



## **I Want to Work!**

A fact sheet about the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation written by youth for youth.  
Written by Tina Sanders; Edited by Stephanie Birmingham and Jenny Wagner Neugart.

Waisman Center, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, University of Wisconsin - Madison

### **What is DVR?**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) helps people with disabilities get a job. It is a federal/state program designed to obtain, maintain, and improve employment for people with disabilities by working with consumers, employers, and other partners.

### **How do I know if I am eligible for services?**

You must have a disability that gets in the way of you getting or keeping a job because of your disability. Common types of disabilities are: Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Cerebral Palsy (CP), Deaf, Blind, Depression, Specific Learning Disability, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), or Para/quadruplegic. Since money is limited, you may not receive services right away. DVR serves people with the most significant disabilities first. If there is enough money, they will serve other people with less significant disabilities.

### **What services does DVR offer?**

DVR will provide career counseling to help you identify a career goal, assessments to identify your skills, and help finding a job. They will help you create a resume or pay for mobility training. They may even help pay for appropriate work clothes. In some cases, they can help pay for adaptations to your car, academic accommodations at college (e.g. tutoring), or modifications to make your home accessible for you to get to work (e.g. ramp).

### **What do I need to know before I receive services?**

Before you receive services, you will create an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) with your counselor. You and your counselor must both agree to the plan. The plan says what your job goal is and the services you will need to get that job. It is helpful if you already know what you are good at (your skills) and what you are interested in doing for work. Your IPE also says who is responsible for paying for the services.

**Tip:** Create a list of your skills and ideas for jobs you would enjoy. You may get help with this list from people you trust. Bring this list with you when you meet with your counselor to develop your IPE. Developing your plan will be much quicker and easier with this list and your counselor will know you are serious about working.

### **How can DVR help if I want to go to a technical college or university?**

DVR is not a scholarship program. It is a federally funded program to assist people with disabilities who want to work get the skills they need to become employed. Depending on your situation, you may receive financial help with tuition, books and disability-related services (like tutoring and homework aides), if it would lead to you getting a job that you are interested in and qualified to do. You must apply for financial aid before DVR will consider paying for any of your college expenses. Most counselors require you to maintain a certain grade point average to continue receiving financial assistance, usually a 'C' average.

## **How do I apply for DVR services?**

Call 1-800-442-3477 or visit [www.dwd.state.wi.us/dvr](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dvr) to find the DVR office closest to where you live. A counselor will tell you about DVR services and help you find out if you are eligible for services. The counselor will fill out an application with you.

Don't wait until the last minute to apply. It can take several weeks to apply and if there is a waiting list, they will go by the date on your application.

You will have to provide documentation of your disability to prove you have a disability. It will help if you have the addresses of your doctors with you when you apply for services. If you have documentation, bring it with you to your first visit or send copies of it with your application. This will make the application process quicker and easier.

## **How can I build a relationship with my DVR Counselor?**

Once a month, call or e-mail your counselor with updates about your progress or what you need. Remember, they want to hear good things, too.

Always be on time for appointments with your counselor. If you can't make the appointment, call your counselor as soon as possible to re-schedule.

Give your counselor your financial aid statement, your grades, and receipts as soon as you receive them. Your counselor needs these things before they can pay for services. You can build a positive relationship by not having your counselor have to track you down for these things.

Ask questions whenever you have them. You can make better decisions when you have more information. Ask your counselor what you should be asking. Sometimes you don't know what you don't know.

Tell them what you need, such as academic accommodations, work accommodations, help looking for a job, or help identifying a job you want. The more proactive you are, the better results you will get.

Ask your counselor about other resources in your community. They have information about many resources like independent living centers and county services.

**Tip:** Building a relationship with your counselor makes the process of finding and keeping a job much easier for both you.

## **What do I do if I am having problems with my counselor or services?**

Try to talk to your counselor about the problem first and work out a solution together. If nothing changes, you can contact your counselor's supervisor to let them know you are having a problem with your counselor. Give the supervisor time to review the problem and get back to you. If you are still not satisfied, the Client Assistance Program (CAP) can help you understand your rights and the policies of DVR. You can appeal to CAP if you do not agree with a decision your counselor made. CAP also offers mediation.

To contact CAP: 1-800-362-1290 or Linda Vegoe, CAP Director at (608) 224-5070  
E-mail: [Linda.Vegoe@datcp.state.wi.us](mailto:Linda.Vegoe@datcp.state.wi.us)