



## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

### FACT SHEET

# WHAT IS THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM?

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program is authorized by Congress under Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 31. It is sometimes referred to as the Chapter 31 program. The VR&E program assists Veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For Veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VR&E offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR VR&E SERVICE?

#### Active Duty Service Members are eligible if they:

- Expect to receive an honorable discharge upon separation from active duty
- Obtain a VA memorandum rating or Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) rating of 20% or more
- Apply for VR&E services

#### Veterans are eligible if they:

- Have received, or will receive an honorable or other than dishonorable discharge
- Have a VA service-connected disability rating of 10% with a serious employment handicap or 20% or more with an employment handicap
- Apply for VR&E services

### BASIC PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY

The law generally provides for a 12-year basic period of eligibility in which services may be used. The 12-year period begins on the latter of these dates:

- Date of separation from active military duty or
- Date the veteran was first notified of a service-connected disability rating



Disabilities determined by VA to be related to your military service can lead to monthly non-taxable compensation, enrollment in the VA health care system, a 10-point hiring preference for federal employment and other important benefits. Ask your VA representative or Veterans Service Organization representative about Disability Compensation, Pension, Health Care, Caregiver Program, Career Services, Educational Assistance, Home Loan Guaranty, Insurance and/or Dependents and Survivors' Benefits.



**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER ELIGIBILITY IS ESTABLISHED?

Eligible Veterans are scheduled to meet with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) for comprehensive evaluation to determine if he/she is entitled to services. A Comprehensive Evaluation is completed with a VRC that includes:

- A full assessment of the veteran's interests, aptitudes, and abilities to determine whether the veteran is "entitled" to VR&E services
- An assessment of whether service-connected disabilities impair the veteran's ability to find and/or hold a job using the occupational skills already attained
- Vocational exploration and goal development leading to employment and/or maximum independence at home and in the Veterans community
- Explore labor market and wage information
- Narrow vocational options to identify a suitable employment goal
- Select a VR&E program track leading to an employment or independent living goal
- Develop an individualized rehabilitation plan to achieve the identified employment and/or independent living goal

## HOW IS ENTITLEMENT DETERMINED?

A VA Counselor decides if a veteran has an **employment handicap** based upon the results of the comprehensive evaluation. Entitlement to services is established if the veteran has a 20% service-connected disability **and** an employment handicap. If the disability is 10% service-connected, then a **serious employment handicap** must be found to establish entitlement to vocational rehabilitation services. A serious employment handicap is based on the extent of services required to help a Veteran overcome his or her service and non-service connected disabilities permitting the return to suitable career employment. After an entitlement decision is made, the veteran and the counselor will work together to develop a rehabilitation plan.

## WHAT IS A REHABILITATION PLAN?

A Rehabilitation Plan is an individualized written detailed outline of services provided under the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program. The plan is an agreement that is signed by the Veteran and the VRC and is updated as needed to assist the Veteran to achieve his/her goals. The following service delivery options may be provided under a Rehabilitation Plan:

1. Reemployment with previous employer
2. Rapid employment services for new employment

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3. Self-employment
  4. Employment through long term services
  5. Independent living services

#### **WHAT OTHER BENEFITS MAY BE PROVIDED?**

After a plan is developed and signed, the counselor will assist the Veteran to implement the plans to achieve gainful suitable employment or independent living. The counselor or case manager will provide ongoing counseling, assistance, and coordination of services such as tutorial assistance, training in job-seeking skills, medical and dental referrals, adjustment counseling, payment of training allowance, and other services as required to help the Veteran achieve a career and live as independently as possible.

For more information, please visit [www.vetsuccess.gov](http://www.vetsuccess.gov). If you prefer to speak to a VR&E representative, please visit the [VA Facility Locator](#) to find your local VA regional office. You may also call 1-800-827-1000.

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