

NC DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND POLICIES AND PROCEDURES VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Section:	I
Title:	Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)
Current Effective Date:	04/08
Revision History:	Revised 02/99; 07/99; 04/03

Formerly From: Policy Manual

1. DEADLINES TO COMPLETE AND SIGN IPE

The Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) (On-Line DSB-4005b-VR Individual Plan for Employment with instructions) should be promptly developed, signed, and put into effect within ninety (90) calendar days of the determination of eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services unless the circumstances of the eligible individual prevents this from occurring. Special circumstances will be documented in the case record and further justification every ninety (90) days thereafter and the individual is informed of the special circumstances. The individual must be advised of all procedures and requirements affecting the development and review of the IPE.

For students with disabilities who are receiving special education services from a public school and also are determined eligible for VR services, the IPE will be completed and signed before the student leaves the school setting.

2. SERVICES DURING IPE DEVELOPMENT

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor may provide the following services to the extent needed to develop the IPE:

- a. Counseling and Guidance (counseling and guidance), and referral services.
- b. Diagnostic, Assessment (assessment), and evaluation services, including vocational evaluation (VE), to develop the IPE.
- c. Essential support services necessary for the individual to access DSB-sponsored diagnostic, assessment, and evaluation services. Essential support services can include, but not be limited to, Transportation (transportation) (including guide services), Personal Assistance Services (PAS), rehabilitation technology, assistive technology services, and others.
- d. Interpreter (interpreter) services and other appropriate modes of communication, as appropriate, to enable the individual to comprehend and respond to information being communicated during the vocational rehabilitation process.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor shall not provide, or commit to providing, non-diagnostic, non-evaluation, non-assessment goods or services before the IPE is completed and signed.

The purpose of the assessment is to determine the employment outcome and services to be included in the IPE.

3. REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR DEVELOPING AN IPE

The individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, will be provided with information in writing and in appropriate mode of communication about the options for developing an IPE. These options must include:

- a. The availability of appropriate modes of communication if required to develop the IPE;
- b. The timeframe for the development of the IPE;
- c. Any additional needs assessment information needed;
- d. Information on the availability of assistance, to the extent determined to be appropriate by the eligible individual from a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the individual to write all or part of the IPE; and
- e. Information on the availability of technical assistance in developing all or part of the IPE;
- f. Information describing the full range of components that shall be included in an IPE;
- g. As appropriate,
 - (1.) An explanation of Division of Services for the Blind (DSB)/VR program guidelines and criteria associated with Financial Responsibilities/Economic Need Requirements (On-Line DSB-4040-VR Economic Need Survey with instructions) commitments concerning an IPE;
 - (2.) Additional information the individual requests or DSB/VR program determines to be necessary; and
 - (3.) Information on the availability of assistance in completing the DSB/VR forms for the IPE;
- h. A description of the right and remedies available to the individual including, if appropriate, recourse to due process and mediation through the Appeals Process; and
- i. A description of the availability of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and information about how to contact the program.

4. MANDATORY COMPONENTS OF AN IPE

Regardless of the approach selected by an individual to develop an IPE, the IPE must contain these mandatory components:

- a. A description of the specific employment outcome chosen by the individual that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and Informed Choice (IC) and to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated work setting (integrated setting).

- b. Timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of services.
- c. A description of the entity (ies) chosen by the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, to provide the VR services and the methods used to procure the services.
- d. A description of the criteria to evaluate the progress toward the achievement of the employment outcome.
- e. Terms and conditions for the provision of the services including:
 - (1.) The responsibilities of the DSB/VR program.
 - (2.) The responsibilities of the individual including:
 - (a.) Achievement of the employment outcome;
 - (b.) If applicable, participation in paying for the cost of services; and
 - (c.) Applying for and securing comparable benefits that are available to the individual under any other program.
- f. The responsibilities of other entities as the result of arrangements made pursuant to comparable services or benefits. (Examples: Reader (reader) or Interpreter services through college or university; private insurance for speech therapy.)
- g. For an employment outcome in Supported Employment (SE) (SES), the extended services (ES) needed by the individual and the source of the ES must be identified.
- h. As determined to be necessary, a statement of projected need for Post-Employment (PE) services.
- i. When services are being provided to an individual who is also eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the IPE must be prepared in coordination with the appropriate education agency and include relevant elements of the individual's Individualized Education Program (IEP). This includes a student with a disability who is receiving special education services.

5. MANDATORY PROCEDURES

An IPE shall be a written document prepared on forms provided by DSB.

The IPE shall be developed and implemented in a manner that affords the individual the opportunity to exercise informed choice in selecting an employment outcome. Components of informed choice include: the employment setting, the specific VR services needed to achieve the employment outcome, the settings in which the services will be provided, the entity that will provide the VR services, and the methods available for procuring the services.

The IPE and any substantial amendments (On-Line DSB-4005d-VR Individual Plan for Employment Amendment with instructions) shall be agreed to and signed by the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative in writing and, if appropriate, in the native language or mode of communication of the individual or the individual's representative and approved and signed by a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

A copy of the IPE and any amendments to the plan shall be provided to the individual or, as appropriate, to the individual's representative in writing and, if appropriate, in the native language or mode of communication of the individual or the individual's representative.

The IPE will be reviewed as often as is necessary but at least annually by a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and the individual or the individual's representative. The focus of the review is to assess the individual's progress in achieving the employment outcome. Any substantive revisions will be incorporated into the IPE amendments and explained and dated in the case record by a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor under the heading "Annual Review." Substantial VR services or any amended services are those services, which provided in the context of the counseling relationship, collectively and significantly; contribute to the achievement of the employment outcome.

An amendment is only necessary if there are substantive changes to the employment outcome, the VR services to be provided, or the providers of the services. The IPE amendments will not take effect until agreed to and signed by the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, and approved and signed by a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Copies of any amendments will be provided to the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative in the native language or appropriate mode of communication of the individual or the individual's representative.

A substantive change indicates a significant change or difference in such factors as the cost, quality, effectiveness, timeliness of a service, or service providers that is being deleted, added, or changed.

For example, a pharmacy service provider is changed to another pharmacy. If the cost and quality of the service remains relatively the same, no substantive change has occurred. The change or pharmacy service provider will be explained in the case progress notes (on-Line DSB-4011-VR Case Progress Notes with instructions) and no amendment will be needed.

Another example is a change in the employment outcome. If the employment outcome changes, but remains within the same job family, no significant change has occurred. Therefore, no amendment is needed, and the change will be explained in the case progress notes.

If, however, the service is training in a community college and the service changes to training in a four-year college or university, an amendment will be needed, as there will be a significant change in the cost of the service.

An amendment will also be required in situations where the financial status of the individual changes from need to non-need. At that time, some services, which are need-based, must be amended to reflect who will pay for the service and describe any changes in the individual or State Agency responsibilities.

When services are being provided to an individual who is also eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the IPE must be prepared in coordination with the appropriate education agency and include relevant elements of the individual's Individual Education Program (IEP). This includes a student with a disability that is receiving special education services.

6. CASE FILE DOCUMENTATION FOR THE IPE

The case record must contain documentation supporting the development and implementation of the IPE in a manner that affords the individual the opportunity to exercise informed choice in selecting an employment outcome, the specific VR services to be provided under the plan, the entity that will provide the VR services, and the methods used to procure the services. The services must be provided in the most integrated setting that is both appropriate to the service being provided and reflects the informed choice of the individual.

The case record must also contain documentation that the IPE is based upon the findings of the assessment for VR service needs. Documentation may include a VE report, career exploration activity, tests, work samples, and relevant counseling and guidance. The employment outcome chosen by the individual should be consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concern, abilities, capabilities, interest, and informed choice of the individual, and to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated setting. If the projected outcome is not in an integrated setting, the case record must contain a justification for the non-integrated setting.

7. DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IPE

The individual and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor should begin implementing the IPE within thirty (30) calendar days of obtaining the required signatures on the IPE. If additional time is required, the counselor must provide written justification in the case notes and further justification every thirty (30) days thereafter.