

## **ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY**

**Program Name:** Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

**Policy Number:** VR-12.7-v2

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2008

**Last Revision:** April 8, 2024

**CHAPTER 12:** Support Services

**Section 12.7:** Information and Referral

### **I. Policy Statement**

This policy provides guidelines regarding information and referral services for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program applicants and clients.

### **II. Authority**

Authority for policies contained in this document includes the following:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), 29 U.S.C. § 3101 et seq.
- Title IV Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, 34 C.F.R. §§:
  - 361.37, Information and referral program,
  - 361.48 (b)(4), Scope of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities,
  - 361.53 (b)(3)(i)(D), Comparable services and benefits, and
  - 361.54 (b)(1-2), Participation of individuals in cost of services based on financial need.
- A.R.S. §§ 23-502 and 503
- Arizona Administrative Code, Title 6, Chapter 4:
  - R6-4-201 (A)(1)(b), General considerations, and
  - R-6-4-403 (A)(1)(b)(iii) and (B)(2)(b)(v), Economic need and similar benefits.

### **III. Applicability**

This policy applies to all applicants/clients who request and receive information and referral from VR.

### **IV. Standards**

- A. VR must provide information and referral services to any applicant/client regardless of eligibility status.

- B. VR must provide information and referral to appropriate programs and service providers best suited to address the specific rehabilitation, independent living, and employment needs.
- C. Economic need does not apply.
- D. Comparable benefits do not apply.
- E. VR must respond to any request for information and referral within 24 hours.
- F. The VR Counselor must provide individualized information and referral services, to access other resources, to all clients who are required to wait for VR services due to:
  - 1. Order of Selection, or
  - 2. Lack of long-term employment services.
- G. VR Counselors must inform all clients that are recipients of social security benefits such as Social Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) of the availability of benefits counseling/consultation, work incentive planning, and advisement resources.
- H. VR Counselors must provide basic information about the impact of work on benefits, to help the client decide whether to apply for Vocational Rehabilitation services, plan a program of Vocational Rehabilitation services, and close the client's case as successfully employed.
- I. Benefit Counseling/Consultation includes the following services:
  - 1. Disseminating accurate information on how employment will impact Social Security benefits and medical benefits,
  - 2. Providing information to beneficiaries regarding employment incentives, including Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE), Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), and Trial Work Period, if appropriate,
  - 3. Providing information regarding the Ticket to Work Program,
  - 4. Providing information regarding services to assist beneficiaries to obtain or return to economic self-sufficiency,
  - 5. Developing, as necessary and appropriate to the specific beneficiary, a personalized benefit planning and management plan,
  - 6. Providing ongoing assistance to beneficiaries on issues concerning Social Security benefits, and
  - 7. Providing the service in a group or beneficiary one-on-one, which may include the VR Counselor and/or the beneficiary's family/guardians.
- J. VR must provide information and assistance with benefits counseling though any or all of the following:

1. Use of the Disability Benefits 101 Calculator,
  2. Referral to certified work incentive specialists, and
  3. Referral to Social Security Administration directly.
- K. The local VR Program Supervisor must designate staff who will maintain a comprehensive Information and Resource list of local programs and organizations to which clients may be referred, to include, at a minimum, the following:
1. Local ARIZONA@WORK center: a comprehensive one-stop center provides an array of employment and training services to job seekers and employers in Arizona (e.g. job search assistance, resume preparation, job training, etc.) <https://arizonaatwork.com/resources-job-seekers-and-employers>
  2. Small Business Administration centers that provide resources for small businesses <https://www.sba.gov/about-sba>
  3. Arizona 211: information about community assistance programs that may offer services or benefits to assist the clients in meeting a variety of needs (e.g. disability related resources, resources for assistive technology, mental health support groups, independent living, clothing, food bank, etc.) <https://211arizona.org/>
  4. Client Assistance Program (CAP) <https://www.azdisabilitylaw.org>
  5. Social Security Administration (SSA) and work incentive programs/benefits offered by SSA (e.g. Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), Impairment Related Work Expenses, Ticket to Work, etc.).
- L. The VR Counselor must refer to the office Information and Resource List or conduct online research to identify the programs and services available locally that may be suitable for meeting the applicant/client's needs.
- M. The VR Counselor must complete a written notice of the referral to the agency carrying out the program that may assist the applicant/client, to include the following:
1. The name of the program to which the applicant/client is referred and information about the services, and
  2. Contact information for the program (address, contact person, phone number, and other relevant information).
- N. When the applicant/client requires assistance with contacting the community resources, the VR Counselor must send the written notice of referral to the selected program/agency upon securing the applicant/client's signed Authorization for Release of RSA Records form.

- O. If the applicant/client does not require the VR Counselor's assistance, the VR Counselor must provide the client with a copy of the referral notice.
- P. The VR Counselor must document information and referral provided to the applicant/client in a case note, and save the written notice of referral in the ECF.

**V. Procedure**

- A. Refer to IV.A, B, F, G, H, and J. above.
- B. Refer to Standard Work, if available.

**VI. Documentation Requirements**

The client's electronic case file must include documentation about providing information or referral to community resources or benefits counseling.