

100.00 Consumer Involvement Policy

(February 2007)

See corresponding procedure: 100.00P Consumer Involvement Procedure

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Description

ACCES-VR recognizes that individuals with disabilities, their families and representatives are partners with their vocational rehabilitation counselors in the vocational rehabilitation programs. The active involvement of individuals in their programs contributes to the success of, and satisfaction with, the employment goal and degree of independence they achieve.

Individuals with disabilities have a major role in determining their vocational rehabilitation programs. Starting at first contact, ACCES-VR encourages individuals to be as independent as they desire in designing and fulfilling their individualized plans for employment (IPE). The vocational rehabilitation counselor is available to assist the individual with the vocational rehabilitation process and the attainment of the employment goal. The individual may choose to have the counselor provide full support, technical guidance and/or review and approval of the IPE developed independently.

One major goal of the vocational rehabilitation process is to foster the greatest degree of independence and responsibility, as desired by an individual. Individuals are encouraged to be as independent and responsible as possible throughout their programs in their roles and responsibilities in developing and fulfilling their IPE's. Individuals should actively participate in developing their own IPE's, schedule their own appointments, complete investigatory assignments and perform other tasks with the full support and guidance of their counselors, as needed.

Families, representatives and others may also play an important role in the success of a vocational rehabilitation program to the extent the individual with a disability requests, desires and needs such supports. In such cases, when directed by the eligible individual, family members and others should be included in the rehabilitation process.

In addition to encouraging the involvement of individuals with disabilities in their own IPE's, ACCES-VR also seeks and incorporates the views of individuals with disabilities

in developing and implementing the plans, policies and administration of the vocational rehabilitation program at the local, statewide and national levels.

Policy

ACCES-VR will provide or assist eligible individuals in acquiring information that enables those individuals to make meaningful and informed choices about the:

1. need for further medical and/or vocational assessments;
2. selection of their employment goals;
3. vocational rehabilitation services they receive;
4. selection of the providers of their services among approved vendors;
5. suitability of a particular placement;
6. level of integration of their selected employment goals;
7. need for post-employment or extended services.

The ACCES-VR counselor also explains ACCES-VR's policies and procedures that impact on the individual and his or her IPE. The counselor provides this information and guidance through modes of communication appropriate to the individual, including support services for individuals with cognitive or other disabilities who require assistance in exercising informed choice.

While individuals are encouraged to actively participate, make meaningful choices, and develop all or parts of the IPE, consumer choice does not mean that they have complete control over their programs. Vocational rehabilitation counselors must review, consider and approve all IPEs. They will apply their professional judgment; vocational rehabilitation expertise, applicable laws, regulations, and policies; sound planning considerations; and responsible use of public funds.

Services must lead directly to employment goals that are feasible, timely and attainable within the fiscal constraints of the program. This means that ACCES-VR will only support the most cost-effective option that leads to the individual's employment goal and that is required to meet the individual's employment objective. Cost effectiveness is determined by comparing cost, level of integration, duration, quality, timeliness, proximity and appropriateness of service options required to meet the individual's needs.

In some cases, there may be disagreement between the individual's choice and the counselor's professional judgment that cannot be reconciled through discussion and counseling. Initial problem resolution should include the counselor's supervisor. Beyond this level, the administrative review, mediation and impartial hearing process, as well as the availability of the Client Assistance Program, must be clearly explained and attempts to resolve the situation informally should continue.

Waiver on Cost and Duration Limits to Meet the Rehabilitation Needs of the Individual

ACCES-VR has a process in place to evaluate the consumer's individual situation and to determine whether the cost and duration limits established in ACCES-VR policy would in effect deny the consumer access to necessary services. A waiver process is established to accommodate the rehabilitation needs of an individual when necessary to achieve an employment outcome. Counselors work with the individual to complete a full exploration of comparable benefits and/or other supports. Once all alternatives have been explored, the counselor may request a waiver.

Documenting Consumer Involvement

ACCES-VR will assist the individual to be as independent as possible when deciding on how much assistance they need in developing the IPE and choosing among options. The case record of services will reflect how the individual was informed about and involved in choosing among alternative goals, objectives, service providers and methods to obtain services. The IPE will allow for optional comments regarding the IPE by the consumer. Other areas of consumer involvement are documented in casenotes.

Reference:

Policies:

- 105.00 Due Process
- 202.00 Eligibility of Services
- 204.00 Assessment
- 206.00 Individualized Plan for Employment
- 405.00 Training at a College or University

Procedures:

- 105.00P Due Process Procedures
- 202.00P Eligibility of Services Procedures
- 206.00P Individualized Plan for Employment
- 405.00P College and University Training Policy & Procedures
- 500.00P Case Record Procedure

Other:

- FIS-05-03 Restoration of Fully Funded Training Services

Obsolete:

- PRO-06-03 Waiver Process Overview