

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

Section:	I
Title:	Individual Rights
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INFORMED CHOICE

Individuals served by the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program will be informed about the availability of, and opportunities to exercise Informed Choice (IC). This includes the availability of support services for individuals with cognitive or other disabilities who require assistance in exercising informed choice throughout the VR process. Appropriate modes of communication will be utilized at all times.

Informed choice is defined as a decision-making process in which the individual analyzes relevant information and selects, with the assistance of the qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, an employment outcome, specific Vocational Rehabilitation Services, service providers, employment setting and settings in which services are provided, and methods for procuring services. It is utilized in (Assessment) assessment for both a determination of eligibility and for VR needs.

Regardless of the approach selected by the individual in developing an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) (On-Line DSB-4005b-VR Individual Plan for Employment with instructions), it will be a written document prepared on forms provided by the VR program. In both its development and implementation, the individual will be provided an opportunity to exercise informed choice in selecting an employment outcome, the specific VR services to be provided under the plan (including assessment services), the provider of the VR services, and the methods to procure the services. Mandatory components of the IPE which address informed choice will include: (1) a description of the specific employment outcome chosen by the individual, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual and, to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated work setting; and (2) a description of the specific VR services provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate for the service involved and is consistent with the informed choice of the individual.

For purposes of IPE development, VR services are defined as any services described in the IPE which are necessary to assist the individual in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome. Along with informed choice, the services must be consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests. The service of Counseling and Guidance (counseling and guidance) also includes information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice.

Individuals may choose to involve family members, advocates, or other authorized individual representatives in their VR program.

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

It is the responsibility of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to inform each individual of the purpose, availability, and means of contacting the Client Assistance Program (CAP) at **each** of the following steps in the process:

1. Application;
2. In each IPE and IPE Amendment:
3. At any decision of ineligibility; and
4. At any time the individual requests CAP information/intervention.

APPEALS PROCESS

All applicants for, and eligible individuals of North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) VR services have the right to request a due process hearing through the Appeals Process when dissatisfied with any determination made by the State Agency concerning the provision, or denial of services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.