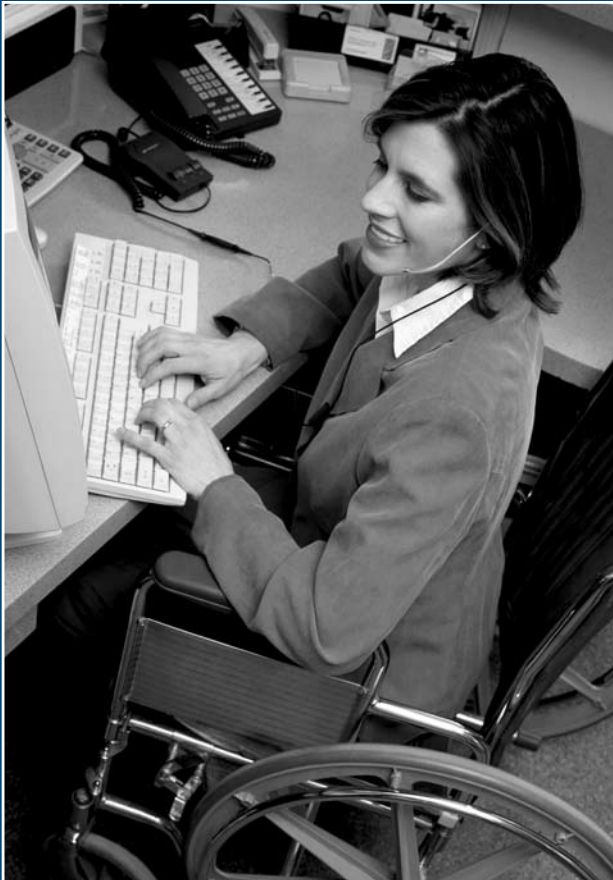


# TOOLKIT FOR OUR CUSTOMERS



**New Hampshire**  
**N.H.V.R. | Vocational Rehabilitation**  
New Hampshire Department of Education

## **Welcome to New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation!**

The staff of New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation (NHVR) is committed to assisting individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment potential and options. We understand that the uncertainty of not knowing where to turn for assistance in either finding employment or maintaining a current job can be frustrating. If you are found eligible for NHVR services, we can help you determine the career path that is right for you, based on your strengths, interests and abilities.

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## **STOP! READ CAREFULLY!**

### **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is here for you if...**

- You have a disability that is making it difficult for you to get or continue to work.
- You need some specific services to obtain employment.
- You want to work to the best of your capacity.
- You are ready to make informed choices for your vocational future.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is not the place you are looking for if....**

- You don't have a disability.
- You don't want to work.
- You want VR to help you get disability exemption.
- You came here to get other services like food stamps.
- You are being mandated to be here and you do not want to be here.

**VR can help you find out what your interests and abilities are so you can determine a career path.**

**VR can help you figure out what barriers to employment you may have.**

**VR can help you find out how to change or minimize the barriers that are keeping you from employment.**

**VR can help you figure out what services you need to get into employment and how to obtain those services.**

## The Basic Vocational Rehabilitation Process

Application for Services	People who want services from VR must complete an application for services.
Intake & Eligibility Process	<p>Once you have completed the application, your case will be opened. Your VR counselor will meet with you for an intake interview. Your VR counselor has up to 60 days from the date VR receives your application to determine if you are eligible for VR services.</p> <p>People who are eligible for services are those who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a physical or mental impairment</li> <li>• have a substantial impediment to employment</li> <li>• require VR services to become employed</li> </ul> <p>People receiving SSI or SSDI benefits who want to work are presumed eligible for VR services</p>
Comprehensive Assessment	<p>During this step you may be asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complete further evaluations to determine what profession best suits your interests and abilities</li> <li>• conduct labor market research</li> <li>• identify additional barriers</li> </ul>
Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	<p>Once eligible for services, you and your counselor will prepare an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The plan will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• your vocational goal</li> <li>• guidance and counseling activities</li> <li>• specific services that will be provided</li> <li>• your responsibilities</li> <li>• financial participants</li> <li>• job placement activities</li> </ul>
Services	<p>Vocational Rehabilitation services may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on-the-job training</li> <li>• job search assistance</li> <li>• education or training</li> <li>• books, supplies, tools</li> <li>• transportation</li> <li>• assistive technology</li> <li>• other necessary services</li> </ul>
Job Placement & Successful Employment	When you reach your employment goal and have been working at least 90 days, you will be considered successfully employed and VR will close your file.
Post-Employment Services	Post-Employment services may be provided after your VR file has been closed to help you maintain your job.

## Step 1: Application for Services

*At your first meeting, your VR counselor will talk with you about:*

- Your strengths and abilities
- Your disability and medical history
- Your barriers to employment
- Your employment history
- Your education history
- Your interests and goals for the future
- Services you may need to get or maintain employment
- Information about your family, your income and benefits, etc.
- What services we have and what VR is all about

If you have not already applied for VR services, you can apply for services in the office with the VR counselor's assistance or you can take the information home to think about it and complete the application yourself.

*If you want to apply for services, VR will:*

- If needed, ask you to sign release of information forms so that information can be obtained from doctors, schools, and other relevant contacts to determine your eligibility.
- If needed, set up appointments with doctors, psychologists, or evaluators to help us know more about your abilities and also about your disability. (These appointments will be paid for by VR.)
- It is your responsibility to attend the appointments or to call us if you cannot attend so the appointment can be re-scheduled.

## Step 2: Intake and Eligibility Process

Once you have completed the application, your case will be opened. Your VR counselor has up to 60 days from the date VR receives your application for services to determine if you are eligible.

VR will pay for any assessment necessary to determine your eligibility. It is your responsibility to attend the appointments.

### *People eligible for services are those who:*

- have a physical or mental impairment,
- have a substantial impediment to employment, and
- require vocational rehabilitation services to become employed, maintain employment or advance in employment

People receiving SSI or SSDI benefits who want to work are presumed eligible for VR services.

If VR notifies you that you are not eligible, you have the right to appeal that decision.



## Step 3: Comprehensive Assessment

You are about to participate in a program that can change your life. What you get out of it depends on what you put into it. VR is a partnership between you and your VR counselor.

### *The first thing you and your VR counselor will do is talk about:*

- your strengths, interests, abilities and values
- your understanding of the world of work
- occupations that may be suitable for you
- opportunities based on your career goals
- education or training programs and what is needed to get into them
- what barriers you have and how to work with or around them

### *During this step you may be asked to:*

- complete further evaluations to determine what profession best suits your interests and abilities
- conduct labor market research
- identify additional barriers

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*“The free services provided by NHVR Business Consulting & Services have added tangible value to CaLLogix. It feels very logical to use NHVR.”*

– Cara Longenecker, CaLLogix

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## Step 4: Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

VR services are built around *informed choice*. You and your VR counselor will discuss a great deal of information and a number of options.

*The options for developing all or part of the IPE include the following:*

- With assistance from the VR counselor, to the extent determined appropriate by the individual; or
- With technical assistance from the VR program or other program representative selected by the individual; or
- The individual without assistance.

Working together, you will identify a career path that reflects your strengths, interests, abilities and values.

You and your VR counselor will write an *Individualized Plan for Employment*, or IPE.

The IPE begins by stating, “What job goal do you want to work toward?” Your plan will be based on your strengths, interests, abilities, values, and job market area.

You and your VR counselor *will plan the steps you need to take to reach your job goal*. You will write down all the services you need, when they start and stop, and who will provide them. You will also write down how much the service or services will cost and who will pay for what. Sometimes VR will pay for some or all of the cost. Sometimes you will pay for some or all of the cost, and sometimes other agencies will pay for some or all of the cost. Services paid for by VR must be authorized before they begin.

It is important that you stay in touch with your VR counselor when something happens that might change the course of your IPE. You and your VR counselor must agree that the goal is right for you and achievable in the current job market.

### *Resolving Issues and Concerns*

If you disagree with any Agency decision you may explore any of the following options:

- Bringing the concern to the VR counselor in an attempt to resolve the issue at the lowest level.
- Requesting assistance from the office’s Regional Leader.
- ***Client Assistance Program (CAP)***: CAP is an independently administered program at the Governor’s Commission on Disability, 57 Regional Drive, Concord, NH 03301. (603) 271-2773 (Voice) or 271-2774 (TTY). Its staff can explain how the VR system works, advise you on your rights and responsibilities, suggest ways to work more successfully with your counselor and help you prepare for any appeals or hearings.

***Review Process***: You may request a review of any decision made by VR that affects the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

- ***Mediation***: You have the option to request mediation to resolve disputes involving agency determinations that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. It is available as a voluntary option by agreement of both parties. A mediation session is conducted by a trained attorney with knowledge of state and federal vocational rehabilitation law. Requests must be made in writing and should be sent to the Office of Legislation and Hearings, Department of Education, 101 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH 03301.
- ***Formal Review***: You may request a more formal review of any decision with which you disagree. A fair hearing involves an attorney who will hear evidence and testimony by you or your representative and the Agency and make a formal decision. A request for a fair hearing needs to be in writing and describe the complaint. Written requests should be sent to the Office of Legislation and Hearings, Department of Education, 101 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH 03301. Note: The written request for a hearing needs to be made within 30 days after the agency notifies you of its determination or after completing mediation if you chose to pursue that option before requesting a formal review.

## Step 5: Services

VR offers many types of services. Your plan is customized to suit your needs and abilities. The services that are a part of your IPE are what you need to achieve your employment goal.

VR does not take a “cookie cutter” approach to services. Someone else may receive a service that you will not. Your VR counselor will work with you to determine what services are specific to your needs.

### *Job Preparation and Placement*

As you prepare to look for work, VR will assist you in a manner that works best for you. Some people prefer to conduct job searches and complete applications on their own. Others may ask for the counselor’s help.

### *Some of the ways VR can help include:*

- Developing resumes
- Preparing for interviews
- Assisting with job search
- Making referrals to employers

### *College or Technical School*

You and your counselor will talk about your abilities in an effort to determine if college or technical school is right for you. If so, you will work together to determine what colleges, or training programs, offer the type of education you are seeking.

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*“It’s been a real savior for me.”*  
– Raymond Morrissette, NHVR Customer

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### *When Choosing a College or Technical School, it is Important to Think About:*

- Will there be jobs in the field you want and in the location you want?
- How long can you afford to stay out of the work force?
- How will you invest in the program yourself?
- What do your abilities say about your chances to succeed in college?
- What services are available at college to help you succeed despite your disability?
- If you are willing to move in order to attend college or get work after college.
- How supportive your family is about you attending college.
- How committed you will be in terms of time to spend succeeding in college.

### *If You and Your Counselor Agree that College or Technical School is Necessary to Achieve Your Vocational Goals, Here is What You Need to Do*

- Apply for admission.
- Apply for financial aid.
- Meet with the school to determine what their placement rate is in the field you are interested in.
- Meet with the school to talk with Student Services if you need accommodations in the classroom.
- Let VR know of your admission status.
- Bring in your financial aid award letter as soon as you get it.
- Meet with your VR counselor to determine what assistance is needed from VR.

### *Vocational Rehabilitation Will Not be Able to Help You with the Expense of College or Technical School Programs if:*

You are in default of a past student loan until you have made arrangements to repay and have shown good-faith effort to remove the default.

You have no “unmet financial need” based on the information provided by the school. (If you are under 25, you are most likely going to be determined a “dependent student” and your parents’ income will be counted.)

You have not maintained an agreed-upon grade point average that meets the school’s requirement each semester.

### *College or Technical School is Not for Everyone. Some People:*

- Do not have the time.
- Don’t want to attend college or technical school.
- Learn better in other ways.
- Find it difficult to attend college because of family or other financial obligations.

It is also important to know that some jobs will not require a college or technical degree. Your counselor can work with you to find out if there is a better way to learn skills to become employed such as:

- On-the-job training.
- Seminars or class training.
- Working with an adult learning center to improve on specific skills.
- Working one-on-one with a trainer to learn a specific job skill.

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*“Before I approached NHVR, I felt very discouraged to find myself on disability at 40, with no marketable skills. Through their assessment process, NHVR helped me find a field that suited me as an individual.”*

– Andy Castor, LPN

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### *Self-employment*

Self-employment is an option some people consider. There are many things to think about before choosing this type of employment outcome. You and your VR counselor can discuss all the pros and cons of self-employment in depth. Here are some things you need to think about:

- What skills do I have?
- What services do I provide?
- What is the competition in this location?
- How much money do I have to invest in this business?
- How will my disability impact self-employment?
- Is my family supportive?
- What business experience do I have?
- How is my credit?

If you decide you want to pursue self-employment, you will have a lot of work to do! You will:

- Participate in assessment activities to look at whether you have the interests, skills, abilities, commitment and resources necessary to be successful as a self-employed individual.
- Explore whether you have a viable business idea and a market for your business.
- Develop a business plan or business proposal.
- Put your plan into place.

This option will take time, commitment, personal energy and finances on your part. But, if you and your VR counselor feel it is the right option, VR will work with you to help you succeed. VR financial assistance is never guaranteed and depends on the nature of the business, what you have done to invest in yourself, and what other funds are available to you.

### *Home-based Employment*

Some individuals choose to work from home-based employment. This should not be confused with self-employment. It is considered home-based employment if you are working from home performing job duties as an employee for someone else. There are a few options that you may have. Some are not financially rewarding, such as constructing crafts for other companies. Others earn more income, but may require certain skills just like jobs outside of your home. One example is home-based medical transcription. You have to be a very fast typist and be very disciplined to do the work. Home-based business is not a good option if you do not have family support, if you do not have the discipline to make yourself work at specific hours, or if you have distractions at home such as small children.

### *Supported Employment*

For people who need long-term supports for employment because of their disability, we have supported employment services.

Supported employment means competitive employment in an integrated setting with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. These services are more intense in direct work with individuals who need it. It is for individuals who need substantial assistance to attain, learn and maintain a job.

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*“I am writing to let those interested in using NHVR know that it is a service that takes the individual’s needs into consideration...The services that are provided are invaluable.”*

– Timothy J. Hodgdon

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When you are ready to work, VR will assist you in finding a job in the manner that works best for you. Some people prefer to conduct job searches and complete applications on their own. Others may ask for the counselor’s help.

### *Some of the ways VR can help include:*

- Developing resumes
- Preparing for interviews
- Assisting with job search
- Making referrals to employers

At your request, VR can also make direct contact with employers to discuss employment-related issues.

When you are working VR will keep your case open for at least 90 days. Then, before closing the VR file, both you and your VR counselor must agree that everything is satisfactory and that you are doing well in your job.

### *Job Accommodations*

VR can help you determine if there are special accommodations you need to find or keep your current job. Perhaps you are having problems learning the job, learning new job-related tasks, or a disability is making your job difficult. You and your VR counselor can discuss what problems you are having and what to do about it. Some of the things that will be discussed:

- Job coaching, if you are having problems learning your job or learning new things on your job.
- Assistive technology, such as magnifiers, hearing aids, or different computer screens that might make your job easier.
- Scooters or stools that might make it easier for you to perform your job.
- On-the-job training to help you learn new skills for a different job if you can no longer do the one that you used to do.
- Working with your employer to determine what will work best for both of you on the job.



## Step 7: Post-Employment Services

Post-Employment services may be provided after your file is closed if you need short-term assistance to maintain your job.

Be sure to call your VR counselor if you think you might need these services.



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*“My employment situation improved immediately. I truly cannot thank you enough for your help”*

– Craig LaCroix

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## Resolving Issues and Concerns

You are applying for services under the Rehabilitation Act, as amended. As part of the application process, you are being informed about help available to you through the New Hampshire Client Assistance Program.

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is available to assist and advocate for you whenever you are dissatisfied with any action or inaction on the part of VR or other programs we are working with. You may request help from the Client Assistance Program at any time. Call if you have questions, concerns, or problems with your eligibility or with services you would like or are receiving.

If you call, the Client Assistance Program will work with you to resolve your problem. Client Assistance will offer advice and provide you with help. Should it be necessary, the Client Assistance Program can also assist you with mediation or a Fair Hearing. The Client Assistance Program can be reached at:

### ***New Hampshire Client Assistance Program***

57 Regional Drive

Concord, NH 03301

Telephone: (603) 271-2773 (Voice) or 271-2774 (TTY)

### ***Resolving Issues and Concerns***

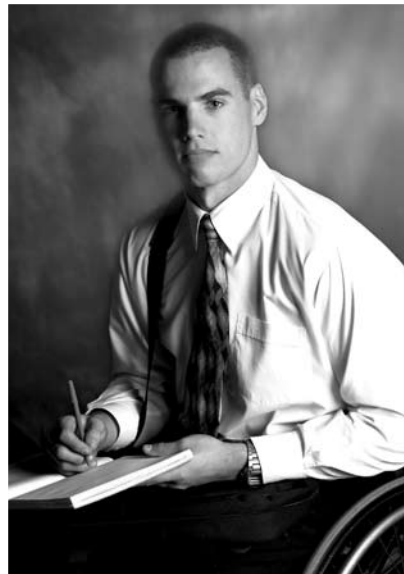
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## Resolving Issues and Concerns, Cont.

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*“The most important thing for Starbucks is a relationship. That’s what Vocational Rehabilitation has built with us.”*

– Debra Russell, Starbucks

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## Customer Rights and Responsibilities

As a customer of Vocational Rehabilitation you have a number of rights and responsibilities. Following is a description of your key rights and responsibilities followed by a brief discussion in some instances.

You have the **right to be treated with courtesy and respect**. In return, VR asks that you extend that same courtesy and respect to others.

You have the **right to services without discrimination** on the basis of race, color, religion, marital status, national/ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability. You will not be discriminated against in any matter related to receiving a service, financial assistance or other assistance under the VR program.

You have the **right for your case file information to remain confidential**.

- Your records will not be shared without your permission. If VR needs medical or other information, we will ask you to sign a release form so we can get that information. If you are eighteen years old or older and you want someone from your family to be able to talk with your VR counselor, you will need to sign a release for that family member.
- You have a **responsibility to inform** your VR counselor about other agencies or programs you have worked with who may have information that would be helpful in planning your services, and to sign a release of information form so VR can contact them.

You have both the **right and the responsibility to participate in the planning and development of your vocational goal and rehabilitation**.

It is important that you make your desires known and that you talk with your counselor anytime you think your program needs adjusting.

You have the *right to make informed choices* regarding your employment goal and services. You also have the *responsibility to discuss the pros and cons of your choices* and to come to an agreement with your VR counselor about the services you will receive.

You have the *right to timely services* needed to achieve your employment goal.

- To help in receiving timely services, you have a *responsibility to stay in touch with your VR counselor, keep appointments and follow through on your IPE*. It is also important to report any changes in address, telephone number, medical condition or other major changes affecting you.

You have the *right to appeal any decision*.

You have the *right to work with the Client Assistance Program (CAP)* if you need information or help to resolve any issue or a concern you may have.

- If you think you might want to work with CAP, it will be your *responsibility to contact* them. CAP contact information is on page 16 of this handbook.

You have the *right to review* information in your case file.

- If you wish to review your case file, *it is your responsibility to give VR advance notice* so the information can be ready for you.

You have the *right to request a different* counselor.

Before requesting a change in VR counselors, you have a *responsibility to attempt to work out any differences* between you and your counselor. However, if that fails, please talk to your counselor's supervisor about the difficulty you are having and your desire to change counselors.

You have the *right to be consulted* before your VR file is closed.



**Berlin Regional Office**

650 Main Street, Suite 110  
Berlin, NH 03570  
Toll Free: 1-888-300-9550  
Tel: 603-752-2271 (Voice or  
TTY) Fax: 603-752-5940

**Concord Regional Office**

21 South Fruit Street, Suite 20  
Concord, NH 03301  
Toll Free: 1-800-299-1647  
Tel: 603-271-2327 (Voice or  
TTY) Fax: 603-271-2328

**Keene Regional Office**

149 Emerald Street, Suite T  
Keene, NH 03431  
Toll Free: 1-800-620-7688  
Tel: 603-357-0266 (Voice or  
TTY) Fax: 603-352-1391

**Manchester Regional Office**

1 Sundial Ave  
Manchester, NH 03102  
Toll Free: 1-800-627-9304  
Tel: 603-669-8733 (Voice or  
TTY) Fax: 603-668-2640

**Nashua Regional Office**

5 Pine Street Extension 1st  
Floor  
Nashua, NH 03062  
Toll Free: 1-800-635-9614  
Tel: 603-889-6844 (Voice or  
TTY) Fax: 603-889-2292

**Portsmouth Regional Office**

215 Commerce Way, Suite 3  
Portsmouth, NH 03801  
Toll Free: 1-800-882-2744  
Tel: 603-436-8884 (Voice or  
TTY) Fax: 603-427-6910

**Services for Blind and Visually Impaired**

21 South Fruit Street, Suite 20  
Concord, NH 03301  
Toll Free: 1-800-581-6881  
Tel: 603-271-3537  
Tel: 603-271-3471 (Voice or  
TTY) Fax: 603-271-3816

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**New Hampshire  
Vocational Rehabilitation**  
New Hampshire Department of Education