




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:	June 17, 2019
Approved:	Kevin L. Miller, Director 
Origin:	Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired
Supersedes:	80-VR-07 (01/23/17)
History:	80-VR-07 (09/02/14) VRP-0910 (04/06 and versions prior to 04/06) and any other policy on Informed Choice issued prior to this Policy.
Review date:	Review By – 11/02/20 Implement Revisions By – 05/03/21

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 or legal guardian, 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 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 Vocational Rehabilitation (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 procedure.
 - a. If supervisory or management approval is required during the VR process, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall, via a "Custom Activity Due" in AWARE, request approval which shall include a written justification.
 - b. The supervisor or manager shall consider the VR Staff or VR Contractors' justification and document his/her approval or denial within the "Activity Due" as detailed below.
 - i. If approval is based on the written justification, the supervisor/manager shall enter "Approved" in the "Comments" and change the activity status to "Completed."
 - ii. If approval is based on the written justification but additional conditions/requirements need to be addressed before VR Staff or VR Contractor can take action on the approval; the supervisor/manager shall enter "Approved with Conditions" and document the conditions/requirements in the "Comments" and change the activity status to "Completed".
 - iii. If denied, the supervisor/manager does not agree with the justification, he/she shall enter the words "Request Denied," and document the reason(s) for denial in the "Comments" and change the activity status to "Completed."
3. If any VR Staff or VR Contractors are Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC-certified) and will be directly involved with an individual's case, he/she shall complete the "Professional Disclosure Statement" (80-VR-01.E).
 - a. VR Staff or VR Contractors who are not a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC-certified) are exempt from this requirement.
 - b. Once completed, the "Professional Disclosure Statement" shall be reviewed and signed by the individual and, if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian, and the CRC-certified VR Staff or VR Contractor.
 - i. Once signed, the statement shall be scanned into the AWARE Participant Module, as a Case Note, with the category "Professional Disclosure Statement" and summary title "Signed."
4. If, at any time during the VR process, an individual or, if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian, wishes for someone other than his/her parent or legal guardian to take part in any step of the process or if additional records and/or assessments are needed (e.g. medical records), a "Consent and Release of Information" form (80-VR-01.G) must be completed and signed for each person or entity and placed into the AWARE case record.
 - a. If, at any time during the VR process, an individual or, if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian, wishes to withdrawal consent from any person or entity listed on his/her application or on a completed consent, a "Withdrawal of Consent" form (80-VR-01.H) must be completed, signed and placed in the AWARE case record.
5. Information shall be provided in a manner that ensures all individuals and, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian, are able to exercise informed choice in areas, including, but not limited to, employment outcome, VR services, and provider selection.

6. 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 or legal guardian throughout the VR process.
 - a. Information shall be provided to individuals and, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian to support their ability to exercise informed choice during:
 - i. assessments for eligibility;
 - ii. determination of VR services and providers/suppliers;
 - iii. selection of an employment outcome in a competitive integrated setting;
 - iv. 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 throughout the VR process.

D. Identifying Services and Selection of Providers/Suppliers

1. Individuals and, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian shall be given information about VR services and approved providers/suppliers to assist them with making informed choices.

E. Violation

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

FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS

- N/A

RESOURCES

- Professional Disclosure Statement (80-VR-01.E)

FUNDING

Programs provided by the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities are funded, in whole or in part, with federal grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

For purposes of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program, including Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), OOD received 78.7% of its funding through the DOE VR grant. In Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2018, OOD received \$100,336,097 in federal funds. Funds appropriated by the State covered 21.3 % of the total costs, or \$27,155,767. Of these federal funds, \$15,050,415 is set aside for Pre-ETS.

For purposes of the Supported Employment Program, the DOE VR grant funded 100% of the costs for the Supported Employment for Youth with a Disability Program. In FFY 2018, OOD received \$303,725.

The grant also funded 95% of the Supported Employment Program (non-Youth). In FFY 2018, OOD received \$303,725 and the State appropriated funds paid the remaining 5% or \$33,747 of the total costs.

For purposes of the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who are Blind (OIB) Program, the federal grant received from DOE in FFY 2018 paid 90% of the total costs incurred under the program. In FFY 2018, OOD received \$1,174,400 in federal grant funds. Funds appropriated by the State paid 10% or \$130,489 of the total costs incurred under the OIB program.

For purposes of the Independent Living (IL) Program, the federal grant received from HHS paid 90% of the total costs incurred in FFY 2018. In FFY 2018, OOD received funding of \$632,411. Funds appropriated by the State paid 10% or \$70,268 of the total costs incurred under the IL Program.

REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Deputy Director, or designee, to 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 "Policy and Procedure Development, Review, Dissemination and Acknowledgement" (10-ADM-01).