




Title:	<b>Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Information and Referral</b>
Procedure #:	<b>80-VR-11-07</b>
Policy Reference:	80-VR-11 “Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services”
Legal Reference:	ORC 3304.15, OAC 3304-2-55; 34 CFR 361.37, 361.42(a)(4)(i), and 361.52 ; Section 102 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA)
Effective Date:	May 20, 2019
Approved:	Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director 
Origin:	Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired
Supersedes:	80-VR-11-07 (1/23/17)
History:	N/A
Review/Implementation	Begin Review – 11/02/2020 Implement Revisions By – 05/03/2021

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to provide direction for implementing information and referral 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 Vocational Rehabilitation (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 Information and Referral Services for students with a disability enrolled in a secondary educational institution.
6. Refer to "Vocational Rehabilitation Fee Schedules" (80-VR-10) for guidance regarding referrals to Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) and Physical and Behavioral Health Providers.

## B. Information and Referral System

1. OOD's information and referral system ensures individuals with disabilities, including those who are placed on a statewide waitlist if OOD is operating under an order of selection (OOS), will be provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in, or regaining employment.
2. Providing Information and Referral Services
  - a. VR Staff and VR Contractors shall appropriately refer individuals to Federal and/or State programs, including programs carried out by other entities of the statewide workforce investment system (e.g. OhioMeansJobs Center, Veterans Administration, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services), that are best suited to address the specific rehabilitation, independent living and employment needs of the individual with a disability.
  - b. Situations with referral guidance are provided below.
    - i. An individual does not meet eligibility requirements for VR services.
      - a) VR Staff or VR Contractor shall provide the individual with information and guidance regarding the most appropriate services to address his/her needs.
    - ii. OOD has implemented a statewide waitlist and an individual, who has been determined eligible, is placed on the waitlist due to his/her priority category as determined through the order of selection (OOS) process and therefore will not receive VR services immediately.
      - a) VR Staff or VR Contractor shall provide the individual with information and guidance of alternative programs, including programs offering vocational counseling and job placement referrals, which could assist him/her in preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in, or regaining employment.
    - iii. An individual chooses to not pursue an employment outcome.
      - a) Prior to VR Staff or VR Contractor making a referral for an individual who makes an informed choice to not pursue an employment outcome, the individual shall be:
        - 1) informed that the purpose of VR services is to assist individuals in achieving a competitive integrated employment outcome;
        - 2) provided with information regarding the availability of employment options, VR services, and achieving competitive integrated employment;
        - 3) informed that VR services can be provided in an extended employment setting, if necessary, for the purposes of training or otherwise preparing for employment in an integrated setting;
        - 4) informed that if he/she chooses not to pursue employment in an integrated setting, he/she may seek VR services at a later time, when he/she decides to pursue a competitive integrated employment outcome; and

- 5) referred, if appropriate, to the Social Security Administration or other appropriate service providers to obtain information regarding work incentives available when receiving disability benefits.
- iv. An individual's case is being closed without an employment outcome as required in "Vocational Rehabilitation Case Closure" (80-VR-02-01).
- v. An individual chooses subminimum wage employment.
  - a) VR Staff or VR Contractor shall follow the direction in "Requirements for Subminimum Wage Employment" (80-VR-11-17).
    - 1) Designated OOD Staff shall provide information and referral services every six (6) months for the first year of employment in subminimum wage and on an annual basis thereafter.

### 3. Making Referrals to Federal and/or State Programs

- a. VR Staff or VR Contractors shall perform the steps indicated below when making a referral to appropriate Federal and/or State programs, including programs carried out by other entities of the statewide workforce investment system
  - i. Provide the individual with the following:
    - a) notice that a referral is being made by OOD to the entity carrying out the program;
    - b) a specific point of contact within the referral entity; and
    - c) information and advice regarding the most suitable services to assist him/her to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment.
  - ii. Obtain a signed "Consent to Obtain and Release Information" (80-VR-01-01.E) form from the individual and, if applicable, his/her parent or legal guardian, when appropriate.
  - iii. Complete, in its entirety, the "Information and Referral" (80-VR-11-07.A) form and send it to the appropriate entity.

#### C. Violation

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

### FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS

- ~~Referral to Community Rehabilitation Program (80-VR-11-07.A)~~ Moved to 80-VR-10.A
- ~~Referral for Physical or Behavioral Health Services (80-VR-11-07.B)~~ Moved to 80-VR-10.B
- Information and Referral (80-VR-11-07.A) was 80-VR-11-07.C

## **RESOURCES**

- 80-VR-01.E Professional Disclosure Statement
- 80-VR-02-01 Vocational Rehabilitation Case Closure
- 80-VR-01-01.E Consent to Obtain and Release Information
- 80-VR-11-12 Transition Services
- 80-VR-10 Vocational Rehabilitation Fee Schedules
- 80-VR-11-17 Requirements for Subminimum Wage Employment

## **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 review as required in "Policy and Procedure Development, Review, Dissemination and Acknowledgement" (10-ADM-01).