

REHABILITATION DIVISION: BVR / BSBVI
Participant Services Policy and Procedures Manual
Section 10, Title: Counseling and Guidance, Assessment of
Vocational Rehabilitation Needs (AVRN) and Individualized
Plan for Employment (IPE)



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I. Rehabilitation Counseling

Provision of quality counseling and guidance is a key component to Rehabilitation Counseling and is critical to the mission of the State VR Agency.

It is imperative that quality counseling and guidance and other services are provided throughout a case that:

- Facilitate the obtainment of meaningful, sustainable employment consistent with an individual’s primary employment factors (strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities), as well as the individual’s interests and informed choice;
- Sufficiently addresses barriers to employment, accommodation needs and other needs that will facilitate sustainable employment; and
- Facilitate the development of both hard and soft skills the individual needs in order to maintain or advance in employment.

Quality counseling is also important at case closure:

- For cases closed without an employment outcome: to assist the individual in identifying and addressing challenges that will help him or her be successful in future cases or employment.

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- For cases closed with an employment outcome: to provide guidance on maintaining employment, including detailed information on post-employment services and the importance of contacting his or her counselor if facing challenges that could jeopardize the employment.

While counseling and guidance is provided during every aspect of the VR case, it is especially critical during the Assessment of Vocational Rehabilitation Needs (AVRN) and development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

II. Assessment of Vocational Rehabilitation Needs (AVRN)

The Assessment of Vocational Rehabilitation Needs (AVRN) is a transparent process of exploring vocational options; determining how disability related barriers to employment can be diminished, accommodated or eliminated; and exploring how other vocational needs can be met in order to assist the participant to make informed choices, that have a high probability of leading to sustainable employment, regarding:

1. The employment outcome (vocational goal) and
2. The nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation services to be included in the IPE.

A) Federal Requirements:

To the extent possible the employment outcome and IPE services must be determined based on the data used for the assessment of eligibility and, as appropriate, in accordance with confidentiality requirements, information from other programs such as education officials, Social Security Administration, and information provided by the individual and the individual's family. If additional data is necessary, a comprehensive assessment to determine the participant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice, including the need for supported employment, must be conducted in the most integrated setting possible consistent with the informed choice of the individual. This assessment:

1. Is limited to information needed to identify the rehabilitation needs of the individual and to develop the IPE;
2. May include, to the degree needed, an assessment of the personality, interests, interpersonal skills, intelligence and related functional capacities, educational achievements, work experience, vocational aptitudes, personal and social adjustments, and employment opportunities of the individual; and the medical, psychiatric, psychological, and other pertinent vocational, educational, cultural, social, recreational, and environmental factors that affect the employment and rehabilitation needs of the individual;

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3. May include, to the degree needed, an appraisal of the patterns of work behaviors of the individual and services needed for the individual to acquire occupational skills, and to develop work attitudes, work habits, work tolerance and social and behavior patterns necessary for successful job performance, including the utilization of work in real job situations to address and develop the capacities of the individual to perform adequately in a work environment;
4. To the maximum extent possible, relies on information obtained from experiences in integrated employment settings in the community, and other integrated community settings; and
5. As applicable, the assessment must also include a referral for the provision of rehabilitation technology services to assess and develop the capacity of an individual to perform in a work environment.

B) Agency Requirements when Determining a Vocational Goal:

1. Required Considerations:

The counselor must provide counseling and guidance to assist the participant in determining an employment outcome (vocational goal). To the extent possible, the participant, with the counselor's guidance as needed, must complete the research required in this process. The participant and counselor need to:

- Explore short and long-term employment goals; and
- Identify the participant's interests and primary employment factors (strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities) as they relate to employment; and
- Explore labor market trends and in-demand industries. High demand industries within the individual's interests and abilities should be taken into consideration; and
- For individuals traditionally in low wage occupations or who have little work experience: career pathways, measurable skill gains, obtainment of credentials and/or opportunities for the individual to participate in job driven training that will result in high quality employment outcomes and enhance career options should be explored; and
- For individuals who receive SSI or SSDI: prior to selecting the vocational goal, the counselor and individual need to discuss the individual's goals as they relate to retaining benefits or earning sufficient income to get off benefits, and how the individual's priorities in this area affect the individual's vocational choices. Individuals should be referred to and participate in benefits planning,

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- as available, and be referred to Social Security Administration if additional discussion regarding their benefits is needed; and
- Explore other pertinent income and benefit needs or considerations; and
- Explore the pros and cons of various vocational options.

Vocational test batteries, prior work experience, work based learning or training experiences and other assessments or tools may be useful in determining an individual's primary employment factors and in considering various options. Family members and other individuals who know the individual well, may also be able to provide valuable insights.

It is important to obtain a good understanding of the job in order to determine if it aligns with the individual's primary employment factors.

To the extent possible, and needed, the participant will research the job duties, expectations and requirements, for employment options that are under consideration.

Note: If the participant, due to a cognitive or other disability, requires support in completing research, the counselor will make arrangements for the participant to receive the assistance needed. Direct counselor assistance, family members, community partners, interpreters or use of assistive technology are examples of supports that may be utilized, when appropriate, to assist the participant in completing research necessary to make an informed choice regarding the employment outcome.

The participant, with counselor assistance as needed, and appropriate, will take into consideration all the previously discussed factors and narrow down his or her vocational options to one goal that has a high probability of leading to long-term sustainable employment for the individual.

In order for VR to support a chosen vocational goal, it must:

- Be consistent with the individual's primary employment factors (unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities), as well as career interests and informed choice; and
- Be founded on the individual's ability to achieve long-term employment success and be reasonably attainable; and
- Be in an in-demand industry; or have a good labor market; or there must be a justifiable reason why the participant will be able to obtain and maintain employment in the field given the labor market conditions; and
- Be for competitive integrated employment (including supported, customized or self-employment that meet the criteria of "competitive integrated employment").

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2. Before Finalizing a Chosen Goal or Amending an IPE Goal:

Both the counselor and participant must agree the goal will be a good job match and has a high probability of leading to sustainable employment before including the goal on the IPE.

If the IPE goal requires an advanced degree, the “IPE Goals that Require Advanced Degrees Agreement Form” will be completed and signed by the counselor and participant prior to signing the IPE and document additional research completed by the participant following the “Advanced Degree Decision Making & Research Checklist”.

Informed Choice and Limitations on Vocational Goals:

While the participant should make an informed decision regarding his or her employment outcome/vocational goal, and the participant’s decision should be taken into serious consideration, **the Rehabilitation Counselor should not agree to a goal that is not consistent with the participant’s primary employment factors or that does not have a high probability of resulting in sustainable competitive integrated employment for the individual.**

For example, if an individual has a lifting restriction of 15 pounds, a goal that requires lifting over 15 lbs. **must not be** agreed to unless the limitations are alleviated (for instance, accommodations or a selective placement that does not require heavier lifting), to avoid the likelihood of further injury to the individual. If the limitations cannot be alleviated, VR cannot support the goal, even if the individual chooses to pursue the occupation on his or her own.

If Additional Time is Needed to Explore a Vocational Goal:

If, within the 90-day time frame required to develop an IPE, it cannot be determined:

- a). Whether or not a goal is consistent with the individual’s primary employment factors; or
- b). If it has a high probability of leading to sustainable employment

the counselor and participant may either agree to an IPE (as discussed later in this section) or may proceed with the goal **on the condition that:**

- Counseling is provided so the participant understands that agreeing to the goal does not guarantee continued support of the goal; and

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- The counselor and participant agree to complete and sign the “IPE Addendum: Additional Exploration of My Vocational Goal Form” prior to or in conjunction with signing the IPE.
 - The form should then be scanned into the file as part of the IPE.
 - The IPE, reason for selecting the vocational goal, should state “See IPE Addendum: Additional Exploration of My Vocational Goal Form”; and
- The IPE, as applicable, includes services needed to evaluate the appropriateness and feasibility of the goal; and
- The IPE only includes the training and supports (specific to the goal) needed to assess the feasibility of the goal (for example, a trial semester at college versus an entire 4-year degree). The IPE can be amended at a later date (contingent on policy; and appropriate IPE level review and approval) to include the entire training or support services, if it is determined the goal is feasible and likely to lead to sustainable employment for the individual.

Note: The IPE should still include services that will generally be needed (regardless of the vocational goal chosen) such as counseling and guidance and job placement services.

C) Agency Requirements when Determining IPE Services:

Required Services. The following services must be adequately provided for or addressed as applicable to the needs of the individual:

1. Counseling and Guidance:
 - To assist the individual through the VR process;
 - To help the individual explore pros and cons of various options and make informed choices that have a high probability of leading to long-term employment;
 - To assist the individual, as needed, to develop social skills, self-advocacy skills and good work habits needed for long-term employment;
 - To provide assistance in identifying resources, as needed; and
 - To provide other support and guidance the individual may need to be successful in employment.
2. Services that will accommodate, diminish or eliminate barriers to employment due to the disability:

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Addressing disability related barriers to employment may include, but is not limited to:

- Retraining for a vocational goal or choosing a selective placement that is within the participant's abilities (if the individual can no longer participate in his or her traditional employment due to a disability);
- Restoration services that can be achieved, in a reasonable amount of time, aimed at alleviating the disability related barrier to employment, such as medical treatment;
- Assistive technology that alleviates or compensates for functional limitations due to the disability;
- Identifying, supporting, or teaching the participant to self-advocate for accommodation needs, and when appropriate short-term assistance in providing the accommodation;
- Addressing behavioral, psychosocial or interpersonal barriers an individual may have to employment as a result of his or her disability;
- Job development, job coaching or appropriate use of job development resources for individuals with cognitive disabilities who are unable to independently search for employment or learn job duties once employed;
- Supported employment for individuals who meet the criteria required for provision of this service; or
- Customized employment for individuals who meet the criteria for the provision of this service.

The above services (counseling and guidance as well as assistance eliminating, diminishing or accommodating disability related barriers to employment) are the primary services provided by VR. All other VR services are ancillary to these services.

3. Measurable Skill Gains and Credentials:

A measurable skill gain, in brief, is the progress a participant is making in an education or training program that is leading to a credential or employment.

A credential, in brief, is obtained at the end of an approved education or training program.

All measurable skill gains or a credential obtained during the case, or expected to be obtained within a year after case closure, must:

- be included on the IPE;
- have acceptable supporting documentation in the case file; and
- be accurately recorded in the AWARE electronic case management system.

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Measurable skill gains include:

- Educational Functioning Level (EFL) Gain:
 - Advancement of educational level by making measurable improvement, measured by a pre-test and post-test, such as moving from a 9th grade to a 10th grade reading level on a Basic English Skills Test or progress on National Reporting System for Adult Education assessments. (i.e. Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS))
 - Documentation of awarded credits or Carnegie units and adult high school program.
 - Documentation of exiting a program below postsecondary level and enrolling in postsecondary education and training during a program year. A program below the postsecondary level applies to participants enrolled in an adult basic education program only.
 - *Note: Concurrent enrollment in postsecondary training and adult education does not meet the definition of an EFL.*
- Attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent: Documentation of a secondary school diploma OR documentation of a State recognized equivalent.
 - *Note: Does not include special education certificate/diploma.*
- Secondary or Postsecondary Transcript/Report Card
 - Secondary Transcript/Report Card: For each school year, a transcript or report card documenting the participant completed each semester with at least a D- or above (minimum grade required in Nevada to receive credit for completion of a class) in each class taken and is in good academic standing. If the report card indicates the participant dropped out of school, was removed from the institution, or any other conditions that indicate removal on academic or conduct grounds, then the individual does not receive an MSG.
 - *Note: Doesn't apply to special education yearly progression while working towards special education certificate/diploma.*
 - Post-Secondary Transcript or Report Card: A transcript or report card documenting that a full-time student completed a minimum of 12 credit hours for one semester or a part-time student completed a minimum of 12 credit hours over the course of 2 consecutive semesters during a program year.
- Training Milestone: Satisfactory or better progress towards skills advancement while the participant is in an on-the-job training program, registered apprenticeship program, Customized Training Program, or the Business Enterprise Program.
 - *Note: Adequate documentation of skills progression is required.*
- Skills Progression: Successful passage of an exam required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining trade-related benchmarks, for example, passing a welding certificate examination.

Credentials include:

- High School Diplomas, High School Equivalency Diploma or GED
 - *Note: While special education certificates/diplomas do not count as credentials, VR still tracks the enrollment and attainment of these certificates.*
- Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's and Graduate Degrees
- Vocational/Technical license, diploma or certificate such as:
 - An industry specific certificate or certification (for example, Microsoft Information Technology Certificate, Certified Nursing Assistant, Commercial Driver's License etc.)

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- Licenses recognized by state or federal government (for example registered nurse, cosmetologists, marriage and family therapist etc.)
- Technical Diploma
- Other education or training diploma, degree or certificate such as Job Corps certificate of completion for career technical training
- Apprenticeship certificate/diploma
- Business Enterprise Program (BEP or BEN in Nevada) License

Credentials do not include:

- CEU's
- Disability skills training
- On the job training
- Adjusted diplomas or certifications of completion (for example, Project Search)
- Job seeking skills and soft skills training
- General skills certificate related to safety or hygiene (such as CPR, OSHA, emergency management, NV food handler card, TAM, and Sheriff card)
- Credentials that are not industry-recognized or sought by employer in the industry (such as community college certificates in global studies)

4. Other services needed to reach the specific vocational goal chosen:

In addition to measurable skill gains and credentials, there may be other services needed for the particular occupation. For example, training that is not considered a measurable skill gains or credential but is still needed to develop work skills required for the occupation or required work cards.

In determining services needed to reach the particular employment objective, the participant and counselor need to understand the nature and requirements of the employment objective. To the extent necessary and possible, the participant should research the job demands and criteria of the chosen goal as well as credentials needed for employment in his or her chosen field.

If the participant due to a cognitive or other disability, requires assistance completing this research, the counselor will make arrangements for the participant to receive the assistance needed. Direct counselor assistance, family members, community partners, interpreters or use of assistive technology are examples of supports that may be utilized, when appropriate, to assist the participant in completing research necessary to make an informed choice regarding VR services.

5. Services or actions needed to address non-disability related barriers to employment (as applicable).

Note: Not all of these services need to be included on the IPE if case notes adequately explain how they will be addressed. For example, if childcare is needed, but the participant has already made arrangements for a family member to provide childcare assistance, a case note to this effect will suffice.

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6. Services integral to entering or obtaining employment including (as applicable) job seeking skills, soft skills and job placement assistance.
7. Services to develop good work habits, appropriate social skills and/or to identify and address reasons for previous job losses (as applicable and needed in order to promote long-term employment success).
8. Other services to promote sustainable employment success including, but not limited to:
 - Follow along, and
 - A discussion regarding the availability of post-employment services should the participant's job be in jeopardy.

After the needed services are identified, the counselor and participant will research ways of providing the services which are both cost effective and meet the vocational needs of the individual. The counselor will also inform the participant of any applicable policy requirements the participant needs to know in relation to the provision of the service.

If Additional Time is Needed to Determine Specific IPE Services

If additional time is needed to determine specific service needs (beyond the 90-day requirement for IPE completion), the counselor and participant may either agree to an IPE extension consistent with policy; or the IPE may be completed if it includes services to assess the service needs. The IPE will still include fundamental services and specific services that have already been identified such as job placement services, counseling and guidance, etc. However, in general, the specific service or services that are in question will not be included in the IPE until the assessment is completed and it is determined the service is appropriate and/or necessary to reach the goal. The IPE may be amended later (contingent on policy; and appropriate IPE level review and approval) for the specific service.

For example:

- If it is believed the individual will need assistive technology, but the specific technology needed is unknown, the initial IPE may include an assistive technology assessment, and the IPE may be amended later to reflect the specific technology needed.
- If the individual's job goal requires college training, but it is unclear if the individual can successfully complete college courses, the IPE may include a

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trial semester, and if the trial semester is successful the IPE may later be amended to include the entire degree program.

III. Limitations on Services

Services are subject to other policies found in this manual, including, but not limited to financial participation policies, comparable benefits policies, requirements found in scope of services, policies regarding the purchase of goods and services, etc.

While participants should make an informed decision regarding vocational services, a “want” is not always a vocational need. The counselor and participant should closely examine an identified service in order to determine if it is a “want” or a “need”, and be able to provide an adequate rationale on why the service is needed to reach the vocational goal, and document this in a case note when an explanation is needed.

The criteria for making an informed choice should be consistent with regulatory guidelines, and the policies, procedures and practices of the Division. Counselors are not under obligation and should not as a matter of procedure agree to “any” choice made by the participant. The Division will not fund services that are not necessary to the achievement of the employment outcome. Cost effective methods of providing services **must** be taken into consideration as long as they do not preclude an individual from receiving adequate or necessary services.

Participants should be informed regarding the options available and the limitations of the Division when paying for services, as well as their own financial responsibilities, if any. They should also be informed of their responsibility for accessing comparable services or benefits when applicable. If the participant desires an item or service that is not needed to achieve the employment outcome, such as glasses with high priced designer frames rather than glasses with average priced frames that meet the employment need of improved vision, the participant still has options for making an informed choice. For example, the participant can choose to receive the glasses with the average priced frames or choose the designer frames and pay the difference in cost.

IV. Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

After agreeing on a vocational goal and the services needed to reach the goal, the counselor and participant commit to these goals in writing by completing an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

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The IPE is a participant's roadmap to successful employment. The IPE is not a contract, but rather an agreement made in good faith, which delineates the employment outcome and services to be provided that are needed to achieve the outcome. However:

- All services provided by VR must be included in the IPE, or the IPE amendment (except services necessary to complete the assessment of eligibility or initial vocational rehabilitation needs; and
- Services included on the IPE must be necessary to achieve the employment outcome.

The IPE also describes timelines, the criteria for evaluating progress toward the outcome, and the participant's responsibilities for reaching the employment outcome. The federal regulations pertaining to IPEs are [34 CFR 361.45 Development of the individualized plan for employment](#) and [CFR 361.46 Content of the individualized plan for employment](#).

A) Federal Requirements:

Definition of a Participant

The federal regulations cited above frequently refer to "eligible individuals or, as appropriate, the individual's representative." For the sake of brevity, the term "participant" is used with the assumption that its use includes the phrase "or, as appropriate, the individual's representative."

Definition of a Rehabilitation Counselor

References to the Rehabilitation Counselor in this manual refer to a qualified Rehabilitation Counselor employed by the Rehabilitation Division of Nevada's Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation.

1. Participant Options and Information Needs for IPE Development

An eligible participant should be informed that he or she may choose to develop all or part of the IPE with or without assistance. The participant should be provided information on the availability of assistance from a qualified rehabilitation counselor employed by VR or, as appropriate, a counselor not employed by VR, a disability advocacy organization or assistance from other resources. Regardless of the option chosen, the IPE must be completed on the Division's forms, and agreed to and signed by both the participant and the Rehabilitation Counselor employed by VR.

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The participant must be provided information regarding the full range of components that must be included on the IPE including:

- An explanation of guidelines to determine financial participation.
- Information and assistance on completing the IPE forms.
- Additional information the participant requests or the Rehabilitation Counselor determines is necessary to develop the IPE.

The participant must also be provided:

- A description of the rights and remedies available.
- A description of the availability of the Client Assistance Program.

Individuals who receive Social Security Benefits on the basis of a disability shall also be provided general information on additional supports and assistance for individuals with disabilities desiring to enter the workforce, including assistance with benefits planning.

2. Timeline

The IPE must be developed as soon as is reasonably possible, but not later than 90 days after an eligibility determination. In extenuating circumstances, the counselor and participant may agree to an extension of time.

Note #1: In Nevada when the counselor and participant agree additional time is needed, the counselor and participant complete an IPE development extension form in AWARE, which is signed by both the counselor and participant. If unable to obtain the participant's signature, he or she may agree by an email reply or through SARA electronic communication that they are in agreement to the IPE development extension and the dates on the form. This alternate method of agreement will be documented by the counselor on the form. The email reply or SARA electronic communication will then be scanned into the electronic case file along with the IPE development extension form signed by the counselor.

IPE development extensions are to be completed for no longer than 30 days from the IPE due date. However, in extenuating circumstances based on the facts and unique circumstances of the case, additional 30-day extensions after the first 30-day extension may be completed with Rehabilitation Supervisor approval.

Note #2: If additional time is needed to explore the vocational goal or service needs, as appropriate and applicable, the counselor and participant may:

- a) Complete an extension as noted above; or

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- b) The IPE may be completed on condition that the respective requirements are met as previously outlined in this section under:
If Additional Time is Needed to Determine the Feasibility of an IPE Goal; or
If Additional Time is Needed to Determine Specific IPE Services
3. Mandatory Federal Procedures at [34 CFR 361.45\(d\) Development of the individualized plan for employment- Mandatory procedures](#)
- a. The IPE is a written document prepared on forms provided by the Division.
 - b. The participant is given the opportunity to exercise informed choice in selecting the employment outcome and setting, the specific VR services needed to achieve the outcome as well as the setting of those services, the entities that will provide the services and the methods for procuring the services. (See Section 3 of this manual -- Informed Choice).
 - c. The IPE must be agreed to and signed by both the eligible individual and a Rehabilitation Counselor.
 - d. A copy of the IPE and any amendments are provided to the individual in writing and, as appropriate, in the native language or mode of communication of the individual.
 - e. The IPE is reviewed annually by the Rehabilitation Counselor and the participant to assess the individual's progress toward achieving the employment outcome.
 - f. IPE amendments – The IPE is amended as necessary if there are substantial changes to the employment outcome, the VR services or the providers of those services. IPE amendments do not take effect until agreed to and signed by the participant and the Rehabilitation Counselor.
 - g. IPE's are also amended, as necessary, to include post-employment services necessary for an individual to maintain or regain employment consistent with his or her primary employment factors, interests and informed choice. This is accomplished by completing a "Post-Employment Plan." (See "Scope of Services; Post-Employment Services" Subsection 12.9).
 - h. An IPE for a student receiving special education services is developed in consideration of the student's IEP and in accordance with required interagency agreements (see Section 14: Students and Youth with Disabilities).
4. Content of the IPE: Mandatory Federal Components at [34 CFR 361.46 Content of the individualized plan for employment](#)
- a. Employment outcome – The IPE must include a description of, the specific employment outcome chosen by the individual that is consistent with the

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- individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests and informed choice and the general goal of competitive integrated employment. The IPE for a student with a disability may be a description of the projected post-school employment outcome. (See Section 14 or Appendix B for a definition of student with a disability).
- b. Services – A description of the specific rehabilitation services needed to achieve the employment outcome which will be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate for the services involved and consistent with the informed choice of the individual. This includes as appropriate:
- The provision of assistive technology devices and services.
 - Personal assistance services (including training in the management of these services).
 - In the case of an eligible individual who is a student with a disability, the specific transition services and supports needed to achieve the employment outcome or projected post-school employment outcome.
- c. Timelines for achievement – Timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of services.
- d. Service providers and procurement methods – A description of the entity or entities chosen by the participant that will provide the services and the methods used to procure those services.
- e. Criteria to evaluate progress – A description of the criteria that will be used to evaluate the progress toward achievement of the employment outcome.
- f. Terms and conditions – The terms and conditions of the IPE including, as appropriate:
- The responsibilities of the Division.
 - The responsibilities of the participant including the participant's responsibilities for achieving the employment outcome, and when applicable, the participant's financial responsibility in paying all or part of the cost of the services, and the participant's responsibilities for applying for and securing comparable benefits.
 - The responsibilities of other entities pursuant to arrangements made for comparable services or benefits.
- g. For Supported Employment – Ensure all requirements as found in Section 13: Supported Employment, are met.

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- h. Post-Employment – As needed, statements regarding expected need for post-employment services for an individual who achieves an employment outcome, a description of the terms and conditions for the provision of post-employment services and, if appropriate, how post-employment services will be provided or how they will be arranged through other entities that provide comparable services or benefits.
- i. For Students – Coordination of services for students with disabilities receiving special education services as described in Section 14: Students and Youth with Disabilities.
- j. For Individuals Receiving Services from an Employment Network – Under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program, a description of how responsibility for service delivery will be divided between the agency and the employment network.

Note: When a participant’s ticket is assigned to an EN, the Division will not pay for any services that the EN has, in their agreement with Social Security, agreed to provide Ticket holders. Adhere to the policy “**If a participant has their ticket assigned to an EN**” found in Section 5 (Ticket to Work Program) of this manual.

- k. Employment Outcome/Vocational Goal – All IPE employment outcomes must be for competitive integrated employment. This includes supported, customized or self-employment that meet the criteria of “competitive integrated employment”.

In addition, measurable skill gains and credential obtainment is a federal performance indicator by which VR is measured. In order for the agency to receive credit for them, they must be included on the IPE.

B) Additional Nevada Requirements:

1. Employment Outcome/Vocational Goal

Federal regulations require a description of the specific employment outcome (or projected outcome for students with disabilities receiving transition services) that is consistent with the individual’s primary employment factors. Projected outcomes for students must follow the general policies discussed in Section 14: Students and Youth with Disabilities.

The use of a generic goal should be limited. The use of “All Other Service Workers” as an IPE goal is limited to:

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- a) If a specific goal, in the service industry, has been selected, but the case management system does not list the goal. In these situations, “All Other Service Workers” may be used only if the specific goal is included in the customized line; or
- b) For customized employment, while the discovery process takes place if it is anticipated the individual may work in the service sector. Once a specific goal has been determined the IPE must be amended to reflect the specific goal; or
- c) As a projected goal for a transition student, if a specific goal or a broader projected goal within a particular field or area cannot be determined during the initial counseling and guidance time period. The projected goal of “All Other Service Workers” may be used while the participant is engaged in work based learning experiences and/or other vocational activities to help identify the specific goal or a broader projected goal within a particular field or area. The goal must be amended to a specific goal (or a projected goal in a broader area) as soon as possible and before implementation of certain IPE services such as on the job training and college tuition. No job placement services will be authorized until the goal is amended except as noted in points a) & b) above.

Note: Federal regulations require the identification of a specific goal for adults. Thus, the IPE goal should be narrowed down to at least a specific area. As appropriate, vocational goals may be amended, and as applicable, “The Additional Exploration of My Vocational Goal” form and policies may be utilized to complete additional vocational exploration.

2. Services

- In addition to any federal requirements, at a minimum IPE services should include:
 - Counseling and Guidance Services
 - Job placement services (unless the goal is self-employment or to maintain a current job)
 - Job seeking skills and soft skills, as applicable
 - Skills training if needed to enter the field (if needed, to meet IPE development timelines, the initial IPE may include a service to clarify training needs such as a Community Based Assessment, or trial classes in a particular field to determine the ability to meet educational

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- requirements for that field -- with a subsequent IPE reflecting more specific services once identified)
 - Services to address functional limitations (or if the specific services to address the functional limitations cannot be identified at the time of the initial IPE, services that will help identify needed services such as an assistive technology evaluation -- with a subsequent IPE identifying the specific assistive technology to be provided)
 - Services to remove barriers to enable participants to obtain and/or maintain employment
- The description of services should be specific enough that there is no confusion regarding the exact service being provided or when the service has been completed. General categories must be clarified so that the Counselor and participant have an accurate understanding of an agreement as to the service being provided. For example, the general category of transportation may be clarified by indicating "a monthly bus pass to participate in job search activities and employment until the first paycheck is received." The general category of college training is clarified by indicating "a bachelor's degree in elementary education."
 - Each service cost must be a realistic estimate of the actual costs involved.
 - Service dates for each planned service should represent a realistic estimate of the actual initiation and completion of the anticipated service. When a service is contingent on the successful completion of another service, this will be documented per the service date and in the service description on the IPE. All service dates will be within the start and end dates of the IPE.
3. Informed Choice
- As federal regulations require the implementation and exercise of informed choice, case files should provide sufficient documentation that the participant's decisions regarding the employment outcome, services chosen, and procurement methods were informed choices. Possible ways to document informed choice in the development of the IPE include case noting the options the participant explored, documenting counseling and guidance that assisted the individual to make an informed choice, documenting how the participant made choices and decisions rather than indicating that the participant simply agreed to choices that the counselor made, and documenting the rationale for denying inappropriate choices as well as describing the alternative options the participant was provided in order to make an informed choice.

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4. IPE Timelines
Employment outcome achievement dates should be realistic estimates of when the services will be provided and the outcome obtained.
5. Responsibilities
The responsibilities of each party should be specific enough that there is no confusion regarding who is providing the service and the expectations and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities when applicable of the participant, and goods and services being provided by comparable benefits.
6. Evaluation Criteria
Evaluation criteria should include measurable statements to determine the progress made in reaching the vocational goal. Evaluation criteria for a specific IPE service should clearly define how the participant and Counselor will determine if an objective has been met.
7. IPE Rationale
The case should contain appropriate documentation of the IPE rationale including a clear understanding of; how IPE services assist the participant to address functional limitations related to employment, how significant services will assist the individual in obtaining the employment outcome, and how the employment objective is consistent with the participant's primary employment factors and informed choice.
8. IPE Services and Expenditure Approval
IPEs must be approved by the appropriate level and authority before obtaining IPE signatures and providing IPE services. (See Section 18 for approval levels).

Once IPE and spending approval has been granted, any significant changes to the IPE such as a change in the vocational goal or services (even if it does not result in increased service costs), additional expenditures or an increase to the estimated cost of an already approved expenditure will be submitted for additional review and approval; and must include a rationale.

9. Changes to the IPE/IPE Amendments
 - Substantial changes to the IPE, including but not limited to changes to the vocational goal, additional services (including assessment services authorized after the IPE start date) and substantive increases to service costs require an IPE amendment, and additional approval.

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- All service costs from previous IPE's must be rolled over into the amended IPE. If the service is completed or no longer needed, the IPE can indicate such, but any funds already spent must still be accounted for on the current IPE.

10. IPE Annual Reviews

IPE reviews should occur as often as necessary, and at least annually from the date of the original IPE. The annual review must be completed on the electronic case file annual review form that is signed by the counselor and participant. It should document the participant's progress toward achievement of the employment outcome. It is not only an opportunity to document progress and justify continued services but also to determine if corrections or changes are needed when appropriate progress is not being made.

Other Annual Review Requirements:

- a. **Releases of Information:** Generally, an "authorization to release information" should not exceed one year. At the time the IPE is signed, the counselor and participant should complete new "release forms" to any individual or entity when there is a need for additional sharing of information beyond the eligibility stage of services. Therefore, at the time of the IPE annual review, the counselor and participant should review all release forms to determine if a new authorization to release information is required.
- b. **Financial Participation:** Financial participation should be re-evaluated and updated at the time of the annual review. An updated financial participation assessment form must be completed and income re-verified. This may be waived if all remaining services are exempt from financial participation, or the participant is exempt from participation due to still receiving SSI/SSDI, TANF or SNAP (food stamps) (the reason for waiver must be case noted by the counselor). If applicable, the IPE should be amended to reflect changes in the participant's portion of service costs.