



NORTH  
**Dakota** Be Legendary.

Health & Human Services

## Vocational Rehabilitation

OVERVIEW – FEBRUARY 2023

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## Vocational Rehabilitation

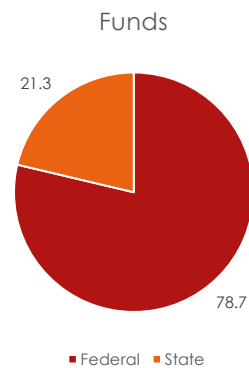
- ▶ **Learning Objectives**
  - ▶ An overview of the VR Process
  - ▶ What is the criteria for VR to determine eligible for services
  - ▶ What is an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and what services can VR provide to individuals

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# Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a program that assists individuals with disabilities to achieve **competitive integrated employment** and increased independence through rehabilitation services.

We provide training and employment services to eligible individuals with physical or mental impairments so they can become and remain employed. Services that result in **competitive integrated employment** are either provided or purchased.



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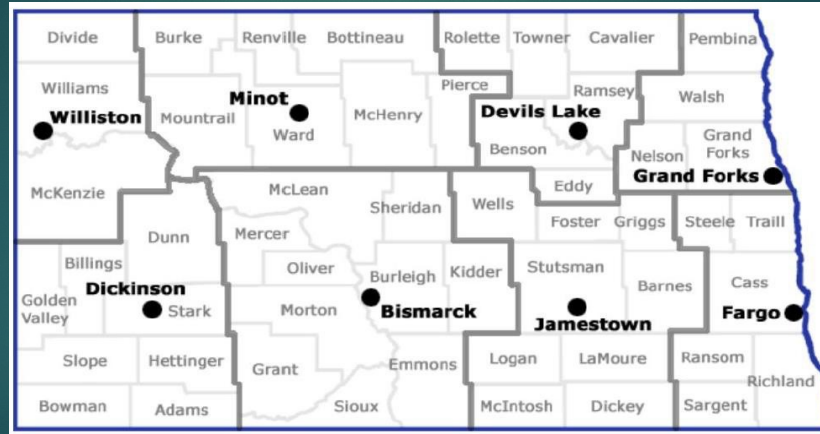


## Vocational Rehabilitation Program Purpose

► To assist individuals with disabilities to obtain, maintain or advance in competitive, integrated employment.

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VR provides services in businesses, schools and homes across ND



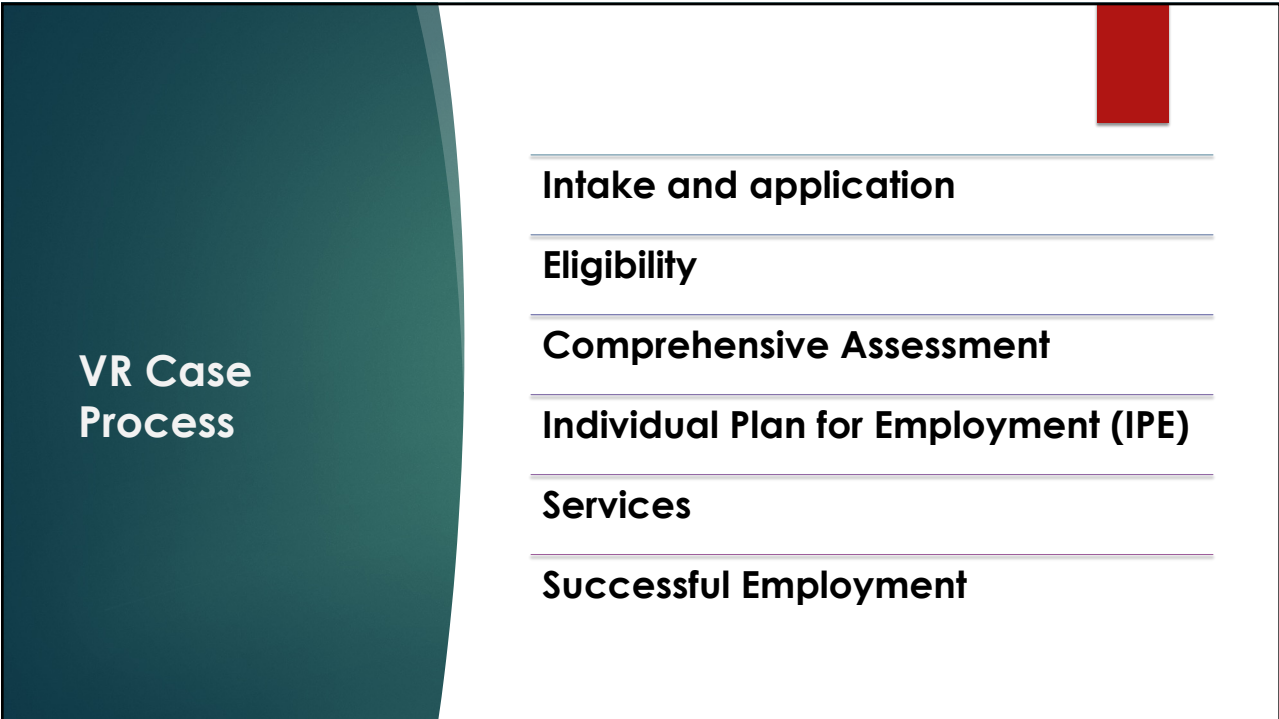
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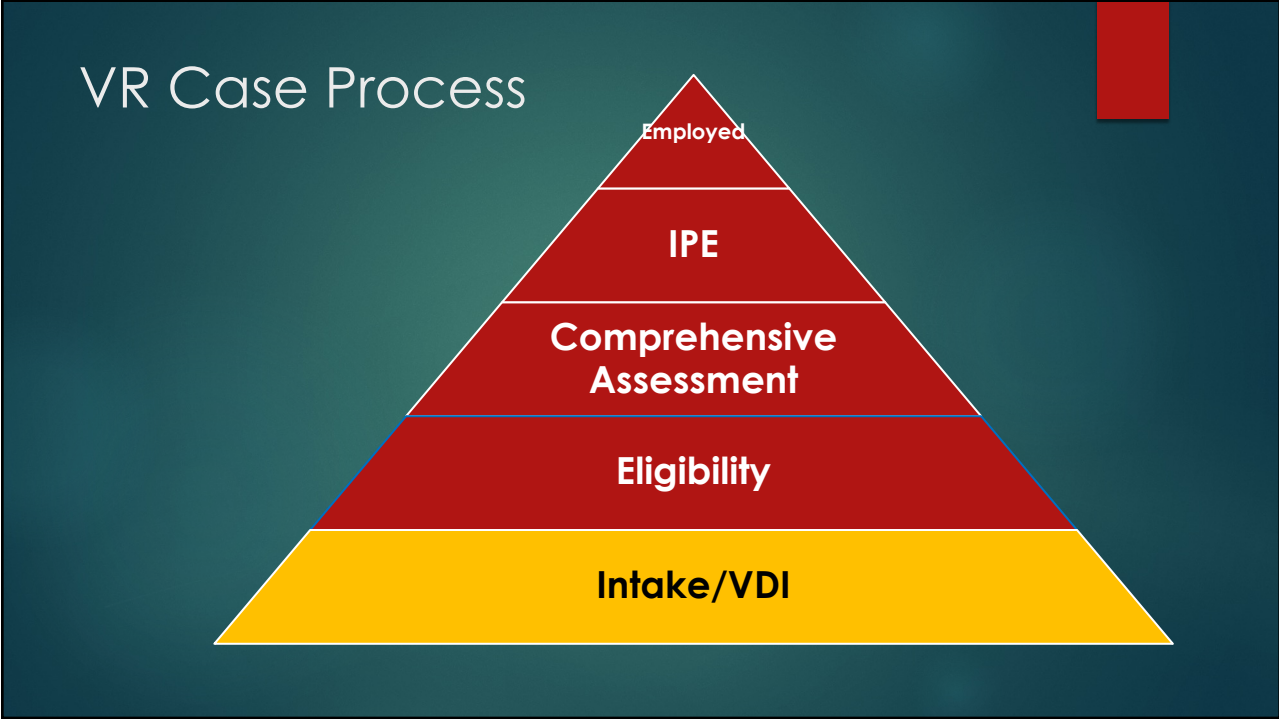
## Vocational Rehabilitation What We Do

- ▶ Assists North Dakotans with disabilities to enter or re-enter the workforce through individualized services
  - ▶ Assess skills and abilities
  - ▶ Identify a vocational goal
  - ▶ Develop an individualized plan to achieve employment
  - ▶ Provide services that result in competitive integrated employment

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## Initial Meeting

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## Initial Meeting

### Complete

Complete VR Application and Supplement

### Conduct

Conduct an Interview. Areas that will be discussed with the individual

### Complete

Complete Authorizations to Disclose Information

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# Vocational Diagnostic Intake Interview Guide

- ▶ Presenting Information
- ▶ Medical and/ or Psychological Disabilities and Functional Limitations
- ▶ Legal Considerations
- ▶ Work History
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Social History/Independent Living
- ▶ Counselor Next Step



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## Functional limitation

Functional Limitations:

- ▶ **A serious functional limitation is a loss occurring as result of a severe physical, mental or cognitive impairment, a reduction of one's capacity to perform to the degree that the individual requires services or accommodations, not typically provided to others, in order for the individual to work.**

What are NOT Functional Limitations

- ▶ **External factors, such as geographic location, criminal convictions, poor public transportation, or lack of training do not relate to a disability and therefore are not factors in determining a serious functional limitation.**

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### Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Documentation Checklist

In order for the VR Counselor to determine eligibility for VR Services documentation of the individual's disability must be acquired. A counselor can expedite eligibility determination and develop the individualized plan for employment with current and completed documentation.

	Attached	N/A	Other sources of documentation, please describe
Social Security Information			
Psychological Information			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological Evaluation</li> <li>• Neurological Evaluation</li> <li>• Psychiatric notes</li> <li>• Psychologist or counseling notes</li> </ul>			
Medical Information			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Medical Information</li> <li>• Specialist Medical Information</li> <li>• Therapies (Speech, Physical, Occupational, etc.)</li> </ul>			
DD Program Information			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current Overall Service Plan (OSP)</li> <li>• Individual Service Plan (ISP)</li> <li>• Quarterly progress reports from the provider on SFN 1414               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Summarizes what occurs in prevocational services</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Employment Readiness Assessment SFN 1800</li> </ul>			
Community Rehab Provider (CRP) Information			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevocational and vocational activities</li> </ul>			
Behavioral Plan or Behavioral			
Work History			
Educational Information			
Proof of Guardianship			
Parole and Probation, legal history			
Other Community Agencies			

\*Social Security information could include Verification of benefits, rep payee contract information, etc.

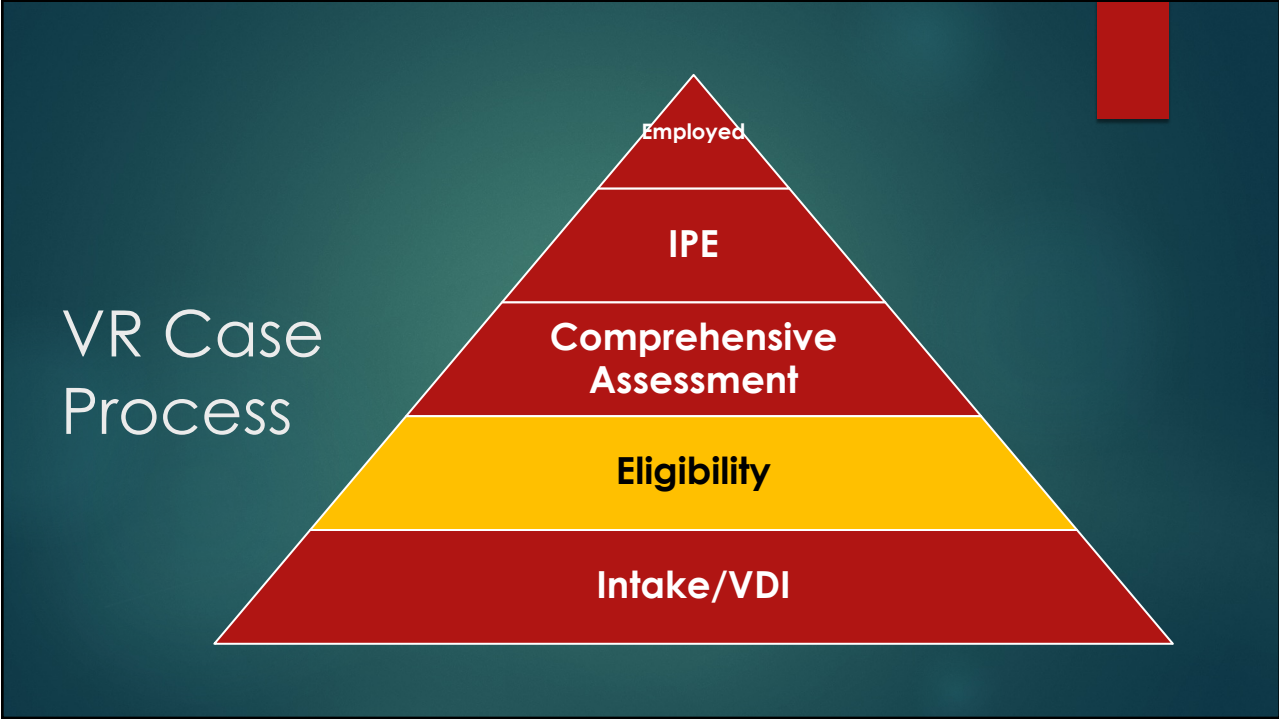
\*Work history should include dates and address of employers or volunteer sites, which could be captured in a resume or general application. Work history could include volunteer experiences, school experience work, community work Experience.

\*Educational information could include recent Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 504 Plan, MAP Scores, Summary of Performance, school transcript or grades, Work Keys, ACT score, ASVAB results. In addition, testing and assessments conducted by the school which could include the Woodcock Johnson, WAIS/WISC, Vineland/adaptive, Interest inventories, Language Assessments, etc.

\*CRP could include documentation of services provided for individuals who are receiving Pre-vocational services, small group or day habilitation services.

Other agencies could include residential staff, day habilitation supervisors, independent living centers, Autism Center, North Dakota Brain Injury Network, etc.

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## Eligibility Criteria

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The individual has a physical or mental impairment; and

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The individual's physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment for the applicant; and

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The individual requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment that is consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest, and informed choice.

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The individual must want to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment.

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## Eligibility Process

- ▶ People receiving SSI or SSDI benefits who want to work are presumed eligible for VR services.
- ▶ If VR notifies an individual that they are not eligible, the person has the right to appeal

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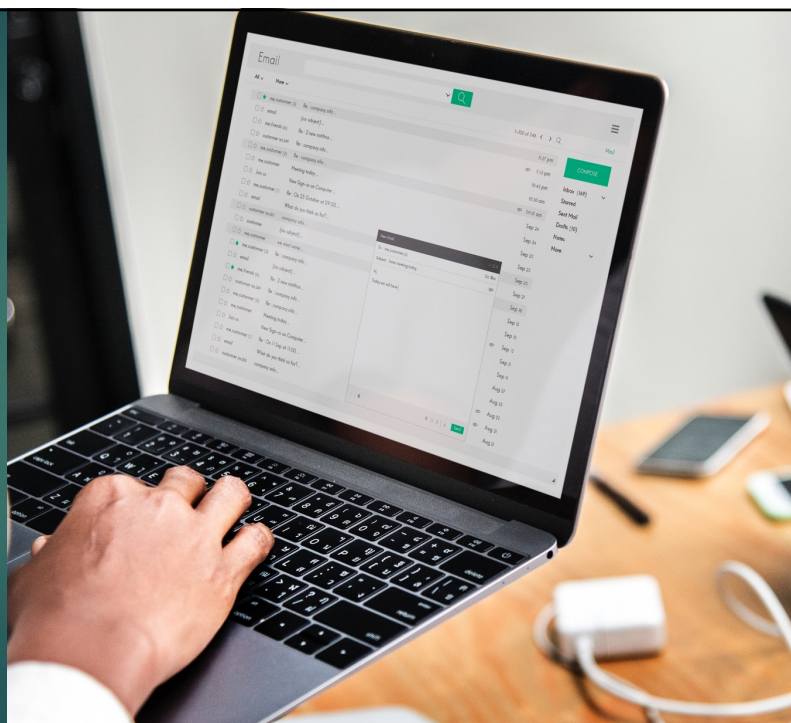


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## Documentation of Observable Disabilities

The counselor must document in the case records that the disability is observable and how the individual reports how it presents an impediment to employment.

As part of the comprehensive assessment, additional documentation will be required.



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## Disability Related Programs

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In order to determine eligibility for their services, certain programs have already verified the individual has a disability.

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To provide timely services, VR Counselors can obtain current eligibility status from these programs, through records or written communication with program staff documenting the disability that made them eligible for those programs.

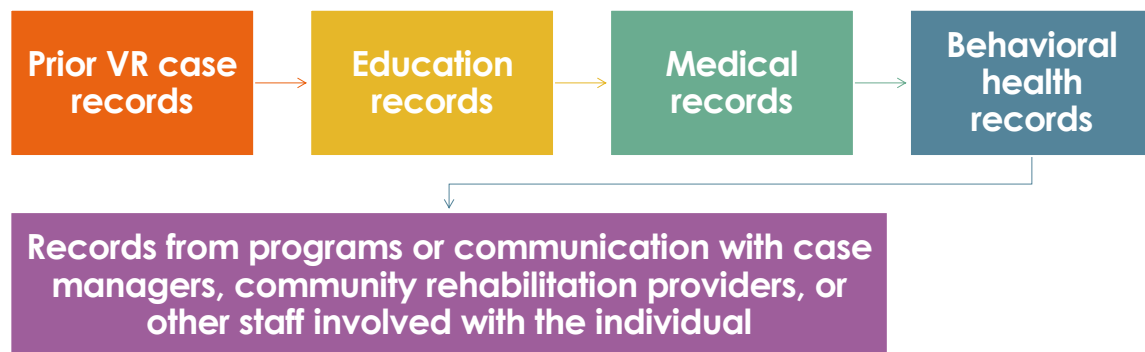
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## Use of Existing Information

VR Counselor should use existing and current information to determine eligibility for the vocational rehabilitation program. Older documentation may be appropriate when the VR Counselor has verified that the impediments are still relevant at the time of application.

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## Sources of existing information



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## Disability Related Programs

- Education Agencies (e.g. IEP/504)
- DD or Community Rehab Providers providing DD authorized services
- Human Service Center
- North Dakota School for the Deaf/Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- North Dakota Vision Services/School for Blind
- 1915i
- State Hospital
- Life Skills and Transition Center
- Home and Community Based Services/Aging and Disability

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## Completing the Eligibility

Eligibility should be completed as soon as possible but not to exceed **10 business days** of receiving

- ▶ documentation of any disability or
- ▶ verification of eligibility for SSI/SSDI.

For individuals who had a prior NDVR case, in the last 6 years, eligibility will be completed within **10 business days** of the application.

In situations when documentation of disability cannot be **obtained within 60 days**, an extension will need to signed documenting the exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of VR

MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR!

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## Eligibility Determination Extension



Unforeseen Circumstances

- ▶ An eligibility extension request should be initiated within **45 days of the date of the official date of the application.**
- ▶ The VR counselor must discuss the need for the extension with the individual, and if applicable the guardian, and obtain approval for the extension.
- ▶ Once the individual has agreed to the eligibility extension, the request must be forwarded to the regional administrator for approval, before day 60.

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## Examples of additional assessments



Medical evaluation  
(general medical,  
functional capacity  
evaluation, audiological  
evaluation, etc.)



Behavioral health  
evaluation (psychological,  
neuropsychological, or  
other relevant assessments)

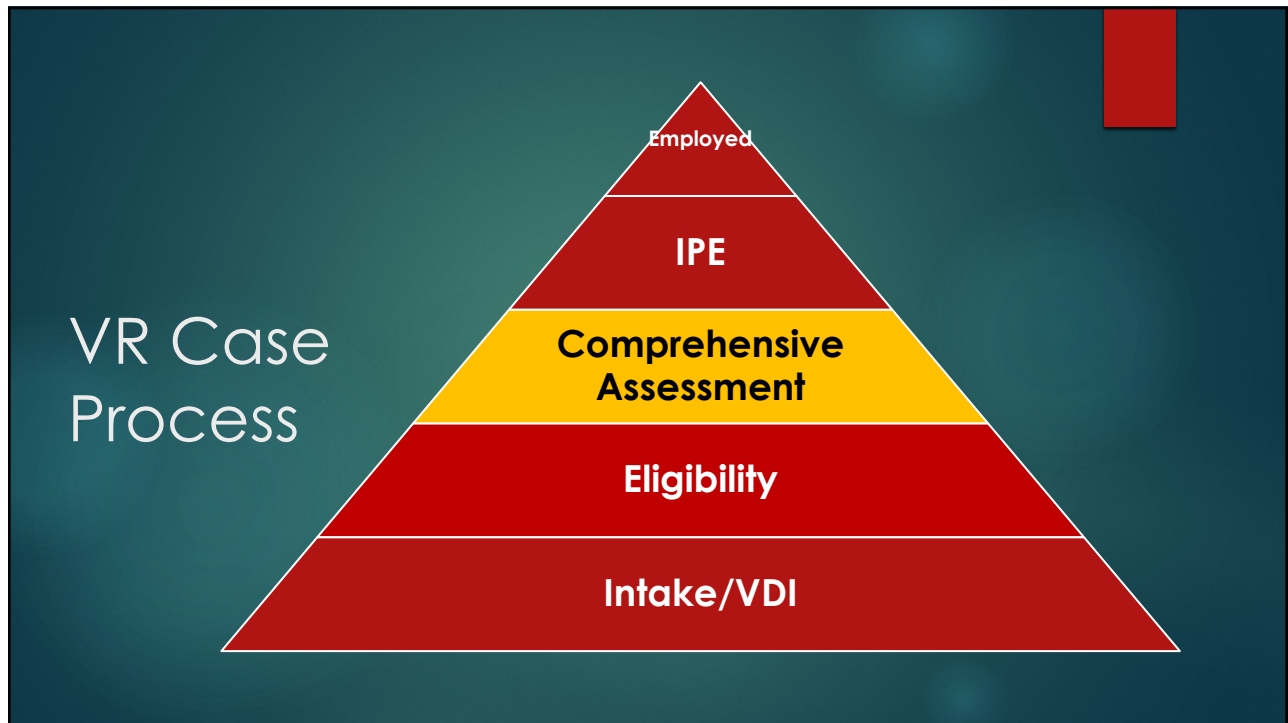


Cognitive assessment



Communication  
assessment

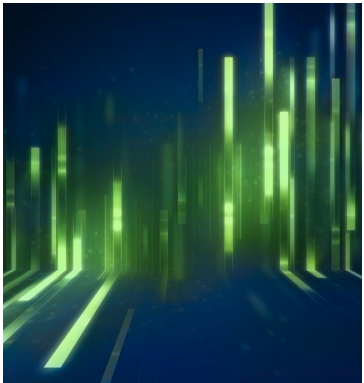
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## Comprehensive Assessment

The purpose of the comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs is to determine the employment outcome and the nature and scope of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to be included in the individualized plan for employment (IPE).



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## Comprehensive Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs Roadmap



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## Examples of Counseling Tools

Barriers to Employment

Work Motivation Scale

Offender Reintegration Scale

Employment Skills

Job Survival and Success Scale

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## Examples of Formal Assessments

[Reading-Free Vocational  
Interest Inventory \(3<sup>rd</sup> edition\)](#)

Wide Range Achievement Test  
(WRAT-5)

World of Work Inventory  
[www.wowi.com](http://www.wowi.com)

ONET Interest Profiler

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## Gathering Information

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# The Big Eight



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## Existing Information

Existing information from other agencies or previous closed VR files. To the maximum extent possible, the VR counselor can:

- Use existing records.
- Rely on information from the individual's experiences
- Consider the validity of the information based upon the source and the VRC's knowledge of the individual.

Individuals must not be required to participate in unnecessary assessments, such as a psychological assessment or medical assessment, if:

- Comparable information is available from records and is sufficient; or
- The assessment will not directly assist with determining the IPE goal or the VR services to the individual.

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## Work History

Work history. The VRC will gather information from the individual to include;

- Job titles
- Job duties,
- Previous accommodations
- Length of time in each position,
- Hiring/educational requirements, and
- Reasons for leaving previous positions.
- Assess the individual's satisfaction with the job, the employer, and co-workers.

This information should be used to identify transferable skills for future employment.



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## Limitations – Impediments to Employment

The individual's impediments to employment need to be clearly outlined before the development of an employment goal. The establishment of an appropriate employment goal requires that both the VR counselor and individual are aware of and address barriers to employment including the individual's perception of their limitations. This involves addressing the following areas:

- Physical limitations (lifting, walking, carrying, driving, stooping, reaching, handling, and bending)
- Mental limitations (coping with stress, working with other people, working alone)
- Current work tolerance
- Acceptance of disability
- Cognitive functioning

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## Personal Social & Economic Factors

It is important for the VRC to gather, document, and understand personal social and economic considerations. These considerations include:

- Values (personal and work)
- Family
- Service or support agencies
- Legal
- Financial (current realities and future expectations)
- Substance Use
- Available supports

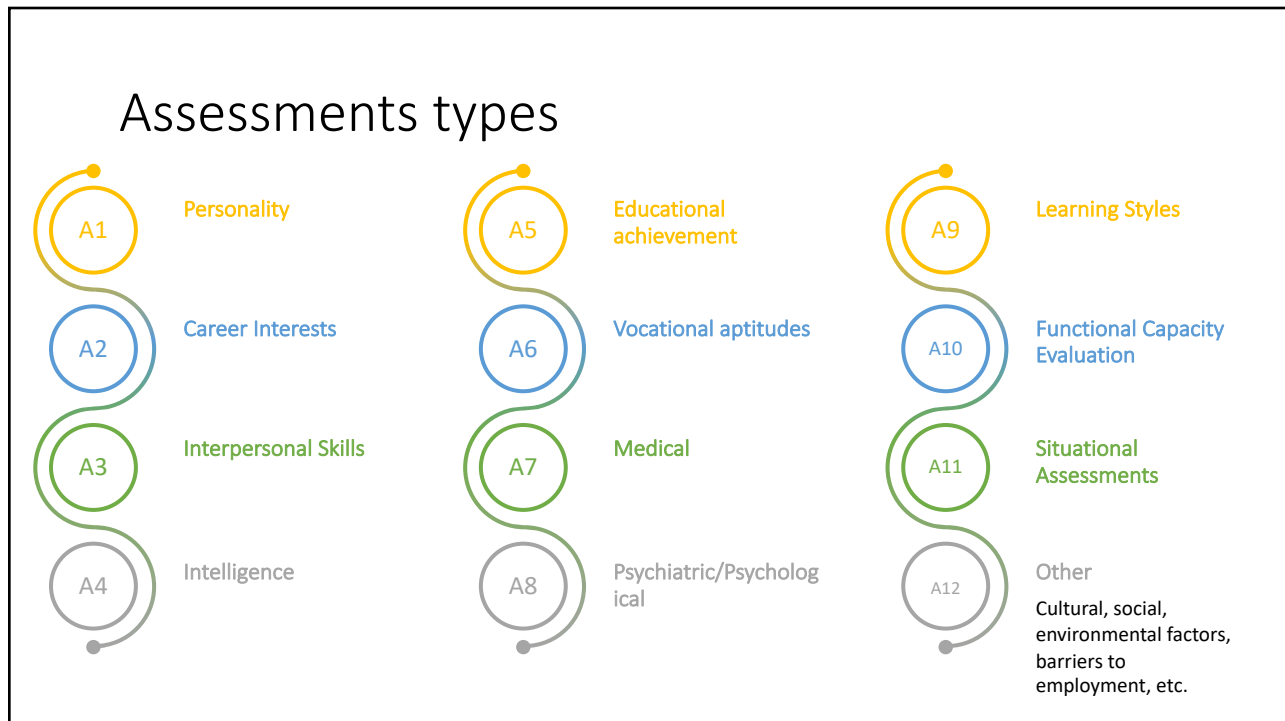


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## Comprehensive Assessment

THE VR COUNSELOR PURCHASES ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT TO COMPLETE THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT.

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## Role of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

The VR Counselor should communicate information at the level of the individual's understanding and consider their ability to understand important assessment information. Counselors should be familiar with the different tests, measures, or approaches used when completing assessments.

The VR counselor will:

- Collect, analyze, synthesize, and interpret available information
- Engage the individual in the assessment process

If additional information is needed, the VRC, along with the individual receiving services, should decide how to obtain the information and establish appropriate timeframes for completion. The decision to pursue additional assessments will be fully discussed. The individual's active involvement should be documented in the case file.

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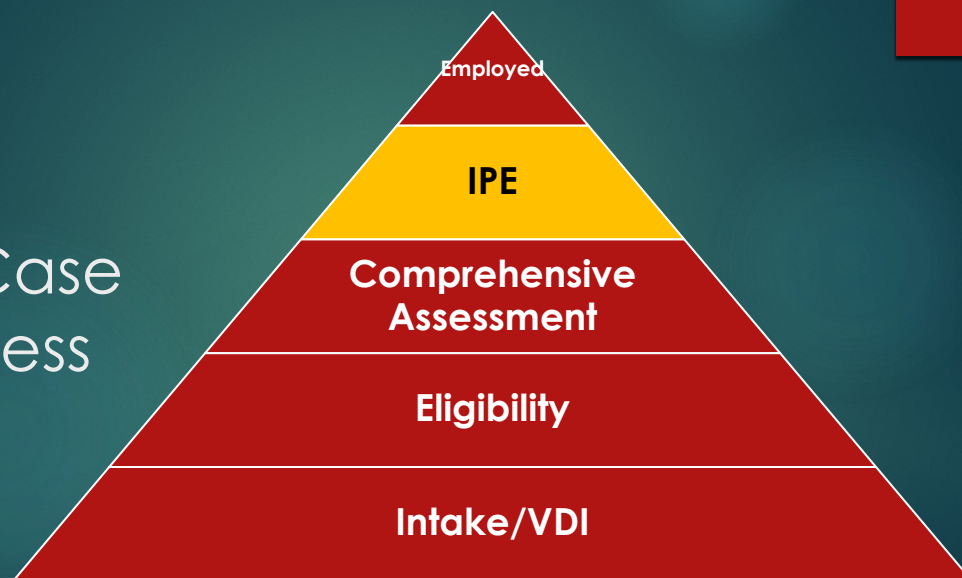
## Individual's Participation in Assessments

### The individual is expected to:

- Work with the VR Counselor to understand how the assessment process is used to determine eligibility, plan for services, and identify an employment goal.
- Be available for assessment services and complete any agreed upon assessment activities; and
- Participate in a discussion of the results and what they mean in terms of achieving an employment outcome.

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## VR Case Process



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## Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

It is the responsibility of VR counselors to work with individuals to develop the IPE. The IPE must be signed by the counselor, individual and if applicable, guardian. Per federal requirements, the IPE shall be developed within 90 calendar days from the date of eligibility.

The VR counselor must take steps for the timely completion of the IPE. These steps include:

- ▶ setting up appointments with the individual to begin gathering information
- ▶ or completion of activities necessary to develop and complete the IPE.

Building rapport with the individual during this period will also assist in the successful development of the IPE.

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## Plan Extension

### The Plan Extension must include:

- the date the extension was agreed upon.
- A description of the circumstance beyond the control of the individual and/or VR counselor that created the need for an extension.
- A description of any activities that will occur.
- Steps that will be taken to complete the process and the timeline for those steps.
- The date by which the plan will be completed.
- Documentation of the individual's and/or guardian's agreement to the plan extension.

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## Plan Extension



### Unforeseen Circumstances

- ▶ A plan extension request should be initiated within **75 days of the date of eligibility**.
- ▶ The VR counselor must discuss the need for the extension with the individual, and if applicable the guardian, and obtain approval for the extension.
- ▶ Once the individual has agreed to the plan extension, the request must be forwarded to the regional administrator for approval, before day 90.
- ▶ In the event a second extension is required, the request to state office for a second extension must come from the Regional Administrator.

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## Individualized Plan for Employment

The IPE must be designed to achieve a specific competitive integrated employment outcome that is selected by the individual and is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

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# Services

- ▶ VR offers many types of services. The employment plan is customized to suit the individual's employment and disability needs.
- ▶ The services listed on the IPE are the services needed to achieve the employment goal. VR does not take a “cookie cutter” approach to services.
- ▶ Services listed on the plan must be reasonable and necessary for the individual to reach their employment goal.
- ▶ Services must be authorized by the VR Counselor before they can begin.

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# IPE Services

## Service Impact Areas

- Preparing
- Entering
- Engaging
- Retaining
- Advancing

## Necessary and necessary

- Address the functional limitations associated with the disability(s)
- Overcome or circumvent an impediment
- Address rehabilitation needs
- Attain/retain the employment goal

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# What should be captured in the IPE?

- ▶ **Employment Goal**
  - ▶ Labor Market Information
  - ▶ Comprehensive Assessment
- ▶ **Services must be:**
  - ▶ Reasonable and Necessary
  - ▶ Employment goal and/or to mitigate the Functional limitations associated with the disability
  - ▶ Provided by VR or through comparable benefits
- ▶ **Responsibilities and identification of the individual's measured Progress**

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# Service Addressing the Functional Limitations associated with the Disability and Employment Goal?

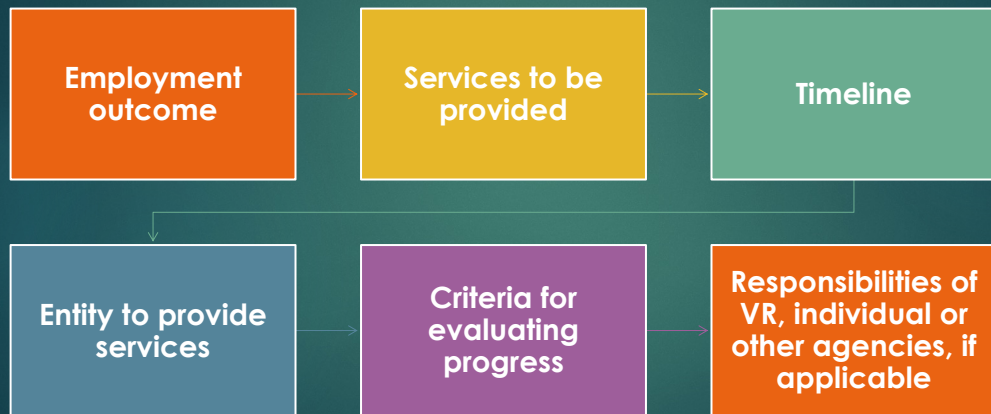
The IPE should address the individual's disability and how it will factor into both the employment goal and the services to be provided. Some questions you might ask:

- ▶ Does the person have an ongoing or continuous need(s) (e.g., therapy, medication management, etc.)?
- ▶ How will the person address the need(s)?
- ▶ Does the individual require support services (e.g., transportation, child-care, etc.)?
- ▶ Will the individual need additional assessments or ancillary services such as assistive technology, interpreters, etc.?

Consider any related factors (e.g., location, hours, educational requirements, transportation issues, training needs, etc.)

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# IPE Requirements



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# Comparable Benefits

- ▶ Benefits that are provided or paid for in whole or in part by other federal, state or local public agencies; by health insurance or by employee benefits;
- ▶ Benefits that are available to the individual at the time needed, to ensure the person's progress toward achieving the employment outcome; and
- ▶ Benefits that are commensurate to the services that the individual would otherwise receive from VR

Comparable benefits do not include awards and scholarship based upon merit.

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# IPE Review

Must be reviewed at least annually

Must be amended if necessary due to changes in

Changes will not take place until agreed to by individual and VR counselor

- Employment outcome
- VR services
- VR service providers

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# Questions

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