




Title:	Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Assessment Services
Procedure #:	80-VR-11-01
Policy Reference:	80-VR-11
Legal Reference:	OAC 3304-2-53, 3304-2-54, 3304-2-56, 3304-2-59, 3304-2-62; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(6), 361.36, 361.41, 361.42, 361.44, 361.45, 361.47, 361.48, 361.52, 361.53, 361.54
Effective Date:	April 22, 2019
Approved:	Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director 
Origin:	Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired
Supersedes:	80-VR-11-01 (10/23/17)
History:	80-VR-11-01 (11/17/14)
Review/ Implementation	Begin Review – 11/02/20 Implement Revisions By – 05/03/21

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide direction for the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) assessment services in accordance with appropriate federal (e.g. Code of Federal Regulations [CFR]) and 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.

Refer to the AWARE Manual for more detailed instructions regarding the management of cases in AWARE.

II. APPLICABILITY

This procedure applies to all VR Staff and VR Contractors.

III. DEFINITIONS

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

IV. PROCEDURES

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 VR Staff or VR Contractor are a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (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 an individual wishes someone other than his/her legal guardian to take part in any area of the process for VR services, the individual shall be required to complete and sign a "Consent to Obtain and Release Information" (80-VR-01.G) form.
5. "Transition Services" (80-VR-11-12) shall be followed for additional guidance and direction regarding assessment services for students with a disability enrolled in a secondary educational institution.
6. Refer to "Vocational Rehabilitation Purchases" (40-FIN-01-06) for additional direction regarding the purchase of assessment services.

B. Provision of Assessment Services

1. Assessment services may be provided to the extent they are necessary, to facilitate the VR Staff or VR Contractor's determination of:

- a. eligibility for VR services;
 - b. priority category under Order of Selection (OOS);
 - c. readiness for employment;
 - d. an appropriate employment outcome; and/or
 - e. VR services needed to reach the employment outcome.
2. Prior to the purchase of any assessment service, VR Staff or VR Contractors shall utilize observation, vocational counseling and guidance skills, professional judgement, and information gathered during intake to substantiate the need for the service; which may include, but not limited to:
 - a. review of previous case information in AWARE, if applicable; and
 - b. review of records from known treatment and/or service providers.
 3. When assessments are determined necessary, VR Staff or VR Contractors should refer the individual for the needed assessment service(s) within three (3) business days.
 4. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall ensure the necessary assessment service(s) are provided as detailed below.
 - a. In the most integrated setting possible.
 - b. Consistent with the individual's needs and informed choice.
 - c. By means of comparable benefits and/or by no or low cost service providers.
 - i. Assessment services for determining eligibility (Section B.1.a.) and vocational rehabilitation service needs (Section B.1.e) are exempt from the exploration of comparable services and benefits.
 - a) Through informed choice, an individual and if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian may choose to utilize a comparable service or benefit to meet, in whole or part, the cost of these services as long as it will not delay the provision of the intended service(s).
 - d. In accordance with OOD Fee Schedules.
 - e. Where applicable, by individuals who are licensed or certified to provide the needed service(s).
 5. VR Staff or VR Contractor may provide appropriate supports (e.g. assistive technology devices/services, personal assistance services) to accommodate the rehabilitation needs of the individual during the completion of assessment services.
 6. VR Staff and VR Contractors may provide maintenance services (e.g. transportation, child care) by following the direction in "Maintenance Services" (80-VR-1-02) , to the extent that they are necessary, for the participation in assessment services.

- a. Wherever possible, ancillary services shall be arranged for and funded by the individual and if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian as part of his/her contribution to his/her VR program.
 - b. Ancillary services are not required to be included on an IPE when provided in association with an assessment service.
7. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall provide justification for the necessity of VR assessment services (including ancillary services) in an AWARE Case Note titled "Assessment Justification."
- a. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall follow "Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Informed Choice" (80-VR-07 and 80-VR-07-01) and shall include the informed choice discussion in the "Assessment Justification" case note.
 - i. In this situation, it is not necessary to create a separate "informed choice" case note.

C. Assessment Services to Determine Eligibility and Priority Category under OOS

1. When an individual is in "Application" status, VR Staff or VR Contractors are limited to only providing assessment services that are necessary to determine eligibility for VR services and/or the individual's priority category under OOS in accordance with "Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Eligibility Determination" (80-VR-06-01) and "Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Order of Selection and Statewide Wait List" (80-VR-06-02).
2. VR Staff or VR Contractors may purchase assessment services if there is not enough information gathered during the intake process to document impairments and/or functional limitations. These services may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. medical evaluation to determine the presence of a physical impairment;
 - b. psychological evaluation to determine the presence of an intellectual, psychosocial or cognitive impairment, including neuropsychological evaluations (when appropriate);
 - c. vision evaluation to determine the presence of a visual impairment;
 - d. audiology evaluation to determine the presence of a hearing impairment; and/or
 - e. speech evaluation to determine the presence of a communicative impairment.

D. Assessment Services to Identify Necessary VR Services or an Appropriate Employment Outcome

1. Once an individual has been determined eligible, VR Staff or VR Contractors should only provide assessment services that are necessary to assist in the facilitation of the comprehensive assessment (CA) process, in accordance with "Comprehensive Assessment" (80-VR-04 and 80-VR-04-01), and the development and implementation of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) as outlined in "Individualized Plan for Employment" (80-VR-08 and 80-VR-08-01).
 - a. VR Staff or VR Contractor are not required to amend an IPE, if an assessment is needed, after plan implementation.

- b. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall amend an IPE if, as a result of post plan assessment services, it is determined that additional services need to added to or removed from the IPE.
2. VR Staff or VR Contractors may purchase assessment services if there is not enough information gathered during the intake and eligibility process to identify necessary VR services and/or an appropriate employment outcome. Assessment services may include, but are not limited to those detailed below.
- a. Vocational Evaluation/Vocational Testing to help evaluate and identify the individual's vocational strengths, aptitudes, abilities, capabilities, interests, and academic skill levels to select a viable employment goal.
 - i. Consideration should be given as to whether or not the individual would benefit from the use of paper/pencil tests and other assessment strategies utilized in a vocational evaluation given the nature of the individual's impairment and functional limitations.
 - b. Community Based Assessment (CBA), to assess job readiness and/or to provide information on an individual's aptitudes, abilities, behaviors, and preferences or to determine if a specific employment outcome would be an acceptable match.
 - i. CBA should be conducted in a setting consistent with the definition of competitive integrated employment, except, in limited instances when VR Staff or VR Contractor determines that the individual's needs cannot be met..
 - a) CBA provided in a non-integrated setting shall be transitioned to an integrated setting as soon as possible based upon the individual's needs.
 - ii. VR Staff or VR Contractors may initially authorize a maximum of two (2) weeks of community based assessment services
 - a) After the initial two (2) weeks of the authorized assessment, VR Staff or VR Contractors shall determine whether additional information is necessary to develop the IPE.
 - 1) If it is determined that an additional assessment is necessary, up to an additional two (2) weeks, may be authorized.
 - b) If, after four (4) weeks of CBA, the service needs of the individual are still in question, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall conduct a meeting with the individual and, preferably, the service provider, to discuss the individual's progress and next step(s).
 - 1) VR Staff or VR Contractor shall provide justification in AWARE and acquire supervisory approval to extend CBA services beyond 4 weeks
 - iii. CBA should not be utilized to prepare an individual to become job ready, only to assess job readiness and the services needed to prepare the individual for job readiness.
 - c. Career Exploration to assist an individual in selecting an employment outcome, (including Supported Employment), amongst several potential options.

- i. Career Exploration may also be utilized for extended support planning (i.e. discovery activities).
 - a) Discovery activities are commonly associated with supported and/or customized employment and may be necessary when the individual's potential skills and abilities are not readily apparent.
- ii. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall utilize vocational counseling and guidance skills, interviewing skills, professional judgement, and/or free or low-cost resources (e.g. Ohio Labor Market Information (LMI), MyLMI, OhioMeansJobs Centers, or other community agency resources) to support the individual in exploring possible careers prior to authorizing for career exploration services.
 - a) In addition, VR Staff and VR Contractors should encourage individuals to independently conduct career research using the resources listed above.
 - b) In the event that the tools listed above are not sufficient, VR Staff or VR Contractors may authorize career exploration services for the individual.
- iv. Circumstances warranting the authorization of career exploration services include, but are not limited to, the situations listed below.
 - a) Individuals who, because of the nature of their disabilities, lack the ability to independently conduct these activities and who require an intensity of service which exceeds the VR Staff or VR Contractors' capacity to provide the required level of support.
 - b) Individuals who require job shadowing to make an appropriate selection of an employment outcome and for whom the development of a job shadowing experience is expected to require an intensity of service that exceeds the VR Staff or VR Contractors' capacity to provide.
 - c) Students with disabilities who need intensive assistance with these activities as a part of their career development process.
- v. VR Staff or VR Contractors may initially authorize a maximum of ten (10) hours of career exploration services.
 - a) If after the first ten (10) hours, services have not resulted in the identification of an appropriate employment outcome, VR Staff or VR Contractors may consider up to an additional five (5) hours of services.
 - b) If after a total of fifteen (15) hours, services have not resulted in the identification of an appropriate employment outcome, the VR Staff or VR Contractor should conduct a meeting with the individual and if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian and if appropriate, the service provider, to discuss barriers to identifying an employment outcome and to determine if additional hours or other assessments are needed.
 - 1) Extension of career exploration services, beyond the fifteen (15) hours, shall be justified in an AWARE Case Note and requires supervisory approval prior to authorization.

- d. Work Incentives Planning to provide information on how participating in VR services and returning to work could impact the individual's earning potential.
 - i. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall follow the direction in "Work Incentives Services" (80-VR-11-15) when an individual is receiving SSI/SSDI.
- e. Evaluations to assess an individual's need for Activities of Daily Living, Low Vision Services, Rehabilitation Technology & Orientation and/or Mobility when identifying an employment outcome.
 - i. During the comprehensive assessment, the evaluation shall be limited to the information needed to determine:
 - a) if a proposed employment outcome can be accommodated ; and
 - b) the nature and scope of the VR services to be included on the IPE.
 - ii. An evaluation of the individual's needs, including functional evaluation of the individual in his/her customary environment, may be completed prior to the selection, acquisition or use of an assistive technology.
 - a) When authorizing for rehabilitation technology assessment services, VR Staff or VR Contractors may initially authorize up to a maximum of five (5) hours.
 - 1) If additional hours are needed VR Staff or VR Contractor shall justify in an AWARE Case Note.
- 3. In very limited circumstances, and with proper justification, VR Staff or VR Contractors may provide additional non-assessment VR services as an assessment once the individual has been determined eligible.
 - a. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall provide clear justification in the AWARE case file as to why the service must be provided prior to the development of the IPE.
 - i. For example, a single term of post-secondary training could be used as an assessment for the purpose of determining an individual's ability to succeed in the chosen educational setting.
 - a) The assessment term will not count towards the 18-month rule for completing an academic year as specified in "Post-Secondary Training" (80-VR-11-05).

E. Provision of Assessment Services after the Implementation of the IPE

- 1. VR Staff or VR Contractors may provide assessment services after the implementation of the IPE, without a clone, to the extent they are necessary to evaluate:
 - a. changes in the individual's impairment and subsequent functional limitations; and/or
 - b. the need for adjustments to the employment outcome or VR needs of the individual.
- 2. If the results of the assessment constitute substantive change(s) however, VR Staff or VR Contractors shall amend (i.e. clone) the IPE as required in "Individualized Plan for

Employment” (80-VR-08-01).

F. Violation

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

FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS

- N/A

RESOURCES

- AWARE Manual
- OOD Fee Schedules
- 80-VR-11-11 Transition Services
- 40-FIN-01-06 Vocational Rehabilitation Purchases
- 80-VR-07 and 80-VR-07-01 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Informed Choice
- 80-VR-06-01 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Eligibility Determination
- 80-VR-06-02 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Order of Selection and Statewide Wait List
- 80-VR-04 and 80-VR-04-01 Vocational Rehabilitation Comprehensive Assessment
- 80-VR-08 and 80-VR-08-01 Individualized Plan for Employment
- 80-VR-11-15 Work Incentives Services
- 80-VR-11-05 Post-Secondary

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.

REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Deputy Director, or designee, to review this procedure, 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”.