

Explaining Services Checklist

- What is the Reach Up/ESD/Vocational Rehabilitation Connection?

The Vocational Rehabilitation Reach Up pilot program is funded by ESD to work with people receiving TANF benefits who have told their ESD case manager that they have a disability.

- What is Vocational Rehabilitation?

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is a section of Vermont State government. Vocational Rehabilitation is a small, publicly funded program within Vermont's Agency of Human Services. Individualized, vocational services are delivered from 12 Vocational Rehabilitation office locations throughout Vermont.

- Vocational Rehabilitation's mission is to enable Vermonters with disabilities to be employed and to live successfully in their communities.

You are not required to work with Vocational Rehabilitation, as it is a voluntary program.

- Criteria for Reach Up eligibility

1. Must be receiving TANF
2. Must have a child living in the home
3. The parent must have a disability and it appears that it will last more than three months.
4. Must be referred to Vocational Rehabilitation by ESD

- Services Reach Up provides

The Pilot Program is staffed with eleven full-time Vocational Rehabilitation counselors covering the entire state of Vermont. Each counselor, who is also the participant's welfare case manager, works with 40 TANF families at a time. The caseload is capped at 40 families due to the complexity of the barriers and the need for intensive involvement with each family.

Services include, but are not limited to:

Disability screening, assessment, identification of disability-related barriers to employment, provision of supportive services related to disability, plan development, intensive case-management/counseling, job placement career exploration: vocational assessment of your unique strengths, interests, and needs, problem solving: help in identifying and solving problems that prevent you from getting or keeping a job; Job placement: support or train you to write a resume,

practice for an interview, follow up job leads, interview skills assistance, job club and other important skills.

Other services provided are: help with car repairs, liability insurance, driver's license fees, clothing, childcare, help with resumes and cover letters, education, and accessibility related

The counselor and you determine what actual services and supports are to be provided within program guidelines.

How often do we meet?

According to Reach Up policy, you are supposed to meet with your counselor at least once per month. Depending upon where we are in the process, we will have more frequent contact than the monthly requirement.

Cancellation policy:

If for any reason you are unable to attend a scheduled meeting, you are to call your counselor to cancel and/or reschedule the meeting. Failure to attend or call two consecutive times leads to the assumption that you are knowingly and willingly choosing not to participate in the program. This can result in conciliation.

Confidentiality

Personal information provided to your counselor will not be released without your written consent except to the persons involved in the administration of the Division of vocational rehabilitation, in response to judicial orders or investigations regarding law enforcement, fraud or abuse, or when one's safety is threatened.

As a participant in the ESD /Reach Up program, you will be asked to sign a Release of Information, giving your consent to release all of the information in your Vocational Rehabilitation files.

You will be given information regarding the Client Assistance Program if you think the information in your file has not been kept confidential.

Provide the consumer with a CAP brochure

Discrimination

DVR does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual preference, disability, age, or religion in admission or access to, or employment in its programs or activities.

IPE (goals)

Your IPE is a contract between two parties--you and DVR. You are responsible to hold up your end of the contract, as DVR is responsible to hold up its end. You are also responsible to keep your counselor informed of any problems; difficulties and changes in your situation as your IPE may have to be changed. If you do not carry out your responsibilities, your IPE may have to end early or parts of it may not be able to be delivered as planned.

To the extent that you choose, your counselor will help you with all or part of developing your IPE you may develop your IPE on your own, with the assistance of a qualified DVR counselor, or with the assistance of others you select.

Benefits of working with Vocational Rehabilitation's Reach Up Program

You will have a modification of your work requirement as long as you are making progress toward your work goal with Vocational Rehabilitation.

Case Management by a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor whose focus is to help you choose, get and keep the job of your choice. I will assume the dual role of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and Reach Up case manager. In addition to the traditional employment-related services associated with vocational rehabilitation, I will also be responsible for ensuring that you understand and work within all TANF rules and requirements.

I will offer you help to identify your barriers to meaningful employment and support you in reaching your job goal.

If your goal is to file for Social Security, we can refer you to a staff person who will assist you in the application process. If you require legal representation we will assist you in finding an attorney.

Risks in the Reach Up Program

This program is an employment-focused program. Even if you are filing for Social Security, we will still work on an employment goal. If you are awarded Social Security benefits, you can still work. My job is to help you prepare to choose, get and keep the job you want and we will work together so that you can reach your goal.

Conciliation

If it is documented that on two separate occasions that you are not following your plan to achieve employment, if you are not participating in agreed upon activities without good cause, or if you knowingly and willingly choose not to participate, you can be conciliated.

If you are conciliated you will work with your counselor to develop a plan to prove that you are willing to participate in the Reach Up program. The timeline for this plan can be from two weeks to three months. The counselor is responsible for exercising their professional judgement in determining the length of the "Conciliation Resolution Plan."

Sanction

If you:

- a) Do not appear for the Conciliation meeting**
- b) Do not participate fully with the Resolution**
- c) Exhibit a pattern of behavior from which refusal to participate can be reasonably be "inferred"**

A recommendation will be forwarded to the ESD District office for sanction.

A sanction means that you will be given a case manager from PATH. Once sanctioned the individual is responsible to contact the Vocational Rehabilitation/Reach Up counselor as the first step in curing the sanction. At this time the individual and the counselor can schedule a meeting to negotiate what a "Good Faith Effort" is needed to cure the sanction.

A sanction means that you will lose \$75.00 a month from your benefits.

Similar services are provided by the Vermont Center for Independent Living, however, they do not provide case management services and you would still have your case managed by PATH.

Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me?

I have received a copy of this checklist and agree to work with the VR/Reach Up program.

Signature

Date

Counselor

Date