

The Role of NH Vocational Rehabilitation in Transition Planning



NHVR Mission Statement

To assist eligible NH citizens with disabilities to secure suitable employment and financial and personal independence by providing rehabilitation services

NHVR and Transition

In collaboration with schools, NHVR will assist eligible transitioning students to enter the world of work, complete his or her educational goals as they relate to employment, and obtain employment skills to meet the needs of employers

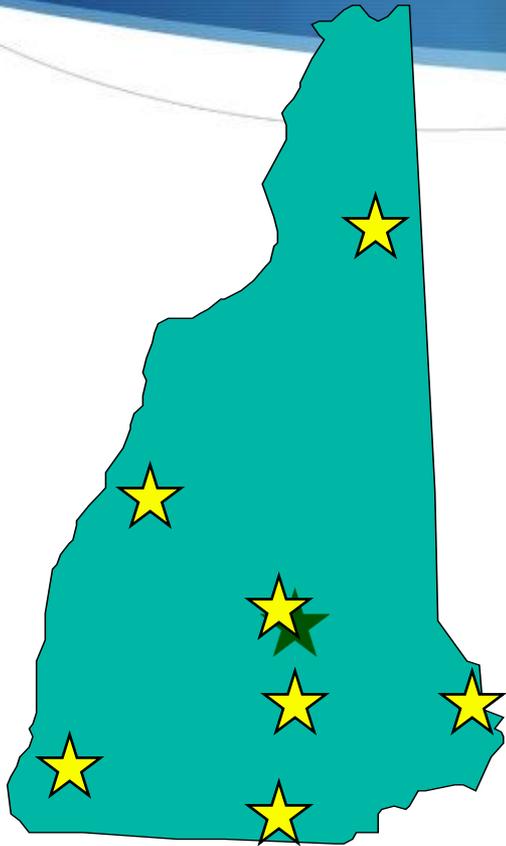
Keys to our Philosophy

- ◆ Self determination
- ◆ Informed choice
- ◆ Knowledge of self and knowledge of the world of work leads to the matching of the appropriate type of work and environment

Quick NHVR Facts

- ◆ NHVR is a statewide program that is both state and federally funded. It has been in existence for over 90 years
- ◆ There are seven regional offices around the state, with the administrative office located in Concord. It includes services for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, and blind and visually impaired
- ◆ 17 counselors provide transition services in 70+ schools, serving approximately 1100-1300 students per year
- ◆ 4 counselors provide expertise to individuals who are blind or visually impaired (SBVI)
- ◆ 3 counselors provide expertise to individuals who experience deafness or hearing loss

NH Vocational Rehabilitation



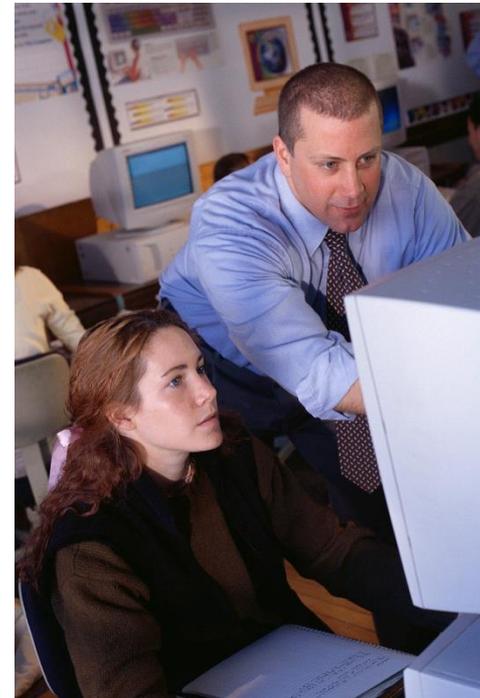
★ Berlin
★ Concord &
Administrative Office

★ Keene
★ Lebanon
★ Manchester
★ Nashua
★ Portsmouth

★ Regional Offices
★ Service Area
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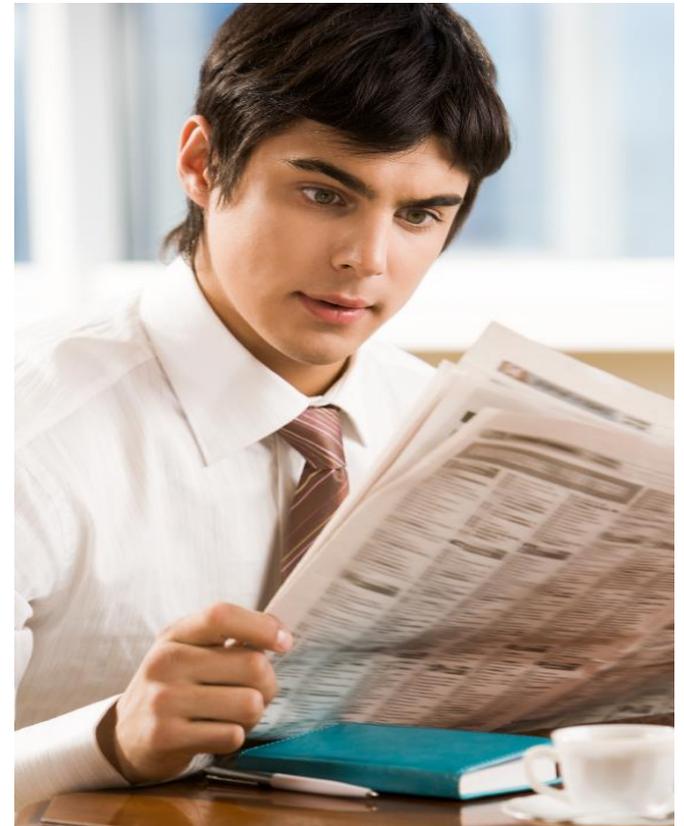
About NHVR

- ◆ Most counselors live in the area they cover and are familiar with their communities
- ◆ An excellent resource for employers, schools, agencies and persons with disabilities on how disability affects employment



Our Success!!

In 2013, Vocational Rehabilitation successfully assisted 1,162 NH citizens with disabilities to obtain employment or return to work.



Who is Eligible?

- ◆ Any individual with a physical, psychological, intellectual or sensory impairment
- ◆ The impairment for that individual constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to **employment**
- ◆ And that individual requires and would benefit from vocational rehabilitation services to overcome **employment** impediments to prepare for, enter, engage in or retain **gainful employment**
Employment for VR is in an integrated and competitive setting

What is a Disability?

- ◆ A physical impairment
- ◆ An emotional/psychiatric impairment
- ◆ A learning disability
- ◆ A sensory impairment such as blindness, hearing loss, deafblind or Autism

What Documentation is Needed?



Existing medical documentation signed by a qualified representative, as appropriate to the disability (MD, licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, SAIF, certified substance abuse counselor, etc)

Documentation cont.

Evidence that the individual is receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) which substantiates the disability and a substantial impediment to employment

An Individual Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan, although it contains helpful information, is **NOT** documentation of a disability for VR

Substantial impediments/barriers to employment?

- ◆ The individual is unable to learn or complete work tasks either from jobs in their work history or from tasks found in entry level jobs in the community
- ◆ The individual is unable to prepare for the job, communicate appropriately or effectively with the employer, coworkers or customers or has been unable to keep a job due to disability
- ◆ The individual's work behaviors are impediments to employment, i.e. chronic tardiness, poor attendance, poor hygiene or inability to get along with coworkers

Key VR Services

- ◆ Vocational guidance and counseling
- ◆ Job placement
- Career exploration
- Job Analysis
- Job seeking and keeping skills services
- Rehabilitation technology, accommodations, and/or modifications
- Specific job training
- Technical assistance regarding disability impact on specific job

Important Things to Remember

- ◆ An educational barrier does not always mean there is an employment barrier
- ◆ Some students who identified as having a disability in education (coded)
- ◆ Family income does not impact eligibility, but is considered for services in the Individual Plan for Employment
- ◆ VR is **NOT** an entitlement program, it is eligibility based and voluntary

Referral Process for Students



Who Should be Referred?

Students who have:

- 💧 A physical impairment
- 💧 A learning disability
- 💧 An emotional or psychiatric impairment
- 💧 A sensory impairment

Who Can Refer?

- ◆ Students
- ◆ Parents
- ◆ Teachers
- ◆ Guidance Counselors
- ◆ School Nurses
- ◆ Special Education staff
- ◆ Psychologists
- ◆ Therapists
- ◆ Case managers
- ◆ Other agencies (DCYF, etc)

When to refer?

- ◆ Beginning of the Junior year or age 16 (two years prior to graduation or exit)
- ◆ Youth at risk of dropping out of school (as early as 14-15 years old)
- ◆ If a possible referral doesn't fit the “typical” categories, please call your VR counselor to discuss the individual circumstances

NOTE: Students placed “out of district” are typically served by the regional office that serves the **sending** school district

VR Procedures Upon Referral

- ◆ VR counselors are available in each regional office to serve transition students
- ◆ VR counselor schedules initial meeting with referral sources
- ◆ Referral source provides demographic information along with current school records
- ◆ VR counselor contacts student/parent
 - ◆ Meetings with the students and family upon referral and thereafter can happen at the school and the local VR office. Participating in meetings at both locations is highly encouraged
- ◆ VR counselor reviews application materials
- ◆ VR determines eligibility and/or need for further assessment

The Individualized Plan for Employment

- ◆ The Plan for employment must be jointly developed and agreed upon by the student and VR counselor
- ◆ The plan must include
 - ◆ Work Goal
 - ◆ Objectives and Services to reach the work goal

When is the Plan developed?

- ◆ The Plan is individualized based on a student's need and employment goal, after a period of comprehensive assessment
- ◆ The plan is created as soon as the counselor and the student determine an appropriate employment goal, with completion by the date of graduation

Other considerations in Plan development

- ◆ Individualized Employment Planning
- ◆ Flexibility
- ◆ Age of Majority/Confidentiality
- ◆ Build on what has been accomplished
- ◆ The IPE is not completed at an IEP meeting
- ◆ Coordination with other agencies
- ◆ VR Services are Time Limited
- ◆ Link to the IEP/transition plan
- ◆ Consider current IEP goals and objectives
- ◆ Expand this knowledge to the world of work

Example Services

That do not require financial need evaluation

- ◆ Career guidance and counseling
- ◆ Information on employment trends
- ◆ Job seeking/keeping skills
- ◆ On the job training
- ◆ Advocacy, information, and referral to other community services
- ◆ Participation in student's transition process

Example Services

Based on Financial need of student/family

- ◆ Adaptive equipment
- ◆ College/Course work
- ◆ Employment training
- ◆ Uniforms
- ◆ Tools
- ◆ Driver's education
- ◆ Transportation

Remember.....

- ◆ All services offered are based on the individual's **need** and **employment** goal!
- ◆ VR is required to investigate comparable benefits and services, and is to provide the most appropriate and cost effective services!

How Can VR Fit into the Transition Picture?

Working together toward a common goal



Things to think about ...

- ◆ When a student is unsure of what he/she would like to do for employment, VR can provide guidance and tools that will assist in the development of an employment goal
- ◆ VR can assist the student to figure out what their skills are and what types of support they might need to learn about a job and to keep their job
- ◆ VR can provide technical, expert assistance to the student and their transition team around issues related to employment and disability

Important Points to Remember!

- ◆ DO refer students to Vocational Rehabilitation!
 - ◆ School should give family and student VR information and then contact VR transition counselor informing them of the referral (preferably in writing)
 - ◆ Student and family need to APPLY for VR services
 - ◆ VR needs parental permission (for those under 18) to contact students and share info with school
 - ◆ VR will often need case manager and school support to contact family
- ◆ After information has been shared with family AND the transition counselor has been notified (preferably in writing) check off the box on the IEP that says team referred to NHVR

More Important Points

- DO NOT promise services in the IEP that are to be delivered and funded by VR without the counselor being contacted, attending the meeting and approving the service
 - ◆ Often even though referral is made, the student/family does not follow through, fails to apply or decides they do not want VR assistance
 - ◆ Remember.....VR is **voluntary**
- Following contact with the family and the VR counselor, DO invite VR to IEP meetings where the transition plan and postsecondary employment/training goals will be discussed
 - ◆ The IEP meeting should **not** be the first contact that a student and their family has with VR
- DO NOT make assumptions!

Questions?

