



# Applying for VR Services

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ADVANCING JUSTICE. ADVOCATING INCLUSION.



# Presenter



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# About Disability Rights NJ

- Disability Rights New Jersey is the designated Protection and Advocacy agency for New Jersey
  - Each state was to designate an agency to receive federal funds to investigate and monitor facilities where individuals with developmental disabilities were located to ensure that they were not the subject of abuse and neglect
- We advocate for and advance the human, civil and legal rights of residents of New Jersey with disabilities



# Client Assistance Program (CAP)

- CAP is a federally funded program designed to assist individuals seeking or receiving Vocational Rehabilitation, or VR, services who need assistance
- If you have questions or concerns about your rights to VR services, or you disagree with VR service decisions you may contact Disability Rights New Jersey



# Learning Objectives

- Overview of the VR systems
- Eligibility for VR services
- Overview of the VR Process for applicants
- Applying for VR Services and common concerns
- Issues in IPE development
- Presumption of Eligibility for SSI/SSDI beneficiaries
- What to do if you have any concerns



# NJ's Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)
- Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI)

Both VR agencies provide financial sponsorship for higher education, including vocational training, certificate programs, community college and four-year colleges and universities.



# Eligibility for VR Services

## DVRS

Individuals with physical, mental, cognitive, or other forms of disability who have a substantial impediment to employment may be eligible for DVRS services.

Individuals who receive SSI or SSDI are presumed eligible for DVRS services.

## CBVI

Individuals who are blind, visually-impaired or deaf-blind Individuals who have a visual impairment and who need services to work may be eligible for CBVI VR services.

Individuals who receive SSI or SSDI for a visual impairment are presumed eligible for CBVI services.



# Overview of the VR Process

- Fill out online Referral
- Intake meeting and Application for VR services
- Determination of Eligibility
- Development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- Provision of VR services
- Obtaining employment - eventual closure of VR case
- Post-employment services - if necessary





# Referral to VR agency

The first step for services from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is to complete the online referral

<https://www.nj.gov/labor/career-services/special-services/individuals-with-disabilities>

## DVRS Referral Form

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=0cN2UAI4n0uzauCkG9ZCpzVnFpBuuFNArhLYruJEYsRUM0FOTFk1UTNV0VIEOTBZT000Tk5HWki5TCQIQCNOPWcu>



# Referral to CBVI

For the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, contact the main office for the referral

## CBVI Website

<https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cbvi/>

## Call CBVI for Referral

Two phone numbers: (877) 685-8878 or (973) 648-3333



# Things to note during Referral Process for DVRS

- Once you complete a referral, DVRS will contact you, either requesting documents or to set up an intake interview.
  - Please note, this is all before you complete the actual application
- DVRS will ask for documents from you *prior* to filling out an application
  - Driver's License, Social Security Card, proof of address, tax documents
  - Medical information or releases, these include a "General Basic Medical Examination" from your physician, a mental health evaluation and an authorization to release documents



# Intake Interview

- Your first conversation with DVRS/CBVI will be an "intake interview."
  - Discussion of your career objective
  - Discussion of your disability
  - Discussion of your past employment/education
- PLEASE NOTE, THIS INITIAL MEETING WILL NOT LEAD TO AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN OF EMPLOYMENT
  - After the intake interview you will be given the application to complete
  - Once the application is completed, the VR agency has 60 days to make an eligibility determination



# Common problems during Eligibility Assessment

- There may be a long period of time between submitting the referral and having your intake interview
  - There is supposed to be a written policy to address the timeline, but it may be longer than anticipated
- The VR agency may request a certification from your doctor that you are ready and able to work
  - Be sure to ask your doctors to provide you with the copies rather than sending them directly to the VR agency
- DVRS closes the case without notice before making an eligibility determination

# Presumption of Eligibility – SSI and SSDI Recipients.



- Presumed to have a physical or mental impairment which is a substantial impediment to employment; and
- Presumed to need vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in or regain employment; and
- Considered an individual with a “significant disability” as defined by 34 CFR 361.5(c)(29).



# What to do if you have concerns?

- If you have any concerns or problems during the application and eligibility phase, what can you do?
  - Contact your VR counselor for updates
  - Contact the Manager of the VR office you are working with for updates
  - Contact the Client Assistance Program





# Questions?





# Contact Us for More Information:

We are located at:

**210 South Broad Street, Third Floor  
Trenton, New Jersey 08608**

We can be reached at:

**800-922-7233 (NJ Only)**

**609-292-9742**

**[advocate@disabilityrightsny.org](mailto:advocate@disabilityrightsny.org)**



Visit us online: [disabilityrightsnewjersey.org](https://disabilityrightsnewjersey.org)



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