

IDVR Counselor Training Series Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and Provision of Services

Welcome

Welcome to The Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Training. This training is provided by New Hampshire Department of Education, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Interwork Institute of San Diego State University. It is part of the Agency's effort to provide readily available training support to vocational rehabilitation counselors. For further information contact: shannon.wilcox@vr.idaho.gov.

Introduction

The assessment of vocational needs described in Module 6 is the driving force that determines what will be included in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

The participant and counselor, after completing the comprehensive assessment, including a review of appropriate labor market information (LMI), have agreed upon an appropriate vocational goal that is consistent with the participant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

They have also made decisions regarding services, service providers, procurement methods, costs and availability of comparable benefits. Now it is time to develop and implement the IPE. This module will focus on the development and implementation of the IPE.

Developing an IPE

Focus of the Section

In this section, we will review the timeline for development of the IPE, the information required on an IPE, and the participant's and counselor's responsibilities in the development process.

Timeline for Developing an IPE

The IPE should be developed as soon as possible after gathering the required information and completed a comprehensive assessment. The development of the IPE should not exceed 90 days after the eligibility determination has been made. If extenuating

circumstances justify a delay in the development of the IPE beyond 90 days, the counselor and participant may agree to an extension of time to complete an IPE.

Developing an IPE - Participant Options

Federal regulations provide several options available to participants and their representatives when developing an IPE:

- Typically, participants will develop an IPE with assistance from their VR counselor to the extent determined appropriate by the individual.
- They may also develop an IPE themselves, with technical assistance from the Vocational Rehabilitation program or other program representative selected by the individual.
- The individual may choose to develop an IPE without assistance.

IPEs must be developed on the division forms, regardless of the option chosen. They must be both agreed upon and signed by the participant, the guardian (if any) and by a qualified rehabilitation professional (QRP) employed by IDVR.

Developing an IPE: Participant Information

The participant (or representative) must also be given the information necessary to make an informed choice before completing the IPE. This includes the range of components that must be included on the IPE, an explanation of agency guidelines and criteria for determining financial commitments, the availability of assistance in completing required state forms and any additional information needed for the development of the IPE.

Developing an IPE - Federal Requirements

Federal regulations require that the IPE include the following mandatory procedures:

- A description of the individual's specific employment outcome consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests and informed choice of the individual and the overall goal of competitive integrated employment. For students with disabilities, this may be a broad, exploratory vocational goal that will be developed as the student progresses through high school.
- A description of the specific rehabilitation services needed to achieve the employment outcome. These should be delivered in the most integrated setting appropriate for the services involved and be consistent with the participant's informed choice.

- Timelines for initiating services;
- Names of the providers for applicable plan services
- A description of the criteria used to evaluate progress towards achieving the employment outcome

The IPE's terms and conditions include, as appropriate:

- the responsibilities of Vocational Rehabilitation,
- the responsibilities of the participant to achieve an employment outcome,
- when applicable, the financial responsibility of the participant to pay all or part of the service costs,
- the use of comparable benefits when available
- responsibility for service delivery for individuals receiving services from a community rehabilitation program (CRP).

IPE Rationale and Documentation

It is important that counselors document the rationale for their decisions as well as the participant's involvement in the IPE process when completing an IPE or IPE amendment. A participant agreeing to an IPE is not the same as a participant being actively involved in its development or taking ownership and primary responsibility for decisions.

Case Notes: Boyd

Here are two examples of IPE case notes for a participant named Boyd.

Case Notes: Boyd - Example 1:

I met with Boyd today to write his IPE for the vocational goal of cook. The plan was written for training at ABC Culinary Training School, because Boyd enjoys cooking meals at home for his family. Additional services include transportation assistance, assistance with the cost of a uniform, maintenance of his mental health, and assistance with the cost of eyeglasses. We reviewed the plan and agreed to all the terms and conditions. Boyd signed the plan; we will provide a copy to him and issue authorizations to ABC.

What is missing from this documentation of the rationale for the services and documentation of IPE development? Are those items addressed in this next example?

Case Notes: Boyd - Example 2:

Boyd and I met today to jointly develop his IPE with the goal of cook (see comprehensive assessment). After visiting CSN and ABC Culinary Training Schools, he decided he would like to enroll in the professional cook training program at the ABC Culinary Training School. The costs of both programs are comparable, and at ABC he will be able to complete the program in a shorter length of time and will have more hands-on experience while training.

A recent eye exam documents a need for new glasses. The plan includes updated eyeglasses to ensure he has no vision problems during his training. Boyd chose America's Best for because they are located close to where he lives.

Boyd understands his responsibility for maintaining his mental health and compliance with his medications. Therefore, the plan stipulates that Boyd will continue regular appointments with his psychiatrist at XYZ Clinic. Boyd and I reviewed the completed IPE, including his responsibilities. We both signed it, and I provided Boyd with a copy for his records. Client rights and responsibilities and CAP services were also reviewed, and new copies of those documents were given to Boyd with his IPE

Knowledge Check:

Click this [link](#) to complete the knowledge check for this module before moving on with the rest of the lesson.

Comparable Benefits

When determining service needs, federal regulations require the exploration of comparable services and benefits. Comparable benefits are services, financial benefits or assistance that are available to the participant from a program other than VR. For example, medical insurance including Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance are all examples of comparable benefits that may be used for medical costs associated with a service. The Pell Grant is an example of a comparable benefit that may pay for tuition for a college program.

The counselor must determine whether comparable services and benefits exist and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual. However, use of can be waived if using the comparable benefit will delay services and negatively impact service provision outlined on the IPE. With the exception of delay of services, counselors are required to use comparable benefits and alternative sources of funding whenever possible throughout the VR process.

Exemptions

The following services are exempt from the federal requirement to determine the availability of comparable services and benefits:

- Assessments for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs,
- Counseling and guidance including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice,
- Referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies including other components of the statewide workforce investment system,
- Job-related services including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services and follow along services,
- Rehabilitation technology including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices, and
- Post-employment services consisting of the services listed above.

Exploration of comparable benefits can be documented in the case notes and documented on the IPE. Supporting information should also be in the file. For example, if the participant is attending college, the counselor should include a copy of the Pell Grant award or denial letter in the file.

Note: Merit-based scholarships are not counted as comparable benefits.

Provision of Services and IPE Reviews

Provision of Services

Here are some key points to keep in mind before finalizing the IPE and providing services:

- Identify and provide significant VR services that reduce, eliminate, accommodate, or otherwise alleviate the participant's disability-related barrier to employment. Services such as clothing and bus passes generally are not considered significant VR services and are usually only provided in conjunction with a primary service.
- It is important to identify and provide all services necessary for the participant to achieve the chosen employment outcome.
- Services that are not needed to achieve the employment outcome should not be provided or included on the IPE.

Before finalizing the IPE, the VR counselor and the participant should evaluate whether the selected services will adequately prepare the participant for employment in the chosen field.

- Is the vocational goal consistent with the participant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice?
- Does the participant understand their chosen vocation?
- Do VR services provide the participant with the appropriate skills to perform the essential functions of the job?
- Is the participant able to manage the physical, cognitive, social and behavioral requirements of the occupation?
- Is the typical job environment for this vocational goal suited to the participant?
- Is there a real job at the end of VR services?

Once the IPE is finalized and signed, services should be provided in a timely manner. Participants assume the primary responsibility for meeting their objectives and obtaining their employment goals. However, their progress should not be hampered by unnecessary delays in providing services. Counselors should monitor the completion of IPE services according to agency policy.

IPE Reviews: Amendments

- The IPE may be assessed, and modifications taken at any time the counselor and the participant agree that a shift is essential for the achievement of an employment outcome.
- The amendments to the IPE must be signed by the participant and counselor prior to the implementation of changes.
- If the vocational/employment goal is altered, a new evaluation of vocational needs may be required.

IPE Reviews: Annual Reviews

The IPE should be reviewed as often as necessary and at least annually from the date of the original IPE. The annual review must be completed in *Aware*.

The review is an opportunity to provide the required documentation needed to demonstrate progress and to justify ongoing services. It is also a chance to make corrections if suitable progress is not made or if a change of conditions necessitates an IPE change.

Conclusion

The IPE is a roadmap for the rehabilitation process of the participant and outlines the specific vocational goal of the participant as well as the services needed to ensure that the participant is successfully employed in the chosen goal. It also outlines responsibilities, service providers, timelines, sources of comparable benefits and criteria for assessing progress towards the accomplishment of the employment outcome.

It is essential to include in the IPE all the services required to achieve an employment outcome. Services that are unnecessary for the achievement of the vocational/employment goal should not be included. Before planned services are provided, both the participant, guardian (if any), and the VR counselor employed by the State Agency must agree and sign the IPE. Once the signatures have been acquired, the services should be provided in a timely manner so that the progress of the participant is not unduly delayed.

Lesson Completed

You have completed the lesson for this module. Click this [link](#) to complete the end of module quiz before moving on to the next lesson.