS CFO is completed and approved.

11. The fiscal support analyst will submit the DHS purchase requisition in AASIS or makes a decision to use the DSB P-Card to secure the request. The DSB CFO approves the DHS purchase requisition in AASIS.

12. The DHS Office of Finance will create a DHS purchase order within two business days.

13. The fiscal support analyst will notify the supervisor and employee via e-mail within two business days when the purchase order is approved. A copy of the DHS purchase order is forwarded to the supervisor and staff development coordinator via e-mail.
**NOTE:** All out-of-state travel should include an approved DHS-1010. The DHS-1011 is required if the per diem will exceed the authorized government rate.

In the event the request for training is not approved at any point of the approval process, the DSB-8004 will be marked “Not Approved” and signed and dated by the staff member denying the request and returned to the requesting employee.

The completed DSB-8004 and appropriate attachments should be scanned and e-mailed to the next approving authority. A final copy with all approving signatures will be scanned and e-mailed to the requesting employee.

**19.14.4 Follow Up Training Reports**

Employees will submit a follow-up report on all trainings they request to attend. The report shall be submitted to the immediate supervisor with a copy to the staff development coordinator. Follow-up training reports should be submitted within 10 days after the training.

**19.15 PROCEDURES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS AND REFUNDS**

**19.15.1 Tax Deductible Contributions**

In the event an individual wishes to make a contribution or bequeaths something to DSB, a tax deductible receipt can be provided to donors. The Gift/Bequest Form (found in the Forms Chapter of this manual), along with the check, money order, or cashier’s check, will be submitted to the DSB CFO.

**19.15.2 Refunds**

Vendors routinely submit refunds to DSB for various reasons. When a refund check is received, the rehab assistant will complete the Refund Form (found in the Forms Chapter of this manual), attach the check, a copy of the authorization and statement from the vendor, and submit to the DSB Client Data Center. CDC will notify appropriate staff that the refund was received. Upon review, CDC will determine if the money can be re-allotted to the caseload. This is dependent upon the type of funds that were used when the original authorization and payment were completed and whether or not it is a current or prior year refund. Once the refunded amount is posted in AASIS, CDC will inform the appropriate staff if the money will be re-allotted.

**NOTE:** Vendors should make refund checks payable to Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind.

**19.16 REQUIRED MEETINGS AND TRAININGS**
19.16.1 Required Meetings and Trainings Overview

From time to time, DSB will plan a meeting or training that requires staff attendance. Meetings and trainings include, but are not limited to, Field Services quarterly meetings, annual statewide meetings, all training planned by DSB administration personnel, and individual meetings scheduled by administrative personnel such as the Supervisor, Field Services Administrator, case review team, etc. These meetings/trainings can involve group or individual sessions. Staff will be informed of the meeting or training allowing ample time to plan to attend.

19.16.2 Missed Meetings

DSB understands that occasionally an employee has annual leave already scheduled when the announcement of the meeting is distributed to staff. If the appropriate leave request has already been submitted and approved by the supervisor, the employee will be excused from the meeting. Likewise, employees who call in sick during a scheduled meeting must get a note from their physician excusing the employee from the meeting. The employee will not be allowed to work and will remain on sick leave during the entire meeting time.

NOTE: Approval from the Field Services Administrator is required for any deviations from this policy.

19.17 PROCEDURES FOR CASELOAD TURNOVER/COUNSELOR RESIGNATIONS OR TERMINATIONS

19.17 Supervisory Process When a Counselor Resigns

When a counselor resigns or is terminated from DSB, the smooth and efficient functioning of cases in service and the needs of those who require services must be ensured. When a counselor resigns the supervisor must take the following actions:

1. The supervisor will follow the termination/resignation instructions of Policy 1049 found on the DHS Share site. Form DHS-1161, Request for Personnel Action (available on DHS Share) will be forwarded to the Field Administrator as soon as the resignation/termination is available in writing. The written notice of resignation/termination will be attached to the form DHS-1161.

2. The supervisor will contact DHS Information Systems Manager via email to have the exiting counselor’s email and harddrive information available. The staff member’s AASIS number, name, and the reason for the request should be stated clearly in the email.

3. The supervisor will send a letter to all clients on the caseload notifying them that the counselor is vacating the position and identifying who will serve the caseload in the interim. The letter should be generated in the AWARE system and a signed copy is to be put in each client’s case file.

19.18 CASE REVIEW PROCEDURES

Team Case Review Procedure
1. The Team Case Review Coordinator will set the schedule at the beginning of each State Fiscal Year (July 1st.) The schedule will include a plan for the coordination of travel when more than one supervisor from the same area is assigned to a review.

2. The schedule will be disseminated to the field administrator, supervisors, administrative assistants, and the counselors. One supervisor will be assigned to review cases, unless circumstances deem that more than one is needed.

3. Reviews will consist of 25% of the active caseload and 10% of last year’s reviewed cases, ensuring the corrections were made.

4. The reviews will begin at noon on the first day, allowing for travel time, the review will continue the second day and be completed at noon on the 4th day.

5. In the event that a supervisor is unable to make the review for an approved reason, the Team Case Review Coordinator will substitute for that supervisor.

6. The Team Case Review Coordinator will request a random list of cases from AWARE Database Coordinator or the designee. The Team Case Review Coordinator will forward that list to the RA to pull the cases for review. In the event that the RA is out, the AA will perform this task.

7. The supervisor(s) reviewing cases will travel to the office to be reviewed (unless an individual has requested and received a reasonable accommodation.) The RA will be advised of the steps to take regarding any reasonable accommodations by the Team Case Review Coordinator.

8. The cases will be distributed to the supervisor who will be reviewing cases and the reviews will be conducted.

9. The supervisor will collect the case review forms. A copy of the forms will be given to the Counselor, the Counselor’s Supervisor. The original forms will be forwarded to the Team Case Reviewer. The AA of each supervisor that reviewed cases will type the case reviews on the automated forms and submit to the Counselor, Counselor’s Supervisor, and the Team Case Review Coordinator.
10. The Supervisor that reviewed cases will write a brief summary of the recurring non-compliance issues and best practices issues found in the cases that were reviewed. The supervisor have 5 working days to submit their summaries. The typed case review forms will accompany the summaries to the Team Case Review Coordinator.

11. The Team Case Review Coordinator will forward summaries to the Director, with a copy to the Counselor, the Supervisor, and the Field Administrator.
   a. If needed, a Corrective Action Plan will be determined with 10 working days (upon receipt of summaries from reviewers) for the Counselor to submit.
   b. All corrections have to be verified by Counselor's Supervisor. When corrections are verified, the CAP will be removed, if not, the CAP will remain in place. The Team Case Review Coordinator will verify corrections have been made and maintain or remove the CAP. The Team Case Review Coordinator will forward the CAPs, trends, commendations, and recommendations to the Field Administrator.
   c. The Field Administrator will report the CAPs, the trends, the commendations, and recommendations to the Director.

12. Best practice and non-compliance trends will be addressed by the Field Administrator to the supervisors for dissemination to the field staff.

13. Any policy/procedure changes that are required will be discussed and researched by the Field Administrator with assistance from the EMMT committee, policy or procedure changes will be written by the Field Administrator and finalized by the Director.

**FORMS – CHAPTER 20**

**FORMS FOR CASE SERVICES AND DSB PERSONNEL CAN BE FOUND IN THIS SECTION.**
ARKANSAS DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

Referral Information for VR & OIB Programs

Referral Name: _____________________________
Social Security #: ___________________________
Street/Mailing Address: ________________________________________________________
City: _____________________ State: ________________ Zip Code: ___________________
Telephone Number: (______) -__________-__________
County: _______________________________________
Date of Birth: ______________  Age: ______
Referred By:  _________________________________________________________________
Referral Source’s Telephone: (______) -__________-__________
Heard of DSB from: ____________________________________________________________
Visual Complaints:

OIB: (Y/N) Lives Alone:□ Prepares Meals:□ Accesses Medical Care:  □ Moves Independently:□

Referral Sent to:  VR Working: □ VR Want to Work: □ VR Homemaker: □        OIB □
Requested Services: Referral Taken By:
Referral Forwarded Date: ☐ Originator _____ ☐ Supervisor _____

☐ VRC _____ ☐ AA _____ ☐ WSB-OIB _____

To be completed by receiving Counselor/Rehabilitation Teacher

Date Received: __________________________________________

Visual Acuity/Diagnosis: __________________________________________

Date You Contacted Referral: __________________________________________

Appointment Date/Time: __________________________________________

Comments, Directions to Home, Etc. __________________________________________

__________________________________________

DSB 8065 Referral Form/ Rev. 09-2014

Arkansas Division of services for the Blind VR Case Review Form
DSB 8045 Case Review Form 8/2/2016

Case Reviewer _______________ Review date: __________ Counselor:
__________________________

Counselor’s Supervisor: _____________________

Client name: ________________________ Client #: __________ Current status: __________

Referral/Applicant Information

Referral date: __________ Initial contact date: __________ *phone contact at least 24 hrs from receiving referral

Application date: __________ *Should be no more than 2 weeks from initial contact, unless there is extenuating circumstances which are documented in a case note.

Application processed in a timely manner? _______ Date of birth: ___________ Age at referral: _______

Primary disability: ____________________________ Secondary disability: ______________

Was secondary disability addressed? _______ Does secondary disability hinder employability? _______

Receiving SSI/SSDI at application? ______ Documentation is scanned on SSI/SSDI award?
*Reason for receiving SSI/SSDI must be for the individual’s disability related reason only. If the reason the individual is receiving SSI/SSDI is for a disability other than blindness, please refer the candidate to ARS. Dual cases are permitted, but eligibility must meet DSB criteria. If no documentation is presented, the case should not be marked as SSI/SSDI in AWARE. Please have the counselor correct the issue, either obtain the documentation, or remove the reference in the system.*

Was client working at application? _____________ Occupation: ___________________________

Comments on the application information:
_______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

*Clients can have any earnings at application. Please check at closure that earnings are at least minimum wage and work is at least part-time. *

*Note to reviewer- Review AWARE application information, ensure all fields have been answered as per WIOA/PIRL standards.*

Forms

Does the file contain the following: Library for the Blind application? _________

Notice that NFB and ACB information was distributed? __________

Notice that Arkansas Radio Reading Service information was distributed? ___________

Notice that NFB Newsline information was provided? ______________

*Copies of forms and distribution letters should be scanned in AWARE.

Comments on the forms DSB provides
_______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Assessments

Functional Skills Assessment completed? _______Comprehensive Assessment completed? ___________ *narratives found in AWARE case notes

Vocational Assessment completed? _______ *when pursuing work

Tech Assessment completed? ___________ *When the person requires AT for training and/or employment

Other assessments that may be needed to support the vocational goal:
To support physical work, was a General Medical Exam completed? 

To support **college training** the following is required: ACT or SAT score that meets the requirements of the college/university admissions policy. Score is __________ and a HS GPA of at least a 2.0. If a GED is obtained in lieu of a HS diploma or the GPA is less than a 2.0, a WAIS score of at least 100.

GPA is __________.

WAIS score is __________.

Do the assessments identify all VR needs? 

How do the assessments support the employment goal?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

*Clients should be prepared physically and mentally to handle the type of position. Assessments show that they were given information on what it would take mentally and/or physically to do the job and that they are ready to meet the challenge of preparing for and completing the daily essential functions of the job.*

**Eligibility Information**

Eligibility date: ________________

Is there documentation (eye report) supporting the determination that the consumer has a visual impairment that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment? ________ (This should be scanned into AWARE.)

If not, explain.

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Does the documentation support the determination that VR services are needed in terms of employability? ________ How? (This should appear in the eligibility narrative.)

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
*At least 3 substantial services are needed in the initial IPE, subsequent IPEs can have less, but should address all barriers to employment. In order to support that VR services are needed, a person must have vision issues and require some type of service to learn how to modify or accommodate the vision loss, or the person must require restorative services to overcome the barrier. Ancillary services can be provided that are required to get the person into employment (for example, maintenance services); however, DSB should never become the primary financial support for any person to meet basic living needs.*

Was the client *presumed eligible* due to receiving SSI/SSDI? _______

*Important to know that the federal language of presumption of eligibility does not differentiate between blindness/low vision and other disabling conditions. If a person receives SSI/SSDI for a disability other than blindness, that person must be referred to ARS. If the person also meets DSB criteria for eligibility, then the person can also be served by DSB. No duplication of services can occur. DSB can address the blindness/low vision needs. Clear and convincing evidence is needed in the form of trial work periods in order to consider the person not eligible for VR services.*

Was eligibility determined within 60 days? _______ If not, was there an extension agreement? _______

Is the eligibility signed by the counselor? _______ Is the client eligible for VR services? _______

Comments on eligibility:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

**IPE Information**

IPE date: ____________________

Was the IPE developed within 90 days of the eligibility determination? ______________ IPE signed and dated by client and counselor? _____ Were the amendments signed and dated by client and counselor? _______

Does the IPE state how the services were planned and chosen? (this documents informed choice on the plan, see section 2 of the IPE) __________

Does the IPE contain timelines for the initiation and completion of each service? __________

Were the costs estimated on the IPE close to the authorized payment amounts? __________

Does the plan extend beyond a year? _______
Were all services listed on the IPE necessary to reach an employment outcome?

Explain.

Are the individual’s responsibilities sufficiently clear, relevant to the employment goal, objective and measurable? What are the responsibilities listed on the latest plan?

How is progress being measured?

Was the IPE reviewed and renewed by the counselor and client annually? *A new plan and new planning narrative are required each year.*

Were amendments completed during the plan year as needed?

Employment Goal:

**Delivery of Services**

What were the substantial services? (These are the main services required to assist the client with overcoming functional limitations that are disability related.)

What services were needed in order for the client to participate in substantial services? (These are services needed in order for the client to obtain substantial services or to compete for employment. These are services like maintenance and transportation.)
Do the narratives indicate that the service(s) were given to the consumer? ______ Do the narratives indicate how the barriers to employment were accommodated or modified? ______. Does the case record contain receipts, grades, progress notes for training or employment search? ______

Explain.

Was full consideration given to any similar benefits (PELL grant, medical insurance, affordable healthcare, VA benefits) available to the consumer to meet, in whole or in part, the cost of the service? ________________

Which similar benefit was used and for what service?

Was financial need determined for college training?

Were authorizations completed on or before the date of service? ________________

Are there post authorizations? _____ How many? ________________ Could the post authorizations have been avoided? ________________ Why or why not?

Are there invoices and reports to coincide with authorizations? ______ If not, what is missing?

If the client was the vendor, are the receipts filed in the case file?

Once initiated, did services continue without delays?
Did the counselor maintain contact with consumer at least every 90 days? _____ Are counseling and guidance narratives in the case notes? ______________

Comments on service delivery:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Closure Information**

Closure status: _______________ Closure date: ____________

Is there a narrative in the closure section of AWARE? ____ The narrative must contain the following:

Employer _______________ Rate of Pay ___________ Hours per week ______________

Does the case record contain a closure letter? _______ Is the reason for closure documented? __________

Is the employment outcome consistent with the consumer’s plan and goal, strengths and informed choice? ____________

Why or why not? __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Did the client maintain the employment outcome at least 90 days? ______

Is there documentation supporting that the wages are commensurate with earnings of the non-disabled? (This should be documented in the closure narrative with statistical information from sites like O*NET or Dept. of Labor Statistics)
________________________________________________________________________

Was SSI/SSDI completed in AWARE at closure? _______ (This is for reimbursement of funds spent of SSI/SSDI clients. If the person received these benefits and then finds work and maintains it, DSB can receive the costs back that it spent on the person.)

Were post-employment services provided? ____________ If so, was there a signed PES plan on file? _____

Were the PES services provided to cover a limited, short-term service? _______ Should a new plan have been written? _______ (new plans are required when the service becomes involved, multiple services are needed, or the time frame is expected to extend beyond 8 months).
Comments on closure information:
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Narratives and Filing

Were the following required narratives in the case record?

  Initial Interview? __________

  Eligibility Determination? __________ (narrative in eligibility)

  Comprehensive Assessment? __________ (case note & filed under assessment)

  IPE Development? __________ (IPE narrative required)

  Closing Narrative? __________ (on closure screen)

Informed choice documented throughout the case?
________________________________________________________________________________________

CAP documented at application, IPE, and closure?
________________________________________________________________________________________

If applicable, is there a title agreement in the file?
________________________________________________________________________________________

Was O & M needed and provided?
________________________________________________________________________________________

Performance Measures

Wages at application: ___________ Hours worked: ___________

Wages at closure: ___________ Hours worked: ___________

Wages at 2\textsuperscript{nd} quarter after exit? ___________ Job Title ______________________________

Employer _________________________ Wages at 4\textsuperscript{th} quarter after exit? ___________

Job Title ________________________________ Employer ________________________________

Credential Obtained: ___________________________ *a credential consisting of an industry recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Fed. Government or an associate, baccalaureate degree, master’s or higher.
Measurable Skills Gained: _______________________________  Could be any of the following:

1. HS diploma or GED,

2. documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant in an education program that provides instruction below the postsecondary level,

3. transcript or report card with a minimum of 12 hours earned,

4. secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card showing meeting the academic standard,

5. satisfactory or better progress report like OJT or completion of 1 year of an apprenticeship program, or successful completion of an exam that is needed for an occupation.

Commendations

Non-compliance issues
DSB-1 CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY/EXTENSION OF TIME TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY

The top section of the DSB-1 is completed to signify the applicant has been determined eligible for VR Services.

The bottom portion of page one is completed when an applicant is moved into a trial work experience or extended evaluation.

Page two of the DSB-1 is completed to allow an extension of time to determine eligibility (not to exceed 30 days).

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

Certification of Eligibility

Consumer’s Name: _____________________________________________________________

It is hereby certified that this individual has met the basic eligibility requirements for vocational rehabilitation services:

I. ☐ There is a visual disability which is a substantial impediment to employment and the individual can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome.

II. ☐ This individual requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.

Counselor Signature       Date: _____________________________

Certification for Extended Evaluation

I. ☐ There is a visual disability which is a substantial impediment to employment but an extended evaluation (status 06) is necessary to gather evidence to clearly demonstrate that the individual can or cannot benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome.

Counselor Signature       Date: _____________________________
Dear ________________________________:

Re: NEED FOR EXTENSION OF TIME TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY

You understand that the information needed to determine eligibility for VR services is not going to be available within 60 days of the date you applied for services. Because of exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, beyond the control of the Division of Services for the Blind, you agree to allow an extension of _________ days in order to obtain the following information:

______________________________________

(Applicant’s Signature)

Date: ______________________________
The DSB-1080 is found in the case management system and is used to authorize the purchase of goods or services for DSB applicants and consumers. For more information regarding authorizing and paying for goods and services see Section 19.7 in this manual.
Arkansas Department of Human Services

Division of Services F/T Blind

Authorization/Payment for Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auth. Number</th>
<th>Auth. Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vendor</td>
<td>Client Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address 1</td>
<td>Client SSN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address 2</td>
<td>Client Number</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Procedure Code</th>
<th>Amount Authorized</th>
<th>Vendor Charges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Total Amount for this Authorization

Authorization Signature __________________________ Date __________________________

By accepting this authorization, I certify that the charges are considered payment in full and the consumer will not be billed for any additional amount. Charges for hospitalization and/or surgery on consumers with coverage, represent the difference between any insurance payment received and the contract fee with Division of Services for the Blind.

(Counselor Signature)
Counselor Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

DSB Remittance Copy
DSB-8003 (CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY/INELIGIBILITY) (OLDER BLIND AND ILRS PROGRAMS)

The DSB-8003 (Certificate of Eligibility/Ineligibility) is the form that is completed when eligibility is determined for an applicant on the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) or Independent Living Rehabilitation Services (ILRS) Program.
( ) LIFE
( ) ILRS

Client Name: ____________________________________________________________

( ) 1. The individual has a severe visual impairment with resulting functional limitations in activities. The severe limitation(s) resulting from the disability constitute a substantial handicap to functioning independently in family or community or engaging or continuing in employment. There is a reasonable expectation that independent living services may significantly assist the individual to improve his/her ability to function independently in family or community or engage or continue in employment. Functional limitations and reasons for arriving at the above conclusion(s) are stated in the initial narrative.

( ) 2. The individual does not have functional limitations and is ineligible, or

( ) 3. has declined rehabilitation teaching services.

Counselor Name (type) ______________________________________________________

Counselor Signature ______________________________________________________

Certification Date:
DSB-8004 REQUEST FOR TRAINING

This form is to be completed when an employee is requesting training. The form is self-explanatory. For more information, see Section 19.14.3 in this manual.
Training Request # Training Title:

Employee Name:

Training Date(s): Training Location:

Transportation Method Requested:

Employee Comments-Requested Accommodations:

**ESTIMATED EXPENSES:**
Transportation:
Meals/Lodging:
Miscellaneous:
Total:

CRC/RT Certification Renewal Date:
Number of Hours Required for Certification:
Number of Approved Hours Currently Earned:
Reason for Requesting Training:

Signature: _______________________________ Date:

**FAX OR FORWARD IMMEDIATELY TO YOUR SUPERVISOR**

Approved: ________ Not Approved: ________ Signature of Immediate Supervisor
Date Date

Approved: ________ Not Approved: ________ Signature of Program Administrator
Date Date

Rec’d by Training Coordinator: __________________________

Approved: ________ Not Approved: ________ Signature of CFO/Designee
Date Date

Approved: ________ Not Approved: ________ Signature of Director/Designee
Date Date

Administration Comments:

Date Follow-Up Report is Received: __________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Area</th>
<th>Fund Center</th>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>Cost Center</th>
<th>Internal Order</th>
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<td>4194</td>
<td>I0710Q</td>
<td>02 09</td>
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Date Initials
The VR Consumer Application Information Form (DSB-8006) is completed on all applicants. The form is self-explanatory.
VR Consumer Application Information

Channel Code: 20  Counselor Number: _________

Social Security Number: __________________________

Consumer Last Name: ________________________________________________________

Consumer First Name: _______________________________________________________

Consumer Middle Initial: _________

Date of Birth (yyyy/mm/dd): __________________________

Consumer’s Phone Number (include area code): ______________________________

Cell Phone Number: ______________________________

Street Address, Box, Route: ___________________________________________________

Mailing Address: ____________________________________________________________

City: _____________________________ State: ____________ Zip Code: ____________

County Name: ______________________________________

Marital Status: _______________________ Gender: _______________________________

Race:  □ White  □ Black or African American  □ American Indian or Alaska Native  □ Asian  □ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  □ Hispanic or Latino

IEP: ____________________________  Preferred Medium: __________________________

E-mail Address: ____________________________

Reported Disability: ____________________________

Reported Disability Code: ____________________________

Referral Date (yyyy/mm/dd): ____________________________

Referral Source: ____________________________  Referral Source Code: ___________

Consumer Name: ____________________________________________
Military Service: ____________________________

Application Date (yyyy/mm/dd): ____________________________

PWI: _______________ D/B: _______________ MAW: _______________

Educational Level: __________________________________________

TANF: _______________ Amount: ______________

SSI (Aged, Blind, or Disabled): _______________ Amount: ______________

SSDI: _______________ Amount: ______________

General Assistance (State or local government): ______________

Veterans’ Disability Benefits: ______________

Workers’ Compensation: ______________

Other Public Support: ______________

Total Amount of All Other Public Support (GA, Veterans’ Disability, Workers’ Comp, and Other Public Support): ______________

Similar Benefits (PELL Grant, etc.) ______________

Living Arrangement at Application: ____________________________________

Primary Disability: _______________ Code: _______________

Secondary Disability: _______________ Code: _______________

Previous Closure: _________________________________________

Employment Status at Application: ____________________________________

Weekly Hours Worked: _______________ Weekly Earnings: _______________

Primary Source of Support: __________________________________________

College Student: ______________

Medical Insurance Coverage:

☐ Medicaid
☐ Medicare
☐ Workers’ Compensation
☐ Private Insurance Through Own Employment
☐ Private Insurance Through Other Means

Supported Employment: ______________

Date Last Employed (yyyy/mm/dd): ______________
Work History: ______________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Family Members: ___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Person Through Whom Consumer Can Be Contacted: _____________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

I hereby make application to the Division of Services for the Blind for the following services:

I have selected the following vendors to provide these services:

I have been provided information about the Client Assistance Program, its purpose, services, and how to contact CAP personnel. I have also been informed of the following: Arkansas Information Reading Service, Talking Book Service, Voter Registration, and Consumer Organizations (NFB and ACB).

By signing this application, I am declaring my intent to achieve an employment outcome.

Counselor Signature: _______________________________________________________

Consumer Signature: _______________________________________________________

Date: _____________________________
Releasing Information to Arkansas Legislators

Yes, I give Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind permission to give information from my case record to Arkansas Legislators if needed for review. _______________ (Applicant’s initials)

No, I do not wish any information from my case record to be given to Arkansas Legislators for any reason. _______________ (Applicant’s initials)

Felon and Illegal Drug/Drug Abuse Statements

Knowing that convicted felons cannot work in government jobs and those jobs with a state or federal government agency requires a criminal background check, I understand that because I have been convicted as a felon, DSB will not provide funds that will enable me to work in a state or federal government job. I further understand that, if I am eligible for services, DSB will provide the services I need to help me reach the vocational goal (apart from state or federal government jobs) that my counselor and I will agree upon in my individualized plan for employment. By initialing this statement, I confirm I have had a problem in this area. ________ (Applicant’s initials)

Understanding that any involvement with illegal drugs, or abuse of prescribed drugs, is not tolerated in any state or federal government job, and knowing that all government jobs require a background check and drug test, I understand that DSB will not provide funds that will enable me to work for any government agency. I further understand that, if I am eligible for services, DSB will provide the services I need to help me reach the vocational goal (apart from state or federal government jobs) that my counselor and I will agree upon in my individualized plan for employment. By initialing this statement, I confirm I have had a problem in this area. ________ (Applicant’s initials)

By initialing this statement, I confirm I do not have a felony conviction against me and I am not an illegal drug user or prescribed drug abuser. __________ (Applicant’s initials)
DSB-8012 DSB VISUAL REPORT

The DSB-8012 form is given to eye care specialists to be completed when an eye report is needed. DSB staff members complete the top portion of the form including the individual’s name, address, and date of birth. The requesting counselor’s name and local office address is entered at the bottom of the form indicating where the completed report is to be sent.
Division of Services for the Blind is a state agency established to provide services to individuals who have a severe visual impairment. This report will be used by a rehabilitation professional to assist this visually impaired person in planning a program of rehabilitation. Your cooperation in this examination and in submitting this report is a significant part of this rehabilitation effort.

Name of Patient: _____________________________________________________

Address: _____________________________________________________________________________

Date of Birth: ________________________

Diagnosis: _____________________________________________________________________________

Visual Acuity with Best Correction: Right Eye _________ Left Eye _________

Is Condition Progressive? No _______ Yes ________

Is there imminent danger of further vision loss? No ________ Yes _________

Please describe the severity and any limitations to employment:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What is the visual field in each eye? (based on 180°) Right Eye _____ Left Eye ________

Recommendations: ____________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

Signature of Medical Professional: _____________________________________________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________________________________________________

Please send report to: _____________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

Email: ____________________________

FAX: _____________________________
DSB-8017 INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT/ELDERS

An IPE is completed on all eligible individuals. The form is self-explanatory. For more information see Chapter 7 of this manual.
ARKANSAS DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND (DSB)
INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT/ELDERS (IPE)

Client Name: ___________________________ Case No: ______________

SOC Code: ________________ DOT Code: ________________

Employment Goal: ________________________________

Pell Grant: (   ) Needed (   ) Not Needed (   ) Undetermined

PE Assessment at Initiation: (   ) Needed (   ) Not Needed (   ) Undetermined

PE Assessment at Closure: (   ) Needed (   ) Not Needed (   ) Undetermined

Plan Initiation Date: ____________________________

Plan Completion Date: __________________________
ARKANSAS DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND (DSB)
INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT/ELDERS (IPE)

Client Name: ____________________  __  Case No: ______________

PURPOSE:

The purpose of your IPE is to help you get a job and/or improve your ability to function independently at home, in the community, and/or in employment. Your abilities and interests will be taken into consideration as you and your counselor develop your IPE. To receive vocational rehabilitation services, an individual must require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

This IPE describes the services you and your counselor decide you need to reach your goal. Changes can be made to this IPE as your needs change. After a suitable outcome has been achieved, your case may be terminated. Information, referral, and counseling and guidance may be available should circumstances change affecting your ability to maintain employment or activities of daily living.

CLIENT’S RESPONSIBILITIES:

To meet the goals that you set with your counselor, you agree to do the following:
- Keep appointments.
- Attend agreed upon activities.
- Respond to counselor requests.
- Accept equal responsibility for and cooperate in carrying out this program.
- Make progress in training or other activities.
- Apply for comparable services when available.
- Tell your counselor about any changes in your life such as an address, phone number, marital status, health, training, job, income, etc.

If you do not follow through, you may not receive services as soon as you need them, or we may stop providing services. Discuss any questions with your counselor.

CLIENT’S RIGHTS AND SOLUTIONS:

It is your right to:
- Independently develop and write your own IPE.
- Make an informed and reasonable choice of your goal, services necessary to reach the goal, and providers of those services.
- Ask for and agree to any changes in your IPE.

Talk with your counselor, by appointment, about any questions or problems.

If at any time you are in disagreement with your counselor regarding your program, you have the right to appeal. If you are unable to resolve the problem with your counselor, you may contact the supervisor in writing at P. O. Box 3237, Little Rock, AR 72203, or by calling 501-682-5463 or toll free 1-800-960-9270 (outside Little Rock).

Have access to the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to help and advise you on any decision at any time. If you have any problems that your counselor cannot help with, you can call CAP at 501-296-1775 V/TTY or toll free 1-800-482-1174 V/TTY.
ARKANSAS DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND (DSB)
INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT/ELDERS (IPE)

Client Name: ___________________________ Case No: ______________

Category: ______________________ Date Printed: __________

Start Date: _____________ Completion Date: ______________

Specific responsibilities of DSB, client and other entities:

Services (Include vendor name. If supported employment, list provider):

Evaluation Method:

Evaluation Schedule:

Costs:   Client:

Comparable Benefits:

   DSB:
ARKANSAS DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND (DSB)
INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT/ELDERS (IPE)

Client Name: _______________________________ Case No: ________________

ANNUAL REVIEW:

You and your counselor will look at your progress toward completing your goal. Your IPE will be reviewed as often as needed, but at least every 12 months. Together we will look at your progress toward completing your goal.

CLIENT’S UNDERSTANDING OF THE IPE:

I helped choose the goals, the services and who will provide the services to me. I understand that services paid for by the Division of Services for the Blind may be affected by the other resources available to me and the availability of agency funds. I understand that paid services can ONLY be obtained after they are included on the IPE, and a prior specific written authorization has been completed by my counselor. I agree with this IPE as written.

I have participated in the planning of this IPE. I have made the following choices:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Client/Representative Signature                     Date                     Counselor Signature

Services in this program are provided without regard to disability, sex, race, religion, color, or national origin according to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
DSB-8017 INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT/ELDERS – AMENDMENT

The Amendment Form for the Individualized Plan for Employment/Elders is completed any time a change or extension of time must be made to the original IPE. The form is self-explanatory.

**NOTE:** The IPE must be kept current. At no time should services continue on an expired IPE.
ARKANSAS DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND (DSB)
INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT/ELDERS (IPE)
AMENDMENT

Client Name: _____ Case No: _____

IPE Goal: _____

Category: _____ Date Printed: _____

Start Date: _____ Completion Date: _____

Specific responsibilities of DSB, client and other entities:

Services (Include vendor name. If supported employment, list provider):

Evaluation Method:

Evaluation Schedule:

Costs: Client:

Comparable Benefits:

DSB:

I have made the following choices/changes:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Client/Representative Signature  Date  Counselor Signature
ARKANSAS DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND (DSB)
INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT/ELDERS (IPE)

Client Name: _____ Case No: _____

Control Codes:
DSB-8018 NON-VR CONSUMER APPLICATION INFORMATION

All Non-VR (ILRS/OIB) cases will have a DSB-8018 Form completed. The form is self-explanatory.
Channel Code: _____
Counselor Number: _____
Social Security Number: _____
Consumer Last Name: _____
Consumer First Name: _____
Consumer Middle Initial: _____
Date of Birth (yyyy/mm/dd): _____
Consumer Phone Number (include area code): _____
Street Address, Box or Route: _____
City: _____  State: _____  Zip Code: _____
County: _____
Gender: _____

Race:
- [ ] White
- [ ] Black or African American
- [ ] American Indian or Alaska Native
- [ ] Asian
- [ ] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- [ ] Hispanic or Latino

Marital Status:   1 - Married

E-mail Address: _____

Applicant Status: 01

Application Date (yyyy/mm/dd): _____

Referral Source: _____

Referral Source Code: 1 - Eye care provider (ophthalmologist/optometrist)
Consumer Name: ______

Visual Impairment at Time of Intake: 1 - Totally blind (LP only or NLP)

Deaf/Blind: ______

Major Cause of Visual Impairment: 1 - Macular degeneration

Educational Level: 1 - No formal schooling

Onset of Significant Vision Loss: 1 - Less than 1 year before IL services

Medicaid Eligible: ______

Type of Living Arrangement at Time of Intake: 1 - Lives alone

Setting of Residence at Time of Intake: 1 - Private residence

Non-Visual Impairments/Conditions at Time of Intake (as reported by individual):

- [ ] Hearing Impairment
- [ ] Mental Impairments (Alzheimer’s Disease, Dementia, other cognitive, psychosocial and mental impairments
- [ ] Cancer
- [ ] Cardiac and conditions of the circulatory system
- [ ] Diabetes Mellitus
- [ ] End Stage Renal Disease and other genitourinary system disorders
- [ ] Musculoskeletal (arthritis, amputations, fractures/injuries which resulted in permanent loss/impairment of limb function)
- [ ] Neurologic changes due to: stroke (CVA) with resulting paralysis or weakness, peripheral or diabetic neuropathy, other conditions affecting the central nervous system (includes seizure disorders, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, etc.)
- [ ] Respiratory or lung conditions
- [ ] Other

Medical Insurance Coverage:

- [ ] Medicaid
- [ ] Medicare
- [ ] Workers’ Compensation
- [ ] Private Insurance Through Own Employment
Private Insurance Through Other Means

Family Members: _____

Person Through Whom Consumer Can Be Contacted: _____

I hereby make application to the Division of Services for the Blind for the following services:

_____

Toward the following objectives:

_____

I have selected the following vendors to provide these services:

_____

I have been provided information about the Client Assistance Program, its purpose, services, and how to contact CAP personnel. I have also been informed of the following: Radio Reading Service, Talking Book Service, Voter Registration, and Consumer Organizations (NFB and ACB).

Counselor Signature

Consumer Signature

Date
DSB-8021 AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

The release of information will be completed when requesting information on a consumer. A consumer who signs this form gives the facility (school, physician, medical clinic, hospital, or agency) permission to release his or her confidential information to DSB. For further information on confidentiality, see Section 1 of this manual.
ARKANSAS DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

I, _____, with a birth date of _____, hereby authorize
(Client’s Name)
_____ (physician, hospital, clinic, agency, or school), its director, designee, or records department to
release information contained in my records to the individual or organization listed below:

1. Name of person/organization to whom this disclosure is to be made:

   Attention: _____, Counselor
   Division of Services for the Blind

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Specific type of information to be disclosed:

   ☐ Medical, includes visual
   ☐ Psychological
   ☐ Vocational
   ☐ Other (specify) _____

3. Purpose/need for such disclosure:

   ☐ Establish eligibility for services
   ☐ Develop a vocational program for client
   ☐ Determine need for and/or type of treatment
   ☐ Other (specify) _____

1. Expiration: This release may be revoked at any time and shall be valid no longer than is
reasonably necessary to accomplish the necessary purpose for which it is given, not to exceed
twelve months from the date this release form was signed.

__________________________________________                ________________________
Client, Parent, Guardian or Representative Signature      Date

__________________________________________                ________________________
Witness Signature, if required      Date
DSB-8024 RECEIPT OF EQUIPMENT AND TITLE AGREEMENT

Receipt of Equipment:

The DSB-8024 is completed anytime equipment valued at $1,000 or more is purchased for a consumer. The top portion of the form is completed when the equipment is issued to the consumer.

Release of Equipment:

After the counselor sees that the consumer is using the equipment for the purpose it was intended for, the bottom portion of the form is completed.
1. Received of the Division of Services for the Blind, the following property:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM(S)</th>
<th>SERIAL NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Receipt of the equipment listed above is hereby acknowledged, and it is understood that such property has been supplied solely for the rehabilitation of the undersigned, who agrees to keep such property in good condition, provide maintenance and repair service, and available for inspection at all reasonable times, and recognizes the right and title to the equipment are vested in the Division of Services for the Blind until such time as title may be released. It is understood that this property is not to be mortgaged, sold, given away, or in any way disposed of until title is released by the Division of Services for the Blind. If, before title is released, the property is no longer being used for the purpose for which it was provided, it shall be returned to the Division of Services for the Blind.

____________________________________________
Counselor’s Signature Consumer’s Signature

Date Street Address

____________________________________________
Witness City, State, and Zip Code

RELEASE OF TITLE TO EQUIPMENT

The records indicate that you are making good use of the equipment furnished by the Division of Services for the Blind. Therefore, DSB hereby releases to you the title to the equipment. It is hoped that this equipment will continue to be of value to you in your vocation or trade. This release is given with the idea that you will continue to use the equipment in your trade for which it was purchased. If at any time in the future you discontinue use of this equipment, the Agency will appreciate having you notify them in order that it may be transferred to another visually handicapped person.

__________________________________________
Counselor’s Signature                                             Date Consumer’s Signature                          Date
The Vocational Skills Assessment Form will be used to conduct a thorough assessment for determining VR needs for each eligible individual. The purpose of this assessment is to determine the specific employment outcome, the nature and scope of services needed to be included in the IPE, and the criteria for evaluation of progress toward an employment outcome.

The Vocational Skills Assessment is a valuable tool in determining the individual’s interests, overall goals, needs, capacities, and functional skills related to employment. This form should be used on clients to help make vocational choices and decisions. It is designed to steer decision making when an individual has no career goal or isn’t sure which career would be the most appropriate fit, given the individual’s interests, overall goals, needs, capacities, and functional skills. In the event that the client has chosen a career and is currently employed, an onsite job assessment and/or a technology assessment would be a more appropriate initial assessment. When an individual is seeking assistance with physical restoration where restored vision looks promising and the individual wishes to maintain his current employment, the Vocational Skills Assessment may be waived and a Functional Skills Assessment will be sufficient.
Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind

Vocational Skills Assessment

Client Name: _____  Date: _____

a. Employment Goal:

Job Preference #1: _____
Job Preference #2: _____

b. Employability Factors:

1. Employment Availability: ☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time ☐ Transition

2. Shift Type: ☐ Day ☐ Evening ☐ Night ☐ Rotating ☐ Any

3. Willing to Relocate/Commute:
☐ Within State? If So, Where? _____
☐ Not Willing to Relocate Maximum Commuting Distance: _____

4. Other Factors Regarding Employability:
☐ Transportation Available ☐ Public ☐ Private
☐ Has Child Care Responsibilities ☐ Resolved
☐ Can Produce I-9 (or Other Appropriate) Documents
☐ State Issued Photo I.D.
☐ Stable Living Situation
☐ Registered with the Department of WorkForce Services
☐ Veteran ☐ Honorable Discharge ☐ Service Connected Disability
☐ Other List _____

c. Rehabilitation Engineering Pre-Assessment:

1. Information Technology Application (systems/software skills):
   MS Word: ☐ None ☐ Basic ☐ Intermediate ☐ Proficient
   MS Excel: ☐ None ☐ Basic ☐ Intermediate ☐ Proficient
   MS Access: ☐ None ☐ Basic ☐ Intermediate ☐ Proficient
   MS Outlook: ☐ None ☐ Basic ☐ Intermediate ☐ Proficient
   Keyboarding: ☐ None ☐ Basic ☐ Intermediate ☐ Proficient
2. Specific Vocational Skills (second language, leadership skills, welding, truck driving, certificates, military experience, or Career Readiness Certificate and Key Train scores):

3. Equipment: _____

4. Management/Supervision: _____

d. Skills Assessment or Marketable Traits:

1. Academic Skills:
   English Language
   □ Excellent  □ Excellent with Accommodations
   □ Adequate  □ Adequate with Accommodations
   □ Deficient □ Not Determined

   Reading Comprehension (English)
   □ Excellent  □ Excellent with Accommodations
   □ Adequate  □ Adequate with Accommodations
   □ Deficient □ Not Determined

   Writing in English
   □ Excellent  □ Excellent with Accommodations
   □ Adequate  □ Adequate with Accommodations
   □ Deficient □ Not Determined

   Mathematics
   □ Excellent  □ Excellent with Accommodations
   □ Adequate  □ Adequate with Accommodations
   □ Deficient □ Not Determined

2. Cognitive Skills:
   Reasoning and Processing
   □ Excellent  □ Excellent with Accommodations
   □ Adequate  □ Adequate with Accommodations
   □ Deficient □ Not Determined
Problem Solving
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

Memory
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

Executive Functioning
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

3. Physical Capacities:
    Hearing
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

    Functional Vision (Acuity, Depth, Color, Field of Vision)
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

    Lifting, Carrying, Pushing, Reaching
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

    Manual Dexterity
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

    Sitting Tolerance
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

    Squatting, Stooping, Kneeling, Crouching, Crawling
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
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<td>□ Not Determined</td>
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<td>□ Excellent with Accommodations</td>
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<tr>
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<td>□ Adequate with Accommodations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Deficient</td>
<td>□ Not Determined</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking Tolerance</td>
<td>□ Excellent</td>
<td>□ Excellent with Accommodations</td>
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<td>□ Adequate</td>
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<td>□ Deficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
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<td>□ Adequate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to Use Writing Instruments</td>
<td>□ Excellent</td>
<td>□ Excellent with Accommodations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Adequate</td>
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<td>□ Deficient</td>
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4. Social:
   - Demonstrates Appropriate Social Skills in the Workplace
     □ Excellent          □ Excellent with Accommodations |
     □ Adequate           □ Adequate with Accommodations |
     □ Deficient          □ Not Determined        |
   - Able to Get Along with Coworkers
     □ Excellent          □ Excellent with Accommodations |
     □ Adequate           □ Adequate with Accommodations |
     □ Deficient          □ Not Determined        |

5. Behavioral:
   - Time Management
     □ Excellent          □ Excellent with Accommodations |
     □ Adequate           □ Adequate with Accommodations |
     □ Deficient          □ Not Determined        |
   - Safety
     □ Excellent          □ Excellent with Accommodations |
     □ Adequate           □ Adequate with Accommodations |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Deficient</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teamwork and Collaborations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Excellent</td>
<td>□ Excellent with Accommodations</td>
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<td>□ Adequate</td>
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<td><strong>Follows Rules and Regulations</strong></td>
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<td>□ Excellent</td>
<td>□ Excellent with Accommodations</td>
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<td>□ Adequate</td>
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<td>□ Deficient</td>
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<td><strong>6. Personal:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Professional Image</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Excellent</td>
<td>□ Excellent with Accommodations</td>
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<td>□ Adequate</td>
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<td><strong>Attitude</strong></td>
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<td>□ Excellent</td>
<td>□ Excellent with Accommodations</td>
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<td>□ Adequate</td>
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<td><strong>Responsibility</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Excellent</td>
<td>□ Excellent with Accommodations</td>
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<td><strong>Customer Service Skills</strong></td>
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<td>□ Excellent</td>
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<td><strong>Ethics</strong></td>
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<td>□ Excellent</td>
<td>□ Excellent with Accommodations</td>
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<td>□ Adequate</td>
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<td><strong>7. Communication:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oral/Verbal</strong></td>
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<td>□ Excellent</td>
<td>□ Excellent with Accommodations</td>
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<td>□ Adequate</td>
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<td>□ Deficient</td>
<td>□ Not Determined</td>
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Listening
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

Communicates Effectively with Others
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

Expressive Language Skills
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

Receptive Language Skills
☐ Excellent  ☐ Excellent with Accommodations
☐ Adequate  ☐ Adequate with Accommodations
☐ Deficient  ☐ Not Determined

e. Existing Accommodations (CCTV, Magnifier, Cane, Guide Dog, Etc.): _____
f. Functional Limitations:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Limitation/Impairment</th>
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g. Overall Comments: _____