




Title:	Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Informed Choice
Policy #:	80-VR-07
Legal Reference:	ORC 3304.15, OAC 3304-2-51, 3304-2-54, 3304-2-55, 3304-2-56, 34 CFR 361.42, 34 CFR 361.43 (b), 34 CFR 361.45 (d)(2) and (f)(2)(i), 34 CFR 361.46 (a)(2)(ii), 34 CFR 361.47(a)(7), 34 CFR 361.48, 34 CFR 361.52
Date:	January 23, 2017
Approved:	Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director 
Origin:	Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired
Supersedes:	80-VR-07 (09/02/14)
History:	VRP-0910 (04/06 and versions prior to 04/06) and any other policy on Informed Choice issued prior to this Policy.
Review date:	Annually on or before January 23 rd

I. AUTHORITY

This policy is issued in compliance with Ohio Revised Code §3304.16 which establishes the power and authority of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and its executive director to develop all necessary rules and policy in furtherance of its statutory duties.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to assure that individuals and if applicable, their parent(s) or legal guardian(s), are provided information and support services in exercising informed choice throughout the vocational rehabilitation (VR) process in accordance with appropriate federal (e.g. Code of Federal Regulations [CFR]), state law (i.e. Ohio Revised Code [ORC], Ohio Administrative Code [OAC]), Governor directives and executive orders, other governing agency (e.g. DAS, OBM) policy or guidance, and/or Executive Director expectations.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all VR staff and VR contractors.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Refer to “Vocational Rehabilitation Definitions” (80-VR-99.A).

V. POLICY

A. General

1. OOD shall provide information to individuals and if applicable, their parent or legal guardian throughout the VR process as required by law (e.g. rights and duties). This information shall be provided, in writing, and when appropriate, in the individual’s native language or through an appropriate mode of communication.

2. AWARE shall be updated with pertinent conversations, recommendations, justifications, approvals and/or other actions taken in relation to this policy and subsequent procedures. If supervisory or management approval is required during the VR process, the supervisor or manager shall document their approval in AWARE. If written approval is received from a supervisor or manager it shall be added to AWARE.
 - a. Informed choice and outcome(s) shall be documented throughout the VR process as well as in the comprehensive assessment, and the IPE as appropriate.
3. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall ensure that individuals (i.e. populations such as youth with disabilities, students with disabilities and individuals with cognitive or other disabilities) are aware of the availability of additional support services and assistance in exercising informed choice (e.g. DD rights).
4. Informed choice does not guarantee that an individual's chosen employment outcome and/or the service(s) requested will be supported by VR Staff or VR Contractor.

B. Provision of Informed Choice

1. Informed choice shall be provided to individuals and if applicable, their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) throughout the VR process.
2. Information shall be provided to assist individuals and if applicable, their parent(s) or legal guardian(s), in acquiring material that enables them to exercise informed choice during assessments for eligibility and the determination of VR services and providers.
3. Information shall be provided to assist individuals and if applicable, their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in making an informed choice regarding selecting an employment outcome.
 - a. In order to receive support from OOD, an individual's selected employment outcome shall be in a competitive integrated environment.
4. Information shall be provided to ensure individuals and if applicable, their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) can make an informed choice regarding the development and implementation of an IPE and any subsequent amendments.

C. Documentation of Informed Choice

1. The provision of informed choice shall be documented in the AWARE case record.
2. At a minimum, informed choice shall be documented during the following phases of a case as detailed below.
 - a. During application and intake.
 - b. During eligibility determination and other phases when determining assessment services.
 - c. During Comprehensive Assessment (CA) and the IPE and subsequent amendments for:
 1. the determination of VR services;
 2. the selection of providers; and

3. choosing an employment outcome.

d. At case closure.

D. Identifying Services and Selection of Providers

1. To assist in making an informed choice regarding VR services and providers, information regarding VR services and an approved providers listed on OOD's Provider Management Program shall be provided to individuals and if applicable, their parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

E. Violation

An employee who violates this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including removal.

FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS

- N/A

RESOURCES

- Procedure(s) issued in conjunction with this policy.
- AWARE Manual

REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Deputy Director, or designee, to annually review this policy, on or before, the date listed in the header and if applicable, make any necessary revisions. The Deputy Director or designee shall document the annual review as required in OOD Policy 10-ADM-01 "Policy and Procedure Development, Review, Dissemination and Acknowledgement".