

Iowa Department for the Blind
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Program Procedures and Processes
Updated – May, 2017

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Status: 02 – Applicant

Definition:

An individual is considered to have submitted an application when the individual or the individual's representative, as appropriate—1) has completed and signed an agency application form; 2) has completed a common intake application form in a One– Stop center requesting vocational rehabilitation services; or, 3) has otherwise requested services from the Department (§ 361.41 (b)(2)). Vocational Rehabilitation Services can be requested verbally, by phone, fax, or e– mail. The individual must provide information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility and priority for services; and be available in Iowa to complete the assessment process.

Scope of Services:

The applicant is engaged through an active discussion of the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. This comprehensive analysis creates an opportunity to exchange information on expectations and involves discussion of labor market information and assignment of career exploration activities focusing upon employment.

Counselors will make arrangements to communicate with all non– English speaking and deafblind applicants. Deafblind applicants must be informed that interpreter services are available at no cost for all assessments. Translator services will be offered at no cost to non– English speaking applicants.

Special materials will not be routinely provided to a non– English speaking applicant/individual unless the individual is a member of an ethnic group representing a substantial segment of the population. For this purpose, a substantial segment of the

population is defined by the agency as a group of non– English speaking individuals comprising at least five percent of the general population of Iowa.

A translator is often available from the individual or party that referred non– English speaking individual to VR. Other sources for translator services include:

- A. volunteer;
- B. the language department of the local college; and
- C. other agencies that use translators such as Department of Refugee Services.

Application Process

A. Movement to Application Status

The case is moved into Application Status when a new case is created and information is entered into eFORCE by the Intake Staff; a VR counselor will be assigned at this time. The day the intake staff enters this information is the date of application. The VR Application Release for Services must be signed by the individual as soon as possible.

B. Initial Interview

The initial interview is to be a face– to– face interview conducted by the VR counselor. A phone interview may be conducted for extenuating circumstances. The counselor will involve the applicant in a number of discussions throughout the interview process. The counselor will obtain information from the individual regarding strengths, resources, priorities, abilities, interests, etc. The counselor is responsible for gathering information to complete the application process, to determine eligibility, and to begin vocational planning. The counselor will then complete the appropriate data pages in eFORCE to complete the application process.

C. Review of VR Information Material for Applicants

Each applicant at the time of the counselor’s initial interview will be given a copy of the “Application Release for Services” (after it has been signed by the applicant, guardian if appropriate, and counselor), a copy of the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, and a copy of ICAP information on cassette or any other preferred media. As required by State law, the Voter Registration Form must be completed. Regardless of the response, complete the Voter Registration form and place it in the case file. Be sure that the counselor and the applicant complete and sign the appropriate section of this form.

Available Services:

Services provided for and/or arranged for in Application are for the sole purpose of determining if the applicant meets the criteria of eligibility for VR services. Because the individual does not elect to apply interim determination of eligibility, vocational

rehabilitation services will not be provided to a potentially eligible individual on the basis of an interim determination of eligibility. The following is a list of the services the VR counselor can provide in Application:

- A. Guidance and counseling;
- B. Assessment Services;
 - a. Health Assessment Checklist;
 - b. Hearing Examination;
 - c. Eye Examination;
 - d. Hospitalization for diagnostic purposes;
 - e. Medical Specialist Examinations recommended by the examining physician for eye, general medical, or other medical specialist examinations, or when the VR counselor decides that a specific specialist examination is necessary for case development;
 - f. Psychological/psychiatric evaluations;
 - g. Low Vision evaluations;
 - h. Vocational evaluations;
 - i. Assessment for rehabilitation technology skills;
 - j. Community– based career assessment; and
 - k. Any other evaluative studies needed to help determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation.
- C. Interpreter services for the deafblind as they relate to diagnostic/evaluative procedures;
- D. Referral and Information Services
- E. Translator services (Other Services) for non– English speaking applicants;
- F. Transportation for diagnostic/evaluative services.

Action Requirements:

- A. Complete the required data pages in eFORCE to complete the application process.

- B. Eye report, Health Assessment Questionnaire, and if needed, general medical, and other specialty exams.
- C. Distribute authorizations and releases of information, as appropriate.
- D. File the Certification copy of the Iowa voter registration form in the case folder.
- E. Enter individual into the [Iowa Blind Journal](#).
- F. Gather verification of SSI or SSDI status from the Social Security Administration is needed if appropriate.
- G. The case remains in Application Status until such time that the VR counselor (with the applicant) determines and declares eligibility/ineligibility, or determines that a period of trial work or extended evaluation is in order to determine vocational potential.

eFORCE Documentation Requirements:

- A. The following are required fields that must be entered into eFORCE under the Client's case:
 - a. Date Application is Signed by client, guardian if applicable, and counselor.
 - b. Personal information: Name, Social Security Number, Date of Birth, Address, City, State, Zip Code, County, Phone Numbers and Email contact information, Gender, Race and Ethnicity, Marital Status, Living Arrangements, Voter Registration
 - c. Contact Information for client: at least one contact outside of home
 - d. Referral Source: Type of Source
 - e. Education Information: Educated Completed, Special Education Participation
 - f. Employment Status: Currently employed (hours per week and wages), Employment Status at Application, Military Service, Discharge Status
 - g. Monthly Support Benefits: Public Support Received, Primary Source of Support, Health Insurance
 - h. Disability Information: Client's reported disability, condition, or diagnosis.

Case Note Documentation:

- A. Purpose: A statement that VR services were explained to the individual.
- B. Assessment: Individual's apparent or self-reported level of independent functioning. Individual's apparent or self-reported limitations imposed by the visual disability. Individual's family situation. VR counselor's observations as to apparent rehabilitation potential.
- C. Intervention: A statement that the individual has been informed of his/her civil rights, rights to confidentiality of personal information, rights to administrative review and fair hearing, right to pursue mediation with respect to determinations made by the VR counselor that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the names and addresses of individuals with whom requests for mediation or due process hearings may be filed, and rights to the Iowa Client Assistance Program (ICAP).
- D. Plan: Identify additional assessments/reports that may be needed in order to make an eligibility decision, and what is being done to obtain these assessments/reports.

Timeliness Standard:

When an application is completed by the intake specialist, the VR counselor must contact the applicant within 14 workdays of the date the intake specialist completes the application to schedule an interview and complete the application process.

The VR counselor must conduct and complete the initial interview and application process within 30 workdays from the date the intake specialist completes the application. During the interview, the counselor gathers or reviews data for the individual application, explains VR services, obtains the signed VR application release for services, explains the Client Assistance Program, and makes arrangements for any further diagnostic exams necessary to establish VR eligibility.

Once an individual has submitted an application for vocational rehabilitation services, including those whose applications made through common intake procedures in One-Stop centers established under Section 121 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, an eligibility determination will be made with 60 days, unless, 1) there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of VR counselor that preclude making an eligibility determination within 60 days and the VR counselor and the individual agree to a specific extension; or, 2) an exploration of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situation is carried out in accordance with §361.42(e) or, if appropriate, an extended evaluation is carried out in accordance with § 361.42 (f). (Authority: 34 CFR 361.41)

In instances where the counselor can make an eligibility determination based upon the existing information provided by the individual and other third party providers, such a

decision should be made. If there is the slightest question as to the individual's eligibility for services, the counselor should discuss the situation with his/her supervisor, and if necessary, purchase or otherwise arrange to obtain additional assessments whereby a clear decision can be made related to the eligibility/ineligibility of the individual.

An extension for time beyond the 60 days must be agreed to by the applicant and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, and must be approved by the Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor. The counselor and applicant jointly complete the Eligibility Extension form which must state the number of additional days needed to make the eligibility decision beyond the initial 60 days. (Authority: CFR Sec. 361.41)

Only very unusual circumstances are just cause for making the time extension request such as the inability to get the necessary doctor's appointment with an applicant's physician of choice, and when such information is necessary to establish the disability, etc. When the counselor is not able to jointly complete the Eligibility Extension form, the counselor will mail the form to the applicant for signature. If the applicant does not return the form, the counselor will document the form was sent and the date it was sent (the information is documented in eFORCE). The counselor will proceed with the eligibility/ineligibility determination, document the form was never received, and why it was not received if the counselor has that information.

Next Steps:

Once an individual has agreed to move forward with assessment, additional information must be gathered.

Presumptive Eligibility for Social Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) Recipients

A Social Security disability beneficiary is presumed eligible for VR services "provided the individual intends to achieve an employment outcome consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual." If the individual, who receives SSI and or SSDI plans to pursue an employment outcome, consistent with his/her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice; further assessments to determine eligibility are not required; in other words, the individual who receives SSI and or SSDI may be determined eligible immediately following the initial interview, without further assessments. The SSI/SSDI recipient is automatically considered to be an "individual with a significant disability."

Assessment to Determine Eligibility:

An assessment to determine eligibility is required for each individual who applies for services. The assessment to determine eligibility includes examinations and assessments which places primary emphasis upon determining the individual's potential for achieving a vocational goal. Assessments are provided to determine the individual's:

- A. eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation services;
- B. ineligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation services;
- C. the need for an extended evaluation; or
- D. as appropriate, evaluations by qualified personnel to determine the applicant are potential to benefit from rehabilitation technology services.

The data is used in program planning. Eligibility determination covers the period when a case is in Application, Trial Work or Extended Evaluation. When sufficient information is not available without cost, the counselor will purchase the information needed.

Assessment, evaluation, and diagnostic services may be provided during any stage of the rehabilitation process, when they are necessary to make the following determinations:

- A. Eligibility for services;
- B. Potential for employment;
- C. A suitable vocational goal; and
- D. Nature and scope of services to be provided. Assessment, evaluation, and diagnostic services may include:

- a. **Medical Services**

These services include eye examinations by ophthalmologist or optometrist; low vision evaluations; medical and surgical examination; psychiatric evaluations; dental examinations; and specialist examinations, including clinical laboratory tests, diagnostic X-ray procedures, determination of treatability in the case of emotional disturbance, and other medically recognized diagnostic services.

- b. **Determination that the individual is listed on the Iowa Blind Journal.**

- c. **Psychological Services**

These services include psychological tests and measurements of various kinds, such as intelligence tests, work samples, aptitude tests, achievement tests, work evaluations, psychological evaluations, educational progress and achievement, and other psychologically recognized diagnostic services.

- d. **Social and Vocational Services**

These services include evaluation of the individual's employment opportunities and objectives, in light of personality, intelligence level, educational achievement, work experience, vocational aptitudes and interests, strengths, resources, priorities, personal and social adjustment,

and other pertinent data. A social history must be obtained on every case. Information may be a summary of the counselor's investigation, obtained through interviews with the individual's family or others. It includes information about the individual's family, relationships within the family, and relationships within the community. A work history will be obtained from individuals when they have previous employment. Some suggested items that may be included are:

1. Job title or classification;
2. Name and address of employer;
3. Length of time employed;
4. Promotions or advancements;
5. Rate of pay received;
6. Reason for termination; and
7. Periods of time not accounted for, with reasons given for these periods.

e. Educational information will be obtained in every instance from interviews with the individual and/or from the schools attended. Some suggested items for inclusion are:

1. Courses taken and grades obtained;
2. Attendance records;
3. Test scores;
4. Teacher evaluations;
5. Programs in which the individual made significant progress; and
6. Other information helpful in planning services with the individual.

Eligibility Determination Requirements

A Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor shall ensure that eligibility requirements shall be applied without regard to age, gender, race, color, or national origin of the applicant; type of expected employment outcome; source of referral for vocational rehabilitation services; and particular service needs or anticipated cost of services required by an applicant or the income level of an applicant or applicant's family. No residence requirement is imposed which excludes from services any individual who is present in the State of Iowa.

An individual is eligible for VR services if the following criteria are met:

- A. It has been determined the applicant has a visual impairment.
- B. It has been determined that the applicant's visual impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment.
- C. Applicants who have a visual impairment constituting or resulting in substantial impediments to employment will be presumed able to benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome unless a counselor can demonstrate otherwise based on clear and convincing evidence. An example of clear and convincing evidence would be a trial– work experience or functional assessments provided in Extended Evaluation.
- D. It has been determined that the applicant requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter into, engage in, or retain gainful employment consistent with the applicant's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, interests, abilities, capabilities, and informed choice. (Authority: CFR Sec. 361.42)
- E. The applicant is present and legally able to work in the United States; the individual is either a United States citizen, or a legal alien with a valid and current work permit.

Medical, psychological, educational, functional, social, work history and vocational assessments that have been obtained may assist the VR counselor in determining whether or not the applicant meets the criteria to be declared eligible for VR services. The counselor must also consider the applicant's potential to benefit from rehabilitation technology services. VR will only provide vocational training to individuals who meet one of the Visual Disability criteria a. through f. Individuals who meet criteria g. cannot receive vocational training unless after eye treatment or surgery they meet one of the criteria a. through f.

- A. Determining if a visual disability exist that constitutes one or more of the following criteria:
 - a. Visual acuity having not better than 20/200 central visual acuity in the better eye measured at 20 feet with correcting lenses (legally blind);
 - b. Visual acuity greater than 20/200 but with the widest diameter of the visual field in the better eye subtending an angle of no greater than 20 degrees measured (legally blind);
 - c. Visual acuity between 20/70 and 20/200 vision in the better eye with best correction if the person has been unable to adjust satisfactorily to the loss of vision and if it is determined that the person needs the specialized services available through Vocational Rehabilitation;

- d. Visual acuity between 20/70 and 20/20 in the better eye with best correction if the person has a rapidly progressive eye condition, which, in the opinion of a qualified ophthalmologist, will reduce distance vision to 20/200 or less in the better eye with best correction;
- e. Visual impairment which both Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Department believe could be best addressed by the Department;
- f. The individual is eligible for Social Security benefits (either Title II or Title XVI) on the basis of blindness or visual impairment; or
- g. Where eye treatment and/or surgery are recommended and there are functional limitations in performing employment. (Corrective eye surgery or treatment refers to a procedure that is likely, within a reasonable period of time, to correct or modify substantially an eye condition that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment.)

B. Determining if the Disability is a Substantial Impediment to Employment
The VR counselor must determine that a vocational impediment has resulted due to the visual disability. The disability must be a substantial impediment to employment because of the limitations imposed by the diagnosed visual disability, together with any additional disabling conditions diagnosed and other related factors. The existence of a visual disability alone does not necessarily constitute a vocational impediment nor does it automatically establish eligibility for VR services. A substantial impediment to employment exists when the visual disability:

- a. Interferes with the opportunity for suitable employment;
- b. Has interfered with the preparation for suitable employment;
- c. Causes loss of employment;
- d. Requires special assistance in securing suitable employment or in performing job duties; and
- e. Causes employment to be in jeopardy.

Career advancement and upward mobility may be provided by VR for individuals who are eligible for services. The State VR program is not intended solely to place individuals with disabilities in entry-level jobs but rather to assist eligible individuals to obtain employment that is appropriate, given their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities.

Data accumulated in the assessment to determine eligibility (not directly related to a disability) may be used to substantiate a substantial impediment to employment.

Materials may be social histories, educational records, and psychological data. Such information may include:

- a. Lack of marketable skills;
- b. Low educational level;
- c. Community and employer prejudices and attitudes concerning the disability;
- d. Long– term unemployment
- e. Unstable work record;
- f. Long history of dependency; and
- g. Poor attitude toward work, family, and community.

C. Determining if the Applicant can benefit from the Provision of VR Services if it has been determined that the applicant has a disability that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment, the counselor has to assume that the individual can benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome. There would need to be clear and convincing evidence that the applicant, with the provision of VR services, would be unable to:

- a. Enter the competitive labor market consistent with abilities and interest;
- b. Practice a profession;
- c. Enter self– employment;
- d. Operate a vending facility under the Randolph– Sheppard Act; or
- e. Function in supported employment.

Other Sources for Assessment Information

Materials that can be of use in the assessment to determine eligibility are often available from other sources. These should be requested and used. Materials that may be available are: Social Security information, school records, social histories, medical information from physicians or institutions, and test results. These materials can assist in making an assessment to determine eligibility and the need for VR services; also, contributing to a good understanding of the individual.

Medical Information Review

- A. An eye report completed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist and a Health Assessment Questionnaire completed by the counselor are needed to

assist in the determination of eligibility. A general medical and other specialty reports may be requested on an individual basis to determine eligibility if additional disabling conditions are present.

B. The VR counselor must use the most current eye report available to determine eligibility as long as the report indicates the condition was stable or deteriorating, and the visual criteria was met at the time of the examination.

C. The counselor will always complete Health Assessment Questionnaire. This section is basically self-explanatory. In the "remarks" section, always start your comment with the number of the "yes" answer(s). Example: "1. Seeing – individual has very limited vision and needs cataract surgery." Counselors may seek consultation from the consumer's primary medical provider regarding any condition that might impact the rehabilitation process as identified on the Health Assessment Questionnaire/General Medical Form.

D. Medical and other information provided by officials of other agencies, particularly education and Social Security offices, must be utilized to the extent necessary to determine eligibility.

E. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors can work with individuals whose visual acuity is 20/70 with best correction or have a field restriction of 20 degrees or less if the visual impairment is an impediment to employment. This can be determined by completing the Functional Limitation Assessment.

F. Individuals with a visual acuity 20/70 in the better eye with best correction, or a field restriction to 20 degrees or more in the better eye, with no impediments to employment will be referred to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Next Steps:

Movement from Application –

- A. Move to Status 06 – Eligibility Determination Extension, Trial Work or Extended Evaluation;
- B. Move to Status 08 – Closed – Not Eligible for VR Services; or
- C. Move to Status 10 – Eligible for VR Services

Status: 06 – Trial Work Experience/Extended Evaluation

Background:

If an individual has a disability which constitutes an impediment to employment, it is presumed he/she can benefit from VR services. The VR program can rebut this presumption of benefit only by demonstrating with clear and convincing evidence that the individual is incapable of benefiting from VR services in terms of an employment outcome, i.e., no employment outcome is possible even with the provision of VR services. In order to conclude that an individual is not eligible for VR services due to an inability to benefit from such services in terms of an employment outcome, the designated State unit must possess evidence that establishes such a conclusion with a high degree of certainty. For example, the results of an intelligence test or a psychological examination, by themselves, would not constitute clear and convincing evidence of an individual's ineligibility for VR services. However, clear and convincing evidence might be derived from the results of such examinations coupled with additional evidence, particularly evidence drawn from participation in a trial– work experience or other functional assessments that demonstrate that the individual is not capable of benefiting from VR services.

Definitions:

Trial Work Experience: If there is a question as whether that individual can benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome, an individual can participate in a Trial Work Experience. A Trial Work Experience provides an opportunity for the individual to explore their abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in realistic work situations to determine whether or not there is a clear and convincing evidence to support such a determination.

Extended Evaluation: If there is a question as to whether that individual is capable of benefiting from VR services in terms of an employment outcome, the counselor can gather additional information regarding functional limitations (giving first consideration to Trial Work) to support psychological or medical documentation. This might help determine if the individual is capable of benefiting from VR services in order to achieve an employment outcome.

Clear and Convincing Evidence: Clear and convincing evidence means that the counselor shall have a high degree of certainty before it can be concluded that an individual is incapable of benefiting from services in terms of an employment outcome. The clear and convincing standard constitutes the highest standard used in our civil system of law and is to be individually applied on a case– by– case basis. The term clear means unequivocal.

Scope of services:

Trial work experiences might include, supported employment, customized training, internships, job shadowing, structured volunteer experiences in real work settings, and community– based work assessments with appropriate supports, etc.

Process:

Counselor, client, and client's representative if appropriate must develop a Trial Work Experience Plan which clearly indicates the services and timelines required to reach an eligibility determination.

Available Services:

- A. Counseling and guidance;
- B. Diagnostic and related services;
- C. Interpreter services for the deafblind for diagnostic/evaluative purposes;
- D. Maintenance while in an evaluation program;
- E. Work evaluation with rehabilitation technology needed for the evaluation;
- F. Transportation for diagnostic and evaluative purposes;
- G. Rehabilitation teaching or evaluation to determine functional limitation;
- H. Trial work to help assess functional limitations; and
- I. Personal assistance services when needed for an applicant to participate in services to help determine functional limitations.

Action Requirements:

Services provided for and/or arranged for in Trial Work Experience are for the sole purpose of determining if an individual is capable of benefiting from VR services in terms of an employment outcome.

- A. Individual's participation in the cost of services: The individual's participation in the cost of services is not a consideration in rendering services in Trial Work Experience – as long as the services rendered are primarily diagnostic/evaluative in nature. At the point when the services cease to be diagnostic or evaluative in nature and are considered "regular" rehabilitation services, the individual's participation in the cost of services must be applied.
- B. Comparable Benefits: Every effort must be made to utilize the individual's comparable benefits. (Refer to Availability of Comparable Benefits.)

eFORCE Documentation Requirements:

- A. Case enters Extended Evaluation in eFORCE – on the date the VR counselor develops the Extended Evaluation Plan.

B. The case is terminated from Extended Evaluation on the date the VR counselor has enough information to make the eligibility decision and enters the eligibility date in eFORCE.

Case Note Documentation:

A. Purpose: Extended Evaluation are used to determine whether VR services will benefit the individual after a disability has been established.

B. Assessment: Presence of visual disability, or a combination of visual and other disabilities, which impose(s) a substantial impediment to employment. Explanation of the uncertainties as to whether VR services may improve the individual's capability of achieving an employment outcome. Explain the specific areas of uncertainty, such as health, stamina, skills, level of intellectual functioning, etc.

(Authority: CFR Sec. 361.42(d))

C. Intervention: A statement indicating review of assessments. Statements indicating any services, including counseling and guidance provided. A statement indicating Rights and Responsibilities and ICAP information was provided

D. Plan: If additional assessments are required, identify additional assessments/reports that may be needed in order to make an eligibility decision, and what is being done to obtain these assessments/reports. Otherwise, include statement regarding next steps.

Timeliness Standard:

Only one Extended Evaluation period is permitted during the time the case is opened. A case should not remain in Extended Evaluation any longer than 18 months and should be moved out of this Status to another appropriate Status as soon as the VR counselor is able to determine whether the individual is capable of achieving an employment outcome.

Next Steps:

Movement from Extended Evaluation –

A. In limited circumstances, an individual may move from Extended Evaluation to Trial Work Experience. A Case Note documenting this change is required.

B. If Eligible for VR services, complete the Eligibility screen in eFORCE.

C. If not Eligible for VR services, complete the Eligibility screen and Closure screen for Closed Other Than Rehabilitated. Write an explanation for the closure

in a Case Note in eFORCE. Complete and mail to the consumer the Eligibility/Ineligibility Letter from the eFORCE letters catalog.

D. In all cases, information must be provided to the individual regarding the determination decision.

Status: 08 – Closed Prior to Eligibility/Acceptance

Definition:

Status 08 is the result when eligibility criteria cannot be met or when the case must be closed prior to eligibility or for some other reason. Movement to Status 08 can only occur from Status 02.

Scope of Services:

Closure may occur prior to eligibility because the individual does not meet all the eligibility criteria or for reasons listed under closure.

Available Service:

A. Information and Referral is the only service available at this status.

Action Requirements:

A. Attempts will be made to contact the applicant to share information about the determination. Attempts should include a minimum of two phone calls and an “Attempt to Contact” letter located in the eFORCE Letters Catalog.

B. Eligibility Screen in eFORCE is completed, Eligibility certification is signed by the counselor and case moves to Status 08 (Closed Prior to Eligibility / Acceptance).

C. A “08– Closure” letter is completed when a case is being closed as Ineligible (not eligible for VR services) (sample located in VR letter templates in Field Op under Program Areas on the IDB Intranet). It is not permissible to close a case as Ineligible from Application because it has been determined that the individual cannot benefit from vocational rehabilitation in terms of an employment outcome (because disability is too severe) without an extended evaluation being conducted; however, a case can be closed Ineligible from Application when the individual does not have a disability which constitutes or results in an impediment to employment.

- D. Explain how the individual does not meet at least one of the following conditions on the letter form.
- a. Presence of a visual disability;
 - b. Which causes a substantial impediment to employment outcome;
 - c. Presumption that VR services can benefit the individual in terms of an employment outcome (if a. and b. above are met); unless, there is clear and convincing evidence the individual cannot benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome; and
 - d. There is a determination that the applicant requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter into, engage in, or retain gainful employment consistent with the applicant's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and informed choice. (Authority: CFR Sec. 361.42).

eFORCE Documentation Requirements:

- A. Eligibility Screen – under the analysis of medical information, document the reports reviewed created by a qualified ophthalmologist, the date the report was created, and the acuity/diagnosis provided. Provide all information in all required areas in eFORCE. Print and sign the ineligibility certificate for the paper file.
- B. Service History Screen – must be recalculated and completed prior to closure.
- C. Closure Data Screen – must be completed, identifying the reason and type of closure, individual's current benefit, insurance information, and additional required fields.
- D. Status moves to 08.

Case note Documentation:

- A. Purpose: A statement indicating contact was made to discuss the eligibility determination or reason why case is being closed in Status 08.
- B. Assessment: A statement sharing the eligibility assessment information.
- C. Intervention: A statement indicating the service provided, if any, and the eligibility determination decision of ineligibility. A statement indicating that Rights and Responsibilities and ICAP information was reviewed.
- D. Plan: A statement indicating a letter would be mailed to the client indicating the eligibility determination of ineligibility.

Timeliness Standard:

Determination Decision must occur within 60 days of the Application Date. If unavoidable circumstances prevent this from happening, the counselor must obtain a signed statement from the applicant waiving the 60– day time frame.

Next Steps:

There are no further next steps following a Status 08 Closure letter sent to client indicating the determination decision of ineligibility.

Status: 10 – Accepted for VR Services

Definition:

Individual with a disability means an individual (i) Who has a physical or mental impairment as identified by the RSA Coding; (ii) Whose impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and (iii) Who can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services.” (Authority: 34 CFR 361.5(b)(28))

The Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is being developed to assist an individual in achieving his/her specific employment goal.

Scope of Services:

Once eligibility is determined, the VR counselor will begin joint planning with the client to establish the vocational goal and plan for the VR services needed to obtain the goal. The counselor will inform consumers, and when appropriate, their parents, guardians, or other representatives about the available service options. The counselor will explain about the availability of materials in alternative formats, accessibility, costs of services, the concept of informed choice, duration of services, and provision of services in integrated settings. In all cases, the consumer will make informed choices related to the establishment of their vocational goal and subsequent VR services and providers of those services.

Available Services:

A comprehensive assessment of vocational rehabilitation needs is basic to the determination of the nature and scope of services to be provided to a client to accomplish their vocational rehabilitation goals and objectives. If the comprehensive assessment has not been completed prior to eligibility it must be formally initiated to facilitate planning and development of the IPE. The client will remain in Status 10 while

the IPE is developed and written. Record the next action to be taken, including the activities needed to complete the comprehensive assessment of vocational rehabilitation needs. The following is a list of the services the VR counselor can provide in this status:

- A. Guidance and counseling;
- B. Assessment Services;
 - a. Review of Eligibility determination information, including impediments to employment, and analysis of additional relevant information.
 - b. Vocational evaluations;
 - c. Assessment for rehabilitation technology services;
 - d. Community– based career assessment;
 - e. Career Exploration Activities: Informational Interviews, Job Shadows, Career Research, Labor Market Analysis, etc.; and
 - f. Any other analysis of career information needed to help determine an IPE.
- C. Interpreter services for the deafblind as they relate to IPE development procedures;
- D. Referral and Information Services;
- E. Translator services (Other Services) for non– English speaking applicants; and
- F. Transportation for assessment services.

Action Requirements:

- A. Counselor will complete eligibility determination.
- B. Counselor will call individual to share eligibility determination decision and arrange meetings to begin process to work on IPE.
- C. Counselor will move forward with completing eFORCE Documentation Requirements, and move toward Plan Development.

eFORCE Documentation Requirements: Eligibility

- A. Counselor will complete the eligibility screen in eFORCE.

- a. RSA Disability Coding
 - 1. Primary & Secondary Disabilities required
 - 2. Primary and Secondary Impairments
 - 3. Primary and Secondary Causes
 - 4. Priority for Service Category
 - b. Presumptive Eligibility (if applicable)
- B. Evidence of eligibility for SSI or SSDI – The following items are acceptable evidence that an individual is a recipient of SSI or SSDI:
- a. a computer response generated request for Social Security verification;
 - b. a letter or other documentation from Social Security to the individual; or
 - c. an indication the information had been obtained from the local Social Security office, including the first name of the Social Security employee from whom the information was obtained.
- C. In all cases check to be sure that there is either: 1) information in medical reports comparable to a current general systems review; 2) a completed Health Assessment Questionnaire; 3) the report of a purchased general history and physical exam; or 4) documentation the individual is an SSI or SSDI recipient.
- D. If the information is medically reviewed, the remarks of the medical consultant are noted in the Eligibility Screen (Analysis of Relevant Information Section) in eFORCE. Any problem with approval or fees for reports needs to be resolved prior to release of payment. If further diagnostic procedures are recommended or indicated, these should be obtained immediately.
- E. Counselor will print and sign the eligibility certification form for the paper case file.
- F. Client moves into status 10.
- G. Counselor will contact the individual to share information regarding next steps: discussion and development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

IPE Development Process

Introduction

The IPE development process is not considered complete until you have performed all steps and submitted necessary paperwork. The client and counselor are actively engaged in vocational guidance and counseling during IPE development.

To promote prompt client service the agency established that plans will be written within 90 days after eligibility determination. If you and the client require more time, thoroughly document the cause in a case note and complete the IPE Development Extension Form. Clients must have a current IPE as long as they remain in an active status. It is our Department's philosophy that given the proper training and opportunity, a person who is blind can compete for jobs in the open marketplace alongside his or her sighted peers. An individual's employment outcome should reflect this – aiming for competitive work in integrated settings that pay minimum or above– minimum wages. The employment outcome must be realistic and achievable.

The purpose of the IPE is to clearly define the client's employment outcome and the services he or she will require to achieve it. The IPE must be developed in a manner which allows the client to exercise informed choice in selecting an employment outcome and determining the specific VR services necessary to obtain the employment outcome and the person or persons who will provide these services. Informed choice applies to both the selection of an employment setting and the setting where VR services are provided. The IPE is mandated by the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. The IPE is an individualized and clearly– defined road map for achieving the individual's employment outcome. The IPE is a plan of action that is subject to future amendments and revisions.

At this stage, emphasize again that VR programs are for those individuals who require VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment. As such, the client must identify a realistic and attainable employment goal that is consistent with his / her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities interests, and informed choices. In this context, introduce the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and explain its purpose to the client.

Counselors have several responsibilities to carry out during the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The IPE development process involves these phases:

1. Assessing the Client's Vocational Goals and Needs.
2. Identifying Services Needed.
3. Reviewing IPE Development Options.
4. Completing the IPE Form and Case Note.

Taking time to carefully perform these phases ensures that the client is fully informed about choosing his / her vocational goal and about the services and responsibilities required to achieve that goal.

Assessing the Client's Vocational Goals and Needs

Each client has the right to a comprehensive assessment of vocational needs. This may involve formal testing or assessment, further medical assessment or counseling interviews to assist the individual to understand patterns of work behavior, skills, work record and technological needs. In order to be successful it is essential that the Counselor assess the client's existing or transferable skills, update the client's training or job seeking skills, assess the client's interests, aptitudes, and community resources to help the client achieve the goal. The client may participate in vocational exploration, including vocational assessments and evaluations, unpaid work experiences, job shadowing or other opportunities that provide the client with information or experience that will facilitate solid client choice in establishing a vocational goal. The client may participate in medical exams or assessments to assess functional abilities when necessary to help determine the vocational goal.

The Counselor's knowledge of the local labor market, job requirements of occupations, and college programming must be constantly updated to provide a current resources to the client.

Prior to developing an IPE, you must assess the individual's vocational rehabilitation needs. This assessment can include factors such as:

Adjustment to blindness and disability related skills training needed

Need for assistive technology devices and/or training

Educational background

Vocational skills

Medical history and prognosis (impact of other disabilities such as substance abuse, mental health)

Work history

Individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice

Employment opportunities in the chosen geographic region

Personal income

Family income

Other factors which might affect the employment outcome

Generally, most, if not all, of this information by interviewing the individual and reviewing the case file. If more information is needed, the counselor can authorize diagnostic tests, medical examinations, or any additional services or assessments required.

Vocational Research/Labor Market Research:

To ensure that clients are fully informed when making their employment decision, ask them to research the occupation in which they are interested. What are some of the educational, experience, and skill requirements? What is the average wage for the position? Is the job a high demand one? Local libraries, workforce centers, and the Internet are good resources.

Clients often believe that they are unable to perform the same job they held previously or in their field of study. Encourage them to think about alternative ways to perform

their duties or to think about jobs that are related to their past work. For instance, the client may no longer be able to drive a taxi, but she could be a dispatcher. A computer programmer may be able to continue working in that capacity using assistive technology like a screen magnifier or screen access program. If the client has a work history, discuss their transferrable skills and ask questions such as, “what did you like most about your job?”

Job Retention:

When developing an IPE with a client who is currently working and wants to retain his or her job, consider undertaking additional activities to determine the client's vocational needs. Ask the client about his / her current job duties and responsibilities. Complete a job analysis and worksite assessment to identify essential functions of the job and technology the individual is required to use. With approval from the client, meet with the client's supervisor to determine requirements.

Criteria for Review (Benchmarks):

Criteria for Review are a required component of the IPE. The criteria allow the counselor and the client to gauge whether the client is making progress toward the employment goal. The criteria for review must be quantifiable and specific and clearly define the tasks a client needs to accomplish in order to achieve the employment goal. Establishing clear and achievable benchmarks as criteria for review can help the counselor and client determine whether the services listed are right on target, that additional or other services are required, or that a new employment goal should be considered. Discussing the criteria for review with the client before completing the IPE ensures that responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined at the beginning of the process.

Once the counselor and the client have determined that the employment goal is realistic and achievable and have identified what the client needs to achieve that goal, the next step is to determine the services required to meet those needs. Go to 2. Identifying Services to Meet Needs.

Identifying Service to Meet Needs

All planned services must be based on, and supported by, the assessment conducted prior to the completion of IPE. Counseling and guidance should be encouraged. The provision of training in the alternative skills of blindness and a positive philosophy towards blindness should be strongly considered in each case. Without the appropriate skills and philosophy, success in obtaining and maintaining employment will be seriously jeopardized.

The categories of services that can be provided under an IPE are defined within the Rehabilitation Act. The Department has a written policy for each service that describes

the nature and scope of the services. You should become thoroughly familiar with all of the service categories and the Department's policy for each category.

Services:

Assessment

Diagnosis and Treatment

Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance

Training

Graduate College or University Training

Four– Year College or University Training

Junior or Community College Training

Occupational or Vocational Training

On– the– Job Training

Apprenticeship Training

Basic Academic Remedial or Literacy Training

Job Readiness Training

Disability– Related Skills Training

Miscellaneous Training

Job Search Assistance

Job Placement Assistance

On– the– Job Supports – Short Term

On– the– Job Supports – Supported Employment

Rehabilitation Technology

Technical Assistance Services

Information and Referral Services

Other Services

Secondary/Ancillary/Support Services

Transportation

Maintenance

Benefits Counseling

Personal Assistance Services

Reader Services

Interpreter Services

Personal Attendant Services

Funding and Comparable Services

The Department does not provide or pay for every service planned under an IPE. For example, college training provided by the University of Iowa and paid for by scholarships and grants or family resources. These services should be included in the IPE to make sure that the individual receives all of the services needed to reach the employment goal.

Before IDB provides any vocational rehabilitation service to an eligible individual or members of the eligible individual's family, IDB shall determine whether comparable services and benefits are available under any other program, except when IDB is providing the following services:

1. Evaluation of rehabilitation potential;
2. Counseling, guidance and referral;
3. Vocational and other training services, including personal and vocational adjustment, books, tools and other training materials, that are not provided in institutions of higher education;
4. Job placement;
5. Rehabilitation technology services; and
6. Post-employment services that include rehabilitation services listed in paragraphs (A)1.- 5.

(B) IDB shall require that if comparable services and benefits are available to an eligible individual, the eligible individual must utilize the comparable services and benefits to meet, in whole or in part, the cost of the eligible individual's vocational rehabilitation services, except in the situation stated in Subsection (C) and (D) below.

NOTE: Eligible individuals whose IPE includes college- level academic study must complete the FASFA and apply for Pell Grant assistance regardless of eligibility and

annually provide a copy of the Student Aid Report (SAR) in order to satisfy this requirement.

NOTE: IDB does not consider as comparable benefits those awards and scholarships based on merit, or those which are not restricted to specific college– related expenses (tuition, books, college expenses).

NOTE: The following list represents the most commonly encountered comparable benefits in the IDB service community and should be checked before service delivery on all cases:

Medicaid

Medicare

SSI/SSDI

Pell Grant

Any non– merit based scholarship

Any merit scholarships that are specifically dedicated to specific educational costs such as Tuition, books/supplies and paid directly to the school

Private medical insurance

Any other medical insurance

Veteran’s Administration (for health care and rehabilitation center programming)

Worker’s Compensation (when a person has been injured on the job)

(C) IDB shall not determine whether comparable services and benefits are available under any other program if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits would delay the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to any eligible individual who is at extreme medical risk. IDB shall base a determination of extreme medical risk upon medical evidence provided by an appropriate licensed medical professional.

(D) Per Part 361.53 of the Final Regulations and Sec. 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments, IDB shall not require consideration of comparable services or benefits if to do so would result in delays in 1) progress toward achieving an employment outcome identified in the IPE or 2) an immediate job placement. 361.53 Sec.101(a)(8)

How Provided

The individual has the right to make an informed choice about each service provider, but the counselor is responsible for providing the counseling and information that the individual needs to make an informed choice. Counseling in this area can include

suggesting ways that the individual can gather the necessary information, points to consider in evaluating options, and information the counselor has about specific service providers.

Service Dates

Services are time– limited. The counselor and their client must determine acceptable beginning and ending dates for each service listed on the IPE.

Next Steps

Once the counselor and client have identified services to meet needs in achieving the employment goal, how the services will be provided and the dates of service, the next step is to review the IPE development options. Go to 3. Reviewing IPE Development Options.

Reviewing IPE Development Options

The client has several options for developing and completing an IPE. The counselor is responsible for ensuring that the client understands the IPE development options and completes the IPE accurately. The counselor should ensure that the client provides as much information as necessary for identifying his/her vocational goal and the services required to achieve that goal.

The counselor is required to inform a client about the range of components included in an IPE, the rights and responsibilities of the client (with the rights and responsibilities brochure), and the availability and contact information for the Iowa Client Assistance Program (also mentioned in the rights and responsibilities brochure).

The counselor is also required to provide an explanation of the IPE guidelines and criteria in reference to the financial commitment involved in an IPE, any information on the availability of assistance in completing the Department's forms that are required as part of the IPE, and any additional information that the client requests or the Department views as necessary.

Development Options

The client can choose from three different options for developing and completing the plan. A requirement added to Rehabilitation Act in the 1998 Amendments authorizes an eligible individual or (and when appropriate) an individual's representative to develop all or part of the IPE without any assistance, with assistance from a qualified VR counselor (who may or may not be employed by the Department), or with technical assistance from additional resources outside of the Department. These additional resources may include independent living centers, community rehabilitation programs, family members, friends, or other programs and individuals.

These changes enable eligible individuals to determine the extent to which the state VR agencies will assist in the development of their IPEs. They are intended to empower individuals to have greater control in the process of developing their own IPEs so that

they will address their own unique needs. Regardless of the option chosen, the VR counselor retains approval and signature authority over the IPE and any amendments that might be added in the future.

1. The first option is for the counselor and the client to jointly develop the IPE.
2. The second option is for the individual to ask someone other than the counselor to assist in completing the IPE. When choosing this option, the individual will complete the plan on the Department's forms. The forms must be submitted to the counselor for review before the plan can go into effect.
3. The third option, involves the client completing the plan independently and submitting it to the counselor for approval. As with all of the options, the client must complete the plan on the Department's forms.

Regardless of the method used to complete the IPE, it cannot go into effect until it is completely filled out on approved agency forms and entered into eFORCE. The IPE will then be reviewed and signed by the counselor and reviewed by the supervisor. The client will acknowledge agreement with the IPE by reviewing the plan and signing the client response sheet.

Remind the client that the IPE is a plan of action that is subject to future amendments and revisions.

The IPE consists of four distinct components. These components include the cover letter, the plan itself, the Client Response sheet, and the client rights and responsibilities brochure.

Next Steps

Once you have reviewed the IPE development process and the client has selected a development option, the next step in the process is to either complete the IPE form with the client or review the IPE the client has developed alone or with the assistance of someone else. The information on the IPE must be entered in to eFORCE. Go to 4. Completing the IPE Form & Case Note.

Completing the IPE Form & Case Note.

The Counselor is responsible for ensuring the information on the IPE form is accurate and complete and for preparing the accompanying case note.

Completing the IPE form

Counselors are responsible for ensuring that the IPE is completed correctly using the Department's IPE form. The following details the information the counselor should obtain from and provide to the client and general guidelines for completing the IPE form.

NOTE: If you think an interpreter would ensure the client's understanding of the IPE development process and all of the documents and information associated with it, be sure to arrange for an interpreter before the client signs the IPE.

The IPE form has five sections: Employment Outcome, Services, Accepted Criteria for Review and Evaluation, Review History, and Remarks. Each section requires specific information. Remember, a client can choose to develop an IPE without assistance. If a client has selected this option, provide the client with the information that is required for completing the IPE form correctly.

Employment Outcome

To Be Attained By Date: Specify the date by which the employment outcome will be attained. List the date as the month and year that you reasonably expect the individual to have completed their plan and achieved their employment outcome.

The Employment Outcome section requires information for the following fields:

SOC Code and Occupational Title: According to RSA reporting requirements, all plans must list the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code for the client's chosen employment outcome. The client does not need to provide the specific occupational title and its associated SOC code as they are listed in the O*Net database. However, the plan does require this information

Special Codes: Some occupation titles that are specific to VR require the use of these special codes, as they are not listed in the O*NET database.

000001 Trial Work Experience

999999 Randolph– Sheppard vending facility operator (BEP)

Supported Employment: Check the Supported Employment check box if it is anticipated that the individual will require extended supports at work. Refer to the Supported Employment section for more information. When this check box is checked, all authorizations for this case will be charged to the Supported Employment grant.

IA Self– Employment Program (ISE): Check this check box if the individual is participating in the ISE program. By checking this check box, authorizations made on this case will be allocated to the ISE program.

Services

Under the Services section, provide responses to these services:

- **Individual Currently Has IEP:** Indicate whether the client is being served under an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) through his school program. If you check this check box, make sure that a copy of the IEP is filed. Also, be sure to note in the case note how the IEP and IPE services are coordinated.

- **Post– Employment Services Needed:** Indicate whether you believe that Post– Employment Services will be anticipated. The options for this field are Yes, No, and Not Applicable. An assessment on your part of the individual characteristics of the case will help you to determine whether these services will be necessary. When supported employment is chosen as the employment outcome, post– employment services are not appropriate since time– limited, post– employment services are provided for a period not to exceed 24 months (unless an extension is granted) before transition is made to extended services under a cooperative agreement (a letter of commitment from a private provider).
- **Rehabilitation Technology Services Anticipated:** Rehabilitation Technology services could include rehabilitation engineering, assistive technology devices, and assistive technology services. Indicate whether these services will be necessary for the individual to reach his employment outcome.
- **Personal Assistance Services Anticipated:** Personal Assistance Services are a range of services provided by one or more persons who will assist an individual with a disability to perform daily living activities on or off the job that the individual would typically perform without assistance if the individual did not have a disability. It is required that these services must be necessary to the achievement of an employment outcome and provided only while the individual is receiving vocational rehabilitation services. If such services are anticipated, then this service must be listed under the Services heading of the plan.
- **Reassessment of Need of Post– Employment Services:** Indicate whether you believe that a reassessment of need of post– employment services will be required. The options for this field are Needed, Not Needed, and Not Applicable. Indicate Not Applicable in cases of supported employment and trial work experience.

Services to be Provided

Next, list the services that will enable the individual to reach the employment outcome.

IPE Services Listed in eFORCE

Assessment

Diagnosis and Treatment

Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance

Training

Graduate College or University Training

Four– Year College or University Training

Junior or Community College Training

Occupational or Vocational Training
On– the– Job Training
Apprenticeship Training
Basic Academic Remedial or Literacy Training
Job Readiness Training
Disability– Related Skills Training
Miscellaneous Training
Job Search Assistance
Job Placement Assistance
On– the– Job Supports – Short Term
On– the– Job Supports – Supported Employment
Rehabilitation Technology
Technical Assistance Services
Information and Referral Services
Other Services
Secondary/Ancillary/Support Services
Transportation
Maintenance
Benefits Counseling
Personal Assistance Services
Reader Services
Interpreter Services
Personal Attendant Services

Each service should be a measurable, time– limited step that relates to or supports an activity needed to achieve the long– range employment outcome. Be prepared to justify the need for each service listed in the IPE case note.

For each service listed on the IPE, indicate:

1. How the service will be provided. (Examples include VR Counselor, IL Teacher, Client, Volunteer, College\University, etc.)
2. The type of service provider. You may specify: Not provided, State VR Agency, Public Rehab Program, Private Rehab Program, One– Stop Employment, Other Public Sources, or Other Private Sources.
3. The Funding source (Not provided, VR Funds, Non– VR Funds, VR and Other Sources).
4. The date the service may begin.
5. The date the service will end.

Reminder: You cannot authorize funds to pay for any services that are not specified on the IPE and that are specifically selected to be paid for by VR funds under the How Provided heading.

Criteria for Review and Evaluation

In completing the Accepted Criteria for Review portion of the IPE, the counselor should list the means by which it will be possible to evaluate the individual's progress toward an employment outcome. Remember, the benchmarks set as criteria for review must clearly define the tasks a client needs to accomplish in order to achieve the employment goal. ("What do I need to do to reach my employment goal?") These benchmarks may include positive monthly progress reports from Orientation Center Teachers for students in the Orientation Center; keeping scheduled appointments with the counselor; positive monthly training progress reports; and copies of grade transcripts from individuals in training settings; compliance with the minimum 2.5 grade point average requirement by individuals in training settings; college students maintaining a full and competitive class schedule (people who are blind have routinely and successfully carried 15 or more college credit hours at one time); use of the college placement office and counselor leads and other diligent job– seeking efforts by the individual looking for employment; and job performance to the satisfaction of the employer by an individual who has found employment. Each criteria should be individualized, quantifiable, and time specific when appropriate. Examples:

1. Make three employer contacts per week searching for employment.
2. In three months, learn to keep notes and correspondence using the Braille Writer.
3. Successfully complete college by maintaining 2.5 GPA by [date].
4. Attend Job Seeking Skills Seminar.

Review Date

Clients must have a current IPE as long as they remain in an active status. The law requires that you conduct IPE reviews annually, at minimum, for the life of the plan. The review of the IPE should be completed within one year of its development. In some cases, setting a closer review date may be necessary. The counselor's evaluation of the individual's progress will allow them to deem the result of the review as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

NOTE: Supported Employment IPEs and Trial Work IPEs must be reviewed every 90 days.

Remarks

Use the Remarks section to provide additional information relevant to the IPE and the client's pursuit of his / her employment goal.

Next Steps

Once you have completed the IPE with the client, the next step is to prepare the IPE case note.

Preparing the IPE Case Note

The IPE case note should include the following information:

Purpose: Met with client (on Date) to "jointly develop and write" IPE.

Assessment:

How was the client assessed?

- A description of the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice.
- The specific employment outcome chosen by the client that is consistent with the strengths, resources, etc.
- Summary of learnings of assignments up to this point (informational interviews, job shadows, research, onet search, discovery process, review of IEP, review of ICP, review of any other materials gathered such as resumes, work history, and past work performance)
- Background information and evidence around goal
 - (Notes - simply stating an individual has worked in a field, is not evidence that they worked well, enjoyed the position - did they advance in the position? did they receive raises? were they promoted. Also - simply stating a client worked at Lowe's is not enough to identify what the individual's skills are - did they work in stocking, ordering, customer service, maintenance, as a cashier, loading materials, etc. Finally - it is

recommended that if the client is in a job, that you potentially do a worksite assessment (either yourself, or with an RTS) as a part of the assessment process to really look at the job and the needs for the client to be successful.)

- Concerns client shared around the IPE and specific examples of concerns.
- Information shared which may affect IPE goals.
- Summary of barriers to employment identified and accommodations used in the past to address the barriers. **(This determines need for services indicated on the plan for employment.)**
- How many hours a week does the individual want to work?
 - If less than 40 hours, we should be considering benefits planning as a part of the assessment process. If under 20 hours, we should be identifying how the individual is engaged the rest of the week that prevents them from wanting to work less than part time.
- Summary of counselor perceptions, concerns, or other knowledge regarding the chosen goal. (Why do you believe the goal is feasible/realistic?)

Intervention:

- What did you do?
 - We should be using at minimum a review of past work history, interest inventories (not simply a conversation about what the client likes to do), assessments done in the community, review of informational interviews or job shadows with the client, etc. Did you provide information about particular careers, review a job description with the client, discuss the need for training and accommodations, etc.
- Statement indicating agreement/disagreement with goal of “client’s chosen goal” and “Specific job type” if known .
- Statement indicating the agreement of criteria for review have been set and agreed upon jointly.
- Indicate that you provided the client with information about rights and responsibilities and the availability and contact information for the Iowa Client Assistance Program (CAP).
- Information for the authorizations you have issued or plan to issue for this individual. (For example, if you feel a hearing screening is needed, indicate in the

case note that you will be authorizing payment for a screening and the amount authorized.)

Plan:

- A statement indicating the case moves from Status 10 to 12 or other status once approved.
- Explanation of next steps for client and counselor.
 - Especially if you didn't have the client sign the client response form as absolutely no services can begin until this form is signed. This means that you should not be doing referrals or authorizations until the client response form is signed - (Support staff can help to ensure that this is gathered, however, based on several recent case reviews, client's have not been turning these in).
- Assignments given to the client.
 - There should always be a next step for the client and a next meeting should be set (this is to ensure early engagement and can be an opportunity to ensure that the signature is obtained).

**** Refer to the section on Supported Employment IPE for additional information about case note requirements in these situations.**

**** If Post Employment Services are anticipated, be sure to include in the case note the following:**

1. A statement indicating the need for Post– Employment Services;
2. A description of the terms and conditions for the provision of the services; and
3. When appropriate, a description indicating how the services will be provided by other entities with comparable benefits explored and explained.

Next Steps

Once you have completed the IPE case note, the next step in the process is to submit the IPE form and case note for data entry and filing.

Submitting IPE Information for Filing

Once you have entered the IPE and the case note, reassign the IPE to support staff. Support person will review and submit an electronic copy for supervisor's approval. After your supervisor has approved the IPE, sign the document and provide this to support staff for filing and distribution. One copy will be placed in the case file. One copy will be created in the individual's media of choice and mailed to the individual. Remember that no services can be authorized until the IPE has been approved and

signed by the counselor and the signed Client Response sheet has been returned indicating the individual's acceptance of the plan.

The Client Response sheet is a part of the IPE and any amendments that are developed. The client's signature on the Client Response sheet indicates the client's involvement in the development of the IPE and its amendments. The client must sign the response sheet documenting agreement to the jointly developed or amended plan.

Once you have submitted the completed IPE form and case note for data entry and filing, the next steps are to:

Follow– up with VR Counselor Supervisor on approval. If your supervisor requires edits to the plan prior to approval, eFORCE will generate a tickler to indicate changes are needed.

IPE Review

The purpose of the IPE is to clearly define an employment goal and the services that the individual requires in order to achieve that goal. IPEs are developed at the beginning of a client's vocational training. A good IPE helps both the counselor and the client ensure agreement about services the Department will provide and the responsibilities the client accepts in working toward the employment goal.

Reviewing the IPE with the Client

Clients must have a current IPE as long as they remain in an active status. The counselor must review the IPE with the client at least once a year. Discuss whether sufficient progress has been made on the measures listed in the criteria for review. Determine whether new services and/or measures to evaluate the individual's progress toward the employment outcome are needed. Review the guidelines below to determine whether changes to the IPE are required, whether an IPE should be amended, or whether a new IPE should be developed.

Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory

If the counselor determines that progress is being made and the client is continuing to work toward the employment goal, then indicate the review was Satisfactory.

If the counselor determines the client is not meeting benchmarks set in the Criteria for Review, working toward the defined goal, or is not collaborating, indicate the review was Unsatisfactory. If the review is unsatisfactory, note the reason(s) in the case note. Assess whether the client has the motivation and ability to continue the rehabilitation process. Determine whether a change in services or goals is necessary. Unsatisfactory reviews can help the client get back on track in working toward his / her goal. They can also lead toward a case closure as unsuccessful.

Guidelines: Amendments vs. New IPE

As the client progresses through vocational counseling and training, the counselor or the client may determine that information listed in the client's IPE needs to be changed. Some changes may be minor and require a plan amendment; other changes may be substantial and require a new IPE. Knowing when a change is minor or substantive enough to require a new IPE is subjective and based on experience. Use these guidelines when deciding whether an amendment or new plan is needed.

1. **Change to Employment Goal:** Because the purpose of the IPE is to define the services that will help a client achieve an employment goal, create a new plan if the client chooses to pursue a different employment goal.
2. **Type and number of changes:** An amendment may be appropriate when making changes to dates associated with the provision or completion of a service. However, if more than two services require changes or significant date changes, look more closely at the IPE. Think about the services and justifications listed on the existing IPE. Do they continue to be in line with the client's employment goal?

Consider creating a new IPE even if the individual's employment goal has not changed; create a new plan when the services listed on the IPE are no longer appropriate or will not lead to the employment goal due to new circumstances, the counselor's experience and knowledge of the individual suggest that the existing services, or the services listed are obsolete.

3. **Length of time the IPE has been in use:** You are required to review the IPE with a client once a year. During the review, take the opportunity to carefully consider the goal and services defined. If the IPE has been in place for more than a year and progress toward that goal is not being made or progress is slow, consider developing a new IPE. Plans that have been in place for several years may indicate that the specified services are not helping the client achieve the goal.
4. **Items listed in the Criteria for Review:** The items listed in the Criteria for Review and Evaluation help the counselor and the client determine whether progress toward the goal is being made. If those items do not correspond to the goal or are not proving to be achievable by the client, then a new IPE with new Criteria for Review and Evaluation may be warranted.

If a client has met all of the criteria without achieving the employment goal, review the goal with the client. A new IPE with new criteria may be warranted.

5. **Number of previous amendments:** Consider creating a new IPE if a plan has been amended more than three times. A pattern of amendments may indicate that the services listed on the IPE, methods for providing those services, or deadlines associated with those services are no longer appropriate for the client.

Overall, keep the purpose of the IPE in mind when considering whether to amend or create a new plan. Does the current IPE represent the client's employment goal and the services necessary to achieve that goal? Does the IPE clearly define the employment goal and the path to attain that goal? Have accumulated amendments made it difficult to discern how the services will lead the client toward achieving his / her goal? Is it written so that the client can understand it (avoid jargon)?

Submitting IPE Review and IPE Data for filing

Once the review is complete, prepare an IPE review case note and, when necessary, IPE amendment or new IPE information for entry into eFORCE. The review date information on the eFORCE IPE Plan page must be updated with the date the review was performed and the date set for the next IPE review.

Transition IPE

Students who are aged 14 to 24 are considered "transition" clients. All students in Iowa who have vision– related services on their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and are approaching age 14 are referred to the Department. All transition clients receive transition services.

Definition:

Rehab Act defines "transition services" as a "coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome oriented process that promotes movement from school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation."

IPE and Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) Coordination

If the student has an active Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) through his/her school program, the counselor must review the IEP with the student to be sure that the IPE you make with the student does not conflict with those set forth in the IEP. The IPE and the IEP should be coordinated carefully so that the goals and objectives of the two documents complement each other. The IPE is designed to pick up where the IEP leaves off, carrying the student past graduation into adult life. The IPE should not duplicate services provided under an IEP. Remember that as long as the individual is enrolled in the local school district, the school district is responsible for providing all services specified in the IEP. A photocopy of the IEP should be attached to the plan, and the case note should describe the discussion between the IEP case manager and the counselor. An IPE that is developed for a student with a disability who is receiving

special education services must be developed in consideration of and in conjunction with the plans, policies, procedures, and interagency agreement required in the IEP.

Department Sponsored Transition Programs

The Department sponsors several transition programs designed to develop alternative skills of blindness, encourage peer interaction, and instill self– confidence (more around employment).

Required IPE Information for Transition Clients

When completing an IPE for a student who is still in high school, use a goal that reflects the students employment goal. Students in high school may not know what their employment goal is; in these cases, work with the individual to identify a goal that reflects the goal on their IEP and in accordance with other requirements of the IPE (strengths, interests, skills, etc.). Be sure to list Assessment as a service as this will be necessary for continuing to determine a realistic career goal as well as services needed to achieve the goal.

A client is considered a transition client until he or she becomes employed. Just before the student graduates from high school, create a new IPE, based on client assessment data, that lists a defined employment goal if not already determined.

NOTE: If the client is under age 18, have a guardian sign all forms requiring a signature.

Supported Employment

Supported employment is defined as competitive work in integrated settings, or employment in integrated work settings in which individuals are working toward competitive employment, performed by individuals with the most significant disabilities who require intensive supported employment services in order to perform the work.

Supported employment outcomes are intended for individuals:

1. For whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and
2. Who, because of the nature and severity of their disabilities, need intensive supported employment services or extended services in order perform this work; or
3. Transitional employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness.

Supported Employment IPE Information

In cases where a supported employment outcome has been chosen, the IPE must contain the following information:

1. The supported employment services to be provided. These include:
 - a. Evaluation of the rehabilitation potential for supported employment. This evaluation must be completed as a supplement to any evaluation that may have already been conducted under the regular Vocational Rehabilitation program.
 - b. Job development and placement.
 - c. A description of time– limited services to be provided, not to exceed 24 months in duration, to support the trainees in employment, such as:
 - i. Intensive on– the– job training and other training provided by skilled job trainers for individuals with significant disabilities.
 - ii. Follow– up services, including regular contact with employers, trainees with significant disabilities, parents, guardians, or other representatives, and other suitable professional and informed advisors in order to assess and stabilize the job placement. (Follow– up allowed during the time– limited VR funded training only.); and
 - iii. Regular observations or supervision of individuals with significant disabilities at the job site.
2. The expected extended services needed, which may include the facilitation of natural supports.
3. Identification of the entity that will provide the continuing support or a description of the basis for determining that continuing support is available. It is a good idea to get a letter of commitment for extended or follow along services at beginning of services.
4. Where job skills training is needed, indicate the training that will be provided on site.

The IPE must be directed toward placement in an integrated setting with the maximum number of hours possible based on the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Case Note Requirements

The case note for a supported employment IPE must include the following:

1. A specific supported employment job goal to be achieved through the supported employment plan;

2. An outline of the services to be provided;
3. An identification of who will be providing the service;
4. A description of the extended services that will be needed;
5. An identification of the party or parties responsible for the continuing support after stabilization has been achieved; and
6. A description of the basis on which it was determined that the continuing support is available.

Also, be sure to note that the Supported Employment check box on the IPE Plan page in eFORCE should be checked. When this check box is checked, all authorizations created for this case will be charged to the Supported Employment grant.

Assessment for Supported Employment

A counselor may determine that a client should undergo a period of assessment prior to developing a supported employment IPE. In these instances, complete the IPE according to standard procedures. Be sure to include assessment as a service on the IPE. Also, in the case note indicate that an assessment to determine whether supported employment is appropriate is being conducted.

Guidelines for Authorization and Payment

Supported employment services purchased from non– Department operated rehabilitation facilities are to be authorized and billed on a billable hourly basis, in line with the following explanations and exceptions:

- 1) If the client is still in a program of secondary education, the school may have responsibility for providing some of these services. For these clients, this comparable service and benefit should be thoroughly explored and, if available, used before any vocational rehabilitation money is authorized.
- 2) Authorization and billings will only be in terms of whole or fractions of billable hours. Billable hours include:
 - a. Time spent with an employer developing or refining a placement site for a Department supported employment client;
 - b. Direct contact with a Department client at the community– based job site;
 - c. Transportation of the Department client to and from the community– based site;
 - d. One hour per month for completing written reports for individual Department clients; and

- e. One hour per month for individual Department clients for consultations with Department and other involved professionals.
- 3) The maximum number of hours which may be authorized for a client for time– limited training is 60.
- a. Extensions must be approved by the supervisor.
 - b. The limit on extensions is two.
- 4) The time– limited training should be expected to be accomplished in not more than six weeks.
- a. Extensions must be approved by the supervisor.
 - b. The limit on extensions is two.
- 5) Reports must be provided to the Department at least monthly.

When creating authorizations for Supported Employment cases, verify that the Supported Employment check box is checked on the IPE. When this check box is checked, all authorizations created for this case will be charged to the Supported Employment grant.

Definitions

Competitive Work: Work "in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full– time basis or part– time basis in an integrated setting; and for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled."

Extended Services: Extended services are ongoing support services and other services that are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment. These services are provided by the Department, a private nonprofit organization, employer, or any other appropriate resource, from funds other than funds received under this part and 34 CFR part 363 after an individual with a most significant disability has made the transition from support provided by the designated State unit."

Integrated Setting: For services, an integrated setting means a "setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non– disabled individuals other than non– disabled individuals who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals."

For an employment outcome, an integrated setting means a "setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non– disabled individuals, other than non– disabled individuals who are providing services to those

applicants or eligible individuals, to the same extent that non– disabled individuals in comparable positions interact with other persons."

Action Requirements:

A. The IPE shall be designed to achieve a specific employment outcome that is selected by the individual consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice and to the maximum extent appropriate, result in employment in an integrated setting.

B. Each eligible individual, or, as appropriate, the individual's designated/legal representative, shall be provided the following in writing and, if appropriate, in the native language or mode of communication of the individual or the individual's representative:

a. information on the available options for developing the IPE, including the option that an eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative may develop all or part of the IPE:

1. without assistance from the VR counselor or any other entity; or

2. with assistance from: a VR counselor; a VR counselor who is not employed by client; or other resources.

3. additional information to assist the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative in developing the IPE, including: information describing the full range of components that must be included in an IPE; as appropriate to each eligible individual:

i. an explanation of guidelines and criteria for determining an eligible individual's financial commitments under an IPE;

ii. information on the availability of assistance in completing forms required as part of the IPE; and

iii. additional information that the eligible individual requests or determines to be necessary for the development of the IPE;

iv. a description of the individual's appeal rights; and

v. a description of the services available from the Client Assistance Program and information on how to contact that program.

C. Counselor must ensure that:

a. the IPE is a written document prepared on forms provided by the VR agency;

b. the IPE is developed and implemented in a manner that gives eligible individuals the opportunity to exercise informed choice, consistent with Chapter 2, in selecting:

1. the employment outcome, including the employment setting;
2. the specific vocational rehabilitation services needed to achieve the employment outcome, including the settings in which services will be provided;
3. the entity or entities that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services; and
4. the methods available for procuring the services;

D. the IPE is:

a. agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative; and

b. approved and signed by a VR counselor, with no primary services other than assessment and information and referral services being provided until the signatures called for in parts A and B are secured.

E. a copy of the IPE and a copy of any amendments to the IPE are provided to the eligible individual or, as appropriate, to the individual's representative, in writing and in the native language or mode of communication of the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative;

F. the IPE is reviewed at least annually by a VR counselor and the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, to assess the eligible individual's progress in achieving the identified employment outcome;

Note: A Supported Employment or Trial Work IPE is reviewed at least every 90 days by a VR counselor and the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, to assess the eligible individual's progress in achieving the identified employment outcome.

G. the IPE is amended, as necessary, by the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in collaboration with a VR counselor (to the extent determined to be appropriate by the individual), if there are substantive changes in the employment outcome, the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided, or the providers of the vocational rehabilitation services;

H. amendments to the IPE (except for a closure amendment) do not take effect until agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative and by a VR counselor;

I. when a notice of closure is clearly identified as a closure amendment to an IPE (see requirements in Chapter 10), no signature of the eligible individual or the individual's representative is required; and

J. an IPE for a student with a disability receiving special education services is:

a. developed:

1. in consideration of the student's IEP; and

2. in accordance with the plans, policies, procedures, and terms of the interagency agreement between the VR Agency and the Department of Education, including the requirement that the IPE be developed in a timely manner, consistent with the requirements of this chapter;

b. there are no provisions for delaying the development and implementation of such an IPE.

eFORCE Documentation Requirements:

A. Preparation without comprehensive assessment: To the extent possible, the employment outcome and the nature and scope of rehabilitation services to be included in the individual's IPE must be determined based on the data used for the assessment of eligibility.

B. Preparation based on comprehensive assessment: If additional data is necessary to determine the employment outcome and the nature and scope of rehabilitation services to be included in the IPE of an eligible individual, INDIVIDUAL must conduct a comprehensive assessment of the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, including the need for supported employment services, of the eligible individual. The assessment must be in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the informed choice of the individual.

C. In completing the comprehensive assessment, INDIVIDUAL must use, to the maximum extent possible and appropriate and in accordance with confidentiality requirements, existing information that is current as of the date of the development of the IPE, including:

a. information available from other programs and providers, particularly information used by education officials and the Social Security Administration;

b. information provided by the individual and the individual's family; and

c. Information obtained under the assessment for determining the individual's eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs.

The alternative techniques of blindness of all eligible individuals must be assessed and any deficits identified addressed in the IPE.

D. Content of the IPE: Regardless of the method used to develop the IPE, each IPE must include:

- a. a description of the specific employment outcome that is chosen by the eligible individual and is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice, and to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated setting;
- b. a description of the specific rehabilitation services that are:
 - i. needed to achieve the employment outcome, including, as appropriate, the provision of assistive technology devices, assistive technology services, and personal assistance services, including training in the management of those services; and
 - ii. provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate for the services involved and is consistent with the informed choice of the eligible individual;
- c. timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of services;
- d. a description of the entity or entities chosen by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services and the methods used to procure those services;
- e. a description of the criteria that will be used to evaluate progress toward achievement of the employment outcome;
- f. the date in which the IPE will be reviewed; and

Note: An IPE must be reviewed at least annually. A Supported Employment or Trial Work IPE is reviewed at least every 90 days.

- g. the terms and conditions of the IPE, including, as appropriate, information describing:
 1. the responsibilities of the VR counselor;
 2. the responsibilities of the eligible individual, including:
 - i. the responsibilities the individual will assume in relation to achieving the employment outcome;
 - ii. if applicable, the extent of the individual's participation in paying for the cost of services; and

iii. the responsibility of the individual with regard to applying for and securing comparable services and benefits; and

iv. the responsibilities of other entities resulting from arrangements made pursuant to federal regulations.

h. Supported employment requirements. An IPE for an individual with a most significant disability for whom an employment outcome in a supported employment setting has been determined to be appropriate must:

1. specify the supported employment services to be provided;

2. specify the expected extended services needed, which may include natural supports;

3. identify the source of extended services or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the IPE is developed, include a description of the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that those sources will become available;

4. provide for periodic monitoring to ensure that the individual is making satisfactory progress toward meeting the weekly work requirement established in the IPE by the time of transition to extended services;

Note: A Supported Employment IPE is reviewed at least every 90 days.

5. provide for the coordination of services under an IPE with services provided under other individualized plans established by other federal or state programs;

6. to the extent that job skills training is provided, identify that the training will be provided on site; and

7. include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the eligible individual.

h. Post– secondary services. The IPE for the eligible individual attending post– secondary education must contain a supplemental document, signed by the eligible individual, or designated/legal representative, if appropriate, and the VR counselor, identifying additional responsibilities of the eligible individual as a direct result of attending post– secondary education.

i. Post– employment services. The IPE for the eligible individual must contain, as determined to be necessary, statements concerning:

1. the expected need for post– employment services prior to closing the record of services of an individual who has achieved an employment outcome;
 2. a description of the terms and conditions for the provision of any post–employment services; and
 3. if appropriate, a statement of how post– employment services will be provided or arranged through other entities as the result of arrangements made pursuant to the comparable services or benefits requirements in agreements that INDIVIDUAL has, pursuant to federal regulations, developed with other entities.
- j. Coordination of services for students with disabilities who are receiving special education services. The IPE for a student with a disability who is receiving special education services must be coordinated with the IEP for that individual in terms of the goals, objectives, and services identified in the IEP.

Case Note Documentation:

- A. Purpose: A statement indicating purpose of the meeting is to discuss and begin plan development activities.
- B. Assessment: Statements indicating information gathered by individual and counselor indicating a feasible career goal. List information regarding strengths, interests, temperament, work history, education, assessment information, labor market information, work and personal values, barriers to employment and services that will overcome barriers, etc. A statement indicating need for continued assessments if necessary.
- C. Intervention: A statement indicating the plan is being jointly discussed and developed, including the vocational goal and review date. A statement indicating that Client Rights and Responsibilities, including information about ICAP was provided. A statement indicating any services provided in determining the IPE (assessment, counseling and guidance, and other interventions you did as the VR counselor such as reviewing ONet to assist in researching labor market information.)
- D. Plan: A statement indicating next steps: assignments provided to assist in determining plan, plan entry, approval, and signatures to be gathered, etc.

Timeliness Standard:

Within 90 days following the determination of eligibility, the counselor and client will complete the IPE, unless there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of counselor, and the counselor and the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, agree to a specific extension of time, or activities needed to develop the IPE. The counselor must document the extension in the case record.

Next Steps:

Once the IPE is completed and approved, the case is manually moved to the appropriate service Status 12, 14, 16, or 18.

When a longer time is needed for program planning and development, an extension may be made if the client agrees.

Status: 12 – Plan Developed

Definition:

This status is only used when an IPE has been developed with an individual but services are not scheduled to actually begin for an extended period of time. If services are scheduled to begin immediately or in a fairly short period of time, the case should be placed directly in the status where services will be provided (14, 16, or 18).

Scope of Services:

No services are actually provided in this status. It is only a holding status.

Available Services:

No service are provided. ISE cases that are being evaluated in terms of feasibility should be done in Status 14 or 18.

Timeliness Standard:

The case will remain in this status until at least one necessary service has been initiated. Cases should not remain in this status longer than 30 days.

Next Steps:

Movement from Status 12:

- A. Active Cases move to Status 14, 16, or 18.
- B. Cases closed from Status 12 go to Status 30 and the Status 30 Closure is completed.

Status 14: Counseling and Guidance

Definition:

Counseling and guidance are processes in which the vocational rehabilitation counselor works directly with the individual to assist them in understanding their condition and develop strategies to reach their goals.

Scope of Services:

This status is to be used only for those cases in which the IPE calls for objectives for counseling/guidance and placement as the primary service needed to prepare and place an individual in employment or retain current employment.

Available Services:

- A. Counseling and Guidance
- B. Job Placement
- C. Transportation related to counseling and guidance or job placement
- D. Other Services and interpreter Services required to meet the language needs of the individual.

Action Requirements:

- A. Counseling and Guidance is always marked on the IPE due to the nature of the work with the Individual.
- B. Counseling and guidance would be marked as a no cost service when the counseling relationship is protracted and results in employment directly from Status 14.
- C. At least monthly a Case Note entry should indicate purpose of the meeting, the assessments and issues, the interventions and activities used, and next steps required to move the case forward.

eFORCE Documentation Requirements:

- A. An individual is placed into status 14 when the individual requires substantial counseling and guidance as the essential services to place the individual in an employment setting consistent with the strengths, interests, abilities, etc. of the individual.

Case Note Documentation:

- 1. This status is only used when the counselor is providing a significant program of counseling and guidance designed to result in job placement, it is

important that counseling and guidance services be adequately documented. The assessments that were reviewed, the issues that were addressed, the interventions that were used, and next steps should be clearly stated.

Timeliness Standard:

- A. A counselor must contact an individual in this status a minimum of once every month.
- B. Plan Reviews must be completed at a minimum of annually by a counselor.
- C. Plan Amendments must be approved by the Counselor and are done when substantial changes to the IPE are necessary.

Next Steps:

Movement from Status 14 –

- A. Active Cases move to Status 16, 18, 20, or 22.
- B. Cases closed from Status 14 go to Status 28 and the Status 28 Closure is completed.

Status: 16 – Physical and Mental Restoration

Definition:

This status is for cases which have physical and/or mental restoration as the most significant services called for on the IPE.

Scope of Services:

Services to correct or reduce the effects of a physical or mental disability can be provided only when the change is required to assist an individual to prepare for, enter or maintain successful employment.

Available Services:

- A. Counseling and Guidance
- B. Diagnosis and Treatment

- C. Rehabilitation Technology
- D. Job Placement
- E. Transportation related to counseling and guidance or job placement
- F. Other Services and interpreter Services required to address the language needs of the individual.

Action Requirements:

- A. Physical and mental restoration should be checked on the IPE even if it is funded by a comparable service or benefit, but is necessary for the advancement of the IPE.

eFORCE Documentation Requirements:

- A. IPE – The Individual Plan for Employment must detail the needed restoration services and the involvement of other financial resources, especially insurance.
- B. Client moves into status 16 when restoration/diagnosis and treatment are the primary service.

Case Note Documentation:

- A. The assessments that were reviewed, the issues that were addressed, the interventions that were used, and next steps to complete the physical or mental restoration services.

Timeliness Standard:

- A. A counselor must contact an individual in this status a minimum of every three months.
- B. Plan Reviews must be completed at a minimum annually by a counselor.
- C. Plan Amendments must be approved by the Counselor and are done when substantial changes to the IPE are necessary.

Next Steps:

Movement from Status 16 –

- A. Active Cases move to Status 14, 18, 20 or 22.
- B. Cases closed from Status 16 go to Status 28 and the Status 28 Closure is completed.

Status: 18 – Training

Definition:

This status is for cases which have training as the most significant service called for on the IPE. The individual remains in this status until the training is completed or ended.

Scope of Services:

Training is designed to assist the individual prepare for and attain a vocational goal. There is a wide range of training available to the individual, including but not limited to:

- A. Academic training at universities, colleges, junior colleges, and area community colleges;
- B. Occupational or Vocational Training;
- C. On– the– Job Training;
- D. Apprenticeship Training;
- E. Basic Academic Remedial/Literacy Training;
- F. Job Readiness Training;
- G. Disability – Related Skills Training;
- H. Rehabilitation Technology Training; and
- I. Miscellaneous Training.

Available Services:

- A. Those services indicated on the IPE. If additional services are necessary, a plan amendment must occur.
- B. Plan Amendments must be approved by the Counselor and are done when substantial changes to the IPE are necessary.

Action Requirements:

- A. The counselor will determine to their satisfaction that the individual has the capability to complete the training identified and work in that field of employment, and communicate that assessment to the individual.

B. The counselor must identify for the individual when there is a lack of satisfactory progress and what actions should be taken to improve performance as well as possible consequences of failure to progress.

eFORCE Documentation Requirement:

A. IPE – The Individual Plan for Employment should detail the indicators that demonstrate that the individual has the ability to complete the training and the need to search for all comparable services and benefits. The need for accommodations must be spelled out.

B. Plan Review – An agency representative shall prepare a plan review with the individual when there are no substantial changes to the original plan and the case is proceeding as expected. The plan must be reviewed at a minimum of yearly.

C. Plan Amendments – A counselor must approve a plan amendment when the agency representative documents a substantial change from the original IPE.

D. Authorizations – All authorizations must be completed and approved prior to the provision of any services or training programs beginning in this status.

Case Note Documentation:

A. Assess and report on the progress that has been made toward completing the training part of the plan, indicate the interventions used, and list the rehabilitation next steps to be taken.

Timeliness Standard:

A. A counselor must contact an individual in this status a minimum of every three months.

B. Plan Reviews must be completed at a minimum annually by a counselor.

C. Plan Amendments must be approved by the Counselor and are done when substantial changes to the IPE are necessary.

Next Steps:

Movement from Status 18 –

A. Active Cases move to Status 14, 16, 20, or 22.

B. Cases closed from Status 18 go to Status 28 and the Status 28 Closure is completed.

Status: 20 – Ready for Employment

Definition:

This status is used for those individuals who, as a result of agency services provided under an IPE, and are now considered ready for and able to seek employment.

Scope of services:

Placement services are considered to be an integral and important part of the overall program. Services may include a variety of strategies agreed upon by the counselor and individual in the IPE and considered essential to an employment outcome. This will include employer contacts by/and on behalf of the individual.

Available Services:

- A. Those services indicated on the IPE.
- B. All training services are complete and should no longer be necessary when in this status.

Action Requirements:

- A. The agency recognizes the counselor as the person primarily responsible for the determination of job readiness and for assuring that placement services are adequately planned and carried out.

Case Note Documentation:

At the time of movement to Status 20, to the extent that these issues have not been previously recorded, the counselor will meet with the individual to discuss job readiness issues and make a case note entry relating to:

- A. specific information indicating the individual is job ready (i.e., medical issues resolved to the extent possible; medical release to go to work obtained from physician as necessary; individual's functional capability of performing in chosen job areas; meets minimum skill requirements; has satisfactory job seeking skills; has independent living skills necessary for employment being sought; transportation arrangements, etc.);
- B. activities which will be pursued to accomplish placement and identification of responsible entities (i.e., referral to Workforce Development or other agency; use of incentives; participation by individual, counselor, others, etc.);

C. need and justification for any services such as tools, supplies, licenses, interpreter, transportation, or other services which need to be purchased as an integral part of the placement activity.

D. a meeting or contact with staff, at least monthly, to review what has been done and what has changed to improve the individual's chances of obtaining suitable employment and the next steps in the process. Counselors will meet/contact the individual and staff (when appropriate) at least monthly to develop strategies for progress.

E. Case entries should summarize job search efforts specifically focused on business and industry contacts as well as the job seeking activities of the individual.

Timeliness Standard:

A. Plan Reviews must be completed at a minimum annually by the Counselor.

B. Plan Amendments must be approved by the Counselor.

C. Contact must occur with the client a minimum of every 30 days while the individual is in this status.

Next Steps:

Movement from Status 20 –

A. Active Cases move to Status 14, 16, 18, or 22.

B. Cases closed from Status 20 go to Status 28 and the Status 28 Closure is completed.

Status: 22 – Employed

Definition:

This status is used for those individuals who, as a result of receiving substantial services under an IPE, have obtained or maintained employment consistent with employment goal identified on the IPE.

Scope of Services:

Generally, individuals in this status are followed to make sure they are stable on the job. Occasionally, other services are needed to make sure that the person keeps and is successful on the job or finds another job more compatible with their abilities.

Available Services:

Follow– along services should be the only services needed once stable and in this status.

Action Requirements:

- A. The counselor should make the decision on what type and amount of follow up is needed for the individual to maintain stable employment. All services that are planned for must be authorized prior to movement to status 22.
- B. If the individual is stable on the job, the counselor should close the file as soon as possible after the individual has been employed for 90 days. When the individual requires and receives additional services, a plan amendment should be completed by the counselor. The 90– day clock starts again once the service is provided and stabilization is achieved.
- C. If the individual loses the job and does not have an immediate prospect of re– employment, the file should be moved to either a service status that better reflects the activity occurring, or to interrupted status.
- D. A medical residency is considered employment.
- E. Counselors will work with the individuals who have been on SSI/SSDI to reassign their ticket to an Employment Network that will assist them in their career development goals.

eFORCE Requirements:

- A. Plan Reviews may be completed by agency staff and should be done at a minimum of every 90 days.
- B. Plan Amendments must be approved by a Counselor when substantial changes to the IPE occur. If the individual is promoted within the 90 days, then an amendment should be completed reflecting the promotion and the 90 day clock starts again. If the individual leaves an employer to work for another company doing the same job, the 90 day clock starts again when stabilization is achieved.

Case Note Documentation:

- A. Contain information relative to whether the rehabilitation services provided have worked regarding success and satisfaction in the performance on the job.
- B. Documentation regarding the starting 90 day clock or stopping and restarting the 90 day clock if significant services are necessary during this phase of the rehabilitation process.

Timeliness Standard:

- A. Client must be contacted a minimum of every 30 days for the purpose of follow along.
- B. Cases should be closed as soon as possible after the individual has been employed for 90 days.

Next Steps:

Movement from Status 22 –

- A. Cases closed from Status 22 go to Status 26 and the Status 26 Closure is completed.

Status: 24 – Services Interrupted

Definition:

A case is considered to be interrupted when the IPE can no longer be continued and no new plan is readily obvious. A case stays in interrupted status until a new plan has been written or current plan re- activated, or the file is ready to be closed in Status 28.

Scope of Services:

The major activity that takes place in this status is an attempt to develop a new plan or re- start a previous plan in order to move the individual towards employment. This can include new or additional evaluations.

Available Services:

- A. Counseling and Guidance as well as assessment and related services.

Action Requirements:

- A. Counselors will take an active role in trying to move cases back into an active status as rapidly as is feasible.
- B. A plan will be developed listing the activities that will take place to return the file to an active status and entered as a case note.

eFORCE Documentation Requirements:

- A. An IPE review must be completed to move the case into status 24 because the individual's case is being interrupted. Plan Reviews (IPE) will be completed by the Counselor and should occur at a minimum of every 90 days until status change.
- B. Plan Amendments must be approved by a Counselor when substantial changes to the IPE occur.

Case Note Documentation:

- A. A statement indicating an assessment of the situation, interventions provided and a plan will be developed listing the activities that will take place to move the client to active status.

Timeliness Standard:

Client must be contacted a minimum of every 90 days while in this status.

Next Steps:

Movement from Status 24 –

- A. Active Cases move to Status 14, 16, 18, or 20.
- B. Cases closed from Status 24 go to Status 28 and the Status 28 Closure is completed.

Status: 26 – Closed, Rehabilitated

Definitions:

- A. Rehabilitated – A case in which the individual had an IPE calling for a specific vocational goal, received substantial rehabilitation services pertinent to the job goal, and has been employed in the job identified on the IPE and in

Status 22– 0 for a minimum of 90 days. Movement to Status 26 can only occur from Status 22.

B. Substantial rehabilitation services – Services provided within a counseling relationship, which when completed, accomplishes the individual’s vocational rehabilitation.

C. Suitable occupation – A job where, after a reasonable period of adjustment (not less than 90 days) the following conditions are met when the:

- a. individual and employer are mutually satisfied;
- b. individual is maintaining adequate interpersonal relationships and acceptable behavior on the job;
- c. occupation is consistent with the individual’s capacities and abilities;
- d. individual possesses acceptable skills to continue to perform satisfactorily;
- e. job will not aggravate the individual’s disability or jeopardize the health or safety of individual or others;
- f. employment is regular and reasonably permanent;
- g. work is performed in an integrated setting with non– disabled workers; and
- h. individual earns at least the minimum wage, but not less than that normally paid to other workers for similar work.

D. Employment with a Temp Agency – A individual is employed by a Temp Agency, which is the employer of record. The agency places the individual in various employment settings and in addition to the suitable occupation standards listed under “C” above, the following conditions are required:

- a. The Temp agency continues to place the individual in temporary jobs as an employee of the Temp agency;
- b. The vocational goal and preferences of the individual are consistent with the jobs at which the individual is placed;
- c. The Temp agency retains the individual as a viable individual for future placements;
- d. The Temp agency provides verification that continual placements will be provided to the individual at no charge to the individual;

- e. The individual works for the Temp agency with multiple placement periods that cumulate to no less than 90 days.
- E. Acceptance into the Armed Forces – considered suitably employed and rehabilitated.
- F. Employment on a family farm or in a family business operated by one or more members of their own family – considered suitably employed and rehabilitated, as long as the work is gainful, productive, regular, and the result of vocational rehabilitation services.
- G. Employment on the same job held at application – considered rehabilitated when shown VR services aided client in maintaining or progressing in his/her employment.
- H. Exceptions
 - a. Closing a case at less than 10 hours per week.
 - b. Small business cases closed less than at 80% of SGA.
 - I. Incarceration in correctional institutions – not considered rehabilitated while in that setting.
 - J. Employment in Extended Employment (sheltered employment) – not considered employed and rehabilitated.

Scope of Services:

Rehabilitation closure is the final step in a successful program of services. It includes a review with the individual of the services provided, the successes achieved, and an offer of re-establishing services in the future, if needed by the individual.

Available Services:

- A. Information and Referral
- B. Post-Employment Service

Action Requirements and Further Explanations Regarding Employment:

- A. IDB staff will work with the individuals who have been on SSI/SSDI to reassign their ticket to an Employment Network that will assist them in their career development goals.

B. A “26– Closure– Rehabilitated” letter is completed when a case is being closed as Rehabilitated. (sample located in VR letter templates in Field Op under Program Areas on the IDB Intranet)

eFORCE Documentation Requirement:

A. Service History Screen – counselor will document provider and funding for each designated IPE service, and providers of comparable services; and recalculate the service summary records completed prior to closure.

B. Closure Data Screen – The Closure Screen will be completed identifying the individual’s wages, hours of work/week, job title and current benefit and insurance information. Regardless of the individual’s employment setting the wages reported must be at least at minimum wage and commensurate with the industry standard. Small business closures must be closed at least at 85% of SGA.

C. Employment and wage information can be verified through Iowa Workforce Development for those individuals who are unable to provide this information.

D. The VR counselor will print and sign the Closure amendment. The client will sign the Client Response form.

E. Status moves to 26.

Case Note Documentation:

A. Purpose: A statement indicating contact was made and determination by the counselor and the client that the employment outcome is satisfactory and that the client and counselor are in agreement that the individual is performing well in the employment situation.

B. Assessment: Documentation confirming the employment outcome is consistent with the employment goal on the IPE, the counselor had contact with the client a minimum of every thirty days while in employment, and verification the individual’s wage and level of benefits are not less than that customarily paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by non– disabled individuals and that the individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage.

C. Intervention: Documentation indicating the client has the right to re– apply for IDB services when he/she has needs for additional services, and has been informed of his/her rights when he/she disagrees with this decision of inactivating his/her case.

D. Plan: A statement indicating a letter will be mailed to the client indicating determination by the counselor and the client that the employment outcome is satisfactory and that the case file is being closed.

Timeliness Standard:

Complete closure and documents ASAP after consulting with client to inactivate IDB case.

Next Steps:

eFORCE system will re-assign completed closure screen and case note from counselor to clerical staff who will notify VR supervisor for approval. Status 26 Closure letter is emailed and closure amendment mailed to assigned clerical staff.

Status: 28 – Closed after plan initiated

Definition:

A case is closed Status 28 when the individual was found eligible and received services under an IPE prior to the case being determined that suitable employment could not be achieved or that employment resulted without benefit derived from VR services. Cases in Status 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, or 24 can be moved to Status 28.

Scope of Services:

The final case process for an individual who meets the criteria listed in the definition.

Available Services:

- A. Information and Referral

Action Requirements:

- A. The IDB Counselor will follow up on a request to close a case by connecting with the client to discuss the situation, and resolve concerns if needed and possible.
- B. The agency representative will make an effort to contact the individual by using sources identified in the file listed as knowing where the individual can be located.

- C. The IDB Counselor determines when it is appropriate to close the case record in status 28 and completes the closure. In all situations, attempts must be made to provide the client with informed choice in the closure decision.
- D. If the individual is moving to another state, whenever feasible, they will be given the name and address of the rehabilitation office nearest the new residence
- E. When the individual is closed working in an extended employment situation or due to an exacerbation of the disability preventing employment activities, the annual review of this placement is conducted by the Department of Human Services who funds extended employment. Upon their review, the individual may be referred to IDB for community employment. After review of the decision, the case note must clearly show that the determination to not pursue competitive employment was made only after full consultation with the individual, or as appropriate, with a parent, guardian, or other representative.
- F. When the individual cannot be located, but substantial services leading to employment have been provided, the candidate's employment and wage verification will be requested from Iowa Workforce Development. If the employment is consistent with the IPE goal and services provided, the case is closed status 26– 0.
- G. A “28– Closure– Not Rehabilitated” letter (sample located in VR letter templates in Field Op under Program Areas on the IDB Intranet) is completed.

eFORCE Documentation Requirements:

- A. Service History Screen – counselor will document provider and funding for each designated IPE service and providers of comparable services; and recalculate the service summary records completed prior to closure.
- B. Closure Data Screen – The Closure Screen will be completed identifying the individual's wages, hours of work/week, job title and current benefit and insurance information or lack of this data.
- C. Employment and wage information can be verified through Iowa Workforce Development for those individuals who are unable to provide this information.
- D. The VR counselor will print and sign the Closure Amendment.
- E. Status moves to 28.

Case Note Documentation:

- A. Purpose: A statement indicating contact was made and determination that the counselor and the client are in agreement that the case should be closed.

- B. Assessment:
- a. Documentation that the client and the individual's representative (as appropriate) have had an opportunity for full consultation regarding the decision.
 - b. A description of the services provided to the individual and any benefits which the individual may have received from those services
- C. Intervention:
- a. The reason the case file is being closed and any attempts to remedy the situation.
 - b. As appropriate, documentation of the counselor's efforts to identify any other agency or services, including Independent Living Services, which might be available and appropriate to the needs of the individual; and that the individual was advised and assisted in making application for such other agency or resource.
 - c. Documentation indicating the client has the right to re-apply for IDB services when he/she has needs for additional services, and has been informed of his/her rights when he/she disagrees with this decision of inactivating his/her case.
- D. Plan: A statement indicating a letter will be mailed to the client indicating determination by the counselor and the client that the case file is being closed.

Timeliness Standard:

To be completed ASAP following determination of closure.

Next Steps:

eFORCE system will re-assign completed closure screen and case note from counselor to clerical staff who will notify VR supervisor for approval. Status 28 Closure letter is emailed and closure amendment mailed to assigned clerical staff.

Status: 30 – Closed before plan implemented

Definition:

A case is closed Status 30 from Status 10 (Status 30-5) or from Status 12 (status 30-7) when it is determined that a suitable plan for employment cannot be developed

and/or achieved or that employment resulted without benefit derived from VR services. A case closed in this status must have:

- A. received diagnostic and related services; and
- B. been declared eligible. Closure from Status 10 occurs before an IPE was developed. Closure from Status 12 indicates an IPE was developed but not implemented.

Scope of Services:

The final case process for an individual who meets the criteria listed in the definition.

Available Services:

- A. Information and Referral

Action Requirements:

- A. Prior to closure, IDB staff will consult with the individual to determine the need for an appointment with the counselor.
- B. The individual must be notified of the closure. For individuals who were determined eligible but an IPE was not yet developed and closed Status 30– 5, a closure is sent to the client. For individuals whose IPE was developed but not initiated and closed Status 30– 7, a closure amendment and a closure letter are sent to the client. (Sample of a closure letter is located in VR letter templates in Field Op under Program Areas on the IDB Intranet). The notification of closure must include the individual's right to receive assistance from the Iowa Client Assistance Program (CAP). The closure letter must also provide information regarding the individual's right to mediation or appeal within 90 days of the closure decision.
- C. If the individual's case is being closed due to his/her move from the state, whenever feasible, he/she will be provided with contact information of the rehabilitation office nearest the new residence.
- D. The Rehabilitation Counselor determines if case closure is appropriate and directs IDB Staff to process the closure.

eFORCE Documentation Requirements:

- A. Service History Screen – counselor will document provider and funding for each designated IPE service and providers of comparable services; and recalculate the service summary records completed prior to closure.
- B. Closure Data Screen – The Closure Screen will be completed.

C. The VR counselor will print and sign the Closure Amendment for cases closed Status 30– 7.

D. Status moves to 30– 5 or 30– 7.

Case Note Documentation:

Purpose: A statement indicating contact was made and determination by the counselor and the client are in agreement that the case should be closed.

Assessment: Documentation that the client and the individual's representative (as appropriate) have had an opportunity for full consultation regarding the decision.

A description of the Pre– IPE services provided to the individual and any benefits which the individual may have received from those services

When the individual is closed working in an extended employment situation or due to an exacerbation of the disability preventing employment activities, the annual review of this placement is conducted by the Department of Human Services who funds extended employment. Upon their review, the individual may be referred to IDB for community employment. After review of the decision, the case note must clearly show that the determination to not pursue competitive employment was made only after full consultation with the individual, or as appropriate, with a parent, guardian, or other representative.

Intervention: The reason the file is being closed and any attempts to remedy the situation. As appropriate the case note will also reflect efforts of the agency staff to identify any other agency or services, including Independent Living Services, which might be available and appropriate to the needs of the individual; and that the individual was advised and assisted in making application for such other agency or resource.

Documentation indicating the client has the right to re– apply for IDB services when he/she has needs for additional services, and has been informed of his/her rights when he/she disagrees with this decision of inactivating his/her case.

Plan: A statement indicating a letter will be mailed to the client indicating determination by the counselor and the client that the case file is being closed.

Timeliness Standard:

Complete closure and documents ASAP after consulting with client to inactivate IDB case.

Next Steps:

eFORCE system will re– assign completed closure screen and case note from counselor to clerical staff who will notify VR supervisor for approval. Status 30– 5

Closure letter is emailed, or Status 30– 7 Closure letter is emailed and closure amendment mailed to assigned clerical staff

Status: 32 – Post– Employment Services

Definition:

This status is only for individuals whose last VR case closure was as rehabilitated (Status 26), where that file has not been destroyed and who:

- A. need further VR services to maintain employment and prevent the breakdown of rehabilitation results;
- B. need further VR services to obtain another job in the same general field;
- C. do not require a complex or comprehensive rehabilitation effort unrelated to the last IPE goal; and
 - a. A complex provision of services is defined as involving more than two (2) core services;
 - b. A comprehensive rehabilitation effort would be defined as a service that lasts thirty (30) days or more or involves more than \$1,000.
 - c. These services are generally provided within one (1) year following an employment outcome.
- D. have had an IPE amendment (IPE “Post– Employment”) developed which details the needed services.

Scope of Services:

Post– employment services may include any core vocational rehabilitation service or combination of services within the limitations established by the definition above.

Required Actions:

- A. Obtain and read the closed case file from the State Office:
 - a. If no services are to be provided, return the case file.
 - b. If a complex or comprehensive rehabilitation effort, unrelated to the IPE goals at closure, is required, a new case is opened.
 - c. If post– employment services are to be provided as determined by the counselor, proceed with instructions below.

i. Post– employment should be used to solve a one– time problem and cannot be provided for an ongoing situation.

ii. Post– employment can only be provided when the individual is in the same occupation as when the vocational rehabilitation case was closed.

B. IPE: The goal of post– employment services is to maintain employment and prevent the breakdown of rehabilitation results. An IPE “Post– Employment” program must be developed with the individual. The following should be in the IPE:

- a. reasons post– employment services are needed and review of related issues from closed file;
- b. individual’s current employment situation; and
- c. a list of anticipated actions
- d. Services are provided in accordance with the Case Services Manual.

eFORCE Documentation:

A. Post– employment services. The IPE for the eligible individual must contain, as determined to be necessary, statements concerning:

1. the expected need for post– employment services prior to closing the record of services of an individual who has achieved an employment outcome;

2. a description of the terms and conditions for the provision of any post– employment services; and

3. if appropriate, a statement of how post– employment services will be provided or arranged through other entities as the result of arrangements made pursuant to the comparable services or benefits requirements in agreements that INDIVIDUAL has, pursuant to federal regulations, developed with other entities.

B. Content of the IPE: Regardless of the method used to develop the IPE, each Post– Employment IPE must include:

a. a description of the specific employment outcome that is chosen by the eligible individual and is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice, and to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated setting;

b. a description of the specific rehabilitation services that are:

i. needed to achieve the employment outcome, including, as appropriate, the provision of assistive technology devices, assistive technology services, and personal assistance services, including training in the management of those services; and

ii. provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate for the services involved and is consistent with the informed choice of the eligible individual;

c. timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of services;

d. a description of the entity or entities chosen by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services and the methods used to procure those services;

e. a description of the criteria that will be used to evaluate progress toward achievement of the employment outcome; and

f. the terms and conditions of the IPE, including, as appropriate, information describing:

1. the responsibilities of the counselor/IDB;

2. the responsibilities of the eligible individual, including:

i. the responsibilities the individual will assume in relation to achieving the employment outcome;

ii. if applicable, the extent of the individual's participation in paying for the cost of services; and

iii. the responsibility of the individual with regard to applying for and securing comparable services and benefits; and

iv. the responsibilities of other entities resulting from arrangements made with the IDB pursuant to federal regulations.

Case Note Documentation:

Counselors serving individuals in post– employment must enter a case note detailing the reasons for the post– employment services. When said services are delivered only as a result of contractual requirements of follow up/follow along, the case note will state that no further IDB services are necessary, but the individual will receive the contractual services for the designated period of time. When said services are delivered under an open IDB file of Post– Employment, the narrative will detail the responsibilities of each party and the services that will be rendered along with the criteria to determine successful closure (i.e. stabilized employment.)

Status: 34 – Closed from Post Employment Services

Post- employment services are closed when:

- A. the person is returned to suitable employment, or the employment situation is stabilized;
- B. the situation has deteriorated to the point that further services would be of no assistance; or
- C. the case has been reopened for comprehensive VR services.

eFORCE Documentation:

Completion of the Closure Form identifying closure.

OR

- A. Service History Screen – must be recalculated and completed prior to closure.
- B. Closure Data Screen – The Closure Screen will be completed.
- C. The VR counselor will print and sign the Closure Amendment. The client will sign the Client Response form.
- D. Status moves to 34.

Case Note Documentation:

An agency representative enters a Case note in the case file detailing the reason for closure.

OR

A counselor enters a Case note in the case file detailing the reason for closure.

Extension Process for Eligibility and IPE Development

Purpose:

To provide staff with information about the importance of the proper processing of a case from application to IPE development. This document contains processing requirements and best practice suggestions.

Rationale:

IDB is required to deliver eligibility determination and IPE development in a timely manner. IDB encourages all necessary steps to ensure that we deliver these process steps in compliance with federal law. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act states, "an eligibility determination must be made within 60 days, unless: exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the designated State unit preclude making an eligibility determination within 60 days and the designated State unit and the individual agree to a specific extension of time."

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act states: "Standards for developing the individualized plan for employment.— The individualized plan for employment must be developed as soon as possible, but not later than 90 days after the date of determination of eligibility, unless the State unit and the eligible individual agree to the extension of that deadline to a specific date by which the individualized plan for employment must be completed."

Eligibility Extensions

IDB staff will be gathering information for eligibility and processing the eligibility determination. IDB staff should take steps to improve the possibility of timely completion of eligibility. These steps include full completion of all IDB forms with IDB assistance and client verification of the federal requirements, completion and processing of releases of information related to documentation of disability and functional limitations, and any other relevant information should be considered to complete the eligibility.

In some cases eligibility cannot be determined by the 60– day deadline. In these cases, an extension request will need to be started 45 days after the date the client enters into status 02 / application status, to insure that the extension request is processed and reviewed by the Supervisor prior to 60 days elapsed time.

The IDB staff will contact the client, explain the need for the extension and gain approval from the client. Once the client has agreed to the extension, the request will be forwarded to the IDB supervisor. The supervisor will review the extension request. The counselor or support staff will enter the extension date into eFORCE on the eligibility screen.

Criteria that must be included for an eligibility extension and documented in a case note:

1. A description of the circumstances beyond the control of the client and IDB that created the need for an extension,
3. A description of any assessment activities that will occur,
4. Steps that will be taken to complete the process/the timeline for those steps,
5. Date by which the Eligibility will be processed, and
6. Client agreement with the extension.

If a client cannot be reached or fails to engage using multiple methods including the preferred mode of contact, the case must be considered for case closure.

If the eligibility cannot be completed by the deadline identified in the extension, it should be renewed and discussed with the Supervisor **prior** to the deadline. The renewal request

must also include why the deadline cannot be met and reason(s) provided that are beyond the control of the client and IDB.

IPE Extensions

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act states: "Standards for developing the individualized plan for employment.— The individualized plan for employment must be developed as soon as possible, but not later than 90 days after the date of determination of eligibility, unless the State unit and the eligible individual agree to the extension of that deadline to a specific date by which the individualized plan for employment must be completed."

Development of the IPE can begin once the client is found eligible. IDB staff should take steps to improve the timely completion of the IPE. These steps include setting up appointments with the client and begin gathering information or completion of activities necessary to complete an IPE as soon as possible. Building rapport with the client during this period will also assist in the successful completion of the IPE.

An extension request should be requested if IDB and the client agree that additional time is needed and the IPE cannot be written in the allowed 90– day period. The request for an extension should be completed and approved by day 90.

Criteria that must be included for an extension and documented in the case file and a case note:

1. A description of the circumstances beyond the control of the client and IDB that created the need for an extension,
 7. A description of any assessment or other activities that will occur,
 8. Steps that will be taken to complete the process and the timeline for those steps,
 9. Date by which the IPE will be processed, and
 10. Client agreement with the extension.

The request should be completed and placed in the case file.

If a client cannot be reached or fails to engage using multiple methods including the preferred mode of contact, the case must be considered for case closure.

If the IPE cannot be completed by the deadline identified in the extension, it should be renewed and discussed with the Supervisor **prior** to the deadline. The renewal request must also include why the deadline cannot be met and reason(s) provided that are beyond the control of the client and IDB.

Best Practice Tip – Career development activities should begin as early as the application meeting. An understanding of the applicant's career goals can assist in the eligibility process.

Best Practice Tip – If a client misses an appointment, find out why and do not jump to conclusions about motivation or lack of follow through. Clients may simply not be able to make an appointment due to factors outside of their control.

Best Practice Tip – Prior to leaving your first meeting with a client, set a meeting with the client at your office, the local workforce office or other public location to occur within 30 days from your first meeting or prior to day 45 of status 02 (whichever is first). Having this date on your calendar will assist you to continue engaging the client, to review the homework you have given them, and to follow up on any questions regarding their eligibility.

VR Referral Process for Rehab Teaching and Technology Services

Process for Rehab Teaching or Technology Services

* All referrals for technology related services should be made to an RTS.

* All referrals for braille, home and personal management, or travel should be made to a VR Teacher.

* If it is unclear to whom a referral should be made, ask the Education and Training Director

Process for referring clients:

1. Counselor sends email to the RTS or VR teacher who covers the territory and copies the Education and Training Director. This email should include the following:

a. Client name

b. Client phone/email and best way to contact

* Example: Email is best way to contact; Call after 1 p.m.

c. Client status

d. Client job goal

e. Specific referral purpose: assessment, training, etc.

§ Example: Demo of braille displays to use with new job as a high school teacher.

§ Example: Wants to learn to navigate the bus system

f. Other pertinent information (client information that may affect training)

§ Example: Client is new to blindness and is it at the very early stages of acceptance, therefore introducing cane may be difficult.

g. Whether counselor would like to be present for initial meeting. Counselor presence is important for developing training plans, but may not be needed for demos or recommendations.

2. Counselor copies email and enters into eFORCE.

3. Counselor places client in VR Teaching or VR Technology Program (instructions below).

For training referrals: counselor sets up a joint meeting with client. At this meeting, a training plan is created between counselor, teacher, and client. The plan includes the following:

a. Service goals– Example:

§ Cane Travel

§ Locate and apply for jobs online

b. Outcomes expected with timelines– Example:

§ Client will learn to access the public transportation system by June.

§ Client will learn to navigate the Internet with Jaws by August.

c. Counselor enters the jointly developed training plan into eFORCE.

5. Based on the plan, counselor, teacher, and client agree upon how often training will occur in order to achieve the expected outcomes identified.

6. Teacher provides services and updates counselor on progress by completing case notes and informing counselor that case notes are completed. A meeting can be requested by the teacher, counselor, and/or client as needed throughout the training period.

7. Client, teacher, and counselor jointly decide when services are completed. Upon completion, teacher generates an exit report documented in eFORCE. The exit report includes the following:

a. Activities completed– summary of training, worksite services completed, technology provided to client, etc.

1. Example: Client and teacher met every two weeks to work on travel lessons. Client practiced traveling in between sessions. Client and teacher worked on campus towards the end of the training. Client expressed being comfortable with traveling and that no further training is needed at this time.

2. Example: Client was shown several braille displays. Client tried both the Braille Edge and Focus 40 on the job. Client preferred Focus 40. Focus was purchased for client and client is now using it successfully on the job. Client expressed having all the tools needed to perform his job, and no further training is required.

8. RTS or VR Teacher closes out the VR Teaching Program in eFORCE under the client's electronic case. (Instructions below).

Documenting VR Teaching or VR Technology in eFORCE:

1. From the client's summary screen in eFORCE, select the "Program" page.
2. On the Program Page, select the "Add Program" link.
3. Using the Program dropdown box, select the "VR Teaching" program.
4. Enter the referral date as the begin date. (Counselor's responsibility).
5. Enter the teaching service completion date as the end date. (Rehabilitation teacher's or technology specialist's responsibility).
6. Select "Submit" button.

Tour Processes

Completing a tour at the Department is one of the most informative steps in assisting a client to understand the scope of services the vocational rehabilitation program can provide. All new Vocational Rehabilitation clients who have been found eligible for VR services should tour the Department to learn about all of the services we offer. If possible, it's best to tour the Department for the Blind as part of the initial plan development stage following eligibility determination, but it is appropriate at any time the client is ready. A tour is often combined with a technology assessment if appropriate for the client. It's best to schedule a tour when the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center is having classes so that new clients are able to connect with current clients and Orientation Center students and staff. That way, your client is able to see classes occurring and day-to-day activities are taking place.

Completing a tour is also a great service to offer to family members, school groups or staff, workforce partners, or others in the community. You should use the same "Scheduling a Tour" process for these individuals as well. **Note: No reimbursements or authorizations are allowed for non-clients.**

Considerations:

- Mondays through Thursdays are ideal for scheduling tours since the Orientation Center classes are generally in full swing. Please note that we need at least three business days' notice to schedule a tour; however additional time may be needed due to center activities.
- There will be no tours scheduled from 12:20 – 1:20 or that would overlap that time.

- Plan your visit in advance and make sure Orientation Center Classes will be in session!

Scheduling a Tour

1. Discuss options and the goals of the tour with your client; consider looking at a few dates that would work.
2. Complete the [Tour and Technology Assessment form](#) available on the Intranet.
3. If your client has specific needs (interpreter, mobility difficulty, etc.) please be sure to let the Orientation Center Director know this. It is the counselor's or teacher's responsibility to provide for any services the client may need to participate in a tour or assessment.
4. Once the tour date is confirmed, a confirmation meeting request will be sent to the counselor, teacher, program administrators, and others as appropriate.
5. Arrange for any needed and appropriate support services for the client (information on transportation options and authorizations are below).
6. One or two days prior to the tour, the counselor, teacher or designee should contact the client to confirm the tour arrangements. A case note must document this contact.

Tour Day Activities

1. The client should check in at the information desk.
2. The information desk staff will contact the Orientation Center Director/designee to inform him/her that the tour has arrived and to begin the tour.
3. If the counselor or teacher would like to be contacted at the time of the client's arrival, or at the time of the client's meeting with the Orientation Center Director, Technology Assessment, or at any other time, it is the counselor's or teacher's responsibility to inform the information desk staff or appropriate individual of this.

Entering Tour Information into eFORCE

Once the client has toured the Department, an Orientation Center Director/designee will complete a case note and enter the tour date information into eFORCE under Programs. Below are the instructions for entering a tour in Programs.

2. From the client's summary screen in eFORCE, select the "Program" page.
3. On the Program Page, select the "Add Program" link.
4. Using the Program dropdown box, select the "Tour" program.

5. Enter the date of the tour as the begin date. (Orientation Center Staff responsibility).
6. Enter the date of the tour as the end date. (Orientation Center Staff responsibility).
7. Select "Submit" button.

Transportation Options

The counselor or teacher may use one of these transportation options to assist the VR client in traveling to Des Moines:

1. Client arranges for his / her transportation (preferred option).
2. Client arranges for his / her transportation and requests reimbursement:
 - a. It is mandated by the State of Iowa that the Driver Approval process must be completed and the driver approved by the state prior to authorizing state funds.
 - b. Submit a copy of the client's driver's license via one of the following methods.
 - i. Email to: joyce.castell@blind.state.ia.us
 - ii. Fax to: 515– 281– 1395
 - iii. Mail to: Iowa Department for the Blind, Attn: Joyce Castell, 524 4th St, Des Moines, IA 50309
 - c. Indicate on the license copy the name of the client the individual will be providing transportation for.
 - d. This process may take up to a week.
3. Counselor, teacher, or other IDB staff transports the client to Des Moines.
4. Counselor or teacher arranges for transportation using the [Approved Driver List](#) in the area; drivers will be paid for time and mileage.

Authorizations

Maintenance, Transportation, Request for Reimbursement or other types of authorizations may be made to cover the costs related to the tour, such as mileage, driver, food, etc. (Departmental rates for driver and state rates for mileage, food, and lodging will apply.) When a client does not have an active VR case, use pre-plan services for the purpose of assessment for the authorization. Clients with active VR cases must have the appropriate service on their plan for employment prior to the service being provided.

Questions

Please contact the Orientation Center Director with any questions or for assistance in determining the best time to schedule a tour if there are any specific needs or requests.

Please contact your supervisor if you have any questions about this process.

Documenting a Program in eFORCE:

1. From the client's summary screen in eFORCE, select the "Program" page.
2. On the Program Page, select the "Add Program" link.
3. Using the Program dropdown box, select the "appropriate" program.
4. Enter the referral date as the begin date. (Counselor's responsibility).
5. Enter the teaching service completion date as the end date.
 - a. VR Rehab teaching and VR Technology
 - i. Begin date is counselor responsibility
 - ii. End date is teacher/specialist responsibility
 - b. Tours and Orientation Center
 - i. Begin and end date entered by Orientation Center staff
 - c. Transition Program
 - i. Individuals are entered into the Program if they apply for services while transition– age.
 - ii. Counselors are responsible to end the program once no longer of transition age, or prior to closure.
 - d. Others
 - i. Typically, the program manager will work with their teams to determine tracking mechanisms for entering program information.
6. Select "Submit" button.

Note: All programs must have end dates entered prior to case closure.

The Blind Journal

The Blind Journal is a record of all persons in the State of Iowa who are blind or severely visually impaired. The Department is charged with maintaining this record, and new entries are posted when a person is certified as being legally blind.

The Blind Journal is kept as part of the eFORCE case management system. Record the individual in the Blind Journal only when the individual meets the definition of blindness listed below.

Legal Blindness – Definition

The definition of legal blindness includes:

1. 20/200 or less in the better eye with correction; or restricted fields of 20 degrees or less; or
2. Cannot count fingers at 5 feet; or
3. Cannot efficiently read 24– point type at 14 inches

Individuals must be certified in some way to be registered in the Blind Journal.

Certification Methods

Following is a list of acceptable certification methods:

1. Medical proof (e.g., a photocopy, original letter, library application, or Social Security transmittal) of a statement by a medical doctor declaring the individual to be legally blind.
2. A case note indicating that the counselor or teacher has observed that the individual has only light perception or no vision in both eyes.
3. A case note stating that the teacher or counselor has performed a finger counting test and that the individual's best acuity is finger counting at five feet or less, or that the individual is unable to efficiently read 24 point type at 14 inches. (Download [Reading Efficiency Test Document](#).)
4. A case note stating that the teacher or counselor has seen documentation indicating that the individual is legally blind.

Note: You may also obtain this information by asking the pertinent questions to the individual during a telephone call.

Designations – No Documentation Available

It is not always possible to obtain the documentation to determine legal blindness. In those instances, the individual must be assigned one of the following designations:

- **Not Blind.** Does not have a progressive eye condition that would lead to blindness. Maybe only one eye has diminished vision.
- **Visually Impaired.** Acuity is between 20/70– 20/199.
- **Presumed Blind.** Has several functional limitations based on vision loss, but there is no documentation to support legal blindness designation.

If the individual meets one of the designations listed above, record the designation in eFORCE.

eFORCE – Blind Journal Entry

1. Open the individual's Client Data Screen in eFORCE.
2. Under the Disability Information section, review information currently listed to ensure accuracy
3. To update information the Blind Journal:
 - a. Choose the appropriate option in the Blind Code field.
 - i. If the individual meets the definition of being legally blind – Enter a date in the Blind Journal Date field.
 - ii. If the individual meets the designation of being “Not Blind, “Visually Impaired,” or “Presumed Blind,” – Do NOT enter a date in the Blind Journal Date field.

