What Is OVR?

The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) serves people with disabilities that present a substantial impediment to their employment. Services are provided to individuals who can benefit from and who need assistance to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment.

Vocational rehabilitation is a direct service program provided through 21 district offices located throughout the commonwealth.

The federal and state governments work in partnership to fund the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Since 1919, Pennsylvania has provided rehabilitation services to thousands of people with disabilities as a legal right and a public service.

Disabilities include but are not limited to:
- Alcoholism - Developmental disabilities
- Amputation - Hearing impairment
- Diabetes - Learning disabilities
- Drug addiction - Mental retardation
- Epilepsy - Neurological disease
- Head trauma - Respiratory disease
- Heart disease - Skeletal & joint disease
- Mental illness - Speech impairment
- Muscular disease - Spinal cord injury
- Visual impairments

Who Is Eligible For Services?

Important factors determining eligibility are:

- A physical or mental disability causes an impediment to employment and there exists an ability to benefit from services.
- The need for services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.

A vocational rehabilitation counselor will determine eligibility for services after gaining a thorough understanding of an individual's abilities, limitations, interests, and aptitudes. Services are provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.

What Services Can OVR Offer?

Rehabilitation services are provided in an individualized manner. Eligible persons receive the particular services they need to become employable.

Services may include:

DIAGNOSIS - evaluating medical, psychological, occupational and educational abilities, and limitations.

COUNSELING & GUIDANCE - helping individuals select vocational goals and making plans to attain them.

RESTORATION - providing comprehensive medical, psychological, and allied services to minimize the effect of the impairment on a person’s ability to work.

TRAINING - developing job skills through vocational and technical schools, universities, on-the-job training, or job coaching.

HIRAM G. ANDREWS CENTER - offering comprehensive rehabilitation services including: vocational assessment, training, and medical services on a residential or commuting basis.

PLACEMENT - developing job seeking skills and locating employment opportunities.

POST EMPLOYMENT SERVICES - aiding in job adjustment.

OVR counselors are aware of many resources that might be of assistance to persons with impairments and will help customers learn about other programs available to them. During the rehabilitation process, OVR can also help provide attendant care, interpreters for the deaf, and similar support services.

The Rehabilitation Plan

Together, the customer and counselor develop an individualized plan for employment (IPE). The IPE states exactly what services will be provided and what is expected of both the customer and the agency, including responsibilities and costs.

Who Pays For Services?

There is no charge for diagnostic services, counseling, and job placement assistance. However, a customer may be required to share the cost of the other services after a financial needs assessment is completed. Any financial obligations will be discussed with the customer before the initiation of services.

Confidentiality of Information

The information shared with the counselor is confidential. A customer’s written permission must be obtained before any information can be released to others.

How To Apply

Referrals to OVR can be made by agencies, schools, clergy, hospitals, families or any interested individuals. To apply for services, contact the district office (listed on the back page) nearest you.

OVR’s Non-Discrimination Policy

OVR prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, ancestry, HIV/AIDS status and age. Any applicant or customer of OVR who believes he or she is being discriminated against may contact OVR at the following address:

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
1521 North Sixth Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102
BBVS 717-787-6176 Voice, 800-622-2842* Voice
*Toll free within Pennsylvania